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TRANSFORMING THE FIELD

POSITIVE GROWTH. STRONGER TOGETHER.

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NDSC and **NDSGA** swore in new leadership in June. Here's what they have to say about transforming the future of soybeans in North Dakota.

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—Photo by staff

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Honor the Past, Celebrate the Future

By Chris **McDonald**
NDSGA President

Since starting my term as president of the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) in June, I've been humbled by the honor and responsibility of representing soybean farmers from our state who help feed, fuel and sustain our nation.

This year gives us a chance to honor a milestone worth celebrating: America's 250th birthday. For 250 years, our country has been built by hardworking people who believed in rolling up their sleeves, solving problems and leaving things better for the next generation. Farmers have always been a big part of that story.

North Dakota soybean growers continue that tradition every day. We work long hours, deal with weather that doesn't always cooperate, and adjust to changing markets and new technology. Farming has never been easy, but we've always loved the challenge. That's something I'm proud of, and it's helped our communities stay strong for generations.

Our industry continues to change, whether it's new seed technology, conservation practices, renewable fuels or finding new markets for our soybeans. We need to stay focused on making sure that farmers have a voice when decisions are being made. Strong advocacy has never been more important.

NDSGA plays an important role in protecting that voice. The organization works to support policies that help build demand for the soybeans we produce and help farm families succeed. None of that happens without members who are willing to get involved and speak up.

In my term as president, I want to keep our association focused on the needs of North Dakota farmers while preparing for the future. We may not always agree on every issue, but we all share the same goal of keeping our farms productive and making sure that the next generation has an opportunity to succeed.

America's 250th anniversary is a reminder that our country's strength has always come from people who are willing to work hard and invest in the future. I believe soybean farmers will continue to do exactly that. I'm excited to serve as your president, and I look forward to working alongside all of you as we build on the strong foundation that's already been laid.

Speaking Up

By Brent **Kohls**
ASA Director

As farmers, we fill many different roles every day. From farm manager and marketer to mechanic and agronomist, we must be diversified in our skills to be successful.

One job that often gets overlooked but is becoming increasingly important for farmers is that of advocate. All of us in agriculture share the responsibility of telling agriculture's story. Whether it's having conversations with another farmer or communicating with someone who knows very little about modern agriculture, we need to continue to educate and engage with people.

Even in a largely rural state like North Dakota, a very small percentage of our population is involved with or works directly in agriculture. It's important that we connect with people not tied to farming because decisions made in Bismarck and Washington D.C. can impact agriculture, rural communities and the entire state.

I chose to get involved on the national level as an American Soybean Association (ASA) director to help tell our story to ensure the sustainability and financial success of farming. Many of us as farmers want nothing more than to be able to pass along a successful farm operation to the next generation one day. I want to do my part to make that happen.

When it comes to politics, I've always believed that if you're not at the table, you're probably what's on the table. Through ASA and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA), we are able to engage with lawmakers to help them understand the challenges that we face and the type of policies that can help farm families. We represent you, because we're farmers, too.

When we travel to meet with lawmakers, they know that when we walk through their door, they are talking to actual farmers. We're the ones working the land and feeling the effects of policy decisions. That's why when we talk to them about trade policy or burdensome regulations, we're there because those policies have impacts on our farms and thousands of others like ours.

Because of farming demands, we know most growers can't take the time to travel to Washington or Bismarck to meet with policymakers themselves. That's why your membership in the NDSGA and ASA is so important. Strong membership gives strength to our messages. Lawmakers know that when we speak to them, we're not just speaking for ourselves, but for the thousands of our fellow farmers who are relying on us to speak on their behalf.

I hope you'll join us. Together we can shape the voice of agriculture.

NDSGA Elects New Leaders

The North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) recently announced its fiscal year 2027 executive committee following a Board of Directors meeting.

Chris McDonald of Leonard was elected president, Stephanie Cook of Davenport was elected vice president, Josh Gackle of Kulm was elected secretary, and Todd Stutrud of Barton was elected treasurer.

The newly elected officers began their term on July 1 and will help guide the organization in representing North Dakota soybean producers on state and national policy issues.


From left to right, Josh Gackle, Stephanie Cook, Chris McDonald, and Todd Stutrud.

SCOTUS Ruling Affects Farm-Chemical Oversight

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) has ruled that federal pesticide law limits some state-based lawsuits alleging that pesticide makers failed to warn users about potential health risks which were not recognized by federal regulators. The court sided with Monsanto, now Bayer, in a case involving Roundup herbicide.

The lawsuit was brought by Missouri resident John Durnell, who claimed that the company failed to warn consumers about cancer risks associated with glyphosate. Durnell was awarded $1.25 million under state law. The court found that the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) prevents states from imposing label requirements that differ from the rules approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The case revolved around whether plaintiffs can sue pesticide companies in state court if the companies don't warn about the health effects that go beyond the ones formally recognized by the EPA. The ruling is expected to have significant implications for future pesticide litigation and could provide greater legal certainty for manufacturers operating under federally approved labeling standards.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) praised the ruling, saying that the decision provides greater certainty for farmers who rely on crop-protection products.

"Farmers depend on clear, consistent labeling and a uniform regulatory framework to use pesticides safely and responsibly," the ASA noted in a statement. The organization added that the decision reaffirms the role of science-based regulation for pesticide oversight.

The ASA explained how the EPA and regulatory agencies around the world have repeatedly concluded that glyphosate does not pose a cancer risk when used as directed. The soybean group argued that conflicting state regulations create confusion and could limit access to important crop-protection tools.

> **Farmers depend on clear, consistent labeling and a uniform regulatory framework to use pesticides safely and responsibly.**
>
> *— American Soybean Association (ASA)*

Trump Administration Declines USMCA Renewal

In July, the Trump Administration formally declined to extend the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade agreement, which had been in place since 2020.

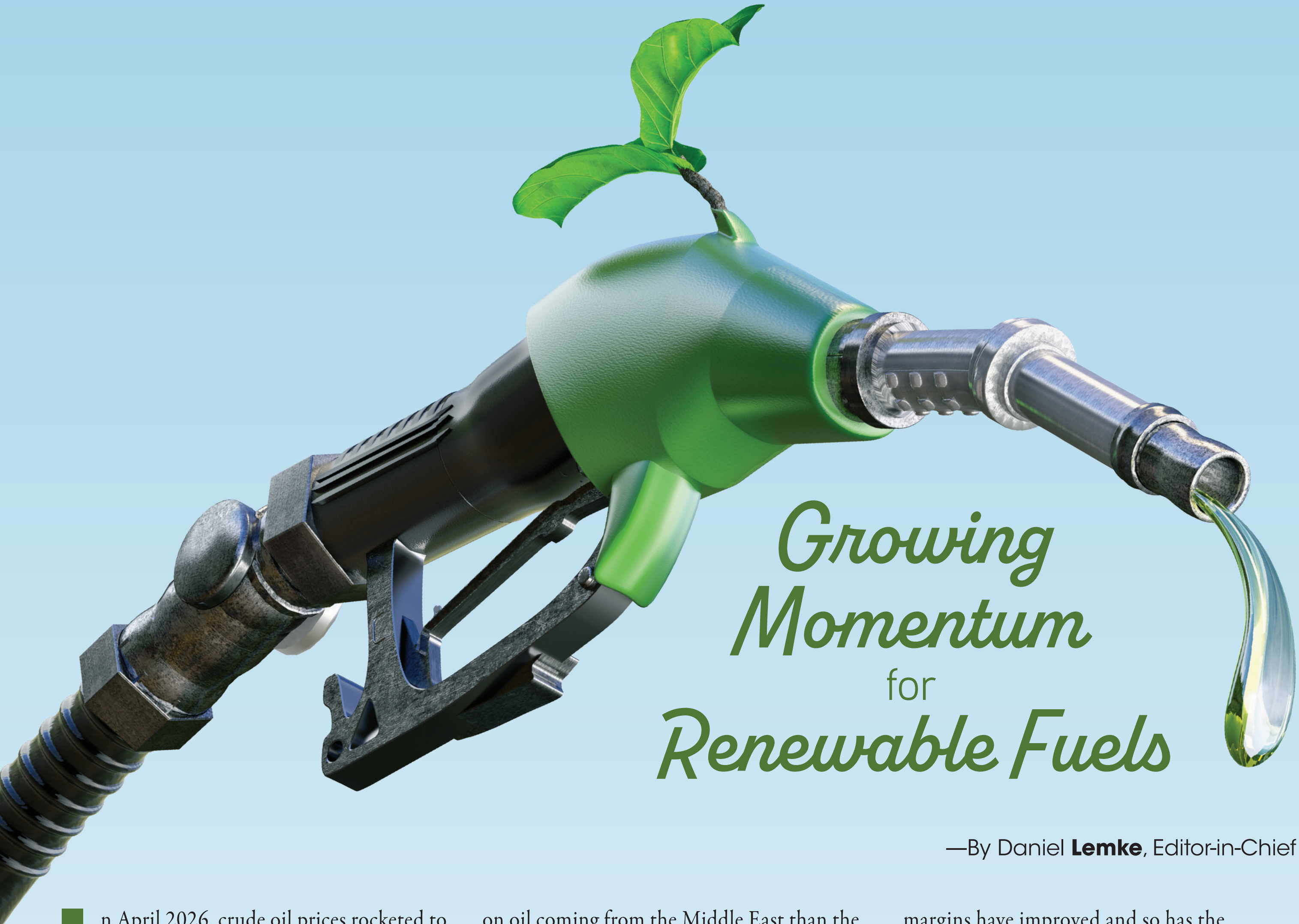
Renewal would have solidified the pact for 16 years, and the rejection means the agreement moves to an annual review.

