

# THE NORTH DAKOTA Soybean GROWER MAGAZINE

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OCTOBER 2023



**INSIDE:**  
The Intersection  
of Ag and Energy  
PAGE 18

(YOU)

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# O

## n the cover

Soybean quality is an important factor for U.S. soy buyers. Wahpeton farmer and North Dakota Soybean Council Director Dallas Loff (in hat) shared the importance of crop rotation with buyers from Indonesia and Thailand during a visit to his farm.

—Photo by staff



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## Resiliency

**H**e was sitting on the tailgate of his pickup, telling me he was pretty sure he was going to quit farming two or three years back, but a talk with his uncle kept him in the game. That elderly uncle was not a farmer, but he cared about his nephew and the farm that went way back in their family. The talk had been about stresses such as variable weather, money worries and keeping tradition—the type of topics often brought up when getting out—and sharing how these issues were wearing on the farmer back then had helped his attitude and perspective. Now, though, some of these same pressures had, again, caught up with him, and he was looking at other job opportunities such as crop adjusting or becoming a loan officer. This particular farmer did end up changing careers, and in hindsight, he thinks that it was best for him and his family.

How many times have you, as a producer, spoken with or heard about others who are feeling the heat or pressures that come with being a farmer? Maybe you have shared misgivings or had second thoughts about your career. If you have ever felt the pressure coming in a way that had you questioning the situation, I hope you have an uncle, a family member or a friend with whom you can and will speak to about the situation.

Most farming publications have run plenty of articles about mental or behavioral health in the last several decades because farming is not a lifestyle that is immune to depression, with some Centers for Disease Control and Prevention studies showing higher rates of suicide among agricultural producers than in many other occupations. You probably know this statistic, but I wanted to bring it up in this space for a couple of reasons. One motivation is that your North Dakota Soybean Growers Association asked me to attend the International Legislative Forum which is held yearly in North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota or Manitoba, the government bodies that have taken part for the last 30 years or so. Run through the Consensus Council, this year's session had several topics for discussion,

but the one I was dreading was on Behavioral Health. My reasons for dread were rather dumb, especially given that, at one point in my life, I was a licensed counselor. However, behavioral health is a tough topic, and I would think that few people were looking forward to it. As it turns out, that session was the highlight of the conference for me. Judging from the participation of most attending lawmakers, many of whom are farmers, it seems that most of them would agree.

The speaker was a veteran of our Middle Eastern wars who came back to the U.S. and became a mental health practitioner and researcher. His name is Thad Shunkwiler, also now perhaps the lead researcher in the U.S. into what he calls the “Treatment Gap.” The second reason that I broach this topic is the difference between the demand for behavioral health services and the number of people who can deliver those services. His speech and slides emphasized the rural side of this gap. Shunkwiler did not wish to start discussing the many reasons why farmers might become suicidal; instead, he explained how he is trying to get people to narrow the treatment gap. He is accomplishing this task by getting lawmakers—this audience of legislators who can make these things happen was perfect for him—to increase the incentives for our students to become familiar with the job opportunities in behavioral health as well as helping institutions of higher education to steer their students in that direction.

Shunkwiler is involved with programs within the Center for Rural Behavioral Health at Minnesota State University-Mankato. He shared that, in North Dakota, 90% of our counties qualify as being in a Mental Health Professional Shortage area. Minnesota is at 80%. South Dakota is at 100%, with 47 counties that do not have a practitioner. He also mentioned that, outside Fargo, Bismarck/Mandan and a couple other larger cities, North Dakota only has one or two people who are professionals in that field. Rural Minnesota fares a little better. Personally, I had no idea that we are that underserved in



**Veteran lawmaker and educator Phil Murphy is the NDSGA liaison between legislators and farmers.**

our region.

Shunkwiler is hoping to lessen the service gap by letting young people know the dangers of social media when it comes to behavioral health. He appreciates that it appears the stigma attached to asking for help is shrinking. As a person studying rural life, he understands that there certainly is a stigma attached to looking for help, but that younger farmers may be more open to counseling or asking for help and advice than previous generations.

North Dakota State University Extension has wonderful resources. Check out the link below and look for the Ag Hub on that website.

We older folks should know better by now, but some of us still see reaching out for help as a weakness when it is, in fact, strength.

Here's to a decent harvest and more peace of mind to you all.

**For more information from NDSU about Farm Safety and Health go to: [bit.ly/NDSUFarmSafetyAndHealth](https://bit.ly/NDSUFarmSafetyAndHealth)**



## A Bushel of Thanks

In August, the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) took the opportunity to celebrate its 40th anniversary. The event provided a great chance to reflect on the past; to remember some accomplishments; and to reconnect with many of the former directors, staff, and industry partners who have been a part of the organization over the past four decades.

It strikes me that, when an organization such as the NDSGA reaches a milestone like a 40th anniversary, there are plenty of people who helped make that landmark event possible. Those individuals deserve our gratitude.

Thank you to our founding directors. Having the foresight to recognize the potential for soybeans in North Dakota and identifying the need to work together, these first farmer-leaders laid the groundwork for the NDSGA to become the effective organization that it is today.

Thank you to our past directors who dedicated their time and energy to better agriculture and soybean farming in North Dakota. There have been myriad challenges over the past four decades, including a farm crisis, a trade war and dozens of other industry and regulatory issues along the way. These farmer-leaders made certain that North Dakota soybean farmers were not overlooked.

Thank you to our industry partners. Agriculture

touches many sectors of the state's economy: transportation, energy, research, agronomy and so much more. We've enjoyed meaningful relationships with many industry professionals who help us learn more about the challenges their industry faces, how those circumstances affect farmers and how we can work together to find a workable resolution.

Thank you to our staff. Board members are farmers first. We are dedicated to our farms while being committed to serving the soybean industry. When we are back on the farm tending to our operations, we can be confident that the important business of the NDSGA is being handled by our top-notch staff.

Thank you to our families. When we, as board members, are in Bismarck, Washington, D.C., or any number of places advocating for North Dakota soybean farmers, someone must be at the farm, making sure things operate smoothly. There is extra pressure on our families when we're gone. Their contributions are appreciated, and we couldn't do what we do without the support of our families at home.

Finally, we thank you for your membership. It would not be possible to advocate for soybean farmers in the same way if it were not for our grower members. Knowing that we are representing our fellow farmers certainly helps motivate us to do all



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that we can to better North Dakota agriculture.

It is good to reflect on our past and all the people who helped to make the NDSGA what it is today. Be assured that we, as directors, are committed to positioning the organization to be an effective voice for North Dakota farmers for the next 40 years and beyond.



## Membership Application

To join the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association and the American Soybean Association, complete and return this application with payment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Farm/Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 County: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation (Please check all that apply)

- Farmer     Retired     Agribusiness  
 Finance     Elevator     Other

Do you raise:     Cattle     Hogs     Poultry     Dairy

Do you currently grow soybeans?     Yes     No

Soybean Acres: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Acres Farmed: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about NDSGA? (Please circle one)

Recruited in person; Recruited by phone; Magazine;  
 Internet; Social Media; Mailing; Radio; Event; Other

3-Year Professional Membership: \$200     Retired Farmer: \$25

1-Year Professional Membership: \$75     1-Year Student: Free

Check enclosed (please make checks payable to NDSGA)

Credit Card: Visa / MasterCard / Discover / American Express

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

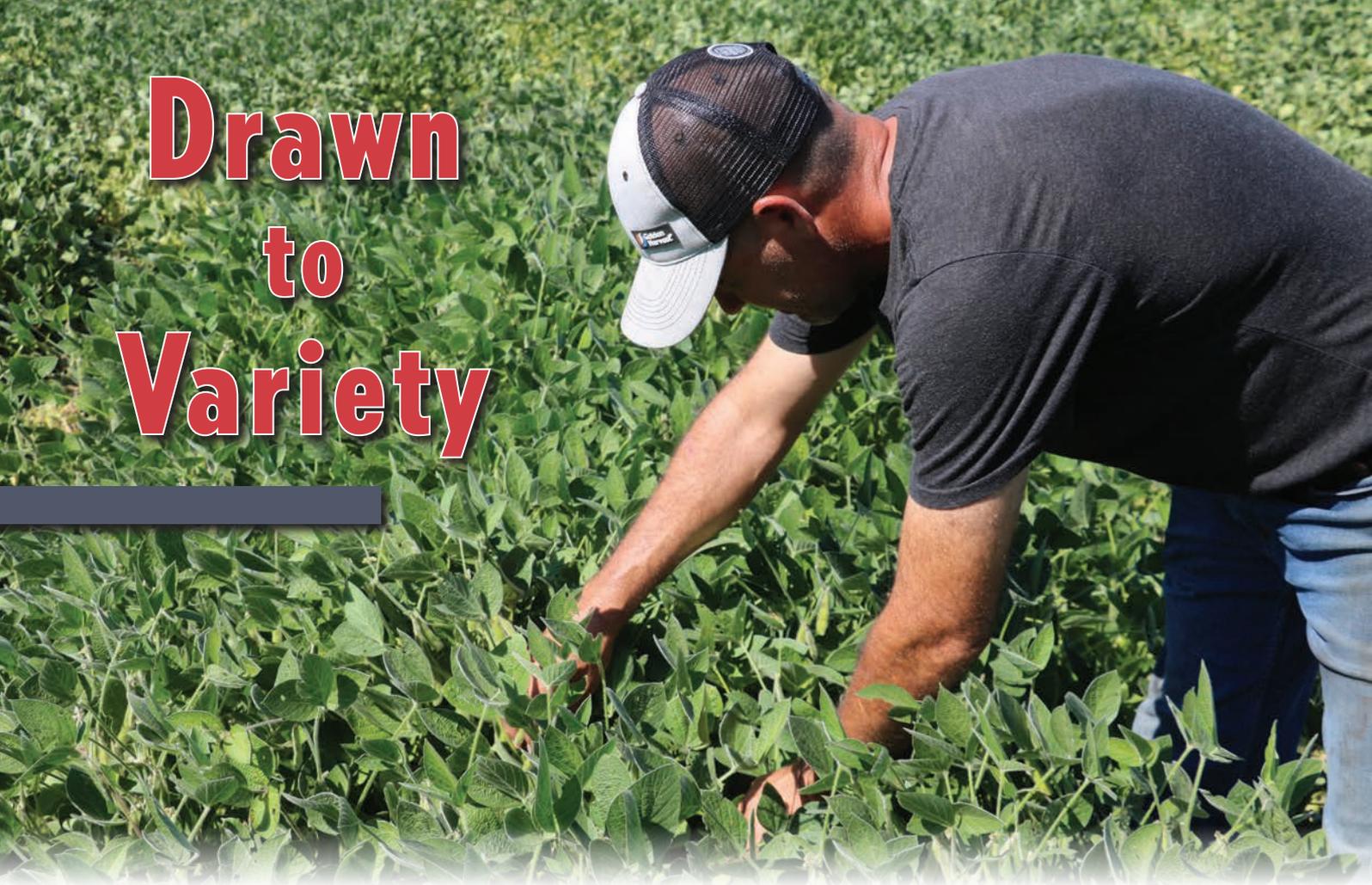
Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_    CVC: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail application with payment to: North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, 4852 Rocking Horse Circle South, Fargo, ND 58104

# Drawn to Variety



**F**armers often have to fill a variety of roles in order to keep their operation running smoothly. From serving as a mechanic or over-the-road trucker to acting as a grain marketer and sometimes even a veterinarian, producers must be prepared to do what needs to be done on a particular day. That position flexibility can also extend to advocating on behalf of their own best interests.

For Leonard, North Dakota, farmer Chris McDonald, the variety of agriculture and the diversity of daily activities wasn't a hindrance. Rather, the array of tasks required in agriculture helped draw him back to the farm.

McDonald earned a degree in agricultural economics from North Dakota State University and spent a year working off the farm, but it didn't take long for him to heed the call of the land.

"I decided I wanted to be near

my family and to take part in the challenge of running our own business," McDonald recalls.

Chris McDonald and his brother, Brian, are the fourth generation to run their family farm. The operation includes raising crops such as soybeans, corn, canola, sunflowers and some small grains. They also have an angus-based cow-calf ranch.

"What I like best about farming is the daily variety of tasks," Chris McDonald explains. "Daily and seasonally, there are drastically different jobs that need to be done. I may help a calf get started nursing, then jump in a semi to haul grain, work on equipment in the shop or seed soybeans."

## Getting Involved

As if the demands of running a diversified farming operation aren't enough, Chris McDonald also serves as a director for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA). In July, he

was elected to be the NDSGA's vice president.

