



BEYOND THE BEAN

PLANTING EDITION



STRATEGIC DOLLARS DELIVERING PRACTICAL RETURNS

By Brent Gatton, Chair of the National Soy Checkoff

As soybean farmers prepare for another planting season, many of us are doing so under continued pressure from tight margins, unpredictable weather and rising input costs. On my farm in Kentucky, where I raise soybeans, corn and wheat with my wife and three sons, these realities make every decision — and every dollar invested — more important than ever.

This spring marks the return of *Beyond the Bean*, a farmer-first print newsletter designed to share how Soy Checkoff investments work on your behalf. It is a practical look at where your dollars are going and how those investments protect yield, strengthen resilience and position U.S. soy for long-term success.

This year also marks the 35th anniversary of the Soy Checkoff, three and a half decades of farmers investing together to solve shared challenges and build new opportunities. Over the years, those investments delivered on-farm supply wins that still matter today, from mapping the soybean genome to advancing national research platforms that support modern production.



Those decades of strategic investment created the foundation we're building on today. Today's investments continue that same long-view approach, targeting the threats that matter most: from soybean cyst nematode and drought to weed resistance and input costs. The Soy Checkoff focuses on helping farmers manage these challenges while staying competitive in a global marketplace that increasingly rewards both productivity and sustainability.

Inside this issue, you will see how your checkoff dollars support production research, partnerships with land-grant universities and state soybean boards, and tools that support on-farm resilience. You will also learn how these efforts open doors to new value streams and premium market opportunities.

As planting gets underway, know that the Soy Checkoff remains committed to making every dollar count and to delivering practical returns back to the farm, not just this season, but for generations to come.



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HOW SOY CHECKOFF INVESTMENTS PROTECT YIELD AND IMPROVE YOUR BOTTOM LINE

By Don Wyss, Soy Checkoff farmer-leader, Value Action Team Chair

Wyss and his wife, Cori, are third-generation farmers from Fort Wayne, Ind., who grow soybeans, corn and wheat.

In 2026, the Soy Checkoff is making targeted supply investments designed to address the most pressing production threats facing soybean farmers while creating long-term value and resilience.

Despite reduced collections, a clear focus with return on investment back to the farm remains a priority. The goal is simple: support research and tools that protect yield, improve efficiency and strengthen the competitiveness of U.S. soy.

It's easy to focus on what you can see, but the invisible threats matter just as much. With tight margins, anything robbing yield through the growing season is something we must stay ahead of. That's why key priorities include mitigating soybean yield loss due to drought and soybean cyst nematode (SCN), two of the most persistent and costly threats to soybean production. SCN alone costs U.S. farmers more than a billion annually in lost yield, making it the number one yield robber in soybeans. Checkoff-funded research advances both resistant varieties and management strategies that combat this silent thief.

Weed management strategies also advance partnerships with national extension programs, helping farmers stay ahead of evolving pest pressures. On my own operation, we're starting to see cracks in weed control in our soybeans. More research is being done, and how we approach weed control in soybeans going forward is going to be a bigger factor. As herbicide resistance continues to spread, these investments deliver integrated approaches that protect both current yields and long-term weed control effectiveness.

Investments also target opportunities to reduce fertilizer inputs and improve nutrient-use efficiency, lowering costs while maintaining productivity. On our farm, we use yield maps and a three-year soil sampling rotation to fine-tune fertility rates across our acres — replacing what the crop takes out rather than depleting the soil. We want to make sure we're at the right fertility, putting ourselves in a position to continue to maximize yields. With input prices remaining elevated,



every dollar saved on fertilizer goes straight to the bottom line. Management systems that enhance both profitability and long-term soil performance rise to the top as a core focus area, helping farmers build resilience into their operations.

In addition, the Soy Checkoff continues to invest in greenhouse gas research and carbon modeling updates to ensure U.S. soybeans are accurately represented and fairly credited in global markets like the European Union. As buyers increasingly make sourcing decisions based on carbon intensity scores, these data investments protect farmers' reputations, market access and future revenue opportunities. Getting the numbers right matters, because accurate data opens doors to premium markets and tax credit eligibility.