The current USMCA agreement remains in force, but representatives from the three countries will continue to negotiate each year with the overall deal expiring in 2036 unless the trilateral trade package is negotiated with changes.

The annual review scenario does create some trade certainty.

U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer said in a statement that the U.S. will continue to engage with Mexico and Canada to address the agreement's shortcomings and trade deficits with the two countries.

Mexico and Canada are the nation's two largest trading partners, with agriculture products chief among the items that move between these neighboring countries.



Growing Momentum for Renewable Fuels

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

In April 2026, crude oil prices rocketed to $138 per barrel.

Prices have since moderated as the Strait of Hormuz opened and the flow of oil from the Middle East has increased, but the spike in costs for crude oil has led to higher prices for gasoline, diesel and biofuels.

"This is a global impact, and that means that other countries that are far more dependent on oil coming from the Middle East than the United States is, are looking for new sources of fuel," said Paul Winters, director of public affairs and federal communications for Clean Fuels Alliance America. "There are new export opportunities, not just for U.S. oil and refined products, but also for U.S.-produced renewable fuels."

Winters explained how the refining margins have improved and so has the renewable-fuels competition. What does this change mean for farmers?

"That means the margin for U.S. producers to go out and ramp up biodiesel and renewable diesel production are pretty good, and they're taking advantage of that situation," Winters asserted.

In April, the Environmental Protection

Renewable Fuel Standards on the Rise

In April, the EPA released Renewable Volume Obligations (RVO) for bio-mass-based diesel production in 2026-27. The updated RVO rule increases biomass-based diesel blending from 9.07 billion renewable identification numbers (RINs) to 9.2 billion RINs, representing a 60 percent increase from 2025 volumes.

Fuel Type	2026 RVO	2027 RVO
Biomass-based Diesel Volume	9.07 Billion RINs	9.20 Billion RINs
Advanced Biofuel Volume	11.10 Billion RINs	11.32 Billion RINs

Source: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

"This is a global impact, and that means that other countries that are far more dependent on oil coming from the Middle East than the United States is, are looking for new sources of fuel."

—Paul Winters, director of public affairs and federal communications for Clean Fuels Alliance America

Agency (EPA) released 2026 renewable volume obligations (RVO) for biomass-based diesel under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) at 9.07 billion renewable identification numbers (RINs), which are generated when a producer creates a gallon of renewable fuel. The total jumps to 9.2 billion RINS in 2027. The advanced biofuel volumes are 11.1 billion RINs and 11.32 billion RINs, respectively, for 2026 and 2027. The updated RVO rule will increase biomass-based diesel blending to approximately 5.4 to 5.5 billion gallons, which represents an increase of over 60% from the 2025 volumes.

Winters noted that expectations about the positive RFS volumes surfaced well before the EPA's official announcement.

"Various companies were already starting to purchase feedstock, starting to ramp up production earlier in the year," Winters stated. "Clearly, people have been picking up production; and it's everyone, it's biodiesel producers, it's renewable diesel producers."

Winters explained that the rule demonstrated a sizable change in perspective for the EPA. In the past, the agency had focused on the feedstock supply, the potential for shortages, and questions about how biofuels would compete with available fats and oil supplies for the food chain.

"(The) EPA finally recognized that we can actually achieve this and that biofuels are (an) ongoing opportunity for American farmers," Winters contended. "By the end of this year, we're going to be talking about the 2028 RFS volumes; we need to keep that momentum going."

About DOE's GREET Model Updates

—By Daniel **Lemke**

The Department of Energy's (DOE) posting for the latest version of the 45ZCF-GREET model includes changes to the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit, which were signed into law in July 2025 and became effective in January 2026.

"Biodiesel, renewable diesel and Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) producers are grateful that Congress adopted beneficial changes to the 45Z credit last July through the One Big Beautiful Bill. They now have certainty that those changes can be claimed for their current tax year, which, for some, end as early as this summer," said Kurt Kovarik, Clean Fuels Alliance America's vice president of federal affairs. "This increased certainty will help our industry achieve the administration's goals of generating more domestic energy and creating new domestic market opportunities for farmers: both of which are critical right now."

The model updates include improved carbon scoring data for inputs, such as natural gas, that were published in the draft GREET model in December. The updated model provides calculations for fuels produced in both 2025 and 2026, reflecting Congress' changes that took effect at the start of this year.

The modifications also include the deduction of Indirect Land Use Change (ILUC) scores and ineligibility for fuels made with feedstocks sourced from outside the United States, Mexico and Canada.

The tool can calculate energy consumption, fossil fuel use, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, air pollutant emissions and water consumption for a variety of transportation fuels on a well-to-wheels basis.

In May, Kovarik testified at the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) public hearing on the 45Z credit, where he highlighted the industry's need for the updated 5ZCF-GREET model. Clean Fuels Alliance America emphasized the need for taxpayer certainty in April comments to the Treasury and in a January letter to President Trump about the proposed rule.

The GREET model, which stands for Gases, Regulated Emission and Energy use in Technologies, was first launched more than 30 years ago.

> **"This increased certainty will help our industry achieve the administration's goals of generating more domestic energy and creating new domestic market opportunities for farmers: both of which are critical right now."**
>
> *—Kurt Kovarik, Clean Fuels Alliance America's vice president of federal affairs*

Why GREET Matters to ND Farmers

45ZCF-GREET model is approved by the US..Treasury as the system to calculate lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions reductions and determine eligibility for the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit.

Ensures Accuracy and Consistency

Drives Greater GHG Reductions

Supports Transparency and Accountability

Builds Confidence in Clean Fuels

Hope Grows for a *New Farm Bill*

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

Lawmakers are inching closer to ending years of frustration for farmers by passing a comprehensive farm bill.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed draft farm-bill language in late June. The proposed bill includes key priorities for U.S. soybean farmers.

The framework includes several provisions that are supported by the American Soybean Association (ASA), including legislation to advance plant biostimulants, expand conservation technical assistance, improve fertilizer research, strengthen rural broadband deployment, increase access to technical service providers and support precision-agriculture technologies.

The farm bill's draft also pursues advancements in market development and rural economic growth through the reauthorization of international food assistance programs, expanded access to guaranteed loans, additional flexibility within farm-storage loan programs, eligibility for precision-agriculture equipment under the Conservation Loan and Loan Guarantee Program, reauthorization of the Conservation Reserve Program and codification of the ReConnect Rural Broadband Program.

The Senate proposal includes several priorities that support growing domestic markets for soy through new uses, including increased funding for the Biobased Markets (BioPreferred) Program, improvements to the Biorefinery Assistance Program and the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP), and a directive for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish a department-wide sustainable aviation fuel strategy.

"A number of things that (the) ASA and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association care about were included in the reconciliation bill last summer when it comes to reference prices, funding for the Market Assistance Program, Foreign Market Development and other trade programs," said ASA Director and Kulm farmer Josh Gackle. "What this farm bill will do, if they can get it through the Senate and pass something to get signed by the president, is to provide more certainty for a long period."

Several policies from the 2025 budget reconciliation bill would be codified into permanent law in a new farm bill.

"There are still several things that we need the farm bill to take care of, including conservation programs that are so important to North Dakota; we've got a lot of the loan programs which are critical to help young farmers and even established farmers," stated Dazey farmer and ASA Director Justin Sherlock. "We have some tougher economic times, and more people are reliant on the Farm Service Agency for loans. We're trying to grow the resiliency of agriculture in the United States, and some of these grant and loan programs are critical."

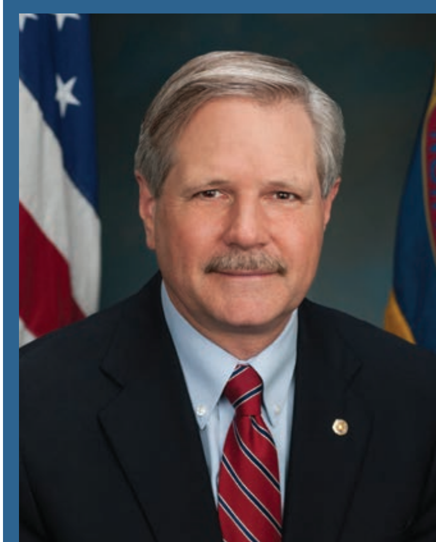
North Dakota Senator John Hoeven, a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, is pleased with the language in the Senate bill.

"We appreciate Chairman Boozman for working with us to write a farm bill that is all about supporting the farmers and ranchers who ensure Americans continue to have access to the highest-quality, lowest-cost food supply in the world," North Dakota Senator John Hoeven said in a statement. "This legislation builds on our long-term priorities of strengthening the farm safety net, advancing ag research and securing market access for our producers. At the same time, the farm bill includes legislation I introduced to address key issues in farm country, including the need for greater fertilizer storage and handling capacity and increased access to capital. I look forward to moving this legislation forward and passing a strong farm bill that maintains our nation's network of family farms and ranches."

Gackle, who previously served as the ASA president and chairman, has advocated for a new farm bill for years. Seeing progress on a comprehensive bill is encouraging.

"There's momentum now," Gackle contended. "Over the past two-to-three years, we haven't seen either the House or the Senate move forward and try to get something passed and to the president's desk. So, to see something come out of the House and now for the Senate Ag Committee, that's something we haven't seen over the past few years."