"I have been involved with 4-H, FFA, and elevator boards and committees," Chris McDonald says. "I decided to get involved in NDSGA because I wanted to contribute to my industry on a different level. It's rewarding to serve my community, township and county on boards, and I thought this would be a good challenge."

Chris McDonald states that he didn't run for the NDSGA board because of any particular ag issue. Rather, it was a desire to learn more about the soybean industry and a desire to represent his fellow farmers that drew his attention to the NDSGA.

Soybean production in North Dakota has had an upward trajectory, and soybeans have become one of the state's most important crops. The soybean industry is undergoing a rapid transformation with the construction of two

soybean crushing facilities. That local processing should provide farmers in the state with some dynamic opportunities.

"The soybean industry in North Dakota is in a really exciting time," Chris McDonald asserts. "With multiple crush plants coming online in the next few years, there is going to be a huge regional demand for soybeans. This is going to improve the basis at local elevators, as they will have new and closer end users to supply. Soybean acres will continue to move further west as more producers decide it could be a good fit for their farm."

As a policy organization, the NDSGA advocates for North Dakota soybean farmers on a wide range of topics. The 2023 Farm Bill is a key issue as ag groups work to protect important facets of the legislation, including crop insurance and conservation programs. Chris McDonald describes how

other issues, such as labor shortages, also need to be addressed.

“We have been fortunate to have family that has helped us on the farm, but many businesses and farms are facing real challenges finding employees,” Chris McDonald contends. “With such a demand for people, this problem probably won’t go away any time soon. Scaling up equipment size and getting better technology could be an option for some, but it will also require a large financial investment.”

Running a farm requires farmers to juggle a lot of responsibilities. However, Chris McDonald also believes that farmers can help themselves by being involved with organizations that advocate for



**Leonard, North Dakota farmer Chris McDonald was drawn back to farming because of the variety of tasks associated with agriculture.**

their success.

“I think it is important to be involved with NDSGA because everyone and every area should

have representation. It is also a great way to network with other growers,” Chris McDonald explains. “Members can also

influence policies that could affect their own operations.”

—Story and photos by Daniel Lemke



**Chris McDonald farms with his brother Brian, growing a variety of crops and raising cattle.**

# Savoring a Soybean Milestone

Some milestones just need to be celebrated. The 40th anniversary of the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) was one of those occasions.

Dozens of current and former NDSGA board members and staff gathered in Fargo on August 24 to celebrate the organization's four-decade history; pay tribute to the visionaries who founded the organization; and, in some cases, marvel at how far the soybean industry has come in North Dakota.

Few states have seen the rapid growth in soybean production which has been a hallmark of North Dakota's soybean story. In the early 1980s, soybeans were only grown in a few counties in southeastern North Dakota. Today, through promotion, research and market success, soybeans have been grown in all 53 counties. Acreage has skyrocketed from about several hundred thousand acres in 1983, to over 7 million acres in 2017.

Robert Sinner of Casselton was one of the farmer-leaders who helped found the NDSGA in 1983.

"There were only about 400,000 acres of soybeans back then," Sinner recalls. "There was no crystal

ball, and I don't think any of us would believe where we are today."

Gary Friskop of Wahpeton was another founding NDSGA board member who signed on as a 23-year-old beginning farmer.

"Who would have thought that the industry would expand like it has," Friskop says. "It's amazing. The organization and the leadership that has commenced since I've been on the board has been spectacular."

The NDSGA was organized in 1983. Through the commitment of early members and the recognition of the soybean industry's potential in North Dakota, membership grew. Board members often went door to door to get farmers to sign up.

The NDSGA's leadership po-

sition grew along the way as well. Don Moffett of Barney was the first American Soybean Association Young Leader back in 1984.

"I thought, what a tremendous opportunity to get some education in this industry and to see how this organization can grow," Moffett states. "I was also president of the NDSGA for three terms, and I thought it was a very quality organization and was very proud to be part of it."

Richard Ostlie served as both the NDSGA president and the ASA

president. There were commitments he made to help grow the soybean industry in the state even when there was work to do at home.

"I sacrificed there, but the reward was great," Ostlie asserts.

As an advocacy organization, the NDSGA's influence has grown over the years as more North Dakotans raise soybeans and more of those farmers become NDSGA members.

"The best input we get on legislation is from individuals telling their stories," explains Representative Mike Beltz of Hillsboro. "The next best input we get is from organizations representing a group of people with common goals trying to make something happen. That is critical."

Among the NDSGA's early actions was to advocate for the establishment of a soybean checkoff to help pay for research in order to improve soybean production in the state.

Valley City farmer and current ASA director Monte Peterson has served on both the North



Past NDSGA presidents (from left) Chris Johnson, Richard Ostlie, Jeff Leinen, Don Moffett, Kasey Bitz, Joe Ericson and Craig Olson joined in the anniversary celebration.



NDSGA President Kasey Bitz, NDSGA Executive Director Nancy Johnson and North Dakota Soybean Council Executive Director Stephanie Sinner shared how the two organizations work together to benefit soybean producers.



**Monte Peterson (left) and Robert Sinner highlighted how the NDSGA has grown and become more impactful over its 40 year history.**

Dakota Soybean Council and the NDSGA, so he's been a part of the soybean industry during its growth.

"Each year, we were gaining more soybean acres in the state, so it was an exciting time, and it still is today," Peterson says. "I was on the Soybean Council for seven years. It didn't take years to realize that, no matter how good the checkoff does in promotion and research, if you don't have an organization that's doing the policy and advocacy work, our job is not complete."

North Dakota's soybean industry has evolved over 40 years, and more changes are ahead as the state's soybean crushing capac-

ity comes online, creating new opportunities and challenges. The NDSGA's solid, 40-year history is a strong indicator that the state's farmer-leaders will be actively involved with helping to shape that future for years to come.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff

**To learn more about "The First 40 Years" of the NDSGA, watch the video: [bit.ly/TheFirst40Years](http://bit.ly/TheFirst40Years)**



**Former NDSGA President Craig Olson was among the dozens of attendees at the 40th anniversary celebration.**



**Dozens of present and former NDSGA leaders and soybean industry partners took part in the anniversary celebration at the Avalon Events Center in Fargo.**



**American Soybean Association Director of Affiliate Relations and Leader Development Christine Luelf highlighted NDSGA's role with the national organization.**



**NDSGA Legislative Liaison Phil Murphy (left) talks with farmer and former state representative Charles Linderman.**

# A Chance to Learn and Grow

**A**s farmers, there is no shortage of ways for us to spend our time. We all know that farming can be nearly a 24-hour-a-day job at different times of the year. However, organizations like the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) depend on committed farmers who are willing to step up and help make decisions on behalf of our fellow farmers.

I've had the pleasure of serving on the NDSC for several years, and my term expires next June. Therefore, another farmer will have the opportunity to influence the soybean industry while learning a great deal in the process.

Everyone knows that the checkoff is taken from what we're paid for our soybeans every year. Before I was on the board, I never really thought about what happened to those funds. I just assumed that they were being put to good use. When you're on the board and you're deciding and choosing as a farmer how best to use those funds and, at the same time, you're representing the best interests of all the farmers in North Dakota, it's a big responsibility. We're not just representing one county or one region, we're doing what we believe is in the best interest of all North Dakota soybean farmers.

I'm an agronomist at heart, so I have an interest in soybean research. The NDSC funds

a lot of research that pertains to growers both now and for new uses in the future. It has been awesome for me to see how much of a return on investment the farmers in our state have received from their checkoff dollars. I only wish my 401k performed as well.

The NDSC supports research that is intended to help farmers with the major problems that they face when raising soybeans. Many of those issues were brought to the board's attention through farmer meetings and NDSC roundtable discussions. Weed management is always an issue, but we also try to address other concerns, such as emerging new pests and emerging diseases. Problems such as soybean cyst nematode and sudden death syndrome may not be as widespread in our state as they are in some others, but it's important for us to know how those pests and diseases could affect us and what can we do to minimize that effect before they become a major problem.

On the new uses side, it's amazing what technology is out there allowing us to use the soybeans that are growing in our fields in order to better the world in some way. Whether it's an asphalt conditioner, road dust retardant, renewable fuel or a protein extraction that can be used to cure cancer, who would have thought that raising soybeans could influence the world



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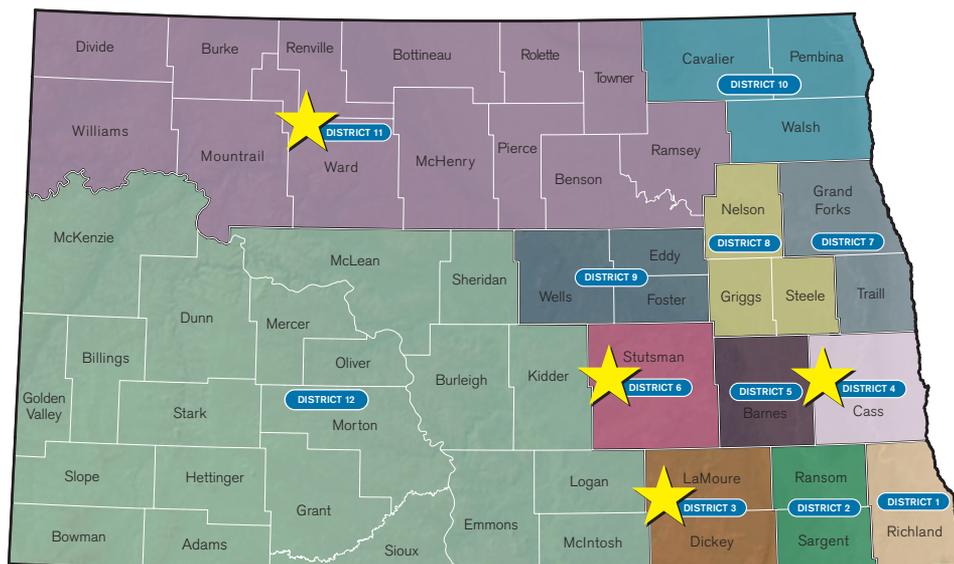
## The ND Soybean Council's 2024 Election Process will begin in December 2023, for the following counties:

**District 3:** Dickey and LaMoure Counties

**District 4:** Cass County

**District 6:** Stutsman County

**District 11:** Benson, Bottineau, Burke, Divide, McHenry, Mountrail, Pierce, Ramsey, Renville, Rolette, Towner, Ward and Williams Counties



in so many ways?

The NDSC is probably one of the most interesting, well-run boards I've ever been a part of, and the information I've received is above and beyond anything I've ever experienced. Serving as a director does require a little time and some work because there's a lot of responsibility involved with handling the farmers' checkoff funds, but the rewards have been tremendous.

When the time comes for NDSC elections this fall, I encourage any soybean farmers who are interested in learning while serving the industry to consider running for the NDSC. Yes, serving as a director comes with some responsibility, but it is very interesting and meaningful work that benefits farmers throughout North Dakota.

To learn more about the NDSC election process, visit [bit.ly/NDSCelections](https://bit.ly/NDSCelections)



# North Dakota Soybean Council Welcomes New Director of Industry Relations

**T**he North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) welcomes Craig Kleven as its director of industry relations. In this newly created role, Kleven is responsible for establishing, expanding and maintaining key relationships with industry partners and stakeholders for North Dakota soybean producers and the state industry.

Originally from Maddock, North Dakota, Kleven grew up on a farm and ranch in the Shyenenne River Valley. He most recently served as the agricultural education state supervisor and executive secretary of North Dakota FFA.

“The NDSC is very pleased to have Craig join our team as director of industry relations,” says NDSC Executive Director Stephanie Sinner. “This position serves a critical role in supporting the North Dakota soybean producers and the industry. Craig brings to the position true passion and enthusiasm for working for North Dakota soybean producers. His work experience will contribute to the success of the NDSC, bringing greater value to North Dakota soybean farmers. We are

delighted to have Craig on our team.”

Kleven previously served as the agronomy manager at Central Dakota Frontier Cooperative, as an associate professor at Bismarck State College and as a Kidder County Extension agent with North Dakota State University’s (NDSU) Extension Service. He is a graduate of NDSU, holding master’s and bachelor’s degrees in agriculture education.

“I am excited to represent North Dakota soybean producers and work closely with production agriculture,” states Kleven. “I am thrilled to work collaboratively with soybean industry representatives in our state to ensure opportunities are pursued to expand the demand for North Dakota soybeans and create awareness of the industry.”

Kleven will be based in Bismarck and will work from NDSU Extension’s Central and West District Office in Bismarck.

—Story and photo by staff



Craig Kleven is the new director of industry relations for the NDSC.

## Happy Tenth!

During the North Dakota Soybean Council’s (NDSC) board meeting on September 6, the board recognized NDSC Executive Director Stephanie Sinner for 10 years of service with the organization.

