THE NORTH DAKOTA
Soybean
GROWER MAGAZINE
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THE NORTH DAKOTA Soybean GROWER MAGAZINE

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On the cover

North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) Vice President Chris McDonald of Leonard visits with a fellow farmer about why membership matters.

Joining NDSGA gives farmers a unified voice in Bismarck and Washington, D.C. Members work together to protect farmland, livelihoods, and rural communities by ensuring farmers are represented where decisions are made.

As a member-driven advocacy organization, NDSGA's strength comes from its members and farmer-leaders who help grow the soybean industry and make sure farmer voices are heard on key issues at both the state and national level. Learn more and find NDSGA's membership application on page 34.

—Photo by staff

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Legislative Interim Committee Process

The legislature's interim activity is a very significant and important part of the North Dakota legislative process. Because the legislature meets every other year, there is a huge amount of work, including legislative studies and legislative management, which must occur between the sessions to keep the legislative branch and process functioning efficiently and effectively.

The Legislative Management Committee has 17 members. The committee is chaired by Senator David Hogue, the Senate's majority leader, and vice-chaired by Representative Mike Lefor, House majority leader. Senate Minority Leader Kathy Hogan and House Minority Leader Zachary Ista are also members, with the remaining committee members elected by the Senate and House prior to completion of the previous legislative session.

The committee quickly began its work. The first meeting was held on May 28, during which the group reduced the number of potential interim studies from 67 to 47. This list included 27 studies mandated by the legislative session and 20 additional studies.

Interim committee volunteers were solicited by their interests and chairpersons and members assigned have started meeting. The topics include agriculture, budget, education, energy, healthcare, K-12 and higher education, human services, tax reform and relief, tribal and state relations, and water.

Many of the topics will involve or touch on matters of interest or importance to agriculture and rural communities. A few studies of particular interest include Senate Bill 2157 (Agriculture Safety Course to Reduce Insurance Premiums); Senate Bill 2210 (Water Management Based on Watershed Boundaries); House Bill 3018 (Inundated Land Taxation); House Bill 1218 (Economic Analysis Formula for Assessment Drain Projects); and House Bill 1176 (Tax Reform and Relief Advisory Committee), which possibly could become the legislative vehicle for future property-tax relief for farmers and ranchers during the next legislative session. For detailed information about these studies and others, please review the website link "Study Directives Approved for the 2025-26 Interim." bit.ly/ND LegislativeMgmtPriorities

This process presents an important opportunity for participation, including public input, with the legislative process. During the legislature's interim period, the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association will be monitoring certain committees, discussions and actions in order to provide input then, prior to the commencement of the next session or during the next session.

The committees will meet between now and November 2026, prior to the December 2026 deadline for pre-filing interim committee bills. Some committees and committee work, including studies, will result in formal approval and specific proposed legislation. It is possible that other studies or reviews might not result in proposed legislation. Some analyses may indicate that legislation is not necessary; appropriate; or, likely, enactable by the entire legislature for a variety of reasons.

For more information: There are 30 interim committees, and each one is listed on the legislature's website: ndlegis.gov. All the relevant information is contained within the "Interim Information" tab. The website and that tab have a wealth of information, including the committee's name, members and staff for each committee, the meeting locations, notices or agendas, all documents related to the committee's work, and a video link to monitor the meetings if persons do not wish to or cannot attend in person. The meetings also are recorded and available for review at a subsequent time.

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Berglund: A North Dakota Ag Pioneer

Long-time agriculture educator and advocate Duane Berglund, Ph.D., passed away July 20. The New Rockford native worked for many years as a North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension agronomist and professor.

Berglund was active in many North Dakota agriculture organizations and helped found the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA).

"He was a great friend of agriculture," says Robert Sinner, who served with Berglund on the first NDSGA board. "Duane always had a passion to help the farmer. He just had a wonderful reputation. I think everybody in the industry considered Duane an advocate, a friend and a real leader in promoting North Dakota agriculture."

—Story by Dan Lemke, archive photo.

This photo shows the first North Dakota Soybean Growers Association Board of Directors. Left to right: David Holter, Curt Hagert, Wayne Colberg, Duane Berglund, Gary Friskop, Gary Woodbury, Maynard Burchill, Paul Schroeder, Bruce Fadness, Tom Dolan and Robert Sinner.

What Advocacy Looks Like

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It's no secret that most of us, farmers and non-farmers alike, focus a lot of our attention on the problems at hand. That situation happens with good reason. There are myriad issues for us to deal with on a daily basis, all of which require our action.

Sometimes, those immediate demands take away from the things that have gone right.

We are certainly in one of those situations right now. Trade disruptions and tariff uncertainty have hampered our export markets and are, rightfully, attracting a lot of attention during this soybean harvest window. We need functioning markets to be sustainable. Rest assured, soybean farmer leaders from the American Soybean Association and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) have been vocal about the situation and the dire circumstances that tariffs and trade disputes are causing here at home.

At the same time, advocacy efforts, supported by your membership, have achieved some important wins that are sometimes overlooked in the moment.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBB) is expected to increase agriculture spending over the next decade, including updates to Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC), Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and crop insurance. There was also funding for disaster assistance programs, trade promotion, agricultural research and numerous other programs. The bill also contained numerous tax provisions that are beneficial to agriculture.

The OBBB delivered a significant win for agriculture-based domestic renewable fuels by extending and modifying the Clean Fuel Production Credit (45Z) through 2029. The credit supports the production of low-emission transportation fuels, such as biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), while narrowing the tax credit's scope to North American feedstocks.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed higher biodiesel volume obligations through the Renewable Fuel Standard. These revised volume obligations will support the increased use of domestically produced fuels, including soy-based biodiesel. Increased renewable fuel use will help drive the demand for our soybeans.

Closer to home, the 2025 North Dakota legislative session also provided some notable wins for agriculture, including substantial increased funding availability for counties and townships to upgrade roads and bridges. Transportation and infrastructure have been priority issues for the NDSGA for many years. To see millions of dollars pumped into infrastructure is a testament to the relentless efforts which numerous people have made to speak on behalf of rural North Dakota.

Several other key policy bills, including a measure which establishes that pesticide labels approved by the EPA are sufficient to meet state labeling requirements, passed during this year's legislative session. A pesticide that is registered with the EPA and is consistent with EPA standards also satisfies North Dakota's health and safety warning requirements. North Dakota was the first state to pass such a law.

It's important to celebrate the successes that strong advocacy has delivered because many of those wins came about thanks to farmers who were in Washington, D.C., or Bismarck speaking on these issues. However, we know that there is still much work to be done.

Many of these success stories would not have happened without the support of our NDSGA members. Your membership lends strength to our advocacy efforts, and it supports policies that will deliver more positive results for North Dakota farmers. Your NDSGA membership holds tremendous value, and it is an investment in future wins for you and your fellow farmers.

China Tariffs Paused, Action Urged

On August 11, President Trump signed an executive order to extend the pause on high tariffs for Chinese goods by 90 days. Without this extension, U.S. duties and reciprocal Chinese tariffs, currently at 34.07% for soybeans, would have reverted to levels above 145%. The pause follows recent U.S.-China trade talks and provides a window for continued negotiations, although the hiatus does not resolve underlying tensions.

China remains the world's largest soybean importer, purchasing more than 100 million metric tons annually. Before the trade war began in 2018, the United States exported roughly 36 million metric tons of soybeans, valued at over $14 billion, to China each year. Retaliatory tariffs reduced U.S. exports by more than 70%, allowing Brazil to surpass the United States as China's top supplier.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) is urging President Trump to prioritize soybeans in U.S.-China trade talks, warning that retaliatory tariffs are keeping American farmers from their largest export market going into the 2025 soybean harvest.

In a letter sent to the White House, the group called for the removal of Chinese tariffs on U.S. soybeans and for commitments regarding future purchases. The ASA also released a white paper, outlining the financial consequences of losing long-term market share in China.

"U.S. soybean farmers are standing at a trade and financial precipice," ASA President Caleb Ragland, a soybean farmer from Kentucky, said in the letter. "Soybean farmers are under extreme financial stress. Prices continue to drop, and at the same time, our farmers are paying significantly more for inputs and equipment. U.S. soybean farmers cannot survive a prolonged trade dispute with our largest customer."

China has historically imported more than 60% of the world's soybean supplies, with the U.S. once serving as the top source. Retaliatory tariffs now make U.S. soybeans 20% more expensive than South American supplies, and China has turned to Brazil, which has expanded production to meet demand.

"Every day without an agreement further erodes U.S. farmers' market share in China," Ragland asserted. "We strongly urge the administration to secure a deal that reopens this vital market for U.S. soybeans."

—Story by Daniel Lemke

Knutson Takes Unique Path to the Farm

Mark Knutson didn't grow up on a farm, but as a youngster, he was able to spend many hours on his uncle's dairy farm, which was located between Knutson's hometown of Wahpeton and Fargo. Through high school, he would spend much of the summer working there and learning the ropes of farming.

Knutson's farming exposure continued through college and even while he worked as a critical-care nurse in an emergency department in Fargo.

"I took vacation to come and farm, and then eventually, after 10 years in the intensive care unit, I was looking for a change," Knutson recounts. "I've always loved farming, so when my uncle asked me if I wanted to take over, I jumped at the opportunity. I quit nursing and started farming."

Switching from a career in emergency medicine to farming may not be ordinary, but for Knutson, it felt right. He marked his eighth year of farming in 2025.

"I don't know if farming was ever a plan for me at an early age, but as I got older, I realized I loved farming," Knutson says. "I enjoy planting the crop and watching it grow, and taking care of the land, especially since it's been passed on through three or four generations. I'm farming the land that my grandparents and my great-grandparents farmed. It's neat to be able to do that and to continue the history that goes way back."

More to Offer

Knutson made the transition from nurse to farmer, but he felt that he had more to offer. While scrolling through social media, Knutson came across an advertisement for the American Soybean Association's Corteva Agriscience™ Young Leader program. The program is for couples and individuals who are interested in agricultural leadership. Knutson decided to apply. He was accepted and became one of three North Dakotans to participate in the 2024 Young Leader program.

"I've always been interested in policy- and advocacy-type things, so I applied to see if I could broaden my horizons, network a little more and get more involved in the ag community," Knutson asserts. "I was lucky enough to get selected."

The Young Leader program involves training sessions at Corteva headquarters in Johnston, Iowa, as well as sessions at the Commodity Classic, which was held in Denver. Knutson also applied for and was selected as one of only 10 program participants who went to Washington, D.C. in July.

"We got to go with our respective states on visits to Capitol Hill and actually really see how things are done in Washington," Knutson explains. "It was extremely eye opening to see how policy can be made and how we can communicate our asks and our needs to our elected officials to, hopefully, better the ag community."

Knutson states that one primary takeaway from his participation in the Young Leader program was the value of communication, which he calls a key to effective leadership.

The Next Step

Knutson has completed Young Leader training and is now a director who serves on the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA). He relishes the opportunity to put his training and experience to work for his fellow farmers.

"I'm looking forward to being able to advocate for North Dakota soybean farmers and to be a voice to, hopefully, make policy that

benefits not only just the farmers, but also benefits everybody else around them," Knutson maintains.

Knutson describes how he's already learned a great deal about the importance of farmers advocating for themselves.

"When you talk to any politician or any of the people who are involved in making these policies for us, they want to talk to the farmer," Knutson contends. "Whether you represent a trade group or something else, these people want to talk to the man or the woman who has the boots on the ground."

Through his training and early exposure to the NDSGA, Knutson has learned a lot about the effect the organization is having on the state's agriculture sector.

"The impact that they (NDSGA) have on ag policy is enormous," Knutson says. "Whether we're out there talking to our politicians out in Bismarck or in Washington, the NDSGA has worked really hard on different policies and bills that really do affect North Dakota farmers, whether farmers know it or not. All the work that goes on behind the scenes is really affecting and, hopefully, bettering the North Dakota farmer because we're fighting for ourselves, too."

