

Dazey Farmer a Young Leader

Soybeans are an integral part of the crop rotation for Dazey, N.D., farmer Eric Broten, and he believes membership in the organization that represents farmers who grow the commodity is invaluable, too.

Broten, 28, joined the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) several years ago after being selected as a DuPont Young Leader. As a Young Leader, he sat on the association's board.

Although Broten had farmed for the past nine years and his dad had long been a member of the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, he said that he didn't really understand how the organization benefitted farmers until he attended the board meetings. "That



Eric Broten

showed me what the growers' organizations do for farming. You hear about a lot of crazy regulations, and they don't make any sense, and the people writing laws don't understand (the issues)."

On the other hand, organizations such as the

NDSGA, which are made up of farmers, understand the issues and have an opportunity to be the voice of reason when it comes to developing rules and regulations. "It became apparent that's an important job," Broten said.

Now, Broten encourages farmers to get involved with their grower organizations. "If there are rules and regulations controlling producers, it's awfully important for them to be at the front of the line."

Whether the issues are pollution, fertility management, load limits or personnel issues, the NDSGA does a good job of being on top of, and spreading the word about, issues, Broten believes.

Because the association is made up of soybean growers, it can voice its opinion on policy issues, Broten said.

Farmers are a small percentage of the North Dakota population, so it is pretty easy for the general public to tell farmers whether something is positive or negative for agriculture, even though that opinion really might not be the case, Broten noted. On the other hand, the NDSGA Association can speak about issues from a farmers' perspective, he believes.

"We're a membership organization, so we can stand up and say 'This is good for agriculture, or this is not good for agriculture.'... Our job is to expose the truth."