Chairman Chris Brossart, right, congratulates Sinner, left, with an appreciation clock.



# Soy Connex 2023: Bridging Nations and Ideas



North Dakota farmer-leaders and staff attended the Soy Connex summit in August. From left to right: United Soybean Board (USB) Director Darren Kadlec, Pisek; USB Director Matt Gast, Valley City; USB Director Cindy Pulskamp, Hillsboro; NDSC Treasurer Jim Thompson, Page; NDSC Executive Director Stephanie Sinner; American Soybean Association (ASA) Director Monte Peterson, Valley City.

**R**eimagining the future of U.S. Soy took center stage at the U.S. Soybean Export Council's (USSEC) Soy Connex 2023 in New York City. Amidst the city's iconic skyline, Soy Connex 2023 welcomed more than 700 international customers from nearly 60 countries, all united by their shared passion to feed the world. The conference facilitated an impressive 700 people and included one-on-one meetings between agribusiness representatives and international customers from across the soy value chain, fostering invaluable connections and collaboration. The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) was a major sponsor of Soy Connex 2023.

The global gathering was a melting pot of expertise, featuring expert panels where visionary grower leaders, economists and industry trailblazers converged to dissect the latest trends and to unveil cutting-edge strategies shaping the soy landscape.

Seth Meyer, Ph.D., U.S. Department of Agri-

culture (USDA) chief economist, kicked off the knowledge sharing with insights about the latest demand and supply numbers for U.S. soy, followed by a discussion with grower leaders, the stewards of family farms across the U.S. Meyer identified agricultural challenges that U.S. soy is uniquely positioned to solve, such as food affordability, farmer income and sustainability.

"We find that what makes U.S. soy distinct is its use of technology for solutions that address not just one but encompass all three challenges to deliver what customers are really looking for," Meyer says. He also highlighted the consistency and reliability of the U.S. as a partner to the world, which is highly valued among buyers who are vulnerable to supply disruptions.

Jim Thompson, NDSC treasurer and a fourth-generation farmer from Page, states, "As a farmer myself, I personally connected with the grower leaders. We talked a lot about our farms and soybean quality. I think buyers have a lot of interest in what's happening on our

farms; what does the crop look like?"

Thompson adds, "We've discovered new markets locally this year from crushing and production, and new uses for soy that will continue to grow our markets. Soy Connex has been energizing, instrumental and timely in connecting us with buyers, procurement and customers from around the world, just as we are expanding our output."

The event showcased a diverse range of insights and discussions. Jim Sutter, USSEC CEO, sums it up: "I like to refer to Soy Connex as a one-stop shop for all things U.S. soy: it's about connecting with others, building relationships and learning: be it new research insights, or tools and technologies, or business practices. From animal protein to aquaculture and from edible oil to soy foods, we continue to see innovations that help feed and fuel the world."

Of course, connections and collaborations are catalyzed by trade, and Soy Connex 2023 presented the opportunity to hear from the key trade drivers. USDA Undersecretary of Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs Alexis Taylor confirms U.S. soy's competitive advantage with premium value, sustainability, science-backed collaboration and supply chain transparency: "We are proud to continue to set record numbers of exports this year. Soy amounted to upwards of \$40 billion of agriculture exports last year, and we remain on track to deliver the second highest export in soy this year."

NDSC played a pivotal role in making Soy Connex 2023 an exceptional gathering. Stephanie Sinner, NDSC executive director, captures the event's vibrancy: "Soy Connex 2023 offered an excellent selection of speakers on the key topics that impact our industry. The opportunity to meet, engage and network with buyers from around the world has been great, given that we are welcoming trade teams to North Dakota this quarter."

Sinner adds, "What stands out for me is that Soy Connex presents an unbeatable platform for building critical face-to-face relationships and accessing the expert knowledge and research that drive trends across the industry and the markets."

Through sponsorship of Soy Connex, the NDSC continues to drive innovation and collaboration, amplifying the conference's influence and setting the stage for a promising future for U.S. soy.

—Story courtesy of USSEC, photo by staff

# North Dakota Hosts International Soybean Customers from AROUND THE WORLD



**M**ore than 700 international attendees from nearly 60 countries visited Soy Connex 2023, the Global U.S. Soy Summit in New York, and the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) was honored to extend the visit for two trade teams by hosting them in the Peace Garden State.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) invites trade teams from around the world to make firsthand visits to U.S. soy production centers. NDSC assisted with itineraries and tours for teams from Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

## Taiwan's Team

Prior to Soy Connex 2023, a soyfood team from Taiwan traveled to North Dakota. The group included seven individuals participating in various sectors of the food industry in Taiwan, all interested in procuring soy from the United States. Many from this team purchase identity preserved soy for soy milk or tofu production, often bred for these specific purposes.

## The Itinerary

The group's first stop was at NDSC's office for a briefing on soybean production and the industry in the state. Participants received a 2023 crop update and learned that Taiwan is the number three customer for North Dakota's farmers' soybeans.

Next, the delegates visited SB&B Foods in

Casselton for a tour of the fourth-generation operation. Today, the company produces food-grade soybeans across four states in the upper Midwest and provides 60,000 metric ton (MT) per year to over 10 global markets. The group also learned about SB&B's food division, which includes marketing and the sale of an extensive line of identity preserved, non-GMO and organic foods to customers worldwide.

## Trade Team Southeast Asia

After a stop at Soy Connex 2023 in New York City, another trade team arrived in North Dakota, this one from Southeast Asia. The group included 10 individuals from Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam interested in procuring whole soybeans and/or soybean meal for the feed industry. Several of these attendees were directly involved in the livestock and poultry industry in Southeast Asia. Southeast Asia has long been identified as an area for the expansion of animal protein consumption, and therefore soy feed ingredients. North Dakota is well poised to provide this region with soy products to meet this need.

## The Itinerary

The delegation's first stop was Luke and Elli Ressler's farm. Luke Ressler, a fifth-generation farmer from Hillsboro, shared his extensive experience with soil conservation practices, including cover crops, crop rotation and inte-

grated pest control, which he has implemented through the years.

Adding depth to the conversation, Stephanie Sinner, NDSC executive director, and Miki Mihoguli, NDSC research programs coordinator, shared insights about ongoing research funded by NDSC, including programs aimed to enhance the protein content of soybeans grown in North Dakota through biotechnology advancements.

The group made a stop at the NDSC office, where topics included the NDSC's role, soybean acreage and growing conditions for marketing year 2023-24. The group discussed the superiority of U.S. soybeans over their South American counterparts, including attributes such as moisture level, consistency, oil content and color bleaching cost, as well as more robust assessments of the quality of U.S. soybeans grown in northern U.S. regions, as opposed to solely crude protein. Additionally, the significance of sustainable U.S. soy as a tool to strengthen its dominant position in the global soybean trade for the years ahead was a focus point for the group.

## Collaborating Success

The success of trade team missions is largely due to farmers, organizations and agribusinesses providing visits and conversations about growing and marketing soybeans. The interactions between the soy value chain and international customers help strengthen relationships, trust and understanding of U.S. soy.

—Story courtesy of USSEC, photos by staff



Seeing is believing for buyers who travel to North Dakota to assess the quality of the state's soybean crop.



# Putting the Hammer Down on Weeds

**O**ver time, troublesome weeds such as waterhemp and kochia have developed resistance to some of the most common herbicides that farmers use for control. However, not all weed management options come from a jug of chemicals.

This fall, researchers at the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Research Extension Center (REC) in Carrington will test a Redekop Seed Control Unit which is mounted the REC's Case IH combine, and smashes weed seeds as they exit the back of the machine.

"Essentially what it does is route the chaff component of the residue down through the hammer mill so that, in many cases, the weed seeds that are going through in that chaff are getting pulverized," says Carrington REC Director Mike Ostlie, Ph.D. "In almost all cases that I'm aware of, they've been able to get greater than 90% seed destruction, and for some weeds like waterhemp and kochia, it's closer to 98% seed destruction coming out of the back of the combine."

The seed destruction technology gives farmers another option for weed management. That alternative could be extremely valuable for farmers, especially for growers who practice no-till.

"This is an extra attachment that goes on to the machine, and it's not something that people would do just for the fun of it. We're doing this because we need another integrated weed management option to control these weeds," Ostlie states.

"For growers who are no-till, this is a great opportunity to add a mechanical method of weed control back into a system without a tillage pass. This mechanical method of control should really help manage weed seed bank and keep our existing chemistries working for longer."

Weed seed destructors have been around for many years and are widely used in countries such as Australia where herbicide control has been lost for some weed species. The seed mill provides a level of management by drastically reducing the number of viable weed seeds in the seed bank.

The Carrington REC's machine won't just be used on test plots. It will be incorporated into the entire farm operation, which includes foundation seed production. Ostlie describes how the weed mill will also be tested on a variety of crops, including barley and flax. Because those crops are harvested at a different time than soybeans, weed development is likely to be at a variety of stages. That growth range will also help researchers determine

the technology's effectiveness.

"We're going to be testing the machine in some new crop species and doing check strips in a lot of our larger fields," Ostlie explains. "We'll come back the next year and see if we can spot any differences in weed emergence."

"A lot of the seed destruction research to date in the U.S. has been focused on soybean and the pigweeds," says NDSU Extension Weed Specialist Joe Ikley, Ph.D. "We certainly hope that will work for us in North Dakota as well because we have that challenge, too. But there's not a lot of data on all the other crops that we have, like small grains, some of our minor crops and pulse crops."

Researchers expect to run the weed seed mill this fall and then watch for volunteer weeds that emerge to gauge the machine's effectiveness. More in-depth research and demonstrations are expected next year.

## Protecting Herbicides

With some herbicides losing their effectiveness on weeds, having

a non-chemical management tool should help prolong the life of the chemistries that are still effective.

"We're not there yet, but there's going to come a day that, if we don't try some of these other tactics that can be easily integrated into machines or into what we're already doing, we may get to the point where we have some weeds with no herbicide options," Ikley warns. "We need to think of other ways to manage those weed populations. Weed scientists often talk about managing the weed seed bank, and this is one way to accomplish that goal."

While there is a cost to purchase the machine and some additional fuel costs associated with its operation, the technology should be easy to use, and it won't require farmers to change how they farm.

"If we can prove the technology's effectiveness, I think it's more likely farmers will adopt something that's easier to use than if they have to completely change the way they farm just to try something different to control weeds," Ikley contends.

"It's really an insurance policy for the next growing season because, I think, almost everybody understands the combine is the best method of weed dispersal we have," Ostlie states. "If we can prevent a high percentage of weed seeds from dropping on the seed bank and germinating, we're really cutting the snake off at the head and stopping that seed before it causes a problem."

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos courtesy of NDSU  
REC in Carrington



**Mechanical seed destruction technology is designed to reduce weed seed viability.**

**For information about weed management options and to download the latest NDSU Weed Control Guide, visit [bit.ly/NDSU23weedguide](http://bit.ly/NDSU23weedguide)**



# PREPARING for WINTER



**B**iodiesel powers harvest through improved equipment performance when its needed most. Biodiesel improves diesel's lubricity, which saves wear and tear on engines in valuable farm machinery and trucks.

When harvest is complete, regardless of the choice of diesel fuel, farmers should prepare farm and equipment for cooler temperatures through routine maintenance of fuel systems. Here are some simple steps that can be taken this fall to minimize fuel related issues that winter temperatures can bring.

## Install a New, 30-Micron or Larger Dispenser Filter

Dispenser filters are a must on a storage tank to keep contami-

nants from getting into the equipment. With the onset of cooler temperatures in the fall, install a new, 30-micron filter to accommodate the increased viscosity of the fuel that can be restricted by even minor filter debris. DO NOT use water-absorbing filters. The pleats will become saturated with water and freeze at temperatures of 32°F or lower.

## Check for Water: Remove Water if it's Present

Water is a major source of fuel problems. Over time, water accumulates in the tanks due to condensation caused by warmer daytime temps and cooler nighttime temps, so you need to check every year. Water leads to icing, microbial contamination and fuel degradation. Visually check the

tanks for free water by obtaining a tank sample from as close to the bottom as possible.

## Winterize Your Fuel Before the Temperatures are Below 15°F

Make plans for winterizing your fuel, and don't wait until the cold temps are bearing down. Typical No. 2 diesel in North Dakota starts clouding (reaches cloud point) anywhere from -5°F to +5°F. No. 1 diesel has an operability of at least -40°F. North Dakota weather usually involves utilizing a combination of No. 1 diesel and cold-flow additives. The best advice is to have your fuel supplier bring its winter blend. If you do add your own winter additives, they should be administered when the fuel temperature is at least 10 to 15 degrees above the fuel's cloud point. When blending No. 1 diesel with No. 2 diesel, put the No. 1 diesel in the tank first. No. 1 diesel is lighter than No. 2 diesel and will not mix if No. 1 diesel is put on top of No. 2 diesel.