Among Knutson's top issues is trade. With so much of the nation's soybean crop bound for exports, policy is important because, "as soybean farmers and farmers in general, we want trade deals and not tariffs."

Knutson is also concerned with maintaining access to crop-protection products, such as herbicides and insecticides. Farmers rely on those tools to continue producing the food, fiber and fuel which the world needs.

Right Timing

Knutson explains that there may be some parallels between the work he did as a critical-care nurse and the life of a farmer.

Mark Knutson got involved in advocacy through the American Soybean Association's Corteva Agriscience Young Leader program.

"I suppose being a nurse, maybe the nurturing part helps with nurturing the crop and wanting to keep it healthy and make sure there's no weeds and no insects. It can also backfire a little because the perfectionist of being an ICU nurse makes me want to walk out into the middle of a field where there's one weed sticking up because I can't stand that one little thing," Knutson says, "so there may be some downfalls, too."

Still, Knutson is happy to have stepped from the medical field to the farm field in order to follow his passion.

"I couldn't imagine doing anything else," Knutson asserts. "I wish I could have had the opportunity or taken over the farm sooner, but I'm in year eight and still going strong, and hopefully, I've got another 40 years left in me."

—Story and photos by Daniel Lemke

After years as a critical care nurse, Knutson traded the medical field for farm fields.

A Fascinating View

I admit that, before I got involved with the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC), I didn't give a lot of thought to the organization's activities or purpose. I worked the ground, raised the crops, sold them and then moved on to other things. Once I became part of the NDSC, I realized that a lot goes on behind the scenes to benefit North Dakota's soybean farmers.

Being a part of the NDSC has included a fairly steep learning curve, but it has also been an adventure. Learning what it takes to market our soybeans to buyers around the world has been eye-opening and educational at the same time. A lot of effort goes into creating and maintaining relationships with customers so that they develop a preference for our products. That outcome happens when we are actively engaged with our customers.

In addition to building markets outside the U.S., the amount of work and the quality of the research involved with developing new soybean uses are also remarkable. Soybeans are such a diverse crop that the value-added uses are nearly endless, ranging from food products to biodiesel to concrete sealant, even a firefighting foam that's safer for the environment and the firefighters who use it. Biofuels are also a key market with tremendous opportunity to add value to the soybeans we grow. As is the case with export markets, these developments won't happen without the commitment of the farmers themselves.

The common thread in both the market development and new use activities is farmer involvement. The NDSC is a farmer-led organization which directs checkoff resources toward opportunities that benefit North Dakota's soybean farmers. The industry thrives when there are diverse voices. Involvement by many is better than involvement by a few.

Getting to know the people in the industry has been one of the best parts of my NDSC involvement. Over the years, I've hosted several trade teams from around the world at my farm. On a recent trade mission to Vietnam, we met with representatives at a feed mill. One participant introduced herself and explained how she had been at my farm earlier that spring. It was remarkable to be halfway around the world talking with someone who had been to my farm, learning about North Dakota agriculture.

I've had the honor to serve on the NDSC for several years, but I will term off the board next spring. That presents an opportunity for other farmers to step in to learn, to serve and to help shape the state's soybean industry.

Farmers who are interested in serving on the NDSC can participate in the upcoming elections. For growers who are not ready to make that commitment, I encourage you to get involved at some level. When you participate, you help the industry, and you'll definitely help yourself and your farming operation. I have learned so much through my involvement with this fascinating industry, and I couldn't be happier that I made the decision to be part of it.

Milo Braaten
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NORTHERN CORN SOY EXPO

Save The Date!

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

Agenda Highlights

- **Early Riser Sessions –** Weather & Supply Chain/ Transportation
- **Market Outlook & Economy**
- **National Industry Panel –** Leaders from the American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers Association, United Soybean Board, and U.S. Grains Council share key updates on markets, policy, and opportunities for growers.
- **Practical Strategy, Hard Decisions, and Farmer of the Future –** Ken Gilliam of The Directions Group shares simple frameworks to guide tough decisions and prepare farms for the future.
- **Industry & Partners Reception –** A casual gathering of farmers, industry reps, and exhibitors for networking, conversation, and connection, with beverages and snacks.

Plan to Attend. Plan to Learn.

For more information, please visit bit.ly/NorthernCornSoyExpo

Butler Machinery Arena
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Shape the Future of North Dakota Soybeans: Become a County Rep!

The North Dakota Soybean Council's (NDSC) 2025 election process will begin in December 2025 for the following counties:

- **District 2:** Ransom and Sargent Counties
- **District 8:** Nelson, Griggs and Steele Counties
- **District 10:** Cavalier, Pembina and Walsh Counties
- **District 12:** McKenzie, Dunn, Billings, Golden Valley, Slope, Bowman, Stark, Hettinger, Adams, Mercer, Oliver, Morton, Grant, Sioux, McLean, Burleigh, Kidder, Logan, Sheridan, Emmons and McIntosh Counties

How Do NDSC's Elections Work?

NDSC's election process is conducted by mail. In December 2025, soybean farmers in the designated counties will receive instructions about the NDSC's nomination process. The information will be delivered in a green envelope.

Official election ballots (in a blue envelope) will be sent in February 2026. To ensure a fair and secure election, the process is managed by North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension.

All NDSC county representatives and board members are elected by their peers: North Dakota soybean farmers

In single-county districts, the elected soybean producer will also serve on the NDSC Board of Directors. In multi-county districts, a representative from each county will be elected to serve as an NDSC county representative. These newly elected representatives will then attend a meeting organized by NDSU Extension, where one of them will be selected to serve as a director on the NDSC board.

Soybean producers in these counties are encouraged to nominate a fellow producer or to consider nominating themselves for the position of county representative.

The Benefits and Rewards of Serving on the NDSC Board

"Being on the North Dakota Soybean Council has allowed me to see firsthand how our work supports both soybean farmers and livestock producers," said Evan Montgomery, NDSC vice chairman from Grand Forks. "Through market development and research initiatives, I've experienced how expanding local livestock production creates a steady demand for soybeans, benefiting our bottom line and strengthening North Dakota agriculture."

Evan Montgomery

"Serving on the North Dakota Soybean Council was a great experience," stated Mike Langseth, a past NDSC director from Barney. "I learned a lot about the soybean industry, met people I otherwise wouldn't have and helped make decisions that benefited North Dakota soybean farmers. The time commitment was worth it for the knowledge gained and the opportunity to help steer our industry forward."

Mike Langseth

"As a director on the North Dakota Soybean Council, I had the opportunity to give back to an industry that supported my farm," said Chris Brossart, a past NDSC chairman from Wolford. "When I started farming over 20 years ago, only about 5% of the acreage in my area was planted with soybeans. Thanks, in part, to the research, market development and outreach efforts of NDSC, many farms in my area now plant 40% to 50% soybeans."

Chris Brossart

"My time on the North Dakota Soybean Council was extremely rewarding and educational," stated Troy Uglem, a past NDSC director from Northwood. "I gained invaluable experiences, learned how the checkoff benefits producers and had the chance to work alongside fellow board members who became true friends. It was a meaningful way to give back and help shape the future of North Dakota soybean farming."

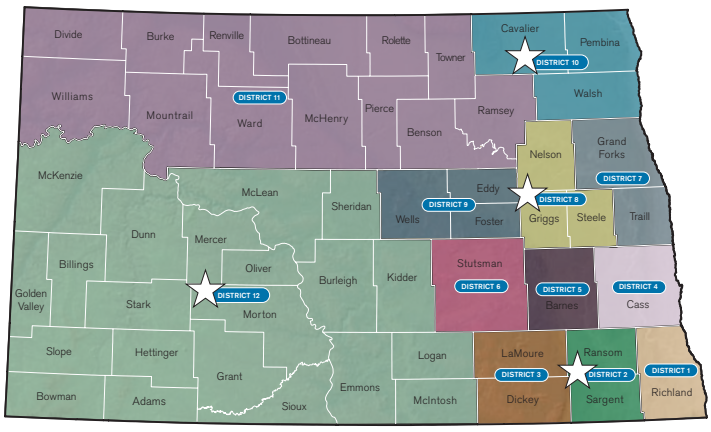
Troy Uglem

To learn more about the NDSC's election process, scan the QR code.

—Story and photos by staff and Wanbaugh Studios

To learn more about the NDSC's election process, scan the QR code.

North Dakota Soybean Council District Map



Factors to Consider with *Alternative Grain Storage Methods*

All storage options should keep the grain dry and provide adequate aeration to control grain temperature," says Ken Hellevang, emeritus professor and retired North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension agricultural engineer. "Grain must be at the recommended storage moisture content and cool when placed in alternative storage facilities because providing adequate, uniform airflow to dry grain or cool grain coming from a dryer is not feasible."

Recommended Moisture Content for Grain

The length of time that grain will be in storage and the outdoor temperatures during the storage period determine the grain's recommended moisture content. The recommended short-term storage period is when both the grain and outdoor temperatures are below 40 degrees, typical in the late fall and winter. Long-term storage assumes storage at warmer temperatures which occur during the spring and summer. The recommended short-term and long-term moisture contents are as follows: corn, 15-16%/13-14%; soybeans, 13%/11-12%; oil sunflower, 10%/7-8%; malting barley, 12%; and wheat, 13%.

Structural Issues for Grain Stored in Buildings

Grain pushing against walls can damage buildings that were not built for grain storage. The wall must be anchored securely, and its structural members must be strong enough to transfer the force to the building poles or to a support structure without breaking or excessive bending.

"Typically, you'll need additional poles and a grain wall to support the grain force in a pole building," Hellevang explains. "Hire an engineer to complete a structural analysis, or have a contractor follow exactly the building company recommendations to prevent a structural failure."

Before placing grain in a building previously used for grain storage, look for anything that is not aligned, such as wall bowing and distortions in the roofline. Bowing or bending indicates that the load on the building exceeded the amount for which the structure was designed and built. This situation weakens the building. Examine the connections for separation or movement, and add a gusset or splice to reinforce the connection, if necessary.

Storing in Bags

Storing grain in poly bags is a good option, but it neither prevents mold growth with damp grain nor insect infestations. Place grain in the bag at no more than the recommended moisture content based on the outdoor temperatures during the potential storage period. Heating and grain spoilage will occur if the grain exceeds a safe storage moisture content.

Grain in bags cannot be aerated to control the crop's temperature. The average temperature of dry grain will follow the average outdoor temperature. If the monthly average temperature is 60 degrees, the average grain temperature will be 60 degrees.

Hellevang also has this advice:

- Select an elevated, well-drained site for the storage bags. Run the bags north and south so that solar heating is similar on both sides. Sunshine on just one side heats that side, which can lead to moisture accumulation in the grain and spoilage on the cool side.
- Monitor the bags for damage. Wildlife can puncture the bags, allowing moisture in, which can lead to spoilage and the grain smell being released, which attracts more wildlife.
- Monitor the grain's temperature at several places in the bags.
- Never enter a grain bag because it is a suffocation hazard. If unloading the bag with a pneumatic grain conveyor, the suction can "shrink wrap" a person.

Grain Piles

Grain being placed in piles needs to be dry and cool.

Precipitation is a severe problem for uncovered grain because grain is very porous. A 1-inch rain will increase the moisture content of a 1-foot layer of corn by 9 percentage points, from 14% to 23%. This scenario typically leads to the loss of at least a couple feet of grain on the pile surface, which is a huge loss.

For example, a cone-shaped pile that is 25 feet high contains approximately 59,000 bushels of grain. Losing just 1 foot of grain on the surface is a loss of about 13% of the grain, which is $39,000 if the grain value is $4 per bushel and

Grain storage could be at a premium this fall so farmers are considering many alternative methods.

Alternative storage methods like poly bagging require extra attention to maintain grain quality.

$78,000 at $8 per bushel. Aeration and wind blowing on the pile will not dry the wet grain adequately to prevent spoilage.

Use a cover to prevent water infiltration. Drainage moving water away from the pile is critically important for the success of any grain storage. About 25,000 gallons of water will run off an area which is about 100 feet by 400 feet during a 1-inch rain. This water must flow away from the grain and the area next to it. When determining a location for a pile, examine the entire area to assure that flooding will not occur during major rain events.