> "This legislation builds on our long-term priorities of strengthening the farm safety net, advancing ag research and securing market access for our producers. At the same time, the farm bill includes legislation I introduced to address key issues in farm country, including the need for greater fertilizer storage and handling capacity and increased access to capital. I look forward to moving this legislation forward and passing a strong farm bill that maintains our nation's network of family farms and ranches."
>
> *—Senator John Hoeven*



Sherlock hopes this farm bill and future versions can be done with support from both sides of the political aisle.

"I hope we can agree that farm and food security are national security issues, and they should be done in a bipartisan way," Sherlock asserted. "My hope going forward is that we can use the farm bill as a tool to try and bring the parties back together and find some common ground."

NDSU Study Reveals Tariff Impacts on ND

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

A study released by North Dakota State University's (NDSU) Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) revealed that U.S. tariffs and retaliatory actions are causing significant economic losses for American farmers.

The study found that retaliatory tariffs from China caused nearly $15 billion in annualized losses for American agricultural exports.

While the retaliation impacts are felt across numerous commodities, soybeans account for about half of the total losses at $6.8 billion.

"The numbers are pretty staggering," said study author, NDSU Associate Professor and Director for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies Sandro Steinbach.

The study, which covered March 2025 through February 2026, also showed that tariffs levied on agricultural imports enacted under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act have increased costs for farmers. It helped researchers understand why and how North Dakota farmers could be impacted soon.

Steinbach said the study is the first attempt to measure impacts empirically, using actual economic evidence to show the implications of policy decisions, particularly on the Chinese side.

"I think it's useful and insightful information in terms of trying to quantify the problem at hand," Steinbach added.

Examining Export Phases

U.S. agricultural exports to China have moved through several distinct phases over the past quarter century, but 2025 stands out as the steepest year-on-year decline, according to the NDSU report.

Exports grew from approximately $1.7 billion in 2000 to a peak near $38 billion in 2022. The expansion included a sharp two-year dip during the 2018–19 round of Chinese retaliation, followed by a recovery to the 2022 peak supported by the January 2020 Phase One purchase commitments and a substantial rebuild of Chinese feed demand.

> **"There are many producer groups that have been heavily affected and there has been significant damage in the upper Midwest. North Dakota and Minnesota have seen substantial disruptions."**
>
> *—Sandro Steinbach, NDSU Associate Professor and Director for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies*

Examining Impacts on ND Farmers

North Dakota farmers were heavily affected by a trade war with China in 2018, but the 2025 retaliation hit growers even harder.

"If you compare 2018 to what we have estimated for 2025, we see that those impacts are about 41 percent higher during the last round, which is obviously a really big issue for American agriculture," Steinbach said. "There are many producer groups that have been heavily impacted and there has been significant damage in the upper Midwest. North Dakota and Minnesota have seen substantial disruptions."

Why Soybeans Are Hit Hard

Soybeans are one of the hardest-hit commodities because of the political climate and ongoing strategic trading, Steinbach said.

China's government and numerous state-traded companies have a lot of control over what is imported, and trade policies can be made quickly. That was evident in the fall of 2025 when U.S. soybeans— particularly those from the Upper Midwest—were price-competitive compared to Brazilian soybeans, yet very few soybeans were imported to China.

"There is a lot of political decision making involved in soybeans, which puts them now at the losing end on some of the disruptions that we see in international markets," Steinbach explained. "The losses we see in North Dakota are almost $500 million, primarily from soybeans."

In addition, farmers face ongoing challenges both with export market disruptions, as well as increased input costs.

"You have a double-margin squeeze because you're squeezed on the input cost margin, and then you're squeezed on the output margin. Overall, the ability to make a positive return for many producers is going to be severely limited," Steinbach said.

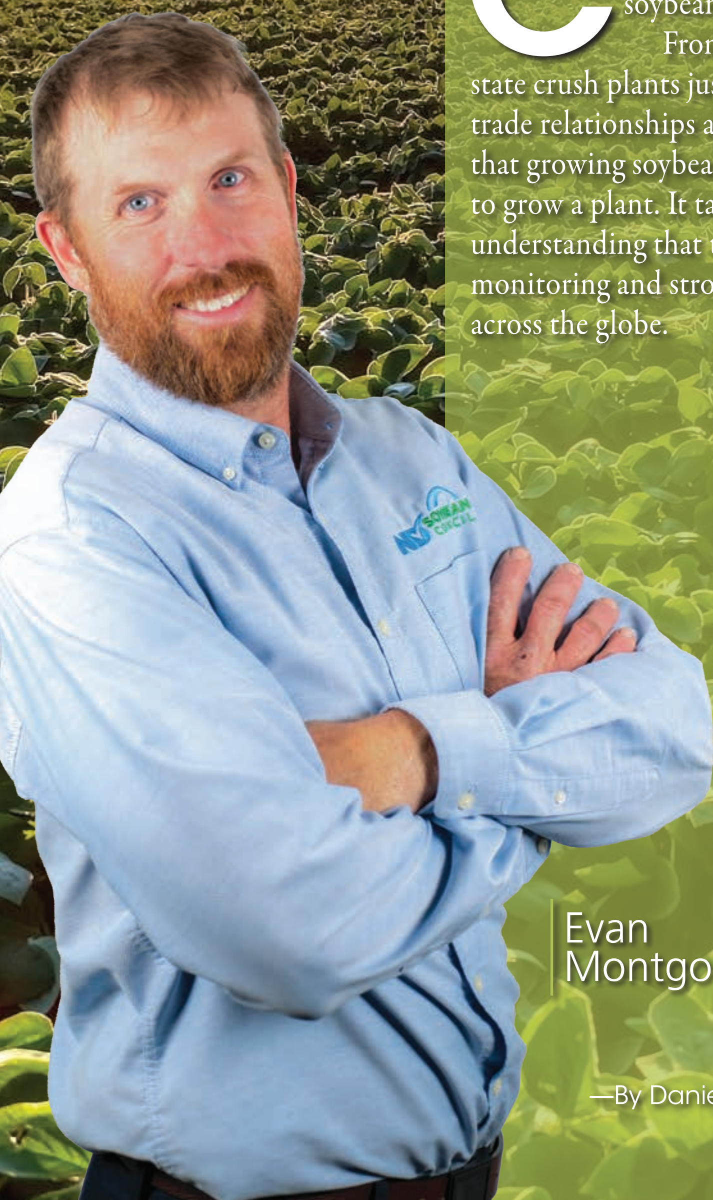
New Federal Commitment Could Add to Existing Soybean Commitments

In May, the Trump administration announced a framework for additional sales of U.S. agricultural products to China. The announced total of $17 billion of additional ag product purchases would come on top of the existing commitments of at least 25 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans annually. If those commitments come to fruition, exports of U.S. ag products to China could reach $28 to $30 billion annually from 2026 to 2028.

TRANSFORMING THE FIELD

Chris McDonald and Evan Montgomery have farmed through many modern soybean-industry transformations.

From the construction of two in-state crush plants just two years ago to building vital trade relationships across the world, both understand that growing soybeans takes more than knowing how to grow a plant. It takes knowledge, patience and an understanding that this industry requires precision monitoring and strong relationships at home and across the globe.



Evan Montgomery

Chris McDonald

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

> **“So much of farming is affected by government policy. The NDSGA gave me a way to learn how that policy is created and to have a voice in the process.”**
>
> *—Chris McDonald, NDSGA Board President*

Montgomery was elected to the NDSC board in 2022 to represent soybean farmers in District 7, which includes Grand Forks and Traill Counties, and he was elected board chair in June.

McDonald was also elected to the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) board in 2022 and became president of the association in June. He represents District 1, which includes Dickey, Ransom, Richland and Sargent Counties.

Together, these leaders will help strengthen relationships with regional, national and global partners while advancing North Dakota’s position as a leading soybean-producing state.

Chris McDonald, NDSGA Board President

When his father retired in 2001, McDonald started farming full-time with his brother.

McDonald got involved with the NDSGA and, in June, was elected as the NDSGA president because he feels strongly about advocating for North Dakota soybean producers in the policy arena.

It was policy discussion at the NDSGA that helped McDonald understand the myriad issues facing soybean farmers at the federal level.

“So much of farming is affected by government policy,” McDonald explained. “The NDSGA gave me a way to learn how that policy is created and to have a voice in the process.”

McDonald stated that he’s excited to tackle many issues, including trade and funding for more effective product transportation, alongside other North Dakota producers.

He added that the NDSGA is working locally in Bismarck to promote pro-agricultural policies and programs that can help address farm issues and can create new end users in-state; that effort is a good thing.

“Trade disputes have caused our exports to become erratic,” McDonald said. “We need to have reliable export markets for our products, which always takes work to maintain and build relationships. We also need clear and consistent farm programs that give North Dakota farmers stability to operate effectively.”

Chris McDonald (second from right) talks soybean production with trade team visitors to his farm.

“We are advocating for more funding to improve the roads and bridges our members need to move their products efficiently and safely,” McDonald said. “In Washington, D.C., we are working to safeguard the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Trade with our closest neighbors is critically important to North Dakota soybean farmers.”

Passing the farm bill and keeping crop insurance at current levels will be a constant push as well, McDonald asserted. The NDSGA is also working with state legislators to obtain wetland easement reform.

While most people don’t enjoy dealing with difficult circumstances, those trying times can provide the opportunity for growth, and McDonald is up for that challenge.