## Use Biodiesel in the Winter

Biodiesel blends up to 5% have the same physical characteristics and perform the same as No. 2 diesel. As Rob Rose, North Dakota Soybean Council vice chairman, attests, "Biodiesel provides excellent lubricity to fuel, extending engine life by reducing wear on moving parts and directly benefits soybean farmers." Blends higher than 5% will raise the cloud point of the fuel and require more No. 1 blending or the use of fuel additives. Try to get the blend down to 5% or less in the winter.

## Fill Equipment Before Its Put Away for the Winter

After harvest, fill the fuel tanks for all equipment. Keeping the tanks full reduces the amount of air in the tank. Exposure to air causes fuel oxidation and degradation. Excess head space in

the tank can lead to condensation and water problems. Below 32°F means icing. The same advice holds true for storage tanks as well, but at minimum, fill those equipment tanks.

Winter is a great time to start planning for spring's work. This spring, talk to a fuel supplier about bringing a biodiesel blend such as B10 or B20. Both options are quality, high performance fuels that meet strict quality standards. In warmer temperatures, biodiesel blends up to B20 can be used in diesel equipment with no modifications, and it's easy to go back and forth from using biodiesel blends to using straight No. 2 diesel without concern.

"Making the switch to biodiesel was simple and caused no issues in my operation," says Rose on using B20 on his farm. "I was concerned I may need to replace a few filters; however, I did not have to do that. I am proud to use the fuel that I grow right here in North Dakota."

—Story courtesy of MEG Corp Fuel Consulting and staff, photo by staff

To ensure a supplier offers biodiesel, check out the map of fuel distributors that have biodiesel blends at [bit.ly/NDSCBiofuels](http://bit.ly/NDSCBiofuels)



## WHAT IS CLOUD POINT?



Cloud Point is the temperature at which small solid crystals are first observed as a fuel is cooled. Once these crystals become large enough, they can cause temporary issues in storage tanks and engines.

## Diesel Helpline

If you have questions, encounter a fuel-related problem or need help troubleshooting the cause of filter plugging, please call the Helpline at 800-929-3437, or email [info@megcorpnm.com](mailto:info@megcorpnm.com)



# The SCN Coalition:

## Igniting More Soybean Farmers to Actively Manage SCN

Experts with NDSU say that annual SCN soil sampling helps determine if SCN management tools are effective.

**B**rewing in the soil was a rising population of soybean cyst nematodes (SCN), stealing soybean yields, and many farmers didn't realize it. They were planting SCN resistant varieties, but the nematodes in the fields were becoming resistant to the most used source of resistance known as PI 88788.

The SCN Coalition—a public/checkoff/private partnership—was formed to raise awareness about the SCN resistance problem, to learn about its impact on yield and to move more soybean farmers to actively manage SCN: the No. 1 yield-grabbing pathogen of the soybean crop in North America.

### Active SCN Management Starts With a Soil Test

The SCN Coalition has a unified message. The organization encourages soybean farmers to work with their crop adviser to develop a plan to actively manage SCN:

- Take an SCN soil test to know your number.
- Rotate SCN-resistant varieties.

## What's your number?

Take the test.  Beat the pest.

The **SCN Coalition**™

Funded by the soybean checkoff

- Rotate to non-host crops such as corn and wheat.
- Consider using a nematode-protectant seed treatment.

The North Dakota Soybean Council provides financial support for the SCN sampling program that is operated by North Dakota State University. This information, along with state specific SCN management recommendations, is available by visiting [thescncoalition.com/experts](https://thescncoalition.com/experts).

### New Tool Estimates SCN's Economic Impact

The SCN Coalition recently unveiled a new tool, called SCN Profit Checker, which is powered by data collected from over

25,000 university research plots. The simple-to-use tool defines SCN's economic toll at the field level. The tool reveals a significant, direct relationship among SCN egg numbers, the reproduction of SCN populations on PI 88788 resistance and yield loss.

That relationship was used to create an algorithm to estimate SCN's economic influence on any soybean field. To use the SCN Profit Checker, a farmer, agronomist or crop adviser provides the following field-specific information:

- SCN egg count
- SCN female index on PI 88788
- Sand content of the soil
- Soil pH

University experts have provided default female indexes on PI 88788 for most states, including North Dakota, to use as a starting point if a farmer does not know that detail for the SCN population in a specific field. Ideally, a farmer would work with his or her agronomist or crop adviser to get a heterodera glycines (HG) type test that provides the female index for the SCN population in the field of interest. The more specific the information provided in the calculator, the more accurate the estimate.

The SCN Profit Checker puts the power of information in the hands of farmers and their crop advisers as they prepare for fall SCN soil testing. Please visit [thescncoalition.com/profitchecker](https://thescncoalition.com/profitchecker).

### Stay Connected on Social Media

To stay up to date with the latest happenings, follow @TheSCNCoalition on X, Facebook and LinkedIn.

—Story and photo courtesy of SCN Coalition



# SAVE THE DATE

Tuesday, February 6, 2024

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Peter Zeihan**  
Geopolitical Strategist

and

**Brandi Buzzard Frobose**

Agriculture Blogger and Advocate

## NEW LOCATION

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For more information,  
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[bit.ly/NorthernCornSoyExpo](https://bit.ly/NorthernCornSoyExpo)





# The Intersection of Ag and Energy

After viewing the challenges of farming in the Prairie Pothole region, farmer-leaders had a chance to see a North Dakota soybean field up close.

**N**orth Dakota offers a unique view into the intersection of agriculture and energy. With a strong agriculture

economy, bolstered by increasing soybean production and processing as well as a vibrant oil and gas industry, North Dakota was the perfect setting for the Producer

and Industry Information Exchange (PIIE) program.

The PIIE program, sponsored by the American Soybean Association (ASA) and the National Oilseed Processors Association, brought farmers and ag industry leaders from across the country to North Dakota to learn more about how agriculture and energy coexist. The PIIE was hosted by the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association.

The PIIE tour provided an overview about the expansion of soybean acres in North Dakota; driving tours of the Green



A pre-event tour included a visit to the Paul Fossum farm near Hillsboro, North Dakota, for an up-close look at the sugarbeet harvest.



For soybean industry leaders, the PIIE Tour presented a unique opportunity to learn more about two of the state's most important industries.



PIIE tour participants visited the Jack Dalrymple Agricultural Research Complex at North Dakota State University. Research sponsored, in part, by the North Dakota Soybean Council was reviewed for the tour participants.

Bison Soy Processing facility and the North Dakota Soybean Processors site; and visits to the Marathon Petroleum Renewable Diesel Refinery, Red Trail Energy featuring its Carbon Capture and Underground Sequestration, an EnerPlus oil drilling site, and the ONEOK Gas Production Plant. The group also had the opportunity to visit the farming operations of Matt Gast, Kathryn; Eric Broten, Dazey; and Greg Kessel, Belfield, North Dakota.

PIIE tour participants received a firsthand look at agriculture in the western plains while engaging in important conversations about agriculture and energy.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff



The tour made a stop at the Matt Gast bin site near Hastings, North Dakota, for a conversation about soybean production and storage.



A tour of the Red Trail Energy ethanol plant near Richardton, North Dakota, gave participants a look at ethanol production technology as well as the plant's unique on-site carbon sequestration system.



The PIIE tour featured a stop at the EnerPlus headquarters in Mandaree, North Dakota, for an introduction to oil exploration in the Bakken formation of western North Dakota.



The PIIE tour included a stop at an EnerPlus drilling pad near Mandaree, North Dakota.



The ONEOK Gas Production Plant in Bear Creek, North Dakota, provided program participants with a greater understanding about the natural gas collection process.

## Building for the Future

A new field laboratory facility has been on the State Board of Agricultural Research and Education's (SBARE) capital-improvement project list for several biennia, and it has been the number-one priority for each of the last three biennia. The 68th Legislative Assembly made this building a reality by providing the appropriations and fundraising authority to make it happen.

The agronomic, horticulture, plant pathology, plant breeding and natural resources programs at North Dakota State University (NDSU) need four types of facilities to maintain top-level research effort and productivity.

Greenhouse space, such as the Jack Dalrymple Agricultural Research Complex

- Greenhouse space, such as the Jack Dalrymple Agricultural Research Complex
- Wet laboratories and molecular biology laboratories, which exist in various buildings on campus
- Product development, end-use characteristics and new uses, housed in the Peltier Complex, which is slated to open in the spring of 2024
- Field lab facilities, which are currently spread across more than four campus buildings that do not meet the needs of modern research programs

Currently, field lab activities are housed in Waldron Hall, Wiidakas Hall, Potato Research, and Lord and Burnham Greenhouses. The construction of a new field laboratory will provide NDSU scientists with the space, equipment and technology to drive innovation in several key areas related to the state's agriculture, including plant breeding, agronomy, weed science, plant pathology and natural resource sciences. This project will empower NDSU and the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station to continue to provide cutting-edge, research-driven solutions for the benefit of North Dakota farmers and agriculture.

The 68th Legislative Assembly provided an appropriation of \$87 million along with the authority to raise an additional \$10 million to construct this new facility. The architects were hired this summer, and they have already been on campus for several meetings with the

scientists who will be using the building in order to properly plan for both current and future needs.

North Dakota's soybean industry will benefit greatly from the activities housed in this building. Scientists, staff and students who work in soybean breeding, plant pathology, soils and other disciplines will have laboratory space in this building.

Investing in the NDSU Agricultural Field Lab Expansion will support pioneering research meant to not only address today's needs but also to help the industry be prepared to address future challenges. The new building will

- Accelerate hands-on research, education and programming related to agronomy, plant science, plant pathology, plant breeding, horticulture and soil science
- Help NDSU recruit and retain top-ranked scientists who are trained in disciplines specific to the needs of agricultural systems in North Dakota and the region, including a variety of different crops that are specific to the regional growing conditions
- Consolidate the field lab programs currently housed in four separate buildings across campus, creating integrated research spaces that will enhance productivity across the entire NDSU agriculture research enterprise for faculty, staff and students
- Give NDSU researchers a competitive edge as they apply and compete for grants that will develop the research solutions needed to help North Dakota agriculture continue to thrive for decades to come
- Support the pursuit of advanced research that has a beneficial influence on the biggest economic sector in the state

Work with the architectural team began in early August. Planning will take seven to eight months, and the project will go to bid late in the first quarter or early in the second quarter of 2024. Construction will begin in mid-2024 and will take approximately 20-24 months to complete.

Once finished, the building will be home to a myriad of scientists who are working to address a variety of challenges associated with crop production in North Dakota. The building



**Greg Lardy, Ph.D.**  
VP for Agricultural Affairs  
North Dakota State University

will create space for controlled-environment agricultural research that is not possible in our other facilities, will enhance our capabilities to deliver the answers necessary to move the state's most important industry forward and will provide a modern facility for our scientists. The work done in this building will address all major field crops grown in the state.

We would like to thank the 68th Legislative Assembly for making this project a reality, and we also want to give a special thank you to all the constituents who worked tirelessly to bring it to fruition. Without the support of groups such as the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, this building would not be possible.

—Story and photo provided by NDSU

# WISHH catches new markets for U.S. soy by **advancing aquaculture.**



ASA/WISHH is helping explore opportunities for soy-based feeds to grow aquaculture in 8 sub-Saharan African countries, including Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Burkina Faso, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania

**Connect with WISHH**  
**wishh.org**



*WISHH is a program of the American Soybean Association and is funded in part by the United Soybean Board and state soybean board checkoff programs.*

# An Up-Close Experience



**M**oving soybeans and soy products to market is not a simple process. Because soy products can range from whole beans and soybean meal to biodiesel and renewable diesel, distributing those varied items from the source to the consumer is a complex endeavor.

In July, representatives of North Dakota's soybean transportation and processing industry joined farmer-leaders for the North Dakota Soybean Council's (NDSC) See for Yourself program to the Pacific Northwest (PNW), including stops in Oregon and Washington.

For years, whole beans were sent by train from North Dakota to the PNW to be shipped to

destinations around the world. With two soybean crushing plants set to open in North Dakota soon, shipments of whole beans will be joined by soy products moved by rail such as soybean meal, soy oil, biodiesel and renewable diesel to their respective endpoints.

See for Yourself program participants were given an inside look at how the Columbia and Snake River systems are used to help move soy products to market; how terminals transport grain; and how fuel distributors handle products such as renewable diesel, biodiesel, and sustainable aviation fuel.