The outdoor ground surface where the grain will be piled should be prepared to limit the soil's moisture from reaching the grain. The storage floor should be higher than the surrounding ground to minimize moisture transfer from the soil to the grain. Make sure that the ground surface is crowned, so moisture drains out and away, rather than creating a wet pocket that leads to grain deterioration.

Covers for Grain Piles

A combination of restraining straps and suction from the aeration system holds grain covers in place.

Provide adequate airflow through the grain to control the crop's temperature. The goal is to have an adequate airflow rate to cool the grain as outdoor temperatures decrease. Place properly sized and spaced ducts on the ground under the pile to pull air through the grain. A rule of thumb is that the duct spacing should be less than the grain's depth. Some storage options use a perforated wall for the air inlet. Minimize the amount of open area so that the air does not "short-circuit" to the fan.

Place perforated ducts on the grain (under the cover) to provide a controlled air intake for the aeration system and to provide airflow near the cover to minimize condensation problems under the cover.

Wind velocity determines the amount of suction you need to hold the cover down. Some control systems measure wind velocity and start fans based on the wind speed. Backup power can hold the cover down during power outages.

For grain piles with bunker or bulkhead walls, the walls should be examined for anything that is not aligned. Any twisting, flexing or bending of a structural member may lead to a failure. Look for separation or movement with the connections as well as material deterioration.

Cooling Stored Grain

Cool grain with aeration to extend the allowable storage time and to reduce the potential for insect infestation. Temperatures below 60 degrees reduce insect reproduction. Insects are dormant below 50 degrees, and extended exposure to temperatures below 30 degrees can kill insects.

Cooling grain as outdoor temperatures decrease will reduce moisture migration and the condensation potential near the top of the grain pile. The crop should be cooled because the grain's moisture content and temperature affect the rate of mold growth and grain deterioration. The allowable storage time approximately doubles with each 10-degree reduction in grain temperature.

Aeration ducts need to have perforations sized and spaced correctly for air to enter and exit the ducts uniformly and to obtain the desired airflow through the grain. The maximum spacing for aeration ducts is equal to the grain depth to achieve acceptable airflow uniformity.

Life Span for Stored Grain

Grain has an acceptable storage life before the quality is reduced enough to affect its value. Allowable storage time is cumulative, so consider the amount of storage life remaining when making management decisions.

For example, if corn is stored at 14% moisture and 60 degrees for two months (November-December), then cooled to 40 degrees for four months (January-April) and then stored through the summer months (May-August) at 70 degrees, approximately 90% of the storage life has been used. Refer to the allowable storage timetables that are available online.

—Story by NDSU Extension, photos by staff and stock

For more information, scan the QR code.

Avoid the Hidden Hunger

Soybean nutrient needs can be overlooked as soybean plants are sometimes left to scavenge for what's left over from other crops. While soybeans may not be as fertilizer dependent as corn or wheat, nutrient deficiency is becoming an issue for soybeans in North Dakota.

"For the majority of farmers in North Dakota, soybeans are going to be the highest potassium-removing crop, and that's starting to get us into a little bit of trouble," says Brady Goettl, Ph.D., North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension soil science specialist. "We're seeing pretty significant declines in soil potassium levels as corn soybean rotations move across the state. We're starting to remove a lot more than we're putting back."

Goettl says that circumstance is opening the door to conversations about putting a base rate of potassium on soybean fields.

"Traveling around the state this year and last year, it's pretty easy to find soybean fields that are showing potassium deficiency," Goettl says. "How we look at our potassium fertilizer strategy going into the future has become important, especially for folks that are bringing more soybeans into their systems."

Goettl says the first step in determining soil nutrient needs is through soil testing. There may be parts of a field that have ample potassium while other areas may be deficient. Sidehills can be particularly susceptible to potassium deficiency. Goettl says research has shown that the upfront cost of sampling and variable rate fertilizer application is typically paid back by input cost savings and increased crop yields.

A key to successful potassium management is to pay attention to critical levels, Goettl says.

"We can't focus too much on the areas that have sufficient nutrients but focus on where we will see a yield benefit," Goettl explains. "We can strategize a little bit on those applications to try to get the most bang for our buck."

Potassium deficiency shows up in soybean fields as a halo effect around the leaf, Goettl says. The outside of the leaf margin turns yellow and eventually brown, with the brown tissue spreading toward the center of the leaf. In the early stages of minor deficiency, the plant is going to look relatively healthy, except for that outside margin, which is going to get worse as time goes on.

"By the time we see a deficiency symptom, damage has already happened," Goettl says. "There's hidden hunger in the plant that is limiting yield before we even visually see it happen."

Goettl says Foster, Eddy, Griggs, Stutsman and Barnes Counties have had instances of potassium deficiency due in part to the rolling landscape. Potassium levels of less than 150 parts per million (ppm) can cause significant yield limitations. One hillside Goettl tested this spring registered only 77 ppm, while the flat, uneroded, hilltop was at 200 ppm.

"If we were to sample that field all as one, levels would look okay," Goettl continues, "but then when we start really parsing it out, part of the field is starving."

IDC Issue

Iron deficiency chlorosis is common in parts of North Dakota, Goettl says. IDC is a deficiency of iron in the soybeans, leading to chlorosis and eventually plant death or yield loss. IDC is due to iron in the soil not being in an available form.

"Once IDC sets into a field, there's really nothing we can do about it that's economical," Goettl explains.

"The best thing that we can do for iron deficiency chlorosis is treat it upfront."

Planting IDC resistant varieties is the first line of defense and the second is field selection. Goettl says that if growers suspect that IDC will occur, an input of a chelated iron product with the seed to try to get the plant over that initial hump of IDC can be effective in helping overcome the disorder.

Knowing high residual nitrate levels are an aggravating factor for IDC, Goettl says research is underway at NDSU to determine what the threshold levels are, above which IDC-preventing treatments should be used.

NDSU offers several Extension circulars to help with crop fertility decisions, including the Soybean Soil Fertility Guide (SF1164) and the North Dakota Fertilizer Recommendation Tables (SF882).

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photo by Brady Goettl

Scan the QR codes for more information on:

Soybean soil fertility from NDSU

North Dakota Fertilizer Recommendation Tables

Program Helps Growers See with Their Own Eyes

Once crops such as soybeans are hauled into a local elevator and unloaded, most farmers rarely give a second thought to what happens to those beans from that point on, but an entire choreography of logistics is required to move products from the farm gate to an end user across the world.

The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) offered a See For Yourself program to the Pacific Northwest (PNW) to help producers obtain a better understanding about this important destination for North Dakota farmers.

"We do this to give North Dakota soybean producers a firsthand look at how their soybeans are transported, handled, and exported out of the PNW after they leave the farm," says Shireen Alemadi, NDSC outreach and engagement director. "By visiting key infrastructure like ports and export terminals, the participants gain a deeper understanding of the supply chain, international trade and the careful work done throughout the process to maintain a high-quality product for export."

The PNW is the major export gateway to international markets for North Dakota soybeans.

In addition to receiving industry insights from representatives of the American Soybean Association, the United Soybean Board, BNSF Railway, the U.S. Soybean Export Council and Clean Fuels Alliance America, See For Yourself participants also toured a fish hatchery, received guided tours of deep-water locks, and visited a hydroelectric dam at the Bonneville Lock & Dam. The delegates also visited Shaver Transportation, a tugboat operation company, to learn about the history, operations and logistics of river transportation, including a tour and a ride along the Columbia River.

The program also included visits to key export terminals and ports, including the Vancouver Export Terminal of United Grain Corporation, the Port of Kalama, Kalama Export Company and TEMCO Kalama. While at the Port of Kalama, participants heard from Captain Dan Jordan of the Columbia River Bar Pilots, who shared the unique challenges of guiding massive vessels through one of the world's most dangerous river entrances.

Dallas Loff of Wahpeton was one of the See For Yourself participants. He told KFGO's Rusty Halvorson, who also attended the event, "we don't see that stuff in North Dakota. We see the first point of transportation, and here's the middle point."

"The region's infrastructure, including deep-water ports and efficient logistics systems, allows for not only timely, but cost-effective access to global buyers," Alemadi explains. "Understanding how soybeans move from North Dakota to the PNW onto international markets helps farmers appreciate the role the PNW plays in maintaining market competitiveness and meeting international demand."

Keith Reinowski, who farms near Anamoose, appreciated the glimpse into the various facets of the soy value chain.

"It gives you a better look at where they're (soybeans) getting used and what they're doing with them," Reinowski states. "You hear they go to China, but you don't really know how they get there. So now that you see that, you might have a better idea. They go through a lot of avenues to get where they're at."

Visits to the terminals and ports gave the farmers a chance to see the important infrastructure and to connect with important people associated with the supply chain.

"From the conversations we had with the export elevator guys, they really do appreciate the work that the farmers do because, without you, they don't have an industry; they don't have a job," Reinowski contends.

Philip Neubauer of Bottineau was impressed with how the grain was handled, managed and loaded for shipment.

"It was really cool to see the pipelines that come in from all the commodities from the Midwest and how efficient they are at getting our product onto the barges," Neubauer asserts. "They (port workers) were all really receptive to showing us the ins and outs on that side and were very accommodating, and they thought it was really cool that we were all asking questions like crazy, and they were very easy to talk to, and they were open books. It was awesome."

The visit to the Kalama Export Company's facility was especially interesting for Oakes farmer Scott German who sold a load of corn to his local elevator just days before the See For Yourself program commenced. While at the facility, participants learned that a train hauling corn into the Kalama Export Company's terminal from Oakes was due to arrive later that day.

"That was strictly coincidence," German says, "but it was neat to see the inner workings of that port. They average 3.2 trains per day. They had just gotten done loading 60,000 metric tons of corn in a Panamax vessel in just over 31 hours. It's just crazy when you see the size and scope of how that export terminal runs. I guess that's the name of the business in and out."

For most of the See For Yourself participants, this trip was their first opportunity to follow the process from farm to ship.

"Just getting a firsthand knowledge of how our soybeans go from our field and end up in the port and getting all the steps that it takes to get to its end destination was pretty cool to see," says Page farmer Preston Burchill. "It's very eye-opening."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos by staff

Salute to Service

North Dakotans are no strangers to military service. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, there were over 38,000 military veterans in the state in 2022. Approximately 9% of the state's farmers have served, and 15% of North Dakota's farm operations have a military veteran working on them.

In celebration of Veteran's Day, we introduce you to two North Dakota farmers whose military service helped shape them as people and prepared them for challenges on the farm.

Rashad Schaffner
Napoleon, North Dakota

Rashad Schaffner joined the North Dakota Army National Guard in 1995. After completing basic training in 1996, he came back to North Dakota and enrolled at Bismarck State College. Then, a full-time opportunity became available with the National Guard's recruiting office.

"I took it," Schaffner says, "Then, I spent two years in Minot, four years in Jamestown; then the remainder of my full-time career was in Bismarck."

Rashad Schaffner with his wife and kids highlights how family strengthens a soldier's morale, resilience, and readiness.

Schaffner later took over as first sergeant for the 818th Engineer Company in Williston, which was deployed to Afghanistan.

"I spent from 2011 to part of 2012 in Afghanistan doing route clearance," Schaffner recounts.

After returning from Afghanistan in 2012, he went back into recruiting before retiring in 2017 with 23 years of service.

Schaffner and his wife then took over her family farm. They have three children, including one who hopes to return to the farm.

Schaffner grew up on a farm during the 1980s and recognized that there might not be enough profitability in farming to return to the family operation. Schaffner didn't want to take away resources from his parents, so he joined the National Guard to pay for his education and to find more career opportunities.

"My recruiting experience was amazing," Schaffner explains. "I got the opportunity to work with some really amazing kids throughout the years, and I had some great coworkers. At that time, I really felt I had the best job in the world. I was getting paid to go out there and meet young men and women who were probably looking for the same opportunities I had."