“In my term as president, I hope to guide policy to make our industry better for North Dakota farmers,” McDonald stated. “I will also help prepare my board members to step in to a lead role when they have the opportunity.”

Evan Montgomery, NDSC Board Chair

Today, Montgomery and his wife farm near Grand Forks, raising soybeans, corn, canola, barley and forage products.

Like McDonald, Montgomery has seen many changes in agriculture during his time on the farm. Farming roots run deep as the couple hail from multi-generational farm families tracing back to the 1800s.

Montgomery said that he felt compelled to get involved more directly with the NDSC after the 2018 trade dispute when the soybean basis skyrocketed to unprecedented levels.

After seeing the success of two crush plants open in the state, in addition to gaining access to additional markets in countries such as Mexico, Montgomery wanted to make sure that the leaders were building farmers for success in the future, too.

“When I started hearing of the potential for agriculture processing operations coming to the state, I wanted to be involved in whatever way I could to ensure that these projects came to fruition,” Montgomery asserted. “I felt it was time for me to get involved and do what I could to ensure a bright future for North

Evan Montgomery holds soy-based aquaculture feed while on a recent trade mission.

> “During my time on the North Dakota Soybean Council, I have met and worked with some of the most capable and intelligent people this state has to offer. I only hope to learn and serve to the best of my abilities, but I know I am surrounded by a strong team.”
>
> —*Evan Montgomery, NDSC Board Chair*

Dakota agriculture.”

Montgomery believes that the crush plants offered some resilience and helped farmers handle recent market disruptions better than in 2018. He’s also excited to open broader discussion about biofuels in the state.

“That, and the increased demand for biofuels, makes me excited and hopeful for the future of the demand for soybeans,” Montgomery contended. “On the production side as well, every year we are doing a better job of raising solid, high-quality soybean crops year after year. With the research being done on all aspects of production, I see our ability to produce these bumper crops only increasing.”

Ultimately, for Montgomery, leading and partnering with the NDSC and the NDSGA is about continuing to learn and to leave a legacy.

“I hope to continue the legacy of service left by all the directors before me,” Montgomery stated. “During my time on the North Dakota Soybean Council, I have met and worked with some of the most capable and intelligent people this state has to offer. I only hope to learn and serve to the best of my abilities, but I know I am surrounded by a strong team.”

Making it Happen—Together

As newly elected leaders, McDonald and Montgomery intend to lead organizations that transform North Dakota’s soybean future.

Both leaders know this fact: Farmers involved with the NDSGA and the NDSC are committed to doing more than watching industry developments. They’re intent on helping the industry grow.

“We know that the North Dakota farmer can bring to bear incredible production of soybeans,” Montgomery said. “We live and farm in some of the most productive and diverse soils in the world. It’s our responsibility to find and build demand for that crop, and to give farmers the tools and information they need to continue to meet and exceed production goals.”

The Great North Dakota Soy Transformation: 1980s to Today

North Dakota’s soybean industry has undergone serious transformation between the early 1980s, when soybeans were first planted in the state, and today.

From just a few acres 45 years ago to an estimated 6.7 million acres in 2026, soybeans have become one of North Dakota’s most important crops.

Two in-state crushing plants opened in recent years, processing hundreds of thousands of soybean bushels per day and producing soybean meal for livestock, oil for biofuels and other uses, and soybean hulls for feed.

Domestic processing provides soybean farmers with access to year-round markets, something that didn’t widely exist just a few years ago.

North Dakota’s proximity to ports in the Pacific Northwest that satiated the demand for soybeans in southeast Asia helped fuel the growth of soybean production in the state.

Industry leaders were already on the lookout for ways to improve and to enhance soybean opportunities when the 2018 market disruptions squelched export demand and spurred another revolution of sorts.

RED RIVER FARM NETWORK

BIG IRON FARM AND CONSTRUCTION SHOW

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

10:30 AM **Straight From USDA: the Latest from the FSA**
Jared Hagert, Deputy Administrator of Farm Programs, Farm Service Agency

11:30 AM **AgCountry Farm Credit Services Forum**

1:30 PM **Market Outlook Seminar**
Allison Thompson – The Money Farm
Tommy Grisafi – Ag Bull Trading
Betsy Jensen – Northland Farm Business Management

2:30 PM **Farmland Values Update:** Farmers National Company

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

10:30 AM **Making the Numbers Work: Managing Strategies Through Tight Margins**
Kent Thiesse – Farm Management Analyst
Brad Parman – NDSU Farm Management Specialist

11:30 PM **AgCountry Credit Services Forum**

1:30 PM **Market Outlook Seminar**
Randy Martinson – Martinson Ag Risk Management
Jim Emter – Van Ahn and Company
Eugene Graner – Heartland Investor Services

2:30 PM **Farmland Values Update:** Farmers National Company

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

10:30 AM **Farm Policy Roundtable**
Dan Glessing – Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Gary Wertish – Minnesota Farmers Union
Val Wagner – North Dakota Farm Bureau
Matt Perdue – North Dakota Farmers Union

11:30 AM **AgCountry Farm Credit Services Forum**

1:30 PM **Market Outlook Seminar**
DuWayne Bosse – BOLT Marketing
Ray Grabanski – Progressive Ag Marketing
Tyler Schau – AgMarket.Net

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AgCountry Farm Credit Services
AgWeek
Pioneer
North Dakota Corn Growers Association
Farmers National Company – Serving America's Landowners
Minnesota Corn Growers Association
Thry Insurance Agency, Inc.
ndfb

North Dakota's Farm Income **Varied in 2025**

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

Data compiled by the North Dakota Farm Management Education Program show that farm income in the state was slightly higher in 2025 than during the previous two years.

By the numbers:

- The average net farm income in North Dakota for 2025 was $147,928.
- Higher livestock prices helped beef-cattle producers compared to crop farmers.
- The average net farm income for crop-only farmers in North Dakota was $128,497 compared to $253,561 for beef cattle-only producers.
- Farms with both crops and beef had higher-than-average incomes at $206,001.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Agricultural Finance Specialist Dr. Bryon Parman said that, in 2025, farmers in the Red River Valley had a challenging year largely because sugarbeets fared poorly.

"Non-sugarbeet areas did a little better," Parman said.

Livestock production had a major effect on net farm income averages because beef-cattle prices were very strong.

"When you look at net farm income, beef cattle had a record year last year, so it makes things look a bit better than they were," Parman added. "When you take beef cattle out of it, it was pretty rough for row-crop farmers."

Parman described how many crop farmers benefited from strong yields.

> **"When you look at net farm income, beef cattle had a record year last year. ... When you take beef cattle out of it, it was pretty rough for row-crop farmers."**
>
> *—Dr. Bryon Parman, NDSU Agricultural Finance Specialist*

Low commodity prices and high input costs are weighing on farm income ahead of the 2026 harvest.

Nationwide, farm-related Chapter 12 bankruptcy filings soared in April to a more than six-year high. While that increase is concerning, Parman doesn't expect to see many bankruptcies in North Dakota.

"Banks haven't loaned out money in a manner that bankruptcy is the best option," Parman explained. "They've protected themselves on land purchases with the amount of capital that the producers have to come up with to make those purchases. What we did see this spring is some debt restructure that's taken some of the short-term debt and making it long term so that folks could make it work."

For more information about the 2025 farm income, visit ndfarmmanagement.com.

2025 Average Net Income by Farm Type

STATEWIDE AVERAGE

$147,928

SOURCE: ND Farm Management Education Program

CROP ONLY FARMS	BEEF CATTLE-ONLY PRODUCERS	CROP + BEEF FARMS
$128,497	$253,561	$206,001

2026 ND Farm Income Increase, Driven by Government Payments

The Spring 2026 North Dakota Farm Income Outlook, co-published by the Rural & Farm Finance Policy Analysis Center (RaFF) at the University of Missouri and the Center for Agricultural Policy and Trade Studies (CAPTS) at NDSU, has provided an updated assessment of the state's agricultural sector under evolving market and policy conditions.

According to the analysis, North Dakota net farm income is projected to increase by 42% in 2026, reaching $4.46 billion, marking the second-highest level on record.

This growth is driven primarily by a $1.59 billion increase in government payments, which is expected to reach a record $3.05 billion.

According to North Dakota Farm Management, government bridge payments helped prevent a decline in average net farm income. Without strong yields, government support, and higher livestock prices, 2025 could have been weaker compared to 2024.

In 2025, the average gross cash farm income was $1,122,218. Of that total, 72.4% came from crop sales, 9.9% from government payments.

Crop and livestock receipts are also projected to rise modestly alongside higher crop insurance indemnities.

Methodology

CAPTS researchers collaborated with the RaFF economists to incorporate the latest USDA and Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute projections for a comprehensive view of how government support, commodity markets, and input costs are shaping farm profitability.

"This outlook highlights the growing importance of policy support in sustaining farm income," said Sandro Steinbach, Dr. Sc., Director of CAPTS. "While market conditions remain mixed, government payments continue to play a central role in stabilizing producer revenues."

PUTTING U.S. MEAT ON THE WORLD'S TABLE

DIFFERENT ROLES, COMPLEMENTARY MISSIONS, ALL FOCUSED ON DRIVING VALUE BACK TO THE U.S. SOYBEAN FARMER.