"We expect a lot of the soybean meal we produce to get exported off the PNW, and I had not had the opportunity to tour and see the fa-

ilities that would be exporting that meal in person," says North Dakota Soybean Processors Commercial Manager Bill McBee. "It was on my list of things to do, so I was excited about the opportunity to join the See for Yourself program and see the facilities in person."

"It was eye-opening to see the network of logistics and efforts that it takes to load vessels out of

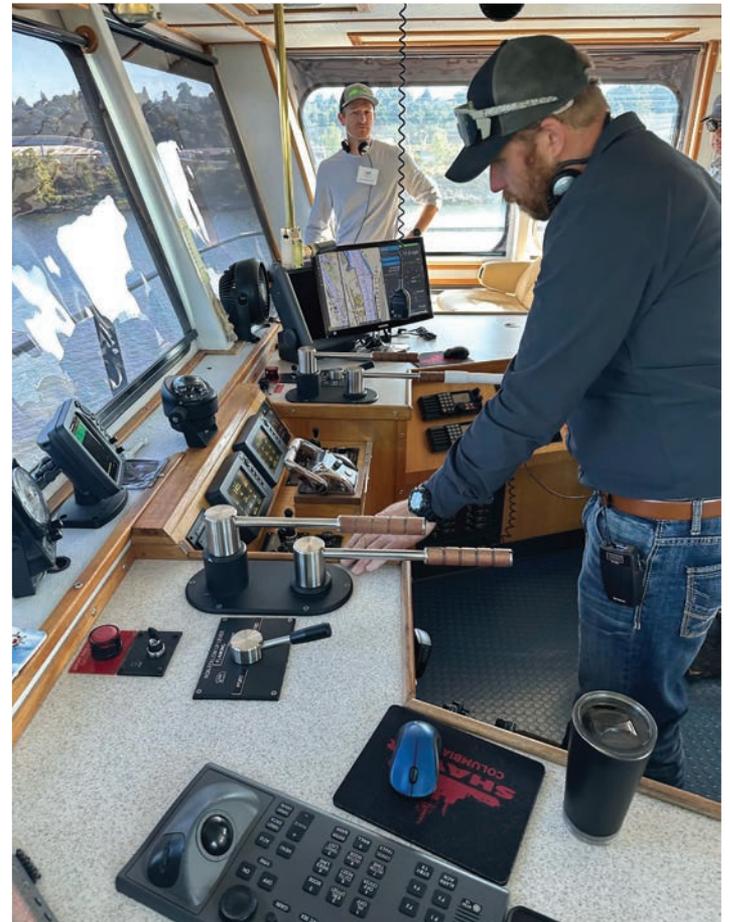
the PNW for export from North Dakota," Green Bison Soy Processing Senior Merchandiser Jeff Goose states. "Touring facilities, tugboat rides, watching vessel loadings, rail updates and learning about the Columbia and Snake River system as a whole were all some of the highlights for me. It helped me to formulate a connection with some of the names in the trade that I have heard about while working in the ag industry throughout my career."

The See for Yourself program incorporated updates from industry representatives, including Clean Fuels Alliance America and BNSF Railway. Participants also toured the Bonneville Lock and Dam as well as a fish hatchery.

"I came away with a new appreciation for the export system as a whole, not just the Pacific Northwest," asserts NDSC Director Evan Montgomery. "I had never



NDSC directors Jim Thompson, Evan Montgomery and Ted Brandt participated in the See for Yourself program to the Pacific Northwest.



The See for Yourself program included a ride on a working tugboat.



**The See for Yourself program helped farmers and soy industry leaders learn about the supply chain while making valuable connections.**

seen a barge. I had never seen a tug. I knew what they were, obviously, but being from North Dakota, I'm not near any navigable water, so I went from about zero to 60 in my knowledge and respect for the export system as a whole."

### Industry Connections

In addition to seeing port facilities as well as fuel handling and

transportation systems firsthand, participants were able to make connections with other people in the soy industry.

"It was a chance to network and meet the producers from North Dakota and other people in the ag industry on the program," McBee explains. "That networking opportunity was invaluable to me. Another fascinating thing was

that the North Dakota Soybean Council provided opportunities that I never would have gotten on my own, such as a tugboat ride on the river. That was a really neat experience and not something that most people get a chance to do."

McBee and Goose provided updates about their processing facilities to the See for Yourself program participants.

"For Green Bison Soy Processing, which is a joint venture between ADM and Marathon Petroleum Corporation, participating in the See for Yourself program helped to explain our relevance for North Dakota agriculture and soybeans going forward," Goose says. "As the first fully dedicated soybean crush facility to come online in North Dakota for harvest 2023, it is an exciting opportunity to work together to best find markets for North Dakota ag and the products our Spiritwood plant will be supplying: primarily feedstock for renewable diesel fuel and soybean meal."

For the NDSC, the See for Yourself program is an important way to connect with industry leaders and highlight the importance of the various sectors of the soybean processing and transportation industry.

"When we, as a board, make investments, if we're going to vote for something or vote to spend money on something, I like to understand it," Montgomery states. "I now feel like I better understand what the PNW means for North Dakota soybeans."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos by staff

## Intern Lends a Helping Hand to the NDSC

**N**orth Dakota State University (NDSU) student Haley McClue has recently joined the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) as an outreach and events intern.

McClue grew up on her family's farm in western Iowa, near Carroll. She is currently a sophomore majoring in agriculture communications with a minor in crop and weed science at NDSU. McClue is no stranger to agriculture,

working on her family farm and helping her dad with his Pioneer seed sales business.

"Growing up I loved helping on the farm and with my dad's seed sales business," says McClue. "I am so honored to have the opportunity to see a different side of agriculture working with the North Dakota Soybean Council through their internship program."

—Story and photo by staff



**Haley McClue will serve as NDSC outreach and events intern.**

# USDA Adjusts Soybean Grading System

**A**s of September 1, 2023, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has removed soybeans of other colors (SBOC) as an official grade-determining factor. Previously, soybeans with discolored seed coats could potentially be downgraded. Removing the SBOC factor means that the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) will only use damaged kernels, foreign material and splits when assigning a grade to yellow soybeans.

Kulm, North Dakota, farmer and American Soybean Association (ASA) Vice President Josh Gackle says that the issue of off-color soybeans popped up in certain varieties and in some geographic locations during the past several years. However, Gackle states that he's not aware of any foreign shipments being rejected because of colored seed coats.

"In different places in the country, it was

more prominent, and certain elevators or the initial acceptor of a load of soybeans was seeing this unusual color in the seed coating on the bean, and they really didn't know what to do with those beans," Gackle explains. "The important thing to know is that there's absolutely no material difference in the quality of the bean when it comes to either protein or oil or what's in the actual in the bean. It's just a variation in the color on the seed coat."

"In previous years, SBOC was not present to the point of changing a grade for a sample," asserts Kia Mikesh, vice president of North Dakota Grain Inspection. "Prior to 2021, approximately 99% of SBOC was within the U.S. Number 1 grade. In 2021, that decreased to 92.19% and the following year down to 83.12%. There were many discussions between FGIS and the industry on the effects this had on the soybean market."

In November 2022, the USDA and FGIS published a proposed rule and sought public comments to make changes to the U.S. Standards for Soybeans. In July 2023, the USDA announced that it would drop SBOC as a grading factor.

Gackle says that the ASA worked with the USDA on the issue and that ASA supports the change.

U.S. soybean farmers rely on export markets. More than half of U.S. soybeans are exported to foreign customers, and most of these exports receive an official grade from the FGIS. U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) representatives describe how removing SBOC as a grade determining factor will bring the U.S. in line with its competitors; improve marketability; and allow the U.S. to focus on the sustainability, quality, and intrinsic value of U.S. soy.

"This was a priority issue for the past couple of years to try and get this grading situation figured out," Gackle contends. "We're very happy to see that change happen. I think it provides more certainty to the farmer and to that initial receiver of a load of soybeans that the bean meets specifications and will be accepted in any destination."

The USSEC has been working to keep cus-



**Soybean grading guidelines will no longer include soybeans of other colors.**

tomers up to date regarding changes that took effect in September. While it has been removed as an official grade standard, the SBOC factor can still be requested for information purposes.

"Most of the foreign buyers or international markets weren't really seeing color issues there, but we were seeing it from the customer at the local elevator. Beans just looked a little different, or workers saw some beans in a sample that were a little different," Gackle explains. "This grading change gives them the certainty that what's coming out of the U.S. meets the specs of a number one U.S. soybean, even if they might find a few beans that the color looks a little bit different."

With the change taking place in September, North Dakota farmers won't have to worry about color affecting the grading for their 2023 soybean crop.

—Story and photos by Daniel Lemke



**Removing soybean color from grading standards has been an issue because the test is not indicative of soybean quality.**

# Soil Health Support Available Through New Initiative

**A** unique initiative called Farmers for Soil Health will provide technical assistance and financial incentives to improve soil health and cover crop adoption for corn, soybean and pork farms in 19 states, including North Dakota.

The partnership among the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the United Soybean Board, the National Corn Growers Association, the National Pork Board, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has announced more than \$13.6 million in new grants to help agricultural producers implement voluntary, on farm conservation practices. The grants will generate \$1.6 million in matching contributions, for a total conservation influence of \$15.2 million.

The grants are supported with a portion of the \$95 million awarded to Farmers for Soil Health by the USDA Partnership for Climate-Smart Commodities.

Farmers for Soil Health is a collaboration that was established in 2022. This climate-smart project offers farmers a transition incentive payment and personalized technical assistance to build cover crop capacity and improve the nation's soil health. Farmers for Soil Health has a goal to advance conservation practices to enhance soil health across the U.S., including doubling cover crop acres to

30 million acres by 2030.

"This collaboration aims to improve soil health by encouraging and assisting farmers to expand their adoption of cover crops through training that addresses barriers to adoption," says Miki Miheguli, the North Dakota Soybean Council's (NDSC) research programs coordinator. "Financial incentives, technical assistance and educational opportunities offered by project partners will support this project over the four years of the grant program. The goal of improving soil health ultimately helps us achieve sustainability goals and improves farmer profitability."

Participating farmers who have existing cover crops or have established new cover crops will receive payments to help them with the transition. These payments will be spread over three years. Eligible farmers will participate in measurement, reporting and verification to highlight progress toward the goal of expanding the adoption of cover crops.

## Local Assistance

North Dakota State University (NDSU) has received a Farmers for Soil Health grant totaling \$825,000 to provide technical assistance to farmers and to help them navigate the transition to planting cover crops.

"It's a boots-on-the-ground project to help farmers adopt

practices that have been scientifically proven to help improve soil health as well as sequester more carbon," states Chris Augustin, Ph.D., director of the NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center and the Farmers for Soil Health program administrator for North Dakota. "With soil health, we're talking about aggregate stability, rainfall infiltration, water-holding capacity and improved nutrient cycling, which could lead to less fertilizer inputs. We will have an extension focus, using the land grant system and science based information to help farmers, and hopefully, that translates into implementation of new practices."

Augustin describes how the grant provides for one funded technical support position for the next four years. The conservation agronomist will work with farmers and ranchers to provide them with technical assistance and to help them enroll in this program.

"Some of the technical support that this conservation agronomist will provide is also to act as a liaison to help producers find cost share opportunities," Augustin contends.

Augustin expects that NDSU will hold summer field days spread strategically across the state as well as having winter workshops to highlight the benefits of cover crops and other soil health practices.

While there is already interest in cover crops in North Dakota, Augustin understands that there

are challenges that need to be addressed, including variable annual rainfall, the short growing season length and soil salinity.

"Those are some things that our researchers are working on, trying to address those issues," Augustin asserts.

Augustin expects the conservation agronomist to be hired soon and, eventually, to be equipped to provide direct assistance to farmers and ranchers across North Dakota.

"I'm excited about this project and the amount of positive impact it can have for our state," Augustin explains. "This wouldn't have been possible without support from the NDSC, the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council (NDCUC) as well as the North Dakota Pork Council. There are some good partnerships out there to help our farmers improve their bottom line and their most valuable asset: their soil."

The Farmers for Soil Health project team at NDSU plans to work closely with the NDSC, the NDCUC and the North Dakota Pork Council to provide more information about the technical assistance, enrollment and eligibility for this program in the coming months.

For more information about the Farmers for Soil Health grant, visit [farmersforsoilhealth.com](http://farmersforsoilhealth.com).

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photo by Wanbaugh Studios



## Decisions Made with Checkoff Dollars Bring Value Back to U.S. Soybean Farmers

### “I can’t put words to it.”

Those words were the first reaction of North Dakota soybean farmer and United Soybean Board (USB) director Cindy Pulskamp to the national soy checkoff’s recent mission to Southeast Asia. The Hillsboro grower traveled to Cambodia, Vietnam and Singapore August 5-16 as part of the See for Yourself program.