Schaffner recognizes some of the personal growth that came from his military service.

"I think everybody has their self-drive, but one thing that the military really showed is that, if you are willing to do something and you're willing to commit to it, you're going to succeed," Schaffner states.

Schaffner's military service also taught him to adjust to changing circumstances, "especially when you get into those times on deployment where things are ever changing," Schaffner contends. "Every single day on the farm, things are always changing. Maybe it's raining today, or we've got crazy wind, and we can't do any spraying. Being able to think on your feet and be fluid in changing gears is important."

Military service also taught Schaffner to plan ahead.

"With farming, if you want to be successful, you better have a plan, and you better have an idea of how you're going to get there," Schaffner says.

Chris Walberg
Leonard, North Dakota

Chris Walberg joined the Air Force after high school and served four years of active duty as a jet-engine mechanic stationed in Charleston, South Carolina.

"We've had a lot of military members in my family, so that was part of the driving force behind me enlisting," Walberg explains. "I wasn't ready to go to college yet, and I didn't know what I wanted to do. The military was of interest to me, so I did it, and it was a good experience. The military has really been good for me."

After his four years of active duty was up, Walberg moved back to Leonard and transferred to the North Dakota Air National Guard. During that time, he changed paths, working

in the welding and fabrication shop for a number of years. He then became part of maintenance operations, overseeing and coordinating aircraft maintenance. He advanced into a supervisory role which he held for the rest of his career, which totaled 30 years of service. He was also reactivated following 9/11.

"I got really good training as a mechanic, and then later in my career, I got a good education on how to manage people and just the life lessons that go along with being a part of a large organization," Walberg states.

In addition to practical skills such as welding and repairing equipment, Walberg describes how the risk-assessment skills learned in the military are applicable to his farming operation.

"We take a lot of risk planting a crop and hoping Mother Nature cooperates," Walberg asserts, "so, knowing how to manage some risk is important."

Walberg maintains that his military service helped him to keep an open mind to try new things on the fifth-generation farm he took over from his grandfathers.

"In the last 10 years, we've transitioned our farm to more of a regenerative farm where we're reducing inputs and trying to reduce our reliance on synthetics and make our soil healthier, so we have a healthier crop to harvest," Walberg explains. "I think the military helped me keep an open mind to the new things coming and to different ways of doing things rather than being dogmatic."

In addition to the training and valuable experience he's received from military service, Walberg says that personal relationships are also a highlight.

"Probably the most valuable thing is all the good people I've met over the years and friends I've made," Walberg states. "You just, you can't replace good friendships and the good people that you get to know."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos courtesy of veterans

Chris Walberg with his grandfather, Robert Radcliffe, who was instrumental in helping him start farming.

Talking Shop Across North Dakota

Farm shops are valuable places for prepping equipment or repairing implements that are needed for the next stage of the growing season. Those shops can also be a place for valuable and meaningful conversation.

In August, the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) held a series of Shop Talk gatherings across the state to connect with growers, to provide updates about key issues and to listen to farmers' main concerns.

"These Shop Talks really provided just a casual, farmer-focused event that involved real conversations in small towns and farm shops," said Craig Kleven, NDSGA's director of industry relations.

Shop Talks took place in Elgin, Fullerton, Dazey and Rock Lake. Each gathering featured discussions with agronomists, experts on markets, local legislators and representatives from the NDSGA and the North Dakota Soybean Council. Each location drew farmers with questions, concerns and interest about the soybean industry's future.

Kleven described how farmers were concerned with the current soybean prices, a widening of the soybean basis and a lack of export orders for new crop soybeans. China's absence from the market was especially noted.

"The markets for soybeans and soybean meal were a concern among the farmers," Kleven explained. "Without strong foreign markets, how much can we really consume here? So, with that in mind, we also talked about the new uses of soybeans and research."

In addition to market challenges, Kleven mentioned that farmers raised concerns about transportation as well as the growth and development of livestock in North Dakota.

"Farmers had questions about the livestock industry, including the potential for growth both to consume more soybean meal and to diversify farming operations," Kleven stated.

Local legislators participated in the Shop Talk events. Kleven acknowledged that the farmers appreciated the ability to engage with local legislators; to have conversations; and to ask about a variety of topics, ranging from property taxes to roads and economic development.

Federal policy decisions, including the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed renewable volume obligations for biofuels through the Renewable Fuel Standard, were also discussed as was the EPA's proposed decision to approve registration and uses for dicamba.

Participants also raised concerns about the disconnect between farmers and non-farmers as well as the shrinking agriculture representation in the North Dakota legislature.

The North Dakota Soybean Growers Association hit the road this summer to share information and listen to farmers' concerns.

Farmer Concerns

Farmer and NDSGA Director

Shop Talks were held in four communities across North Dakota. The events included updates and information on a wide range of topics affecting farmers.

Billie Lentz hosted the event at Rock Lake.

"I wanted to be involved because, as a young producer, I see the value in learning from opportunities like this and getting chances to connect with fellow farmers in my area," Lentz said.

One topic that came up at that event was transitioning the farm to the next generation, which can be a delicate subject to broach.

"I really loved the succession-planning speakers, and I thought that it was extremely valuable to hear from them," Lentz continued. "That's a topic that I care deeply about, and I think that any farmers who get a chance to hear on that topic benefit because it just gets the wheels turning about what planning they can be doing."

According to NDSGA President Justin Sherlock, farmers participating in the Dazey event voiced concerns about the state's roads and bridges.

"Infrastructure needs really came out in that meeting, and everyone was in agreement that we've got to get these roads in North Dakota up to snuff," Sherlock recalled. "They're just not capable of supporting us long term. We've got to get our truck weights increased down the road. We have to be able to haul more per truckload in the future on good roads."

Sherlock contended that growers were also very interested to learn about the soybean crushing process.

Scott German, who hosted the Shop Talk at Fullerton, described how the event provided an opportunity for lawmakers to talk about what happened in Bismarck during the 2025 session related to property taxes, transportation and agriculture. The gathering also helped the soybean industry's leaders to obtain a better understanding about what's on the mind of their fellow farmers so that the concerns can be addressed.

"Right now, everybody's concern is the price and tariffs, which kind of go hand in hand," German explained. "Of course, everybody wants beans to be $15 again, but reality sometimes supersedes what we want. This outreach gave us the chance to connect with other producers to say, hey, you know what, we're here; we work for you; what do you want us to do?"

"I just think it was a good idea to get down to the one-on-one level with soybean producers," declared Aaron Friesz, North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) county representative for Grant County and the host of the Shop Talk in Elgin.

Friesz explained that participants had a wide range of questions for the legislators, the marketing experts, and the representatives of the NDSGA and NDSC. He stated that the discussions were very valuable and that participants left with answers to questions about markets, crop-protection products and what the state's soybean organizations are doing on farmers' behalf.

"Conversations went everywhere, including what the North Dakota Soybean Council and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association do at a national, state and local level," Friesz offered. "It was just a good, well-rounded meeting with lots of questions and a lot of good information. I think it was very valuable."

Kleven mentioned that the NDSGA will use the feedback gathered from the Shop Talk events in its efforts to advocate for North Dakota soybean farmers.

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos by staff

Feedback gathered by the NDSGA at the Shop Talk events will help the organization better advocate for the state's soybean farmers.

Rural Transportation Funding GETS A BOOST

Transportation and rural infrastructure are long-standing issues for farmers and agriculture organizations such as the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. There is good reason for concern because rural roads are often the first mile that crops travel on their way to market and the last mile for crop inputs.

North Dakota has about 6,600 miles of paved county and township roads as well as approximately 59,000 miles of gravel county and township roads. During the 2025 session, the North Dakota legislature provided substantial funding increases to bolster rural roads and bridges.

Over the next biennium, counties are slated to receive $135 million from gas taxes, $52.05 million in flexible funding, including $26.025 million in non-oil county distributions and an equal amount in non-oil grants.

Townships will receive $20.6 million from the gas tax; $5.2 million from the Prairie Dog fund; and $51.8 million in flexible funding, including $31.1 million in non-oil grants and $20.7 million in non-oil distributions.

Senate Bill 2012 (SB 2012) allocates up to $80 million per biennium to non-oil-producing counties and the townships within these non-oil-producing counties for road and bridge infrastructure projects. Up to $40 million of that amount will be distributed by the Office of State Treasurer; those funds will be divided between the counties and townships, including 13% ($5,200,000) for townships in non-oil-producing counties and 87% ($34,800,000) for the non-oil-producing counties. SB 2012 adds additional requirements for organized and unorganized townships to be eligible to receive the township's infrastructure portion.

The remaining $40 million will be given to the Department of Transportation (DOT) for grants that will be awarded concurrently with the Flex Fund Grants.

"This opens up a lot of possibilities for townships to make some real improvements to their roads and to do a better job of maintenance, deal with safety issues and provide better access, better roads for us to haul our crops and have better roads for our school buses," contends Larry Syverson, executive director of the North Dakota Township Officers Association.

Syverson explains that the so-called Prairie Dog funding should run between $150 and $200 per maintained mile for each township and that the flex-fund direct payments will pay between $400 and $500 per maintained mile, depending on how many townships qualify. For both programs, the qualifying townships must be levying at least 18 mils of property tax and cannot have over $100,000 in their general fund.

"We focused on putting more money into road funding for the townships and the counties because everybody gets a chance to benefit by better roads," says Rep. Mike Brandenburg of Edgeley, vice chair of the House Appropriations Committee. "There's no question that

Rep. Mike Brandenburg is vice chair of the House Appropriations committee.

Larry Syverson is executive director of the North Dakota Township Officers Association.

there was a lot of emphasis on the townships, the counties and the rural areas. With these bigger crops, the roads are getting a beating."

"In the 15 sessions I've been in the legislature, this is the most focused effort we've ever made to put funding into rural North Dakota," adds Sen. Terry Wanzek of Jamestown, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. "Hopefully, we can grow from there."

Sen. Paul Thomas, who farms near Velva, understands that most counties and townships in rural North Dakota don't have the capacity to fund the necessary upkeep for roads and bridges.

"I come from a rural district that has deteriorating road conditions, really because of the lack of revenue-producing capabilities to maintain all of our infrastructure," Thomas states. "In my district and a lot of districts, it's not just roads, but bridge projects are cost prohibitive to our counties."

The legislature allocated over $40 million specifically for bridges.

Terry Wanzek chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee

Sen. Paul Thomas serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee

"The amount of revenue to fix those bridges just isn't available locally, so that's where I've made a strong push, and others have joined me in making sure that the state recognizes that need," Thomas maintains. "For the first time ever, we got $40 million allocated specifically for bridges."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos provided by the ND Legislative Council, ND Township Officers Association and Daniel Lemke

A Seat at the Table

North Dakota farmers know about the importance of international markets for their agricultural products. The state's growers produce substantially more soybeans than are consumed domestically, so tools to help facilitate export markets are vital.

Among the organizations that work on global trade issues is the World Trade Organization (WTO). The WTO is the only global, international organization which deals with the rules of trade between nations. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible.

"The American Soybean Association (ASA) strongly supports continued U.S. engagement in global multilateral forums like the WTO," says Virginia Houston, ASA director of government affairs. "The WTO sets the rules-based trading system by which the global economy operates."

The WTO was established in 1995, with the United States as a founding member. Every five years, the U.S. Congress can consider withdrawing from the WTO.

"If the U.S. were to withdraw, that would leave, especially U.S. agriculture, without a seat at the table when trade rules are being negotiated and made," Houston contends. "If we cede our place at that table, that gives rise to people who don't have the United States' best interest at heart to take that position."

Because U.S. participation can be reviewed, some agriculture and trade groups were concerned that the United States might withdraw from the WTO. The Trump administration pulled the U.S. from multi-national organizations such as the World Health Organization and the Paris Climate Accord. Houston explained that there was some chatter about the U.S. leaving the WTO, which prompted a strong response from the ASA.