Celebrating 35 years of the national Soy Checkoff

Dear U.S. soybean community,

For U.S. soybean farmers, the decision to come together 35 years ago and form the national Soy Checkoff[SM] was a defining moment that would reshape American agriculture for generations. Through collective investments into food, feed, fuel, industrial, exports and sustainable production, U.S. soybean production has grown from 1.8 billion bushels in 1990 to over 4 billion today. Because of what farmers have built together over 35 years, we've been able to create entirely new markets from the ground up like biodiesel, expand exports around the world to 90 countries and develop tools that protect yield on the farm.

The partnership between farmers and the Soy Checkoff traces back to a pivotal moment in American agriculture. For many soybean farmers, the drought of 1988 exposed the need for a national checkoff. Soon after, farmer leaders on the American Soybean Association voted overwhelmingly to pursue one, making investments available for international and domestic marketing as well as dedicated research into new uses. USB Secretary and Minnesota soybean farmer Tom Frisch believes the opportunity for every soybean farmer in the country to pool their resources and make a collective impact remains just as important 35 years later. "We need to continue to work together as U.S. soybean farmers and not isolate ourselves. We, as U.S. soybean farmers, need to champion our industry every day, every month, every year," says Frisch.

Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs) have been there every step of the way, serving as the connective tissue between national strategy and on-the-

USB Past Chairs gather for a photo in the Soy Checkoff booth at Commodity Classic 2026 in Austin, Texas.

USB Past Chair Sandy Ludeman participates in a Soy Checkoff town hall in 1992.

USB is formed from the publication of the Soybean Promotion and Research Order under the 1990 Farm Bill.

ground reality. "When I view QSSBs, they are at the grassroots level navigating concerns and opportunities with their farmers across the state. They are in touch with their local agriculture community about what's happening in their backyard," says USB Past Chair and Mississippi soybean farmer Philip Good.

As the Soy Checkoff thinks about the next 35 years, every investment made aims to grow demand, improve resiliency of the soybean crop and bring additional revenue back to the farm. "The Soy Checkoff isn't just about dollars invested from the half-million U.S. soybean farmers — it's about giving them the power to shape their own future and deliver lasting impact," says Indiana farmer and USB Treasurer Don Wyss.

One example of how powerful this partnership has proven to be is the advancement of high oleic soybean research and farmer adoption. We've seen over a million acres of high oleic across states like Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and the Delmarva region with QSSBs helping promote premiums of $0.75 to $1.25 per bushel. And there's potential to reach 5-7 million acres a decade from now. High oleic soybeans have returned nearly $400 million in premium payments to farmers — a direct return on the $130 million checkoff investment through 2025.

Another great example of partnership is the lower Mississippi River dredging project which added an additional $461 million in revenue to U.S. soybean farmers. Through checkoff investment in research, analysis and design, which kickstarted deepening the lower Mississippi River from 45 to 50 feet allowed for an increase of 500,000 bushels per ocean vessel and saves 13 cents per bushel of freight. This investment spanned collaboration with USB, the Soy Transportation Coalition, U.S. Soybean Export Council, the American Soybean Association and multiple QSSBs. "Investing in the research and engineering side of that project was a new venture for us, but it encouraged strategic thinking of how we can use checkoff funds in unique ways to improve all soybean farmers' bottom line," says Good.

As the United Soybean Board celebrates its 35th Anniversary we are proud of the work we've accomplished for every single U.S. soybean farmer. With our continued partnerships with the QSSBs we look forward to what this next chapter brings for the U.S. soybean industry. Together we can continue to deliver sustainable soy solutions to every life, every day.

Here's to the next 35 years of the U.S. soybean industry!

Brent Gatton

Brent Gatton
USB Chair
Kentucky

Cultivating Relationships

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

When their shiny, black bus rolled up to his Red River Valley farm in early June, Mark Knutson might have mistaken his global guests for a touring rock band.

These individuals were a group of trade associates from Kenya, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. The visitors were in town to connect with North Dakota soybean farmers and to learn more about growing some of the world's best soybeans.

Ultimately, the visits helped form potential long-term relationships, which North Dakota farmers say is critical for the future of soybeans' success in the state.

"We have competitors out there in the ag world, and when we're able to go to other countries and see how their ag industry works and have them come here, I think it tells them a lot about how far we're willing to go to be a partner," said Portland, North Dakota, farmer and trade team host Milo Braaten.

The farm tours complemented a host of educational courses from the Northern Crops Institute (NCI), giving international buyers an opportunity to pair classroom instruction with real-life experience in the field.

Not Just Another Photo Opp

While the equipment and beautiful June weather provided a fitting backdrop for a glimpse into modern agriculture, the visit to Knutson's farm wasn't simply a photo opportunity. Rather, the excursion set the stage for real conversations with potential global customers.

"These visits are extremely important because I'm able to show them … that we're very careful in how we plant, how we spray, how we take care of the crops so we can deliver the best possible products to them, so they and their customers can thrive," Knutson stated.

Knutson's farm tour started with a glimpse into operations, including a look at some heavy equipment that caused a few jaws to drop. For some people, it was their first time on a North Dakota farm.

"I brought out machinery to show them everything from the start of soybean planting, how we prepare the ground, to planting our soybean crop, to crop protection all the way to harvest," Knutson explained.

Braaten hosted a trade group from Central America, Asia and Africa; the attendees learned about quality, nutrition and utilization of soybeans in human foods and animal feed. Participants in these courses came from South America, the Dominican Republic, Kenya, Ghana, Sri Lanka and Cambodia.

Like his North Dakota farmer colleagues, the visit also gave Braaten a chance to explain the importance of building relationships.

"We need these people as trade partners," Braaten contended. "The more that we can get information out to the world about how we raise our soybeans and care for the land, it comes back to us in a positive way."

NCI's Courses Provide Deep Learning

Prior to visiting the farms, trade delegates received some educational training from NCI.

Program Development Manager Casey Peterson, Ph.D., said that three different soy courses offered in the spring provided crucial continuing education to growers and trade teams while supporting the institute's mission.

"These groups go beyond traditional trade teams, and they're meant to do more in-depth education and include an academic component in addition to the tours and the things they would normally see," Peterson explained.

Soy courses are supported by the U.S. Soybean Export Council, the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) and the North Dakota Soybean Council.

The classes focused on topics such as the supply chain, inland logistics, transportation and commodity trading. Later NCI sessions covered hedging, basis, spreads, risk management, procurement, feed formulation, contracts, global markets and geopolitics, with tours of the North Dakota Soybean Processors facility and NCI's feed mill.

Participants also completed a multi-day procurement case study before some of them continued to Pacific Northwest export terminals.

Creating Lasting Connections

Another stop on the North Dakota tour brought visitors to Chris McDonald's farm near Leonard, just in time for spring planting.

NDSGA President Chris McDonald welcomed participants from 16 countries to his farm near Leonard as part of Northern Crops Institute's Soybean & Soybean Meal Procurement Management course.

Past NDSC Secretary Milo Braaten welcomed international visitors to his Steele County farm, giving them a firsthand look at how North Dakota soybean farmers are growing food, fuel, and global partnerships.

"I was willing to be a host because I want to help North Dakota have more destinations for our products," McDonald asserted. "If visitors feel comfortable with how we raise our soybeans, maybe they'll be more willing to buy our soybeans or our meal or our oil. All of it helps."

McDonald led visitors through the process that farmers navigate each year to get a crop in the ground. He demonstrated the entire process: from soil preparation to seed care to seed planting.

McDonald stated that he hopes visitors took away lots, especially a sense of connection with North Dakota growers, from their visit.

"I wanted them to leave knowing that we take the quality of our product very seriously, and I wanted them to see we take care of our land and the environment," McDonald added. "We live here, and we want to live in a safe, healthy environment and community, and we want the best for them, too."

"They See with Their Own Eyes"

For Noyan Tulegenov, a WISHH representative from Kazakhstan who was on tour with Knutson's group, having participants from his country in North Dakota to see, firsthand, how soybeans are produced offered a true learning experience for his colleagues.

"The most important thing is to get more knowledge of American soybeans that are the highest quality in the world," said Tulegenov. "They now understand because they see with their own eyes the high quality of American soybean. Now, they want to buy it and use it in their feed mills and poultry farms."

For North Dakota soybean growers, those connections are worth cultivating.

For comprehensive NCI course details, visit northern-crops.com.

International visitors got a closer look at the technology and equipment that power North Dakota agriculture.

NDSGA Director Mark Knutson showcased North Dakota soybean production to international participants.

NDSC LEADER LETTER

When Quality Counts, North Dakota Shines

By Evan **Montgomery**
NDSC Chairman

For most North Dakota farmers, producing the highest quality soybean crop is second nature. We strive for efficiency, sustainability and productivity in all that we do. Doing the right things and focusing on those factors helps make us successful.

Our efforts and the resulting high-quality soybeans that we produce don't go unnoticed by our customers.

I have had the opportunity to travel outside of the United States to meet with soybean customers. I've also been in meetings with trade representatives and buyers from other countries who have come to North Dakota to see firsthand how growers here produce some of the world's highest quality soybeans. Every time I have discussions with prospective customers, everyone acknowledges and agrees that the United States is the most reliable soybean provider. They also agree that we produce the most consistent and better-quality soybeans than farmers in other countries.

Farmers in North Dakota not only produce top-notch soybeans, we also do so sustainably. While sustainable production may be standard operating procedure for farmers, buyers notice. The U.S. Soybean Export Council has a Sustainable U.S. Soy packaging label available for U.S. soy users to put on their products to demonstrate that the soybeans they've sourced from the U.S. are done so sustainably. The Sustainable U.S. Soy label is an easy way for companies to showcase their dedication to responsible sourcing and environmental stewardship. The mark shows that a product meets strict sustainability standards.