See for Yourself is exactly what it sounds like, explains Pulskamp. The program allowed a group of 12 U.S. soybean farmers—six emerging leaders and six current USB directors—to get an inside look at the customers, facilities and opportunities that are funded by checkoff dollars. Every day, the growers met with customers and visited ports, crush facilities, aquaculture farms and more.

“The tour was organized to highlight market progression through export promotion and partnerships,” Pulskamp says, “Cambodia is an emerging market, one that is still developing. Vietnam is more robust, which allowed the farmers to see the demand that U.S. soy’s work had created. And the final stop, Singapore, highlighted a mature market for U.S. soybeans. All of these markets have been supported and developed over time by the national and state checkoffs.”

### Cambodia

Cambodia was the only country with a two-city stop. In Phnom

Penh, the American Soybean Association’s World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) took the group to visit a feed mill and tofu processing facility. In Siem Reap, the farmers toured a family-owned aquaculture business that utilizes the U.S. Soybean Export Council’s (USSEC) in-pond raceway system. In this emerging market, Cambodians are eager for U.S. assistance not only through the USB, but also through partners such as WISHH and the USSEC, to grow their businesses and, eventually, to ensure food security.

“By introducing soybeans into Cambodia,” asserts Pulskamp, “these organizations help local consumers develop businesses.”

### Vietnam

The USSEC’s “boots on the ground” work in this country is to differentiate and build market share for U.S. soy. The group visited purchasing and crushing facilities as well as a soymilk producer that is using the Sustainable U.S. Soy logo. The group also toured several different types of markets, ranging from a traditional wet market to a mega market, where the USB, the USSEC and the USA Poultry & Egg Export Council (USAPEEC) worked together to present an in-store student culinary challenge that featured U.S. soy oil and poultry products.

“While I was in Vietnam, I saw a bag of soybeans that was marked

‘Casselton, North Dakota,’” recalls Pulskamp, “which is just 45 minutes away from our farm. That was a big ‘a-ha’ moment for me. I already knew our North Dakota beans traveled to Vietnam via the PNW (Pacific Northwest), but it’s phenomenal to think of the global market. I could not do this marketing on my own. Why would I market my own soybeans when the checkoff can help me with that?” She reports that those customers told her, “We love American soybeans!”

### Singapore

At the tour’s final stop in Singapore, the group visited a food packaging and processing company; grain processors; and a sophisticated aquaculture facility, BluCurrent

Hillsboro, North Dakota, soybean farmer Cindy Pulskamp participated in the United Soybean Board’s See for Yourself program to Southeast Asia in August. The program provided U.S. Soy growers with a firsthand look at the checkoff’s export promotion and partnerships.

Aqua Farm. The delegates met with the Consulate General of Singapore.

“This mature market helped me to see how all of the pieces came together,” states Pulskamp.

### Returning Value to U.S. Soy Farmers

“How do I know my soybeans are getting out to the world? That’s the true meaning of See for Yourself,” muses Pulskamp. “This program helped me to merge what I knew from serving as a USB director to seeing how our soybeans are actually used in real-time. As a soybean farmer, it was just amazing to see the importance of what USB does. And to see how our partner organizations—WISHH, USSEC, USAPEEC, the U.S. Meat Export Federation and so many others—broaden horizons for soybean usage, creating avenues and opportunities for U.S. soy.”

—Story and photos courtesy of the United Soybean Board



See For Yourself attendees visited a fish production facility in Siem Reap, Cambodia. This woman-owned and operated facility dries and packages fish for local markets. CAST Chief of Party, Jim Hershey is explaining some of the processes used at the facility.

# Preparing the Way for More Meal



It's no secret that the North Dakota soybean industry is changing. With soybean crushing plants scheduled to come online in the next few years, North Dakota will be producing more soybean oil for biofuels as well as more soybean meal for animal agriculture and for export. The industry will be different from the past because, historically, North Dakota soybean farmers have exported mostly whole soybeans to other states for crushing or to the Pacific Northwest for export.

"The dynamic will be interesting now that North Dakota is getting crush facilities," says Matt Gast, a soybean farmer from Valley City, North Dakota, and a farmer-leader on the United Soybean Board (USB). "For anything not used locally, we need avenues to get this meal to current, emerging and new global markets."

One of the avenues to move soybean meal could be the Port of Grays Harbor in Aberdeen, Washington, which Gast and other USB farmer-leaders toured this past summer. During the visit, Gast was able to get an idea about the scope of the expansion to better understand how the system is

working to export the anticipated increase in soybean meal.

Not only are soybean farmers invested in this progress because the ability to increase exports could depend upon it, but soybean farmer organizations are also playing an important role in making sure this expansion is done right. The North Dakota Soybean Council joins the USB, the Soy Transportation Coalition, the Iowa Soybean Association, the Kansas Soybean Commission, the Nebraska Soybean Board, and the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council to fund \$1.3 million in research that will assist with expanding the Port of Grays Harbor.

The current upgrades will increase soybean meal exports from 3 million metric tons to 6 million metric tons at the AG Processing, Inc. (AGP) export terminal at the Port of Grays Harbor. Gast explained that the port is adding infrastructure to handle more railcars and to store more soybean meal. These investments show that the system is preparing for the growth of U.S. soybean meal exports.

"When we were there, they were finishing roofs on the expansion,

so they believe that, with increased crushing in North Dakota, there will be more soybean meal coming to the Pacific Northwest ports," contends Gast. "The ports see the potential of U.S. soy and where it's going to grow. They see (that) the amount of soybean meal coming their way is going to increase."

Not only is the transportation system readying itself for more soybean meal, but there is also work being done to prepare global markets for the opportunity to

import more U.S. soybean meal.

Currently, 68% of the soybeans grown in North Dakota are shipped via rail to the Pacific Northwest and are exported to foreign markets. As the Port of Grays Harbor focuses on exporting soybean meal, Gast explains that not very many North Dakota soybeans have moved through this particular port. However, that situation could be changing. As the North Dakota crushing industry expands, these opportunities to add value to North Dakota soybeans and to export soybean meal are critical for soybean farmers' profit potential. Furthermore, this scenario makes the advancements at this Washington port critical to North Dakota's soybean industry and the farmers' determination to meet customer needs.

"U.S. soy can be the most desired in the world, but if we don't have the means to ship it, it doesn't do soybean farmers any good," says Gast. "We have to continue to expand infrastructure and invest in opportunities, so we can send our soybeans and soybean meal where it needs to go."

—Story courtesy of the  
United Soybean Board,  
photos courtesy of Matt Gast



**North Dakota farmer Matt Gast knows transportation is a key cog in the soybean value chain.**

# Transparency and Traceability

From the field to the dinner plate, from the grain elevator to the fuel tank, from the silo to the end product overseas, transparency and traceability are critical to the future of soybean production.

“Traceability and transparency have been topics of conversation for many years, but it’s challenging to envision how it would work for a bulk commodity crop like soybeans,” Jennifer Coleman, director of communications for Aimpoint Research, told farmers, ag professionals, academics and other stakeholders at the Soybean Research Forum and Think Tank this summer.

Consumer demand is a market driver, Coleman says. People are demanding transparency about food origination, safety and other food related factors more than ever.

“Experience is much more important to millennials,” Coleman states. “It’s not just about having the food but experiencing their food.”

For 63% of consumers, knowing where their food comes from increases their trust while 89% believe that food producers and companies have an obligation to

be transparent, Coleman added.

Traceability, Coleman explains, has been a hallmark with many products, but has not been as much of a focus for soybeans and other commodities.

“There is more than just one driver moving this trend toward greater transparency and traceability,” Coleman asserts. “It’s not just consumer demand; it’s also concerns about food safety, the ability to prove claims and protection from liability. Secondly, there are a lot of companies creating new technologies that will be able to solve the challenges in tracing bulk commodities, and it’s evolving quickly.”

## Bridging Supply and Demand

Katherine Drake Stowe, director of the U.S. Soybean Research Collaborative, describes how the event was created to facilitate these forward-thinking conversations.

“Farmers’ questions today are much more complex than they were 30 years ago, and it will take thinking about research differently to answer those questions and continue to drive the industry

forward,” Stowe says.

Unlike other meetings and events that may focus on one area of the soybean industry, Think Tank brings together a diverse set of players from across the value chain.

“The Think Tank is one of the only times a year we have a diverse cross section of farmers, academics and industry professionals all in the same room sharing ideas and exchanging knowledge,” Stowe contends. “Having the opportunity for these individuals to be exposed to each other is powerful for fueling future collaborations and innovations.”

## A Way Forward

At the conclusion of the 2023 Think Tank, participants identified and prioritized the top needs related to transparency and traceability in the soybean industry. Individuals brainstormed strategies to meet those needs.

## Six Themes Emerged

- 1. Communication throughout the value chain.** Hold grain buyer roundtables to understand how grain buyers think about transparency and traceability, including the plans for infrastructure.
- 2. Defining goal posts.** Create a transparency protocol and stick to it as an industry. Try not to jump into every trend as soon as it’s demanded by a food company.
- 3. Connect with consumers.** Determine how much consumer interest there actually is for transparency and traceability. Tell stories about what’s happening on the farm and with ag research.
- 4. Farmer buy-in.** Help farmers better understand the landscape of traceability, identity preserved, transparency and sustainability.
- 5. Data collection.** Seamlessly integrate data captured on the farm into third-party audits, sustainability initiatives, etc.

- 6. Agronomic innovation.** Increase profitability to encourage the adoption of new practices.

## Team North Dakota

North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) Executive Director Stephanie Sinner, Research Programs Coordinator Miki Miheguli, Board Director Dallas Loff, and Research Committee Member Joe Ericson attended the 2023 Think Tank. North Dakota State University (NDSU) researchers Christina Hargiss, Ph.D., and Lindsay Malone, Ph.D., along with University of North Dakota (UND) researcher Surojit Gupta, Ph.D., also attended the forum with the North Dakota team.

Dallas Loff, NDSC director from Wahpeton, says that the Think Tank facilitated discussions that, ultimately, helped him and the other participants see the bigger picture.

“The Think Tank was a great opportunity to meet individuals from diverse backgrounds to come together and think about what the future of soybean production could look like, the evolution of the consumer, and the questions that need to be explored so farmers can stay viable and excel,” states Loff.

“This forum brings individuals from various disciplines and encourages them to think about soybean research differently, explore unconventional approaches, and seek a broader perspective of understanding to find answers to the industry’s most pressing questions,” says Miki Miheguli. “This is critical to establish cross-disciplinary research teams and radical collaborations to bridge the gap between supply and demand.”

For more information about the U.S. Soybean Research Collaborative and Annual Soybean Research Forum Think Tank, please visit [soybeanresearchcollab.com](http://soybeanresearchcollab.com).

—Story courtesy of the Iowa Soybean Association and staff, photo by staff



North Dakota State University researchers and North Dakota Soybean Council staff and grower leaders participated in the 2023 Think Tank.

# The Versatile Food



**S**oybeans are well known for their wide array of uses. Soy-based products range from livestock feed and cooking oil to industrial products such as plastics, pavement sealers and paints. Soy's versatility can also be showcased in the kitchen.

The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) is helping spread the word about the ease of use and the benefits of incorporating soy into a healthy diet. The Soyfoods Council's Executive Director Linda Funk participated in educational sessions with dietitians and nutritionists from the Bismarck chapter of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics as well as with the North Dakota Nutrition Council in Dickinson. Her goal was to demonstrate how easy it can be to add soy to existing recipes to gain the health benefits of soy.

"It's so easy to start adding soy to everyday diets," Funk says. "I tried to show some really easy things for them to do, not only for them personally but also as they talk to their clients or members of the community. It's important to talk to dietitians and nutritionists because they are out in the community talking to individuals, and we want to make sure that they have the right messages and the right information in addition to being able to help people eat just a

little bit healthier."

Funk demonstrated some simple recipes, including a bean salad with edamame. She made packaged macaroni and cheese, adding some tofu, black beans and corn. There's also soy whipped cream cheese, breakfast cereals and more.

"It's really saying, what do you have, and how do you start adding soy to it?" Funk explains. "The bottom line is tasting is believing. No matter how healthy soy products are, they still have to taste good. So, it's really taking a look at things that you know and love that you're eating and considering how you might be able to add a little bit of soy to it."

Soy is a good source of lean protein, but Funk describes other benefits from soyfoods that include gut health support. Research shows that soy may also offer some protection from breast cancer.

"There's research out there that shows that soy may help prevent a reoccurrence of breast cancer," Funk contends.