"We felt it was important to send a message to the administration that U.S. agriculture supports the U.S. being part of WTO," Houston asserts. "We want the WTO to function as it was intended, but there are some challenges. We feel that the best way to address those challenges is with the U.S. at the table advocating for U.S. priorities."

Houston states that most farmers don't think a lot about the WTO, but the organization is a good mechanism when countries try to put unfair trade barriers up against U.S. exports. The WTO is where the U.S can challenge those barriers legally and, hopefully, find a resolution. Houston describes how the U.S. has won a number of cases before the WTO over the years.

"The WTO is a tool to help our farmers, not to be against our farmers," Houston explains. "We really feel it helps keep the playing field more level when it comes to global trade."

Every five years, the U.S. trade representative has to report to Congress about the WTO and U.S. engagement. That report process opens a window for Congress to consider withdrawal. This year represented five years since the last review. Houston says that there was a resolution in the U.S House of Representatives to withdraw the U.S. from WTO, but the bill didn't receive a vote, so that clock expired.

Virginia Houston is American Soybean Association director of government affairs.

"ASA was engaged in raising awareness on Capitol Hill about the importance of (the) WTO and how we were not in favor of withdrawal," Houston adds.

The next congressional review of U.S. membership in the WTO will occur in 2030.

—Story by Dan Lemke, photo courtesy American Soybean Association

THE EVOLVING ROLE OF MEAL

NORTH DAKOTA'S SOYBEAN INDUSTRY IS A STUDY IN NEARLY CONSTANT CHANGE.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture shows that, in 1995, the state's farmers planted about 660,000 acres of soybeans. By 2005, that number climbed to nearly 3 million acres. In 2015, growers planted 5.75 million acres, and estimates for 2025 North Dakota soybean production top 6.6 million acres.

Until two years ago, most soybeans grown in the state were shipped elsewhere, including to ports in the Pacific Northwest (PNW), for export. The addition of soybean processing facilities in Spiritwood and Casselton have changed the industry dynamic again as farmers now have domestic market opportunities.

Driven largely by the demand for soybean oil, soybean processing in North Dakota, and nationwide, is creating more changes in the soybean industry as soybean meal becomes an increasingly important part of the soybean value chain.

"We've seen a major structural change in the industry, both for North Dakota as well as the domestic and international industry," says William Wilson, Ph.D., distinguished professor in agribusiness and applied economics at North Dakota State University (NDSU).

Filling the Market

According to the American Soybean Association (ASA), there are currently 68 solvent-extraction soybean crushing plants in the United States. Several additional plants are under construction, and ASA economists say that the timeline for completing the new plants spans the next 6 years, with 75 million bushels per year of processing capacity slated to come online in 2025 and another 114 million bushels in 2026.

"In marketing year 2025-2026, crush is projected to represent 57% of total U.S. soybean production, which is over 10% higher than in marketing year 2020-2021," states soy industry expert Scott Ritzman of Ritz Ag Consulting, Inc. "The U.S. is on track to set a new record, crushing an estimated 2.49 billion bushels."

North Dakota processors are contributing to that total. Green Bison Soybean Processing in Spiritwood produces about 1.28 million tons of soybean meal annually, and the North Dakota Soybean Processors in Casselton generates about 1 million tons per year.

Wilson describes how one of the current, fundamental issues for North Dakota is the large volume of soybean meal that's going to have to be shipped and used locally. There is interest in growing North Dakota's livestock sector to utilize more meal locally, but that development will take time before it has a major effect.

"In the immediate term, we have to be selling it elsewhere, domestically in the United States or internationally," Wilson explains. "In the case of soybeans, we struggled but also benefited from the fact that we had one very large buyer called China. As we move away from that distribution of a customer base, we're moving now into soybean meal where there are many customers, but a very intensely competitive international environment dominated largely by Argentina and Brazil. So, in a sense, we're jumping out of one frying pan into another frying pan."

Ritzman says that, over the past year, global soybean meal prices have fallen about 30%, a trend reflected in both futures and spot markets. August 2025 meal futures were trading near $278 per short ton, compared to roughly $320 in August 2024, a drop of $42 (about 14%) per short ton.

"The relative value of soybean meal and oil has become more balanced," Ritzman asserts, "with meal historically accounting for about two-thirds and oil one-third, but now both are contributing roughly equal shares to the total value.

For years, soybean meal was the economic driver for soybean processing because the meal is a key ingredient of livestock rations for pork, poultry, aquaculture, dairy and beef production. In recent years, soybean oil for biofuels has increased in demand, shifting the value proposition.

"Soybean meal accounts for approximately 80% of the soybean's weight and represents a leading portion of the soybean's total value," contends Mike Keller, president of Green Bison Soybean Processing. "In the current market, soybean meal, rich in protein, is the primary ingredient in animal feed, driving consistent demand and stable pricing. For Green Bison Soy Processing, this means a high percentage of the revenue stems from the meal segment of our business."

"It's a net sum," explains Bill McBee, commercial manager for North Dakota Soybean Processors. "It's the oil plus the meal minus what the beans cost. You don't get to choose whether you sell meal or oil; it's really the value of both together. Meal is the bigger volume that we have to move. Historically,

Soybean meal is a staple ingredient in many livestock rations, especially hog diets.

With increasing supplies of soybean meal, research is underway to increase inclusion rates in beef diets.

the oil share of value would be somewhere around 30% to 35%. We're now running up in the 40% to 45% range. So even though oil is only 20% of the bean, its value is about half."

Market Opportunities

Ritzman maintains that soybean meal presents a strong opportunity for both domestic use and export growth. Because the U.S. can't consume all the additional soybean meal at home, there is sufficient meal supply to target major feed producing countries in southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Vietnam. Those nations currently have limited U.S. market presence, so Ritzman says that increasing exports to these markets represents a significant step forward.

"Competitive pricing has kept us strong against Argentina and Brazil, and steady progress into new and emerging destinations broadens our reach," Ritzman asserts. "As supply continues to grow, it will be critical to track how policy changes, weather events and market dynamics shape global demand."

According to Wilson, Brazil and Argentina have very well-established channels for manufacturing meal and the logistics for exporting meal. Companies in the U.S. are taking steps to address meal handling.

Ritzman states that investments by exporters and processors such as Export Grain Terminal and Ag Processing, Inc. (AGP) will help make the PNW a year-round, global soybean meal supplier. The AGP expansion in Aberdeen, Washington, will double the facility's annual meal capacity to six million metric tons in marketing year 2025-2026.

"We are inventing new logistics for efficient, large-scale exporting of meal," Wilson declares.

Wilson conducts regular evaluations of the soybean industry to help agribusinesses and ag organizations better understand the landscape.

"One of the positive features is that our work shows that the growth rate in meal consumption internationally is about 6%, which is pretty substantial and exceeds that of soybeans," Wilson says. "So that's a positive thing."

Wilson explains how he and his colleagues continue to study soybean opportunities because the industry changes very rapidly. His analysis shows that some of the best market opportunities for North Dakota meal lie to the north.

"They have a pretty aggressive swine feeding industry throughout Canada, including Ontario and Quebec, however, we're not competitive there because they have crushing plants," Wilson states. "We are very competitive in the west, notably Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and we're just about competitive in the Alberta and British Columbia markets. They're big markets. They're stable markets. They're less susceptible to international competition. So, there's no doubt Canada's a desirable long-term targeted market for us."

Animal Ag Opportunity

Growing the animal agriculture within the state would provide for substantial soybean meal utilization. NDSU Extension Livestock Development Specialist Jon Biermacher, Ph.D., says that, other than a well-established beef cattle industry, North Dakota's livestock sector is relatively small.

Biermacher has studied what meal markets would look like in the next 10 to 20 years if North Dakota livestock expanded on par with what South Dakota experienced. South Dakota has seen sizable growth with both dairy and pork production. Farmers in South Dakota finish more than 2 million hogs per year and milk over 180,000 dairy cows. Biermacher estimates that expanding North Dakota's dairy and swine herds to similar levels as South Dakota would lead to annual consumption of about 400,000 tons of soybean meal.

"Even with a sizable expansion, we're still going to have to find buyers outside of North Dakota for the meal," Biermacher says. "My models show somewhere around 80% of the meal produced here is still going to be available, so we'll have to stick that on trucks or trains."

Biermacher maintains that there is interest to expand the state's livestock sectors, but it is going to take time for that change to happen and for people to understand the economic influence which a robust animal ag sector could have. He thinks that some livestock expansion could come from existing companies relocating some of their existing swine production to North Dakota because of biosecurity concerns and abundant feed supplies.

"Processors have an interest in livestock expansion, and they would be happy to sell everything they have to us, but they're not going to just give you some unbelievable discount in price," Biermacher contends. "They would sell it locally at a price just low enough to keep it local."

Keller says that long-term growth for North Dakota's livestock sector would have positive influences on farmers, rural communities and value-add ag processing locations such as Green Bison Soy Processing. The growth would create a stable, local market for soybean meal; reduce transportation costs; and add value to the state's ag economy. Development will take time, but Keller contends that it supports a more integrated and resilient agricultural system.

"While some of the soybean meal produced in Spiritwood will be sold to the export markets, we're also working together with local industry associations, university extensions and other partners to help increase the local animal agriculture production market and demand for soybean meal within the state," Keller says.

In addition to working to grow the livestock industry to include more dairy, swine and poultry production, Biermacher states that NDSU researchers are conducting feed trials in an effort to develop economical soybean meal-based backgrounding and finishing rations that can be used by North Dakota's beef cattle producers.

—Story continued on page 22

—Story continued from page 21

Competitive Advantages

In a highly competitive market, something needs to set U.S. and North Dakota meal apart from competitors. That task can be challenging when many buyers are price conscious.

"As a trader, your theory is that, if you get cheap enough, somebody will buy it," McBee says. "We've driven down the price of meal to levels where we're finding markets. When you get cheap enough, then the inclusion rate in feed rations will get a little bit stronger in protein; then, we start competing more with dried distillers grains that had taken some of the soybean meal market. Supply and demand will do its job. The meal will find a home; it's just a matter of where."

Wilson contends that one of North Dakota's advantages is the sheer amount of soybean meal that's available.

"We also have big, sophisticated crushers, which are among the biggest in the world, and they're pretty good at international marketing," Wilson asserts. "Our cost of meal in North Dakota is relatively cheap compared to other origins and even in comparison to shipping costs."

While price is often the primary factor in global soybean meal markets, there are opportunities for North Dakota and U.S. soybean meal to stand out. Differentiation can come through consistent quality, sustainable production practices and reliable supply chains. These attributes may appeal to premium buyers, but broad market adoption may still depend on systems that reward quality over cost alone.

"Our advantage over other origins goes beyond quality," Ritzman declares, "It's also our efficient inland infrastructure that ensures products reach export terminals in a timely and reliable manner. That, combined with the U.S. Soy Sustainability Assurance Protocol, gives us a strong competitive edge in the global market."

According to Keller, maintaining a competitive edge in the global marketplace is closely tied to the protein content of the soybeans grown in the region. Traditionally, soybeans produced in northern climates have lower protein content, which presents a challenge when competing in both domestic and international markets.

McBee agrees that lower protein than meal from competitors such as Brazil "is one of our challenges. Total yield is where farmers get promoted, but higher protein meal would definitely help."

Keller says that there would be value in building stronger regional supply chains.

"As processors like Green Bison Soy Processing look to market soybean meal, developing closer ties between local farmers, feed manufacturers and livestock producers can reduce reliance on volatile international markets," Keller explains. "This regional focus not only supports rural economies, but it also enhances long-term resilience and sustainability in North Dakota's agricultural sector."

In a competitive global market, Wilson explains how targeted market-development efforts will be vital for maximizing the value of North Dakota soybean meal. Targeted importers have to learn about meal from North Dakota; logistical channels have to be identified; and potential buyers have to understand how meal from the state would fit into their procurement efforts.

With soybean production and meal production showing few signs of slowing, marketing the meal will be a long-term process. As Wilson says, "these plants are here for the long haul too."