Having a logo that demonstrates a commitment to sustainability may seem minor, but it really does matter. Our customers want to use the logo because their consumers are demanding transparency and accountability. The label provides that certainty and it gives U.S. soy products an advantage over our competitors.

Buyers, nutritionists and feed millers around the world know about the quality of our soybeans and soybean meal because we take the time to tell them and we demonstrate why our quality is a cut above. Through support from the soybean checkoff, the U.S. soybean industry has people on the ground around the world sharing with customers how our soy products can benefit their operations. Building relationships and demonstrating what sets U.S. soybeans apart from the rest is vital to maintaining and growing markets.

Much of this activity occurs out of the sight of most farmers, and that's okay. As long as North Dakota farmers keep growing quality soybeans, the North Dakota Soybean Council and other parts of the soybean family will be out there telling our story and making the connections that get our soybeans to markets around the world.

NDSC BEAN BRIEFS

—Written & Compiled By NDSC **Staff**

North Dakota Soybean Council Elects FY27 Executive Committee

During its June board meeting, the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) elected its Fiscal Year (FY) 27 executive committee. Evan Montgomery of Grand Forks was elected chairman; Ted Brandt of Enderlin was elected vice chairman; Jeremiah Undem of Oakes was elected secretary; and Dallas Loff of Wahpeton was elected treasurer.

Montgomery represents District 7, which includes Grand Forks and Traill Counties. He also represents the NDSC on the North Dakota Livestock Alliance Board.

Brandt represents soybean producers in District 2, which includes Ransom and Sargent Counties. He serves soybean producers nationally as a member of the U.S. Soybean Export Council's Soy Excellence Center Global Advisory Panel for the 2026-27 term.

Undem represents soybean producers in District 3, which includes LaMoure and Dickey Counties. He also represents the NDSC on the Soy Transportation Coalition board.

Loff was reelected as treasurer and represents District 1, Richland County. Loff also represents the NDSC on the North Central Soybean Research Program board.

From left to right: Dallas Loff, Evan Montgomery, Ted Brandt and Jeremiah Undem.

Three Retire from the NDSC Board

At the June board meeting, the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) recognized retiring directors Milo Braaten of Portland, Adam Redmann of Saint Thomas and Jennifer Meyer of Wilton for their dedicated service to North Dakota soybean producers.

"Their commitment, leadership and contributions have helped strengthen the organization and advance the interests of soybean farmers across the state," stated NDSC Executive Director Stephanie Sinner. "(The) NDSC extends its sincere appreciation to Milo, Adam and Jennifer, as well as their families, for their support throughout their years of service."

Milo Braaten

Jennifer Meyer

Adam Redmann

North Dakota Soybean Council Welcomes New Directors, Reelects Brandt

The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) recently welcomed three new directors to its board and recognized the reelection of one returning director. Their official terms began on July 1.

Andrew Haugen of Hannaford was elected to represent soybean producers in District 8, which includes Nelson, Griggs and Steele Counties. Haugen farms his own land and raises soybeans, corn, barley and seed crops.

Kevin Zikmund of Park River was elected to represent soybean producers in District 10, which includes Cavalier, Pembina and Walsh Counties. Zikmund farms with his brother Tim raising soybeans, corn and canola. Their operation also includes a small hog enterprise.

Andrew Doll of New Salem was elected to represent soybean producers in District 12, which includes southwest North Dakota counties. Doll returned to the family farm after attending South Dakota State University, and now farms with his wife, father and family, raising soybeans and other crops.

Ted Brandt of Enderlin was reelected to represent soybean producers in District 2, which includes Ransom and Sargent Counties. Brandt raises soybeans, corn and wheat. Brandt is beginning his second and final term on the North Dakota Soybean Council.

"We're pleased to welcome Andrew Haugen, Kevin Zikmund and Andrew Doll to the North Dakota Soybean Council and look forward to the perspectives they bring on behalf of producers across the state," noted Stephanie Sinner, executive director of the North Dakota Soybean Council. "We also congratulate Ted Brandt on his reelection. Together, these farmer-leaders will help guide the council's efforts to invest soybean checkoff dollars in programs that deliver value to North Dakota soybean farmers."

Andrew Doll

Andy Haugen

Kevin Zikmund

ND Land and Rental Rate Growth Slows

Despite a relatively sluggish farm economy, North Dakota cash rental rates rose by 19.7%, according to North Dakota Department of Trust Lands survey and North Dakota State University (NDSU).

These land values reflect a slowdown because data from early July 2026 showed a statewide increase for crop land values of 0.88% in 2026.

"We had some regions of the state down several percentage points, and then, we had some regions that were up a little," said NDSU Agricultural Finance Specialist Bryon Parman, Ph.D. "On the average across the state, we had just under 1% growth. That really speaks to the fact that we've seen periods of land prices slowing down or halting altogether."

Cash rents edged up during both of the most recent land price increases but at a much slower pace. When adjusted for inflation, cash rental rates across North Dakota stayed mostly flat from 2015 through 2022. While the costs have increased since 2022 and were up approximately 2% in the most recent 2026 report, cash rent has grown at less than half the rate of land prices. Most cash-rent agreements are negotiated for multiple years.

Looking Ahead to 2027

Parman explained that what the rates do for next year will depend upon farm income this year.

If income remains muted, that scenario will likely mean land prices and farm rental rates will stay largely static.

"If we get more of the same, I expect we are going to see flat, maybe a slight decline in prices, which if you adjust for inflation, flat is declining in real dollar terms," Parman added. "On the rental front, I don't know they're

—Continued on page 25

New NDSU Swine Facility Expands *Research, Education* and *Industry Partnerships*

—Story & Photos Courtesy of **NDSU**

The newly expanded NDSU swine research facility is designed to advance animal agriculture through cutting-edge research, hands-on education and stronger industry partnerships

North Dakota State University (NDSU) celebrated the completion and opening of its enhanced swine research facility in June, marking a significant investment towards livestock research, education and industry collaboration across the state.

The facility officially opened during NDSU's Swine Field Day on Friday, June 12. The event featured an open house, guided tours, research presentations and family friendly activities, offering attendees a firsthand look at the new space and its capabilities.

"This facility represents a major step forward in our ability to conduct industry-relevant research and prepare the next generation of agricultural leaders," said Greg Lardy, Ph.D., the Joe and Norma Peltier vice president for agriculture at NDSU. "By expanding our capacity and modernizing our infrastructure, we are better positioned to support producers, advance animal agriculture and drive innovation in the region."

The enhanced facility includes state-of-the-art equipment and expanded capacity that allows researchers and Extension specialists to conduct commercially relevant studies in swine nutrition, production efficiency and animal welfare. The project significantly increased the space for teaching and hands-on student learning, helping NDSU remain competitive to recruit and to train students interested in livestock production.

A Collaborative Effort

Over the past four years, the NDSU Foundation led a fundraising campaign to support a new 600-head expansion barn and a 50-seat classroom addition to the university's existing swine research unit. The project reflects a shared vision to strengthen North Dakota's livestock sector while creating new market opportunities for regional commodities. The North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC), the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council

NDSC Executive Director Stephanie Sinner (center), NDSC Director of Market Development Jena Bjertness, and NDSU Vice President of Agriculture Greg Lardy recognize NDSC's investment in the new swine barn and its commitment to supporting North Dakota agriculture.

NDSC staff toured the new swine barn, showcasing modern livestock production practices, technology, and facility improvements.

ND Checkoff Investment

The new NDSU swine research facility includes space for 600 hogs. The project reflects a vision to strengthen North Dakota's livestock sector.

and the North Dakota Farmers Union collectively invested $3 million to help make the project a reality. Their combined support, along with other private contributions, underscored the strong connection between livestock production and North Dakota's crop-based economy.

"This project highlights the strength of partnerships across North Dakota agriculture," stated Evan Montgomery, chairman of the NDSC. "Soybeans play a vital role in our state's agricultural economy, and (the) NDSC is proud to invest soy checkoff funds like this to help strengthen (the) demand for soybean-based feed while supporting the growth of livestock production. This investment also helps support the growth of the pork industry by preparing the next generation with the tools they need to return home, strengthen family farms and create new opportunities in rural communities."

NDSC Director of Market Development Jena Bjertness explores the new swine barn.

The upgraded Swine Research Facility features a new 600-head expansion barn and classroom addition, enhancing research opportunities in swine nutrition, production efficiency, and animal welfare while providing hands-on learning experiences for NDSU students.

Fall Soybean-Management Tips

—By Suzanne **Wolf**, *NDSC Director of Communications*

Whether they're bound for the elevator or the storage bin, a year's worth of work and investment is tied up in soybeans.

As a result, proper care and handling in the fall are vital for maximizing the crop's value and quality. From adapting to fluctuating temperatures and moisture levels to practicing safe storage, here are some tips for protecting your investment long after your soybeans have left the field.

Aim for Ideal Moisture Levels

The targeted soybean moisture level for harvest is 13%. In the fall, the weather fluctuates frequently.

Warm, dry days can drop moisture levels several percentage points in a matter of hours, making the soybeans prone to become dry.

"Drier beans in the 9% to 10% range are at the point where mechanical damage and harvest loss can take place in the field," said Kenneth Hellevang, Ph.D., professor emeritus and agricultural engineer at North Dakota State University (NDSU).