Funk asserts that soy helps to build and maintain muscle mass and that soy may even help with wrinkle reduction.

The NDSC supported Funk's educational sessions with the dietitians and nutritionists because these events help support another avenue for soy utilization.

"Because of the many health

benefits related to adding soy in your diet, it is important to us that dietitians and nutritionists across North Dakota are aware of the numerous soy products available and the many ways to easily incorporate them into daily meals," says NDSC Outreach and Education Coordinator Shireen Alemadi.

"Soy has a great nutritional profile and would be so beneficial for patients, especially in the cardiac department," states Sierra Kolle, a registered dietitian for Sanford in Bismarck. "Soyfoods can also be more affordable, which would be a big bonus. The main priority would be educating people on recipes and how to prepare certain soyfoods so that they enjoy them."

Soyfoods have nearly unlimited potential uses from appetizers to the main course and even desserts.

"Soy provides high quality protein, healthy fat, a variety of vitamins and minerals that help no matter what age you are," Funk asserts.

To learn more about the benefits of soy and to get some recipe inspiration, please visit [thesoyfoodscouncil.com](http://thesoyfoodscouncil.com) and [soyconnection.com](http://soyconnection.com).

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff



Dietitians and nutritionists learned about the versatility of soyfoods and how easy they are to include in existing recipes.



# Revised WOTUS Not What Ag Groups Wanted

In late August, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers issued revisions to the January 2023 final Waters of the United States (WOTUS) definition under the Clean Water Act. The rule, which was issued as final without public comment, makes the January 2023 WOTUS definition consistent with the U.S. Supreme Court's May 2023 ruling in *Sackett v. EPA*.

In May, the U.S. Supreme Court delivered a favorable opinion in the much-anticipated *Sackett v. EPA* case. In their ruling, the justices held that "waters" only refers to geographical features that are described in ordinary terms as "streams, oceans, rivers, and lakes" and to adjacent wetlands that are "indistinguishable" from those bodies of water due to a continuous surface connection, making it difficult to determine where the "water" ends, and the "wetland" begins.

The Supreme Court ruling also unanimously rejected the "significant nexus" test for determining if a wetland or waterway should be jurisdictional. Previous EPA rules for what waterways were under federal jurisdiction employed the significant nexus test, which farm groups, such as the American

Soybean Association (ASA), had fought against because the definition was unclear and was viewed as overreaching. The EPA's August final rule did remove all references to significant nexus. The rule also struck previous references to interstate wetlands, and it revised definitions of "adjacent" waters to mean "having a continuous surface connection," as opposed to the previous definition of "bordering, contiguous, or neighboring."

While the revisions concentrate on some of the matters raised in the *Sackett* ruling, the ASA argues that the agencies failed to address many issues that continue to make WOTUS challenging and unworkable for farmers. For example, the agencies do not provide clarity for what "relatively permanent" waters are or address how the regulators would approach seasonal or ephemeral waters. This decision leaves great uncertainty about whether landowners can reasonably determine whether their property is subject to regulation, a significant concern raised by the court in *Sackett*.

"When (the) EPA and the Army Corps announced they planned to tweak the flawed WOTUS regulations on the heels of the *Sackett* decision, we were

concerned this could be the outcome," says ASA President Daryl Cates, a soybean farmer in Illinois. "These revisions are unfortunately window dressings and leave in place much of the rule's confusing and harmful foundations. It is even more unsettling that (the) EPA and the Corps plan to finalize this rule without public comment. This revision is a missed opportunity to address very real and impactful farmer concerns."

The EPA and the Army Corps opted to use an Administrative Procedure Act exception that can allow regulations to go straight to final without soliciting public comment if there is "good cause" for the agencies to do so. The regulators contend that public comment was unnecessary because they are merely making conforming edits to the *Sackett* decision.

The EPA and the Army Corps are not solely responsible for implementing the Clean Water Act. The organizations delegate a lot of that responsibility to states if the states have a plan to implement the Clean Water Act.

"That's how we want it to work," former ASA Director of Government Affairs Ariel Wiegard asserts. "We want the states to have the authority. We want the

states to be making decisions that are best for them locally versus having this top-down regulatory approach where you have an agency that's trying to write a rule for the entire country. We've seen, through many iterations of WOTUS rules over the years, that the top-down approach doesn't work very well because there are so many nuances, so many different types of waters, so many different precipitation patterns that we do really want a lot of that authority to lie with the states.

Because each state has different rules, Wiegard maintains that farmers need to be mindful of state regulations and go through the proper process for dealing with wetlands based on where they live.

"We do still see the Supreme Court decision as a good thing for farmers," Wiegard contends, "because it gives more control back to states to implement our environmental regulations."

Due to ongoing litigation, the underlying January 2023 rule is currently subject to an injunction and is prohibited from taking effect in 27 states, including North Dakota.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photo by Wanbaugh Studios

# For the Love of Plants



**A**griculture offers many career paths that go beyond crop production. For Hunter Gallagher of Ashley, North Dakota, her passion for plants is urging her down the horticulture route.

“Growing up, I was involved in FFA (Future Farmers of America), which really let me explore a bunch of different parts of agriculture, but I found that I enjoyed working with flowers and vegeta-

bles and plants like that,” Gallagher says. “So, a career in horticulture was the natural conclusion.”

Gallagher is majoring in horticulture at North Dakota State University (NDSU) with a minor in crop and weed science. She’s on schedule to graduate in 2025. Then, she has her sights set on working in public horticulture.

“Currently, what I’m thinking is working in public horticulture, which is basically places that the

general public can go to enjoy plants,” Gallagher states, “like botanical gardens, public gardens, arboretums, places like that.”

Gallagher is the 2023 recipient of the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association Scholarship, which is presented to the child or grandchild of a North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) member who is enrolled in agriculture at NDSU and has completed 90 or more credits.

Gallagher describes how the scholarship is very helpful with her efforts to finance her ag education.

“I’m paying for college completely on my own, so scholarships are how I’m able to do that,” Gallagher explains.

The NDSGA Scholarship award has become a bit of a family affair because Hunter Gallagher’s older sister, Morgan, received the scholarship in 2019.

“My sister actually got this scholarship like four years ago or something, so I knew it existed,” Hunter Gallagher says. “My parents are still NDSGA members, so I thought it would be a good idea to apply.”

With college debt a major issue for students across the country, Hunter Gallagher is grateful for the support to chase her career goals.

“It’s extremely helpful. I’m sure my college experience would be very different if I didn’t have scholarships. Because of scholarships, I get to focus more on school or extracurriculars,” Gallagher asserts. “I have a part-time job during the school year, but I don’t have to constantly be worried about getting hours in order to pay for college because I have scholarships that help me.”

Hunter Gallagher also recommends that college students who meet the application criteria take the time to apply for the NDSGA Scholarship.

“I would say just always apply. You miss 100% of the shots that you don’t take, so there’s no harm in trying,” Gallagher explains, “because you never know.”

—Story and photo by Daniel Lemke

**To learn more about the NDSGA Scholarship, scan the QR link below:**



# Ag and Energy TOUR



The Ag and Energy Tour kicked off with a visit to the Red Trail Energy ethanol plant in Richardton, which includes an on-site carbon capture and sequestration system.

**T**wo of the biggest economic drivers in North Dakota are agriculture and energy. Both industries provide jobs and economic activity for the state, and their paths are often intertwined.

Farming, and oil and natural gas production overlap, especially in the western portions of North Dakota. It's not uncommon to see oil wells surrounded by farm fields, illustrating the close connection between the two industries. Renewable diesel production using agricultural resources such as soybean oil is increasing in North Dakota. This summer, leaders from the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA), the North

Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) and the North Dakota Petroleum Council (NDPC) teamed up for

the Agriculture and Energy Tour to the Bakken formation in order to help participants gain a better

understanding of each industry. Agriculture and Energy Tour participants included soybean and petroleum industry leaders, as well as staff from the American Soybean Association, Clean Fuels Alliance America and the North Dakota Department of



**Brady Pelton, North Dakota Petroleum Council vice president, gave an overview of the Bakken formation during a stop at the Marathon Petroleum renewable diesel facility near Dickinson, North Dakota.**



**Members of the Marathon Petroleum team gave an overview of renewable diesel production at the plant in Dickinson.**



**NDSU Dickinson REC Director Chris Augustin delivered an overview of the research being done at the facility.**



The Marathon refinery in Dickinson processes feedstocks such as soybean oil into renewable diesel.



The Ag and Energy Tour included a visit to an oil drilling rig near Belfield, North Dakota.

Agriculture. Faculty, staff and students from North Dakota State University (NDSU) were also able to attend. The tour included stops at the NDSU Research Extension Center (REC) in Dickinson, Red Trail Energy in Richardton, the Marathon Petroleum renewable diesel refinery near Dickinson, the Belfield gas plant and the Fryburg Rail Terminal near Belfield.

The tour served to create a greater understanding about the challenges and connections between North Dakota's energy and agriculture sectors.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff



Tour participants were given access to the control room of the rail loading facility at Fryburg Rail Terminal.



A team from Chord Energy gave tour attendees an overview of the mineral leasing process.



Multiple feedstocks, including soybean, corn and canola oil, can be used to produce renewable diesel, which is a low carbon fuel.



SOY



## RESEARCHING A BETTER BEAN

*Whether you're dealing with drought, flood, heat or other climate-related stress, the soy checkoff is working behind the scenes to diversify U.S. soybean genetics and increase stress tolerance. We're looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And it's helping make a valuable impact for soybean farmers like you.*

*See more ways the soy checkoff is maximizing profit opportunities for soybean farmers at [unitedsoybean.org](http://unitedsoybean.org)*



# the Fun of it



**T**hank you for making the 20th annual Fargo golf tournament successful! The tournament is a way for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) to say thank you to its members and supporters. Your membership dues and sponsorship of NDSGA events help to provide the necessary funds to continue policy and advocacy work in Bismarck and in Washington, D.C. We're proud of our past successes and are continually working to make things better for soybean growers throughout North Dakota.

### Congratulations to our Fargo tournament team winners:

**First Place:** Team First Community Credit Union: Chris Howell, Brian Olson, Ryan Gilbertson and Ryan Bohnsack.

**Second Place:** Team SB&B Foods, LLC: Todd Sinner, Jeremy Sinner, Thomas Nelson and Patrick Bresnahan.

**Third Place:** Farmers Co-op Elevator-Street-er: Jeff Williams, Brett Williams, Andrew Heflin and Josh Brehm.

### Congratulations to the Fargo contest winners:

**Closest to Pin #4:** Thomas Nelson.

**Longest Putt #6:** Derrick Rogers.

**Longest Drive #9:** Nick Donarski.

**Closest to Pin #11:** Patrick Bresnahan.

**Longest Drive #16:** Jess Gowan.

**Longest Putt #18:** Stuart Lamp.

### Thank you to our Fargo golf tournament sponsors:

**Hole Sponsors:** Advance Trading, Inc.; Ag-Country Farm Credit Services; BankNorth; BASF; Bell Bank; Bremer Insurance; Central Sales; Clean Fuels Alliance America; Equitable AgriFinance; Farmers Business Network; First Community Credit Union; Gateway Building Systems, Inc.; Hoffman Irrigation, Inc.; MEG Corp. Biodiesel; North Dakota Soybean Council; James Hendricks – Northwestern Mutual; Peoples Company; Prinsco Water Management Solutions; Proseed; Superior Grain Equipment; and Visjon Biologics.

**Lunch Sponsor:** BNSF Railway.

**Dinner Sponsor:** Dakota Access Pipeline.

**Golf Balls:** Asgrow.

**Golf Carts:** Northern Crops Institute.

**Programs:** Clean Fuels Alliance America.

**Signs:** D-S Beverages.

For more photos of the tournament, check out [facebook.com/NorthDakotaSoybeanGrowersAssociation](https://facebook.com/NorthDakotaSoybeanGrowersAssociation)

Two NDSGA tournaments are scheduled for 2024. The first tournament will be at the Jamestown County Club on July 23, 2024. The second will be August 27, 2024. More information is available at [ndsoygrowers.com/events](https://ndsoygrowers.com/events).

—Story and photos by staff



**Fargo Tournament winning team – First Community Credit Union: Ryan Gilbertson, Chris Howell, Ryan Bohnsack, and Brian Olson.**



**Fargo Tournament second place team – SB&B Foods, LLC: Jeremy Sinner, Clay Solum, Patrick Bresnahan, and Thomas Nelson.**



**Fargo Tournament third place team – Farmers Co-op Elevator-Street-er: Andrew Heflin, Josh Brehm, Brett Williams, and Jeff Williams.**

# Getting to Know the NDSC Director



**Ted Brandt**  
Enderlin, North Dakota

## Tell us about your farm.

We're a soybean, corn and wheat operation located west of Enderlin about 15 miles.