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photos coutresy of United Soybean Board

Helpline Keeps FUEL FLOWING

For nearly 20 years, farmers, mechanics and fuel distributors have had fuel handling customer service available; that assistance is just a phone call away. The Regional Diesel Helpline, staffed by experts from MEG Corp, offers expertise with fuel handling, tank maintenance issues and the diagnosis of fuel issues such as filter plugging.

The helpline grew with the transition from low-sulfur diesel to ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) fuel, which was causing issues for diesel users, according to Lisa Pedderson, president of MEG Corp. About the same time, Minnesota began adding biodiesel to the diesel blends. MEG Corp started a helpline for fuel users in Minnesota to help diagnose problems. As more states, including North Dakota, began incorporating biodiesel into their blends, the need for support grew.

"Most of the issues were from the new fuel being used, which required more attention to tank maintenance than previously required," Pedderson says. "Water, microbial contamination and thermal oxidation became new problems. All those things were blamed on biodiesel."

Pedderson states that the Regional Diesel Helpline, supported by the North Dakota Soybean Council, gives guidance to farmers, fuel distributors, diesel users and mechanics in order to help them troubleshoot fuel-related issues.

"The helpline provides a place for them to contact, get their questions answered; and then if they need to send in samples, we can tell them what was wrong, how to fix it and how to prevent it," Pedderson explains.

Valley City farmer Monte Peterson made use of the Regional Diesel Helpline several years ago when algae growth in his tanks caused filter plugging issues.

"It was a condition that existed before I became a steady user of biofuels," Peterson asserts.

The helpline's staff recommended that he clean his fuel storage tank to get rid of water which had accumulated while also reducing the presence of microbes that can cause handling problems. Peterson now also splashes in an additive that reduces microbial growth to help keep the tank clean.

"I've always been a proponent of checkoff dollars being utilized to have MEG Corp as a resource to help not only farmers, but also fuel dealers to resolve problems that might arise with any fuel, not just soy biodiesel," Peterson contends. "They're a good resource because they have the lab and the technology to help out with the conditions that sometimes pop up that are a problem."

Pedderson describes how, as more people began using biodiesel, they became increasingly aware of the need for proper fuel tank maintenance. Best management practices include checking tanks for water, changing dispenser filters and examining equipment to make sure that the tanks don't have any leaks.

"We still encounter water," Pedderson explains. "A lot of times, diesel users will think something different is the cause of their problem, but about half of the issues end up being water. Sometimes, it's water in the storage tank; sometimes, it's in the equipment."

The Regional Diesel Helpline is available to any North Dakota diesel users, regardless of if they power up using biodiesel. There is also a Facebook page that includes seasonal reminders.

Seasonal fuel and equipment care is one way that diesel users can help to reduce fuel issues. Pedderson says that it's important, after planting season and after harvest season, to fill the equipment's fuel tanks to reduce head space which can lead to condensation, which can then cause water accumulation and promote microbial growth which can plug filters.

Farmers can enlist the help of MEG Corp to analyze fuel from their tanks and equipment. MEG Corp will also work with farmers and fuel distributors to ensure that they have the right fuel blends for the season.

For fuel-related questions or concerns, contact the Regional Diesel Helpline at 800-929-3437. Information is also available through the Regional Diesel Helpline Facebook page: facebook.com/RegionalDieselHelpline.

—Story by Daniel Lemke, photo by staff

SCN Sampling Program Q&A

Q: How does the SCN sampling program work?
A: The NDSC covers the cost of up to 2,000 SCN samples for growers in N.D. NDSU will label, code and distribute sample bags. Growers bag and mail sample bags to the lab.

Q: When will the sampling program begin?
A: Sample bags will be at County Extension offices in mid-late August.

Q: How do I receive sample bags?
A: Each ND grower can get up to three bags at their County Extension office

Q: When is the best time to sample?
A: The number of eggs and cysts in the soil increases throughout the growing season, making SCN detection most likely if you sample at the end of the season; from just before harvest to just before freeze-up is generally recommended.

Q: What do the results tell me?
A: Results indicate how much (if any) SCN is in your soil. If you don't find SCN, excellent! If you find SCN at any level, you want to manage it immediately. If you are already managing SCN, and your levels are still high, it may be time to evaluate additional management options.

Contact Richard (Wade) Webster at NDSU with questions: richard.webster@ndsu.edu • (701) 231-7057

North Dakota Farmers Connect with Diverse Global Customers at Soy Connext 2025

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) brings U.S. Soy buyers, sellers, growers and visionaries together every year for the industry's premier global event: Soy Connext. Against a backdrop of changing trade dynamics and an increasing global demand for reliable, high-quality soy protein and oil, the 2025 event involved more than 700 attendees from 59 countries in Washington, D.C., on August 20-22. The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) provided invaluable support via a sponsorship.

U.S. Soy is America's top agricultural export, contributing $31.2 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2023-24 marketing year. U.S. Soy is traded in more than 80 countries. Fueled by a rising global demand for soybean meal to support the expansion of global livestock, aquaculture and poultry production, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) projects a 4.3% year-over-year increase for the global soybean demand during the 2024-25 market year, reaching 346.2 million metric tons.

"More than 75% of the soybeans grown in North Dakota get exported, including mine, which ship via rail to the Pacific Northwest," says Mark Knutson. He farms near Fargo, serves on the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) board and attended Soy Connext.

The Soy Connext agenda featured expert talks and panel discussions which focused on sustainability, plant-based protein trends, supply chain insights and global market dynamics. In addition, the Trade Team Invitational connected 315 key buyers and 43 export companies to strengthen trade relationships and to explore market opportunities.

U.S. Soy customers and exporters value the insights gained during the Soy Connext sessions. Opportunities to connect with others in the industry really make the event shine. Attendees got a real-time crop update from a farmer panel during the program. Plus, the "Ask a Farmer" lounge made it easy for customers to meet face-to-face with U.S. Soy farmers.

"I talked with a customer from Bangladesh with the potential to import U.S. Soy coming from the Pacific Northwest," states Darren Kadlec, a United Soybean Board director from Pisek who also attended Soy Connext 2025. "I also connected with people I met on previous trade missions. They want to know firsthand the true market conditions in the U.S."

Trade Teams Visit ND

In addition to time in Washington, D.C., many international attendees participated in trade team tours before or after the conference. The visits highlighted the U.S. soybean industry's transparency and readiness to meet global demand, giving international buyers a firsthand look at the sustainable practices, innovation and stewardship that are core to the U.S. Soy value proposition.

A trade team from southeast Asia completed an Identity-Preserved Food-Grade Soybean short course at the Northern Crops Institute (NCI) in Fargo prior to Soy Connext.

Following the event, NDSC welcomed a Chinese trade delegation to North Dakota.

The group from China included representatives from Bunge, Cargill, Tech-Bank Foods, Wellhope Foods, the China Chamber of Commerce of Import & Export, and COFCO Oils & Fats. Their visit focused on learning more about North Dakota's soybean production, processing, and export.

The day's agenda began with an overview of the state's soybean industry at the NDSC office in Fargo, followed by a visit to the Richland County farm of NDSC Treasurer Dallas Loff and his family.

"The team was interested in how the soybean crop is doing, how I prepare for harvest, and some of the challenges I faced during the growing season," says Loff. "International trade team visits like these show the return on investment of soy checkoff dollars in action. They help maintain relationships and keep communication open with overseas buyers."

The day concluded with a tour of Minn-Kota Ag Products in Mooreton.

North Dakota soybean leaders connected with international customers, exporters, and partners across the global soy value chain during Soy Connext 2025.

North Dakota Soybean Growers Association directors Justin Sherlock and Mark Knutson represented the state's soybean industry at Soy Connext.

Importance of Trade Relationships

NDSC's support is integral to the Soy Connext program and bringing the most important customers to the U.S.

"We know it is extremely important to bring together current and future buyers with suppliers and farmers to make connections and keep trade open," Knutson says. "Soy Connext provides opportunities for new buyers to realize the value of North Dakota soy."

North Dakota farmers will see a return on this investment because USSEC emphasizes the consistency, reliability, quality and sustainability of U.S. Soy. As demand for soy foods and soy products grows in emerging, expanding and established markets, the industry is focused on a strategy that builds on U.S. Soy's reputation in the global marketplace.

—Story and photos courtesy of USSEC and staff

North Dakota welcomed a Chinese trade delegation organized by USSEC, giving the trade team a firsthand look at the state's soybean production, processing, and export operations.

From North Dakota Fields to Vietnam Markets: Strengthening Soy Connections

In late July, Milo Braaten of Portland, North Dakota, secretary of the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC), joined a trade mission to Vietnam alongside other Midwest farmers. Trade missions allow North Dakota farmers to strengthen relationships with international buyers, demonstrate the value of North Dakota's soy products and gain direct insight about market trends. The programs also support the NDSC's strategic objective of expanding soybean and soybean meal exports, which are vital to drive the global demand for North Dakota soy.

Historically, about 90% of North Dakota's soybeans have been exported, with about two-thirds going to China and southeast Asia. The recent opening of processing plants in Spiritwood and Casselton has started to shift this pattern, creating opportunities to market both soybeans and soybean meal abroad. This development benefits the broader soybean industry while providing new growth opportunities for North Dakota producers.

Vietnam was a strong market for U.S. soy in 2024, with imports totaling $3.44 billion, making it the 10th largest U.S. agricultural export market. The shifting landscape of the soybean industry in North Dakota, combined with the growth opportunities for soybean meal and soybeans in Vietnam, makes the country a perfect trade partner.

Throughout the week-long trade mission, Braaten met with importers, traders and feed millers to discuss the soybean crop which is now approaching harvest, reinforcing North Dakota's role as a reliable supplier of high-quality, sustainably grown soy. These conversations are critical for strengthening relationships in a market that continues to grow in both feed demand and sustainability requirements. By discussing the quality and consistency of North Dakota soybeans, Braaten helped position the state's farmers to capture a greater market share in Vietnam, one of the fastest-growing agricultural importers in the world, ensuring an ongoing demand and long-term opportunities for U.S. soy.

While in Vietnam, Braaten had the opportunity to tour one of the largest deep-water ports; this port is located outside Ho Chi Minh City and handles around 6 million metric tons (MMT) of product annually. This port is strategically located in southern Vietnam, enabling soy products to flow through the vast inland waterway of the Mekong Delta to end-users in the region. One of these end users is Vinhhoan, one of the world's largest producers of catfish. The company exports 99% of its product to the United States and the European Union, now proudly featuring the Sustainable U.S. Soy logo on its feed bags. A highlight of the trade mission to Vietnam was being able to see how sustainable U.S. soybean meal from the PNW is used as a protein source in finished feed.

Braaten (left) engaged in a Vietnamese demonstration that showcases the quality of U.S. soybeans.

Trade missions are an essential tool to strengthen North Dakota's presence in global markets, ensuring that North Dakota soy remains a reliable and preferred choice. As the demand for both soybeans and soybean meal continues to grow, these connections help to secure long-term market access and to create new avenues for adding value to the state's production. By engaging directly with key partners abroad, North Dakota farmers and industry leaders position the state's soy sector for sustained growth and competitiveness.

—Story and photos courtesy of Ritz Ag Consulting, Inc.

WISHH Trade Teams Build **Asian Markets for North Dakota**

For North Dakota soybean growers, building international trade markets means long-term profitability. Many North Dakotans ship their soybeans overseas, particularly to Asian markets. An in-depth look at the American Soybean Association's World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) program's trade team visit to Cambodia and Sri Lanka helps explain how the organization establishes those trade connections in Asia. This summer, WISHH farmer leaders led an overseas trade mission to Cambodia and Sri Lanka, where participants saw firsthand how U.S. soy powers economic growth in the food and feed industries.

In Cambodia, the delegation reviewed the successes of WISHH's CAST (Commercialization of Aquaculture for Sustainable Trade) project, a U.S. Department of Agriculture–funded Food for Progress program. Over seven years, CAST accelerated aquaculture production by introducing new technologies, providing training and developing markets for high-demand fish species. Farmers learned best practices for fish safety, yield and storage while U.S. soy gained ground as a key ingredient for feed in aquaculture feed. The team also met with the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), which is looking to expand aquaculture investment by applying lessons from CAST's success. The WISHH team is following up with FAO by connecting it to business development in the region. That work not only means a booming economy in aquaculture for Cambodians, but also an opportunity to sell more U.S. soy in the Cambodian feed market.