If the harvest weather is warm and dry, Hellevang recommends harvesting early in the day because the morning dew can help soybeans stay in their targeted moisture range.

Adjust Equipment for the Conditions

Unlike corn, the soybeans' moisture content fluctuates daily. Therefore, farmers must adjust the settings on their equipment.

Hellevang suggests that farmers make sure their combines are set according to the recommendations and adjusted as conditions change. Proper combine settings help to minimize damage and to maximize soybean seed quality.

"We can see a pretty significant moisture change during a warm day, so just because the combine is set right in the morning, we still may have to tweak it as we go through the day," Hellevang stated. "We need to monitor what the field losses are and utilize the technology that is available. We can't just set everything on auto and go. It requires making sure that things are functioning the way we want them to."

Practice Safe Storage

Beans that are likely to remain in the bin until next spring or summer should be stored at a lower moisture because higher-moisture beans can have an increased microbial load when weather warms.

"As we go through the summer, there are fungi and molds that are growing at 13% moisture and summer temperatures," Hellevang explained. "By mid-summer, we're starting to get ourselves into quality loss and trouble. Anything that we're thinking of potentially storing into the warmer temperatures of late spring and summer, we really need to be down closer to the 11% moisture range rather than 13%."

Check Bean Temps Throughout the Winter

Hellevang encourages farmers to cool beans into the 20-to-30-degree range during the winter in order to maintain seed quality and, then, to monitor those beans because it doesn't take long for them to warm up.

"By late February into March, we need to be monitoring solar heat gain and watching the temperature in the bin," Hellevang asserted. "Keep the stored beans as cool as possible during spring and summer by covering fans and ventilating the top of the bin."

Regular monitoring and timely management can help to minimize quality losses and to maintain the value of stored soybeans.

Suzanne Wolf has been the director of communications for the North Dakota Soybean Council since 2001 and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association since 2025.

ND Checkoff Investment

NDSC Chair Evan Montgomery shares details about his farm operations during a recent trade team visit.

—*Continued from page 21*

going to slow down as much. I could see a continued increase of a couple percentage points year over year."

NDSC Chair Montgomery Showcases Agriculture to NDGA Explorer Class

North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) Chairman Evan Montgomery of Grand Forks welcomed participants from the 2026 North Dakota Geographic Alliance (NDGA) Explorer Class to his farm on June 24 for a hands-on farm tour.

The program gives participants the opportunity to explore northeast North Dakota through visits to local farms, geographic sites and area businesses. The experience highlights the region's landscapes, agriculture and communities while offering a closer look at the people and industries which shape the area.

USSEC Director Pulskamp Visits Nigeria for Soy Conferences

Hillsboro, ND, soybean farmer and Director of U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and United Soybean Board Cindy Pulskamp visited Nigeria in June with a simple but powerful message: U.S. Soy offers a reliable partnership built on sustainability, innovation and farmer commitment.

"Nigeria's livestock industry is growing rapidly, and producers are looking for partners they can trust," Pulskamp said. "Being there in person gave us the opportunity to share not only how we grow soybeans, but why we do what we do. By sharing our story, we're helping position U.S. Soy and North Dakota farmers as trusted partners for years to come."

During her visit, Pulskamp attended several collaborative meetings including the Nigeria Now Conference, the CEO Summit, as well as the Soy Excellence Center (SEC) Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Advisory Council and Global Advisory Panel.

In addition to engaging with global soybean partners, Pulskamp shared how her family's 114-year-old farm achieved one of the lowest carbon footprints in global soy production by focusing on precision agriculture and soil health. This illustrated that North Dakota farmers are open to supporting global partners in their efforts to do the same.

"Sustainability matters because our goal is to hand the soil to the next generation in better condition than when we received it," she said. "When customers hear directly from farmers, it changes the conversation. They see the care we put into every acre and understand that sustainability isn't a marketing term, it's how we protect our farms for the next generation."

Better News for Fall Fuel Prices

North Dakota farmers paid a high price for diesel this spring, but relief could be coming as growers prep for fall field work.

According to AAA, diesel prices in North Dakota fluctuated from the mid-$3 range per gallon one year ago to a peak of more than $5.60 per gallon this spring.

By late June, the average diesel price in the state had fallen to about $4.50 per gallon.

Even with the price escalation, diesel prices in North Dakota have remained slightly below the national average, according to AAA.

North Dakota farmer leader Cindy Pulskamp represented the U.S. Soybean Export Council and United Soybean Board during global conferences in Nigeria.
—*Photo courtesy USSEC*

Identifying and Managing *Late-Season Infections*

Combatting White Mold, SDS and Brown Stem Rot

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

Farmers don't typically like surprises, at least not in their fields.

One unwelcome surprise is late-season diseases caused by infections that occur months earlier.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Soybean Pathologist Richard (Wade) Webster, Ph.D., said that these diseases are distinctly different, but the top three can result in an infection that isn't noticed until farmers have few or no treatment options.

White mold, Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) and brown stem rot are three of the most common late-season diseases found in North Dakota soybean fields.

"The disease-causing pathogens responsible for all three diseases live in the soil and don't move very easily from one field to another," Webster explained.

The trick is to establish a long-term plan for identifying, tracking and monitoring these late-season diseases.

White Mold

Farmers can identify white-mold infections by the white fuzz that grows on the plants and the development of new sclerotia, Webster continued.

Because it's well established across the state, white mold remains a persistent problem for North Dakota farmers. It typically occurs between the R1 and R3 growth stages when flowers are present on the soybean plant and when canopy closure occurs.

Fungicide applications can be effective for limiting yield loss. Unfortunately, according to Webster, white mold can infect other broadleaf crops, such as canola, sunflower and dry beans, which has contributed to its establishment.

Tips for White-Mold Management

1) Try cultural practices such as reduced seeding rates and wider row widths, which can improve air circulation in the rows and can reduce humidity within the plant canopy.
2) Establish crop rotation away from susceptible crops. This practice may be helpful for future years.
3) Continue to monitor fields over the long term. One of the most important management practices for white mold is ongoing field surveillance because the pathogen's overwintering structures, known as sclerotia, can survive in the soil for more than five years.

Sudden Death Syndrome

Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) in soybeans is characterized by yellowing and browning between leaf veins.

Plants affected by SDS typically have a white stem pith, but the taproot and lower stem cortex may show gray to light-brown discoloration and root decay.

"SDS is one of those diseases that's continu-



White mold is easily identified by its white fuzz, which can occur on crops other than soybeans. Photos courtesy NDSU Extension.

Sudden Death Syndrome was first identified in North Dakota in 2018.

ing to develop over time," Webster explained. "It was first identified in the state of North Dakota in 2018 in Richland County. It has been slowly starting to spread outward from that southeast corner. It is something that we're trying to track, and we're continuing to watch for it in each subsequent year."

Tips for Managing SDS

1) Consider using an early season seed treatment labeled for SDS management.
2) Select soybean varieties with genetic resistance or strong tolerance to SDS.

Brown Stem Rot

Brown stem rot is found widely across the region, according to Webster. However, incidents are low in most years because of a high level of resistance within seed varieties.

You need to take caution because brown stem rot can still show up in certain fields.

Tips for Managing Brown Stem Rot

1) Plant soybean varieties with genetic resistance to brown stem rot.
2) Use crop rotation to reduce disease pressure, especially in fields with a history of the disease.

"Our best management option is genetic resistance," Webster said. "We have good resistance across most of our varieties. However, there are, occasionally, a few varieties that are highly susceptible."

When in doubt, have NDSU Extension check

Brown stem rot and SDS can be particularly difficult to identify. Webster recommended enlisting a county Extension agent or sending a plant sample to the NDSU Plant Diagnostic Lab for positive identification.

While not as prevalent, Brown Stem Rot is still quite common in the region.

Researchers: Emerging Diseases Remain a Concern

Webster stated that NDSU researchers identified frogeye leaf spot in 28 North Dakota counties in 2025. While it is most heavily located in the eastern and central portions of the state, the disease has also been found on the Montana border.

Frogeye Leaf Spot

"Frogeye leaf spot is continuing to develop as a pest," Webster contended. "It's not a disease where we see significant yield losses in the state of North Dakota, but the fact is that these populations are starting to establish themselves; they are not disappearing. It's not something that I would recommend going out and spraying for during the 2026 growing season, but it is something to look out for and understand if you have it."

Unlike SDS and brown stem rot, frogeye leaf spot spores can move through the air.

Red Crown Rot

Red crown rot hasn't been found in North Dakota and has only been identified in a single field in southwest Minnesota. While there's no reason to manage the disease or be concerned about it currently, Webster indicated that farmers should contact him or the NDSU Plant Diagnostic Lab if they find something suspicious in their fields.

"Tracking and recording where those problematic fields are is a great tool for the next time soybeans are going in that field," Webster continued.

Contact Webster via email at richard.webster@ndsu.edu or by phone at (701) 231-7057.

Tips For Late-Season Weed-Management

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

By late summer and early fall, a lot of unknowns about the coming soybean crop have come into focus.

North Dakota State University Extension Weed Specialist Joe Ikley, Ph.D., said that there's also no better time than right before harvest to judge the success of weed-management programs.

"In general, the weeds are in that field will be the same weeds in that field the next year or a couple years from now," Ikley explained. "Fall is a good time to judge how your herbicide program worked, so we can make any adjustments for weed control next year based on what escaped your program this year."