Partnerships with state checkoffs and land-grant universities play a critical role in amplifying impact. By coordinating research nationally and delivering it locally through extension, these collaborations translate into practical, field-ready tools that farmers can use this season.

Every supply investment is guided by one principle: what moves volume and creates value for soybean farmers. Yield protection comes first, and everything else builds on that foundation.



YOUR VOICE MATTERS TO THE SOY CHECKOFF

The **United Soybean Board** is collecting input directly from farmers like you to help guide decisions on research, market development, and farmer resources. **Scan the QR code to complete a short survey** — it only takes a few minutes, and your responses will help shape priorities that impact your bottom line. As a thank-you for your time, **every completed survey earns you an entry to win a Yeti® cooler.**



PLANTING A MORE RESILIENT FUTURE FOR EVERY SOYBEAN ACRE

By Laurie Isley, Soy Checkoff farmer-leader, Sustainable Production Work Group Lead

Isley and her husband, Jim, are fifth-generation farmers in southeastern Michigan who grow soybeans and corn.

We've learned that taking care of the soil is how you take care of the bottom line. That's the principle at the heart of the Soy Checkoff's resiliency strategy, which is designed to help farmers protect yield, improve environmental outcomes and create new value streams that reward good stewardship. The goal is simple: more ways to win on the same acre.

On our farm, we've used conservation practices for years: no-till, strip-till, cover crops. Soy Checkoff research confirms what we've seen firsthand: conservation and profitability go hand in hand. We don't see a decrease in yields, and we've seen real savings in input costs, as fewer trips across the field mean less fuel, less labor and less equipment wear. Programs like Farmers for Soil Health assist growers through that same equation bringing to fruition long-term benefits for their soil and their bottom line.



At the same time, investments in high oleic soybeans open doors to premium markets in food, feed and industrial markets. These specialty traits offer growers new revenue opportunities while strengthening the role of U.S. soy in high-value supply chains.

The Soy Checkoff's resiliency approach is built around four strategic pillars that work together to protect today's yields while building tomorrow's opportunities.

- 1. Strengthening U.S. Infrastructure** focuses on modern infrastructure and technology investments that accelerate delivery, reduce supply-chain bottlenecks and lower input costs across the U.S. soy value chain. Farmers get what they need faster and at lower cost.
- 2. Improving Data and Modeling Accuracy** ensures farmers are fairly represented in the marketplace. People want

to know how their food is raised, and issues like water quality are only going to become more prominent and tied back to agriculture. The more we can demonstrate through data that our practices deliver long-term benefits, from soil and water quality to carbon intensity scores, the better positioned we are to act on our own terms rather than by a regulatory approach. Updating models like the Global Feed Life Cycle Analysis Institute (GFLI), Indirect Land-Use Change (ILUC), and Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy use in Technologies (GREET) with current U.S. soybean data ensures farmers get properly credited and rewarded for the sustainability work they're already doing.

- 3. Supporting Farmers Directly** provides the tools, resources, guidance and partnerships needed to adopt high-impact practices that protect yield, reduce emissions and improve profitability. From precision nutrient management to conservation practices, these investments deliver practical solutions that work in the field.
- 4. Developing Alternate Value Streams** for soy supports the growth of non-commodity soybeans with traits tailored for premium food, feed and industrial markets, helping growers access new revenue streams and strengthen the role of U.S. soy in high-value supply chains where performance and quality command premium prices.

Together, these investments ensure soybean farmers remain competitive, resilient and profitable for the long term. Resilience is not just about surviving the next challenge. It is about positioning U.S. soybean farmers to thrive in whatever comes next.



TOGETHER WE CAN IMPROVE SOYBEAN PRODUCTION

Moving the U.S. soybean industry forward takes collaboration across the entire value chain. Better Together, a Soy Checkoff-funded initiative, expands outreach and delivers unbiased, research-based information to support stronger soybean production and informed decision-making for farmers and industry partners. Learn more at unitedsoybean.org/better-together.



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