From Cambodia, the WISHH trade team traveled to Sri Lanka in order to visit with food business leaders and government officials. The team also led a seminar titled "Powering Partnerships: Sri Lanka–U.S. Soy Trade." The event brought U.S. soybean farmer leaders together with Sri Lankan food companies and government officials to highlight how U.S. soy can support better nutrition, new product innovations and sustainable economic growth. Her Excellency Julie Chung, U.S. ambassador to Sri Lanka, praised the strong trade relationship, noting that U.S. soy commands an 84% market share thanks to its consistent quality and reliable supply chain. Sri Lankan companies continue to partner with WISHH to develop new soy-based foods, providing consumers with more affordable and protein-rich choices.

"WISHH's work is about better nutrition, new technology and innovation, and stronger growth for our partners," said WISHH Executive Director Gena Perry. "That, in turn, creates more customers for U.S. soy."

For growers in North Dakota, that global demand translates to more dollars back home. The North Dakota Soybean Council's International Market Development Specialist, Avery Hansen, joined WISHH for the trip.

"It's important that we work with businesses overseas to show the superior quality that U.S. soy delivers," declared Hansen. "The Asian market offers ideal business partnerships for North Dakota's farmers. So, it was important to see, up close, how hard WISHH, its farmer leaders, and staff work to foster these relationships and how it builds trade for our crop."

—Story and photos courtesy of WISHH

Over seven years, WISHH's CAST program has accelerated aquaculture production by introducing new technologies, providing training, and developing markets for high-demand fish species, while U.S. soy has gained ground as a key ingredient in aquaculture feed.

NCI Showcases the Global Influence of U.S. Soy Through August Courses

The Northern Crops Institute (NCI) highlighted the value and versatility of U.S. soy through two soy focused courses this August. With support from the North Dakota Soybean Council, both courses connected participants to the entire soybean value chain, spanning production, processing, marketing, and applications in food and feed.

Food Soy Procurement Course

From August 15-19, NCI partnered with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) to deliver the Food Soy Procurement course, which was designed for southeast Asian soyfood professionals. Nineteen participants, representing the United States, the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and Vietnam, attended the program.

The five-day course combined classroom sessions, facility tours and hands-on demonstrations to provide a comprehensive look at sourcing and utilizing U.S. food-grade and identity-preserved (IP) soybeans. Sessions addressed U.S. grading systems, containerized shipping and contract specifications while market experts shared insights about pricing dynamics, risk management and export logistics.

Participants also experienced the soybean industry firsthand through visits to SB&B Foods in Casselton, North Dakota, and Brushvale Seed in Breckenridge, Minnesota. At these sites, they learned about identity-preserved processing, soybean testing and breeding operations. A day of retail market research brought the group into U.S. grocery stores, including Costco and Coborn's, to observe consumer facing soy products and to discuss marketing strategies.

The final morning of the course shifted the focus to soyfood applications. Guided by NCI's food technologists, participants conducted soymilk and tofu quality testing and explored how sensory evaluation can enhance product development. By the end of the program, participants had gained practical knowledge and connections to strengthen their role in supplying soy-based foods for their home markets.

The Food Soy Procurement course was made possible through collaboration with the USSEC; the Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance; and the soy checkoff organizations in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

INTSOY: Introduction to Soybean

The following week, NCI hosted its INTSOY: Introduction to Soybean course from August 25-29, taking participants to lectures and tours in Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota. Designed as an immersive introduction to soybean production and utilization, the program attracted participants who were eager to understand both the science and the market potential of soy.

The course began at the University of Minnesota, where agronomy and genetics experts led tours of soybean field plots and shared insights about genomics and new soybean traits.

Presentations on crushing processes, high-oleic soybean oil and soy's role in human health highlighted the crop's diverse benefits. Participants also enjoyed a soyfood tasting demonstration led by The Soyfoods Council, showcasing innovative uses for soy in human diets.

The middle of the week took the group to South Dakota State University, where participants learned about functional soy proteins in processed meat applications and toured swine research facilities to see soy's role in animal nutrition.

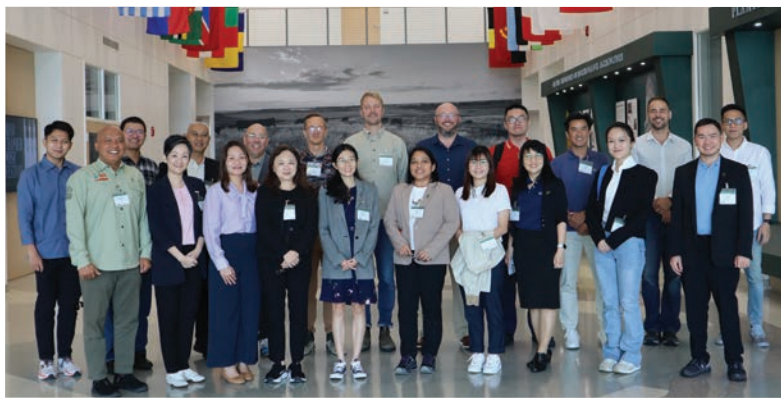
The final days of the program were hosted at the Northern Crops Institute in Fargo, North Dakota. Here, participants engaged in pilot-scale production of tofu, soymilk, tempeh and textured soy proteins. Experts from NCI and industry partners guided demonstrations on extrusion technology and applications of textured proteins in food. The course concluded with a tour of SB&B Foods' food-grade soybean processing facility, reinforcing lessons about quality testing and identity-preserved systems.

Strengthening Soy Markets

Together, the Food Soy Procurement and INTSOY courses demonstrated the importance of U.S. soy to both domestic and international markets. By combining classroom instruction with field and facility experiences, the programs showcased the crop's versatility across human food, livestock feed and industrial applications.

The North Dakota Soybean Council's support ensured that participants gained valuable insight about the strengths of U.S. soy, such as quality, consistency and sustainability. Through courses like these, NCI continues to build global partnerships that expand the understanding of U.S. soy and create opportunities for growers in North Dakota and across the region.

—Story and photos courtesy of NCI



NCI's 2025 Food Soy Procurement Course brought together 19 participants from five countries.

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NDSGA Fore! the Fun of it

Thank you for making the 22nd annual Fargo-area 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-area tournament's team winners.

The tournament was held at the Leonard Country Club.

First Place: Team Central Sales: Jeff Romsdal, Taylor Schmeichel, Stuart Lamp and Cody Pulczinski.

Second Place: Team Newman Seed: Brent Kohls, Robert Runck, Jeff Hoye and Dwight Ogren.

Third Place: Team Streeter Elevator: Brett Williams, Andrew Heflin, Nathan Denning and Eli Heflin.

Congratulations to the Fargo-area contest winners:

Closest to Pin #8: Nathan Denning.
Longest Putt #9: Brett Williams.
Longest Drive #1: Justice Keefauver.

Thank you to our Fargo-area golf tournament's sponsors.

Hole Sponsors: AgCountry Farm Credit Services; AgBull Media; AgWeek; Bell Bank; Bremer, A Division of Old National Bank; Clean Fuels Alliance America; Equitable AgriFinance; Ihry Insurance Agency, Inc.; Kotaco Fuels; MEG Corp. Biodiesel; North Dakota Soybean Processors; North Dakota Soybean Council; Proseed; Rush River Seed & Chemicals; and Titan Machinery/Case IH.
Lunch Sponsor: Ihry Insurance Agency, Inc.
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Golf Carts: Kotaco Fuels.
Programs: Syngenta.
Welcome Bag: Dakota Access, LLC.
Signs: D-S Beverages.

For more photos of the tournament, check out facebook.com/NorthDakotaSoybeanGrowersAssociation

Two NDSGA tournaments are scheduled for 2026. The first tournament will be at the Jamestown County Club on July 28, 2026. The second one will be August 25, 2026, at the Leonard Country Club. More information is available at ndsoygrowers.com/events.

—Story by staff, photos by Addison K Creative

Fargo Area Tournament winning team – Team Central Sales: Taylor Schmeichel, Jeff Romsdal, Stuart Lamp and Cody Pulczinski.

Fargo Area Tournament Tournament second place team – Team Newman Seed: Jeff Hoye, Robert Runck, Brent Kohls and Dwight Ogren.

Fargo Area Tournament third place team – Team Streeter Elevator: Andrew Heflin, Nathan Denning, Eli Heflin and Brett Williams.

Ag-Worker Visas
a Growing Option in North Dakota

Like a growing number of North Dakota farmers, Ryan Pederson of Rolette was having difficulty finding local workers to help him on his farm. Pederson turned to hiring foreign workers through the H-2A visa program.

The H-2A visa program is a temporary agricultural worker program that allows employers to bring foreign nationals to the country for seasonal or temporary agricultural work. The program is designed to address the labor shortages in the agricultural industry and to ensure that agricultural employers have access to a reliable workforce. Employers must demonstrate that there aren't enough domestic workers available to fill the job openings and that the employment of foreign workers won't adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers.

Pederson took the plunge and has hosted H-2A visa workers for the past 3 years.

"Ideally, there would be a labor pool locally that we could hire from," Pederson says, "but everyone knows labor is hard to come by right now."

"We're seeing an approximate 20% increase in applications this year," states Shantel Dewald, senior program administrator for Job Service North Dakota. "We've steadily had around a 20% increase, on average, year after year. The interest is there. A lot of the new applications we get in are from employers looking for one to two workers."

Dewald maintains that the agency's priority is to connect employers with qualified local talent, but she acknowledges that there aren't a lot of Americans looking to fill some of those agricultural jobs.

When farmers reach out to Job Service for assistance, the growers are often new to the program and are seeking some additional help navigating the H2-A process, which can be daunting.

"We do have resources available for them," Dewald explains. "We provide as much technical assistance as we can, but we can't help with a significant amount of the application process. We have enough information to guide them to where they would need to go, where they need to start, and that includes a list of agents."

Most employers use an agent, Dewald says, especially in their first few years of participating in the H-2A program. Agents provide valuable assistance to employers and help recruit qualified foreign labor, which may be difficult for employers to seek themselves.

Pederson used an agent to help navigate the H-2A program requirements.

"That certainly helped the process flow smoothly for me," Pederson contends.

Helping Hands

Chris Grobbelaar of Devils Lake came to work in the U.S. in 2014 through the H-2A program. He started working as an agent in 2020, intending to do that work during the winter months when he wasn't on the farm, helping his host farmer's neighbors find other South African workers.

After COVID hit, Grobbelaar describes how he was inundated with people looking for help.

"My phone didn't stop ringing, Grobbelaar states," so much so that, towards the end of 2021, I told the farmer I was working for that it was unfair towards him that I was on the phone the whole time."

Grobbelaar became a listing agent in 2021, starting Labor Inbound, LLC to work with farmers in order to fill ag labor needs.

"It's just been growing exponentially since then," Grobbelaar maintains. "A big driving force behind the growth is the fact that a lot of baby boomers took early retirement when COVID hit, especially in the manufacturing and production sectors. When everybody went back to work after COVID, a lot of those sectors offered tremendous sign-up bonuses, and a lot of the people out in the countryside took up these offers, and farmers lost a lot of labor."

A Lengthy Process

To get foreign workers, employers have to be certified by the Department of Labor. Part of that process is to advertise in order to ensure that the local labor market isn't adversely affected by the foreign workers. Employers also have to provide adequate housing, which must be inspected and approved.

Once a farmer is certified by the Department of Labor, employers work with the U.S. Customs and Immigration Service to petition the consulate where workers are originating to issue a visa for them to travel to the U.S.

Chris Grobbelaar was an H-2A worker in North Dakota before becoming an agent.