Fall can, sometimes, offer a wider window of opportunity for weed management than spring presents, and whichever practice farmers prefer, it's vital to identify the weeds and then plan for ways to control them.

Managing Early Harvested Fields

Early harvested fields, such as wheat, should be scouted for the presence of weeds because kochia and waterhemp can regrow even if they've been cut by the combine head.

Waterhemp flushes are possible if rain falls after wheat harvest. Ikley recommends either tilling the weeds out if farmers are in a conventional-till system or spraying them if it's a no-till operation.

According to Ikley, waterhemp can produce hundreds or thousands of seeds on an individual plant basis.

"The important thing is to make sure they don't go to seed," Ikley maintained. "We can have kochia produce as many as 15,000 seeds from a plant that has regrown from a stump after wheat harvest."

Residual Herbicide Usage

Ikley described how he has seen an increased number of farmers using residual herbicides in the fall in order to control early emerging weeds, such as kochia. For a fall application, growers should wait as close to ground freeze as possible to reduce herbicide degradation in the fall.

Fall kochia can spread seed across fields, increasing weed pressure in future soybean crops.

Plants that survive a frost can add thousands of seeds to the soil seedbank and contribute to the spread of herbicide resistance.

"We'd rather have it frozen in place over the winter and then start the degradation process in the spring, so as much herbicide is available for kochia the following spring," Ikley stated.

Fall-Applied Herbicides

Fall-applied herbicides won't give complete kochia control in the spring, either.

Ikley mentioned that spring evaluations show between 60% and 90% weed control from fall-applied residual herbicides. The practice won't eliminate the need for spring management, but the action has proven to be effective at reducing the spring weed density, which makes the spring-emerging kochia more manageable.

Managing Winter Annuals and Perennials

Ikley asserted that farmers in western North Dakota frequently deal with winter annual weeds and perennial weeds, such as horseweed and narrowleaf hawksbeard, or perennials, such as foxtail barley.

"We often can make an application in the earlier part of October or even late September because we want those weeds to be as small as possible," Ikley added. "They will emerge in the August/September timeframe, and then, we can spray them out in early October."

If the goal is to take out winter annuals and perennial weeds and to apply residual herbicide in the fall for the following spring, Ikley recommends waiting until October to spray. If the goal is to wipe out the winter annual weeds and perennials, any time in September or October should be good to make that application.

"Vary what you're doing based on the weed spectrum you expect in that field either this fall or next spring," Ikley said.

One waterhemp plant can produce hundreds of thousands of seeds, causing problems for years to come.

Nourish the Future Program Helps Ag in the Classroom Come Alive

—By NDSC **Staff**

North Dakota teachers spent time in the classroom and in the field exploring how science and agriculture work together to feed a growing population, to produce renewable energy and to protect natural resources.

The two-day Feeding and Fueling the World workshop was held on June 17 and 18 in Casselton. Sponsored by the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC), the event provided educators with loads of hands-on experience and classroom-ready lessons.

"Supporting opportunities like this workshop gives North Dakota teachers a chance to help students better understand where their food and fuel come from," NDSC Secretary Jeremiah Undem said. "Investing in agricultural education strengthens the future of our farms, our communities and our state."

Behind it all is an organization called Nourish the Future. It's a national education initiative that was developed to foster science teachers' critical thinking, according to NDSC Outreach and Engagement Director Shireen Alemadi. She explained that the program also connects students to modern agriculture and provides science-based resources that meet modern classroom needs.

"What makes Nourish the Future so successful is the hands-on experience it offers

Teachers engage in hands-on learning during the Feeding and Fueling the World workshop.

Educators conduct science-based expe
between agriculture and the classroom

Teachers visit a North Dakota farm to connect classroom lessons with real-world agricultural practices.

NDSC Secretary Jeremiah Undem shares the importance of agricultural education with teachers attending the Nourish the Future workshop.

teachers," Alemadi stated. "Participants explored everything from biofuels and genetics to digestion, watersheds and soil conservation, all while learning how these concepts connect directly to agriculture and the science standards they teach."

Throughout the workshop, teachers participated in laboratory investigations examining how data can be interpreted, how biofuels are produced from plant oils and how the macromolecules found in crops support food production. The teachers also explored animal digestion and completed activities which were focused on watershed management, cover-crop design and the challenges of feeding communities around the world.

Going Beyond the Classroom

For educators, the greatest value of Nourish the Future continues to be its emphasis on active learning.

Teachers described how they often leave the workshop with classroom materials, laboratory activities and a deeper understanding about the connections among agriculture, food production, renewable energy and environmental stewardship.

"Today's students are far more engaged when it is a hands-on activity, and their retention of the information is better when they are engaged and can and execute a process. A shining example is the Making Biodiesel activity," noted Scott Thiel, a teacher at the Southeast Region Career and Technology Center-Wahpeton High School Campus.

The lessons are designed to meet science standards while showing students how agriculture provides real-world solutions to complex global challenges.

As North Dakota agriculture continues to evolve, programs like Nourish the Future help ensure that the next generation of students understands the science driving one of the state's most important industries, Alemadi added.

"They're not simply given lesson plans," Alemadi said. "They work through every investigation themselves, collaborate with other educators and gain the confidence to implement these activities in their own classrooms. That immersive experience is what makes learning meaningful."

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Teachers participate in interactive activities during the Nourish the Future workshop.

BBQ BATTLE IN ND

Reveals Strong Soybean Partnerships

—By the **United Soybean Board**

For an entire weekend in May, farmers gathered in the parking lot of Scheels Hardware in south Fargo for the 15th Annual North Dakota BBQ Championship.

The event drew 70 top-tier pitmasters from around the country. They were competing for thousands of dollars in prize money, a state title and a chance at the U.S. Soy Combine Award.

Competitors in the 2026 North Dakota Barbecue Championship plate up some meat in anticipation of the keen palates of judges. There were 70 competitors this year.

A big portion of the annual barbecue event is dedicated to exposing the next generation to the power of soybeans—and the fine art of burger flipping. Youth have their own event called Kids `Que.

The 2026 North Dakota BBQ Championship drew more than 1,500 attendees and featured over 70 competition teams from across the U.S. and Canada.

"I might need to retire after this," said Blane Hunter of Porky Butts BBQ, Omaha, Nebraska, and the 2026 ND BBQ Grand Champion.

"The award helps bridge the gap between farmers, meat producers and cook teams, showcasing how sustainable agriculture supports high-quality food production," said North Dakota Soybean Council Executive Director Stephanie Sinner.

This year's Fargo event was one of five Kansas City Barbecue Society (KCBS) competitions, which were held nationwide, featuring the U.S. Soy Combine Award. The award distributes $2,625 in total prize money, with $1,000 going to the top finisher.

The North Dakota event also highlighted the growing importance of state partnerships in bringing the U.S. Soy story to local audiences. For Charles Atkinson, those partnerships also open doors with customers, consumers and producers who might not otherwise connect with agriculture.

"Every time you put a chicken or a slab of ribs on your smoker, you're supporting 500,000-plus soybean producers," stated Atkinson, a Kansas farmer and competition judge. "It lets them see what we're doing and that we are being very productive and very diligent with Soy Checkoff dollars."

Three representatives from North Dakota Combat Vets Motorcycle Association participate in the annual barbecue battle hosted by Scheels Home and Hardware.

Fertilizer in Flux

When and How to Change Buying Strategies

Three Tips for Balanced Buying:

- Communicate frequently with your dealer
- Don't try to do more with less
- Know what's in your soil

—By Daniel **Lemke**, Editor-in-Chief

Farmers are conditioned to deal with uncertainty brought on by weather and markets, but the rapid rise in fertilizer prices in the past year likely tested even the most experienced grower.

Stone X Group Vice President of Fertilizer Josh Linville said farmers can best manage wildly fluctuating prices by taking a different approach to buying fertilizer and communicating with their dealers about cost.

"We've been conditioned over the years that you just buy fertilizer at your time of year, and you just move on down the road, and it's worked," Linville said. "The problem is these markets are fundamentally different than anything we've seen in the past generations. I think that means we need to start approaching it from a new strategy."

It comes down to the fact that farmers don't typically sell all their crops at once, so a similarly measured approach to fertilizer purchases makes sense for many growers, Linville said.

"Rather than trying to call the low—because we don't do that on the grain side, we don't try and sell our grain at once—we need to start taking more of a strategy where we buy in two, three, four layers," he added. "It's more work, more conversations, but it also helps to ease the burden."

Communication with fertilizer retailers is also increasingly important because price changes occur rapidly.

"Some farmers view the retailer with skepticism thinking they're just trying to sell you something," Linville said. "But those more frequent conversations mean you've got a much better chance of jumping on an opportunity when it pops up."

Mike Flaten, vice president of agronomy for MRGA in Casselton agrees that communication matters because price changes can happen quickly, and buyers as well as farmers don't have a lot of time to make decisions.

"One thing that is really different now is when we give farmers a quote, they may have a few hours to make a decision and get back to us because we only have so much time," Flaten said, "Because it can change so much in a short period of time."

Try not to do more with less, either.

Flaten said a lot of soybean acres didn't receive any fertilizer in the past year. In addition, many corn growers applied extra fertilizer on their crop, hoping the remaining nutrients would transfer to their soybeans. While that strategy can work, a big corn crop may take up most of the fertilizer, leaving little for the soybean crop to scavenge. Understanding what's in the soil can help farmers decide if they need to invest in more fertilizer to achieve solid yields.

Volatile fertilizer prices are changing how farmers approach nutrient purchases.


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