## What do you like best about farming?

Every day is a new challenge. One day is not the same as the other... There is always something different going on from day-to-day tasks.

## Did you always know that farming was something you wanted to do?

Farming has always been a passion of mine growing up. It's always been something I wanted to do, but I was involved in different parts of agriculture before I, ultimately, landed in farming.

## Why did you get involved with the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) as a Director?

I found it to be a good way to get involved in and learn where our product goes and what we can do as farmers to help evolve the market and ways we can distribute our beans further domestically and internationally.

## Why are soybeans part of your crop mix?

It's another way to break up the harvest in the fall. Soybeans help with soil health, disease, and weed management.

## If you could change something about the current operating climate for North Dakota farmers, what would it be?

Interest rates.

## What has changed most about farming since you've been involved?

The technology. Precision ag is definitely a leading aspect of farming right now. The usage of chemicals and fertilizers is now more precise. We're learning ways to ween ourselves away from so much fertilizer upfront and using

different chemicals and modes of action to control our pest management.

## What changes do you expect to see on your farm in the next 5 to 10 years?

There will be more advances in technology, I believe, with a lot of new products coming onto the market.

## What do you like to do outside farming?

I like snowmobiling in the winter. I do like to travel and spend time with friends.

## If you could go anywhere, where would it be?

I have always wanted to go to Germany.

## What's the one piece of farm equipment or technology you wouldn't want to be without?

Sprayer and autosteer.

—Story and photo by staff

*Ted is a North Dakota Soybean Council director. To learn more about serving on the North Dakota Soybean Council as a county representative or board member, visit [bit.ly/NDSCelections](http://bit.ly/NDSCelections)*

## ND Farmer Among Leaders

Earlier this year, Chris McDonald of Leonard, ND, (middle back row) attended the Leadership At Its Best program in Raleigh, NC and Washington, D.C. The American Soybean Association and Syngenta sponsored this program for farmer-leaders to network and learn more about current local and national ag issues.



# Getting to Know the Legislator



**Cindy Schreiber-Beck**  
Wahpeton, North Dakota

## Tell us about your background.

I was born and raised on a livestock and multi-crop farm located on the Otter Tail River in Wilkin County, Minnesota. I graduated from Campbell High School and earned a degree in speech and language pathology from Moorhead State University.

## You have an extensive and varied work history. Tell us about it.

I taught for several years and had some unique experiences, including teaching at what is now called the Circle of Nations School in Wahpeton.

I married into aviation in 1982, and although I sold the aviation firm five years ago, I still have an office there. The company, Tri-State Aviation, offered aerial application, maintained ag sprayers and general aviation aircraft, manufactured aircraft parts and restored WWII aircraft. I also operated CinderWhit Company, founded due to the need for replica porch posts and balusters for our home. Until it closed, the company offered replica and stock wood turnings by utilizing com-

puter numerical control (CNC) technology. Currently, I am a sales consultant for Ellingson Companies and the executive director of the North Dakota Agricultural Aviation Association.

I have had the opportunity to serve on numerous boards, including the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission, the North Dakota Aviation Council, the North Dakota State College of Science Foundation, Bremer Bank and Grand Farm.

## What inspired you to run for the legislature?

Russ Thane, a former District 25 senator, asked me to run in 2006. Due to circumstances, I did not run again until 2014, when then-retiring District 25 Representative John Wall convinced me to run. The team at Tri-State Aviation and CinderWhit supported my decision.

## Did you have much legislative experience prior to running for office?

While serving on the North Dakota Aeronautics Commission and as executive director of the

North Dakota Agricultural Aviation Association, I experienced legislative interaction. Serving is a totally different game than testifying and working on bills. It was a steep learning curve. I am fortunate to serve on the Agriculture and Education Committees since I have a background in both.

## Are there issues that you're most passionate about?

Yes, making sure that agriculture continues to receive its due recognition and support within the legislature. Oil continues to contribute to the state's economic success, but one does not want to forget agriculture. Agriculture has been and continues to be an economic engine for North Dakota. The benefits of being an agricultural state and how that plays on the national and international stage are not always recognized. Additionally, I am passionate about the legislature providing for an excellent education system in both policy and funding.

## How would you describe what's happening in North Dakota's agriculture industry?

This is a tremendously exciting time. I appreciate that the legislature has supported value-added ag facilities; ag education; research; automation tax credits; innovation; as well as policies to support expanding animal agriculture, technology, water conveyance, and other areas that will enhance agriculture in North Dakota. Additionally, the private sector continues to pursue improved methods to advance production and to provide the producer with a larger return on their investment with cooperation from Mother Nature.

## What do you find rewarding about legislative service?

Serving is rewarding if successful legislation is a true improvement without causing unintended consequences. Additionally, I believe it is rewarding to give back to your industry, community or state. To give back, in this case, is an opportunity to learn. My data-driven process is to research the issue and to communicate with trustworthy individuals who may be in support or opposition. Legislation is not necessarily the answer. I would hope to adhere to my philosophy that, if a bill becomes law, two laws should be taken away, but this rarely occurs.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photo courtesy of Representative  
Cindy Schreiber-Beck

*Editor's note: This article is part of a series of legislative profiles to help readers learn more about the people elected to represent North Dakota growers in Bismarck.*

## Concern About Proposed Endangered Species Changes

The American Soybean Association (ASA) has submitted comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service outlining concerns with proposed rules to revise regulations for Endangered Species Act implementation. The three rules are largely aimed at rolling back Trump-era regulatory revisions.

In the comments, the ASA reiterates farmers' commitment to conservation and general support for efforts to protect endangered and threatened species, but the organization emphasizes that protection measures must be reasonable and grounded in the best scientific and commercial data available, as required by the law.

"Regulatory efforts based on overly conservative assumptions or those that do not balance the protection of species with the coexistence of agricultural production should be rejected," the ASA explains to the agencies.

FWS intends to reimpose the "blanket rule," which would allow the agencies to put in place the same restrictions for both threatened and endangered species. In the comments, the ASA states that this is inconsistent with the statute and expresses concern with how this plan would result in greater restrictions on growers who farm in threatened species' ranges, which farmers may not otherwise be subjected to if there were two separate sets of regulations.

The ASA raises issue with another proposed rule, allowing the designation of critical habitat, that does not consider economic effects and allows greater designation of habitat that is currently unoccupied by species. Similarly, the ASA is concerned that these proposals are inconsistent with the law and would impose greater restrictions on farmers without considering the economic ramifications.

## Pushing for Trade Deals

Agricultural groups are urging the 2024 presidential candidates to prioritize new market access.

In a letter to presidential campaigns, the American Soybean Association (ASA) and other groups underscored how free and fair trade is vital to ensuring that U.S. farmers and

ranchers can grow and export enough food, feed, fiber and fuel to supply the global marketplace. The groups encouraged candidates to include ag trade requests in their policy platforms, specifically working to diversify export markets for U.S. ag and ensuring that U.S.-China relations are handled in a manner that holds China accountable while maintaining market access for U.S. agricultural goods.

"The U.S. needs to again take the lead in negotiating new free trade agreements (FTAs) with other countries and work to strengthen and reform the rules-based multilateral trading system," the organizations state in the letter. "In many respects, future FTAs could be modeled on the U.S.-Canada-Mexico Agreement (USMCA) passed by Congress with broad bipartisan support. Such agreements could protect American workers and the environment, help contain China's growing geopolitical influence, and open new export markets for our farmers by meaningfully reducing and eliminating tariffs and non-tariff trade barriers."

International trade is one of the pillars of the U.S. soybean industry. Over 50% of the domestic soybean crop is exported to global markets annually, and continued access to those existing markets, new markets and international food-aid markets is critical to sustaining U.S. soybean growers' success.

## Soy Growers Support Dispute Settlement

U.S. Trade Representative Katherine Tai announced that the U.S. is establishing a dispute settlement panel under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) regarding certain Mexican measures concerning biotech corn. The U.S. is challenging measures in Mexico's Feb. 13, 2023, decree, specifically the ban on using biotech corn for tortillas or dough, and the instruction to Mexican government agencies to gradually ban the use of biotech corn in all products for human consumption and for animal feed. Mexico's measures are not based on science and undermine the market access the country agreed to provide with the USMCA.

The U.S. and Mexico will now appoint delegates to an expert third-party panel that will decide whether Mexico's actions violate the USMCA. If the panel rules against Mexico and

the government refuses to comply, the U.S. would be free to take retaliatory action, such as raising tariffs on Mexican imports. The panel's report is expected to be released mid-2024.

Ambassador Tai outlined the steps that the U.S. will take through the dispute panel to resolve concerns and to help ensure that consumers can continue to access safe and affordable food and agricultural products.

"It is critical that Mexico eliminate its USMCA-inconsistent biotechnology measures so that American farmers can continue to access the Mexican market and use innovative tools to respond to climate and food security challenges," said Tai.

Mexico is the No. 2 export market for U.S. soybeans, and the pace of regulatory approvals for new agricultural biotechnology traits is extremely concerning. The American Soybean Association will continue to monitor the issue and will support the U.S. government as the dispute panel moves forward.

## Study Shows the Soy Industry's Influence

An economic influence study commissioned by the National Oilseed Processors Association and the United Soybean Board illustrates the importance of soybean production and processing to the nation's economy.

For the three years from 2019-2022, the soybean industry's total contribution to the U.S. economy averaged \$124 billion per year. The study by LMC International estimates that the U.S. soybean sector provides 233,000 full-time-equivalent jobs to the national economy. The total influence of wages in the employment sector averaged \$10 billion.

The report indicated that the North Dakota soybean industry delivered \$2.12 billion in economic influence annually and supported almost 7,000 jobs in the state.

## Groups Raising Alarm Over EPA's Vulnerable Species Pilot Project

A coalition led by the American Soybean Association (ASA) is raising "grave concern" with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) vulnerable species pilot project which was proposed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Comments in a letter, which drew 206 signers, expressed multiple

ways in which growers and other pesticide-user operations potentially would be subject to irreparable harm should the pilot project take effect as proposed. The comments illustrated worries that the proposal "will effectively result in a de facto pesticide ban for many farmers." Additionally, the comments expressed alarm with ways in which the proposal likely violates the EPA's legal obligations under the ESA; the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA); the Administrative Procedure Act; and other federal statutes.

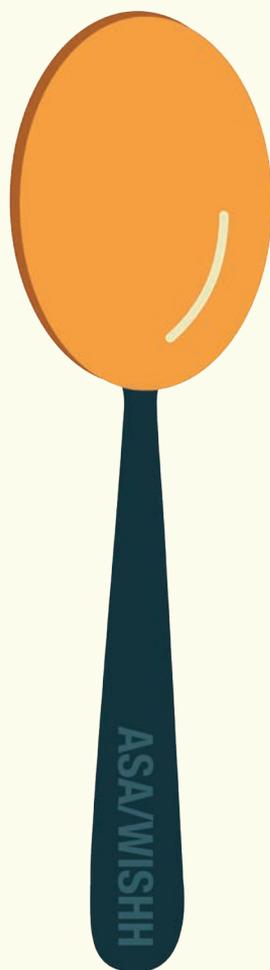
The vulnerable species pilot project, which seeks to protect 27 species that the EPA alleges are uniquely vulnerable to pesticide exposures, would impose geographical use restrictions on pesticide users within the species ranges. The endeavor would establish pesticide use limitation areas (PULA) with varying restrictions, depending on the species.

While the proposal is complicated and largely species-specific, there are many general trends regarding the restrictions that would apply to pesticide users affected by the pilot project. For example, many farmers in the PULAs would have to coordinate with their local Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) offices three months ahead of making any pesticide applications on fields or rangelands. The comments highlight how this limitation could create an enormous regulatory bottleneck if the local FWS office has limited capacity to handle hundreds of coordination requests. It is also impossible for growers to predict their pest pressures and application needs three months in advance. Under the proposal, most farmers would also have to adopt four runoff/erosion mitigations, many of which would be incredibly expensive or impractical for growers to implement. The comments highlight that the collective result of this proposal would be an effective pesticide ban for many growers.

The effects on growers and communities in the PULAs would be enormous. Many farmers would be unable to protect their crops from significant crop damage, which would harm their ability to qualify for crop insurance and financing. For most producers, these factors would affect their ability to continue farming.

—Story by Daniel Lemke

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*WISHH is a program of the American Soybean Association and is funded in part by the United Soybean Board and state soybean board checkoff programs.*

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Add your voice to the hundreds of fellow producers. Together we bolster agriculture in our state and influence policy decisions. Make a personal commitment to the health of the soybean industry by joining the NDSGA today.



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