Grobbelaar describes how the listing agent helps handle the process in the U.S. while a recruiting agent in another country helps to secure workers for the farmers. There are also plenty of touchpoints along the way.

"It's a highly regulated program that entails record keeping during the season, and there are a lot of rules and regulations that you have to adhere to," Grobbelaar explains. "But that's where I come in to guide the farmers through that process, not only to get certified, but also during the season to say, when you do payroll, these are the do's and don'ts. If you need to terminate the worker, this is the process. It involves a tremendous amount of paperwork, and it is a super regulated program."

Grobbelaar says that he usually begins the entire process about 120 days before the worker starts. The paperwork takes about 90 days to process, but he builds a buffer into his timeline.

The process of working through an agent and doing all the necessary paperwork isn't cheap. Grobbelaar contends that it can cost about $5,000 to do the necessary work before the workers even arrive.

"It is a pricey process," Grobbelaar asserts. "It's not something you can really file to get certified for just in case you're going to use it."

An Opportunity

Pederson has had success using H-2A workers. One of Pederson's two employees has been with him all three years that he has participated in the program. Pederson interviewed the workers before they started working for him to make sure they'd be a good fit.

For growers who are new to the H-2A program or are planning to utilize it, Pederson clarifies that there is a learning curve beyond the application process.

"Things like getting a cell phone, getting the driver's license, getting the bank set up, that was the part that took me a little bit by surprise because I didn't think about that too much," Pederson says.

Pederson recommends that farmers manage expectations regarding the workers, especially in the first year. Even if workers have been to the U.S. before, each farmer does things differently, so it may take some time and clear communication for them to understand how the farmer wants things done.

Pederson also points out that workers who are participating in the H-2A program are often leaving a lot behind. In Pederson's first year hosting an H-2A worker, the man's son was born while he was thousands of miles away in North Dakota.

"They're leaving their family for eight or nine months," Pederson explains. "They're making sacrifices to be here."

Information about the H-2A program is available from Job Service North Dakota at commerce.nd.gov/workforce/statewide-workforce-coordination-dashboard/foreign-labor-certification-h2a.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture provides information to navigate the H-2A process at farmers.gov/working-with-us/h2a-visa-program.

—Story by Dan Lemke, photos courtesy Chris Grobbelaar and Wanbauugh Studios

H-2A Process

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the standard filing process for hiring H-2A workers should take between 60 and 75 calendar days and will include the following steps.

- The farmer applies for a domestic job order with the local state workforce agency between 60 and 75 calendar days before the date he needs the work to start.
- The state workforce agency provides approval for the job order.
- The farmer submits a temporary labor certification (Form ETA-9142A: H-2A Application for Temporary Employment Certification) online with the Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification using its Foreign Labor Application Gateway system at least 45 calendar days before the date he needs the work to start.
- The Department of Labor's Office of Foreign Labor Certification provides the farmer with its final determination.
- The farmer completes an H-2A visa petition with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.
- Workers apply for the H-2A visa with the Department of State and then complete consulate interviews.
- Approved workers travel to the worksite and arrive on the start date with an arrival/departure record.

Court Vacates Burdensome H-2A Rule

In August, a federal court vacated the final rule revising the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR) from 2023. This rule dramatically increased the cost of employing H-2A workers by changing how they were classified. The rule is based the H-2A program's AEWRs from the Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics (OEWS) survey in addition to the Farm Labor Survey. This policy applied permanent, non-agricultural wage data to seasonal agricultural jobs and subjected growers to wage increases every six months. For example, instead of receiving normal farm-labor rates, a worker would receive rates for truck driving if he drove a semi to the elevator most of the day.

Agriculture groups, including the American Soybean Association, were pleased to see the OEWS provision of the 2023 AEWR rule vacated. Growers utilizing the H-2A program experienced skyrocketing costs for labor due to the onerous regulations. ASA leaders believe that more work is needed to fix the AEWR, but vacating the rule is a step in the right direction.

Scholarship Helps Reutter's Future Bloom

The North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) scholarship is helping this year's winner bloom wherever she's planted.

Hannah Reutter of Harvey is the recipient of the 2025 NDSGA scholarship at North Dakota State University (NDSU). The scholarship is presented each year to the child or grandchild of an NDSGA member. The recipient must be enrolled in agriculture at NDSU and must have completed 90 or more credits.

"I was involved in FFA through high school, so I did a lot of things like the floriculture, agronomy and land judging contests," Reutter says. "I actually got interested in my degrees competing in floriculture."

Reutter grew up on a farm that produced soybeans, corn, wheat and barley, but her interest in plants comes on a broader scale. She's double majoring in horticulture as well as crop and weed science.

"I was interested in weed science since my family farmed, so I'd be able to learn more about that in case I wanted to go back and do that someday," Reutter continues.

Reutter states that she didn't expect to be so interested in floriculture because she thought her only path forward with that degree would be as a florist.

"Once I learned that there is all the research, production and the public gardens that goes into that career, then I was really interested in it, and I wanted to learn more about it for my degree," Reutter recalls. "When I first started college, I was thinking I would want to work in a greenhouse, but now I'm thinking I want to do public horticulture or research."

Working in the floriculture field has opened the doors to some unique experiences for Reutter. This past summer, she worked at the Denver Botanic Gardens, serving as the plant records curator and mapping intern. The year before, she did an internship at the Cheyenne Botanic Garden in Wyoming where she identified and labeled plants in a garden that was meant to mimic the top of a mountain with the alpine plants.

"I really liked doing that kind of identification and labeling because I feel like, when people go to a botanic garden, they're trying to learn about the plants that are there, so I like those well-documented gardens," Reutter asserts. "I really like talking to all the people, and I'm interested in educating the public and connecting people with plants, but not necessarily just being a teacher. Public horticulture lets you do that while actively working in a plant setting."

Reutter knew the previous NDSGA scholarship winner, who encouraged her to apply. Being selected as the 2025 recipient helped Reutter grow with her education and experiences.

"I'm paying for college on my own, so it's really helping me with being able to afford my classes, and because of that, I can get involved and do other clubs on campus and try a lot of different things," Reutter maintains. "I'm also able to go do my internships for the summer. Denver was pretty expensive, and I definitely would not have been able to afford that if I was worried about just making enough money to pay for my college. It's (the scholarship) been super helpful in me getting a lot of different experiences."

Reutter has one year of school remaining but hasn't ruled out pursuing a graduate degree.

To learn more about the NDSGA scholarship, visit ndsu.academicworks.com/opportunities/27189

—Story and photo by Dan Lemke

Hannah Reutter of Harvey is recipient of the 2025 NDSGA scholarship at NDSU.

Sen. Janne Myrdal

Sen. Janne Myrdal's path to becoming a North Dakota lawmaker is unique among her colleagues. She was born and raised surrounded by mountains and the ocean in Norway. Today, she farms with her husband in Pembina County.

"We're not in the valley; we're on what we call the beach of former Lake Agassiz," Myrdal says. "My husband and I raise mostly small grains, soybeans, corn, some edible beans, sunflowers, canola, kind of a variety. My two adult sons, now in their 20s, have joined us farming, so that's a new experience, and we have one daughter who's still in college."

Myrdal came from a strong academic family and planned to work in missions for a while before going to college at the University of Oslo. What was supposed to be a brief stint turned into 12 years in the U.S. and Central America; she was working in missions and relief, fighting sex trafficking in refugee camps and inner cities.

While still working in the mission field in 1993, she met her husband, Mark. It wasn't long before the woman from Norway who grew up accustomed to mountains and the ocean settled near Edinburg, North Dakota.

"It's very flat here, so I tell my husband it must be love that keeps me here," Myrdal quipped.

Myrdal became involved with local grassroots politics, including education, pro-life and pro-family issues, and agriculture. When the local state senator whom the Myrdal's had helped chose not to seek reelection, his supporters were looking for another candidate to take his place. Someone suggested Myrdal.

"I kind of joked, and I said, well, if I'm supposed to do that, God's going to have to write it in Norwegian, at midnight and in pink on my barn door," Myrdal explained.

Myrdal stated that her husband's family was involved politically, with his mother serving as lieutenant governor in the 1990s. Myrdal's family encouraged her to seek the Senate seat, which she did, winning her first election in 2017.

Myrdal now serves as vice chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, sits on the Senate Judiciary Committee and is a committee chair during the interim session.

Myrdal points to water issues, such as water conveyance and easements, as frequent concerns for agriculture and rural North Dakota along with transportation and infrastructure. To help address the needs of rural North Dakota, Myrdal started the rural caucus.

"I started a rural caucus because 40% of us live in rural North Dakota, but we have less than 40% of the representation because cities like Fargo and Bismarck get a lot more senators," Myrdal confirmed. "Of course, we support them, too, but I felt like we needed a stronger rural voice."

During the recent legislative session, the caucus met weekly to discuss the needs of rural North Dakota. The rural caucus was influential during that session, supporting property tax relief as well as securing additional funds for rural infrastructure repair and upgrades. Myrdal expects tax relief for farm and rural properties to be addressed in the coming session.

Myrdal says that the camaraderie of serving in the Senate makes the task of service enjoyable, even when the debate gets strong. She also understands the gravity of the role she fills.

"This title of Senator doesn't belong to me; it belongs to the constituents, and I carry it as long as they allow it," Myrdal explains. "That title carries some responsibility, but also some authorities. It's such a blessing to be able to use that title on behalf of one of my constituents. It just opens door, and it's fun when you can use the title for good, for an individual who's struggling with something that government has in the way."

—Story by Dan Lemke, photo provided by the North Dakota Legislative Assembly

MAHA Strategy Released

Ag groups, including the American Soybean Association (ASA) have expressed cautious optimism following the Make America Healthy Again Commission's release of the Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy. The strategy acknowledges the Environmental Protection Agency's robust, science-based pesticide approval process. The strategy also highlights the benefits of precision agriculture while proposing policies to expand access to these tools.

Soybean industry leaders acknowledge the Commission was open to learning more about modern farming practices, but ASA remains concerned about the misinformed rhetoric from some Commission members around edible soybean oil, which is backed by decades of science confirming its safety and nutritional value.

Why NDSGA Membership Matters

Joining the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association gives farmers a strong voice in Bismarck and Washington, D.C. Together, we protect your land, livelihood, and community by making sure farmers are heard.

Recent Wins in North Dakota

Duty to Warn Legislation (HB 1318)

- Ensures access and clarity: Guarantees farmers can use crop protection tools and provides clear guidance for safe, effective use.
- Protects and supports: Shields companies from lawsuits and promotes long-term growth for agriculture.

Ag Research & Value-Added Processing

- SB 2020 funds NDSU research, Extension, research centers, and the Northern Crops Institute.
- SB 2342 provides $5 million to support animal agriculture processing facilities through a milk processing incentive program.
- These investments strengthen agriculture through research, innovation, and new markets.

Rural Infrastructure (SB 2012)

- Improves safety and efficiency: Enhances rural roads and bridges for safer, more efficient travel.
- Boosts infrastructure investment: Secures funding to strengthen critical transportation networks and support rural communities.

Landowner Protections (HB 1176)

- Extended property tax exemptions for farm storage and buildings help farmers reinvest in their operations, defend family farms, and strengthen rural communities.

Wins at the National Level

One Big Beautiful Bill Act

- Expands the farm safety net through stronger crop insurance and price protections, long-term conservation funding, crop export support, extended family farm tax breaks, and increased biodiesel and renewable diesel production.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- Supporting efforts to reopen easement mapping and appeals, simplify setback rules for land titles, and back a resolution (SCR 4002) giving landowners flexibility to end perpetual easements.

North Dakota Soybean Growers Association

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: $250 ❑ Retired Farmer: $25

❑ 1-Year Professional Membership: $110 ❑ 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

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*Export initiatives supported by United Soybean Board, Qualified State Soybean Boards, the U.S. Soybean Export Council and USDA Foreign Agricultural Service. Source: Kaiser, H.M. 2024. An Economic Analysis of the United Soybean Board and Qualified State Soybean Boards' Demand- and Supply-Enhancing Programs. Cornell University.

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