BREAKING DOWN TRADE BARRIERS

Overcoming restrictions, regulations and other obstacles that hold back your international sales. PAGE 4
Beyond the Bean On-Air: the only TV show completely devoted to U.S. soybean farmers. On this episode, we'll take a look at:

• The sustainability of U.S. soybean farming
• Connecting your soybeans to international customers
• Answering the demand for soybean oil with improved stability and health profiles
• The summer lineup of farm shows and tractor pull events
• Monitoring soybean rust to protect your yields
• Learning from the unique experiences of an Arkansas farmer

**DATES & TIMES:**
- Tues. July 20, 9:30 p.m. Eastern/8:30 p.m. Central
- Wed. July 21, 11:30 a.m. Eastern/10:30 a.m. Central
- Sun. July 25, 2:00 a.m. Eastern/1:00 a.m. Central
- Sun. July 25, 4:30 p.m. Eastern/3:30 p.m. Central

**CHANNEL:** RFD TV
Or you can watch it on www.unitedsoybean.org

**Getting the Most Out of Your Checkoff Investment with Jim Stillman**

Jim Stillman, a soybean farmer and USB officer from northwest Iowa, works hard to ensure that soybean checkoff dollars are invested wisely.

*By Teresa Lee*

**Q:** You currently serve as treasurer for USB, following two years as chair of its Audit & Evaluation program. How do you ensure accountability in the spending of farmer checkoff dollars?

**A:** We have an extensive system of checks and balances at USB, including conducting a return-on-investment study every five years, financial audits of contractors and evaluations in all program areas. The 68 volunteer farmer-directors are involved in setting and approving the checkoff’s annual budget. In addition, as treasurer, I personally review all invoices and director expense vouchers. I also co-sign all of the checks for USB.

**Q:** The name of your Iowa farm is “Generations Farm.” Tell us a little about the history of your farm?

**A:** My great-grandparents bought the homestead rights for 160 acres of the original farm in 1876. I am proud to be the fourth generation of my family to farm our land.

**Q:** You had the opportunity to accompany soybean farmers not familiar with the checkoff on the “See For Yourself” program to see projects firsthand. What did they learn about how their checkoff money is being invested?

**A:** The participants could not believe all of the projects that the soybean checkoff conducts on their behalf. They were very impressed by the new uses research as well as our international marketing efforts. We visited several major customers of U.S. soy in Mexico, our second-largest international market.

**Q:** How do you utilize soy in your home?

**A:** I’ve always liked to bake, so I started experimenting with incorporating soy into recipes. One of our favorites is soy cheesecake. I use tofu in the filling and roasted soynuts in the crust. Through serving on the Iowa soybean checkoff board, we also became interested in soy candles. We began making soy candles as a hobby that turned into a business.
Breaking Down Trade Barriers

The checkoff’s role in overcoming restrictions, regulations and other barriers to international markets.

Cover Photo: Kevin Luthy, a 27-year-old farmer from Illinois, grows soybeans, corn and wheat and is active in the Randolph County, Ill., Farm Bureau. Kevin is married with two children and represents the fourth generation to farm his land.

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Send your comments and questions to btb@unitedsoybean.org or write to United Soybean Board • 914 Spruce St. • St. Louis, MO, 63102

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You, several of your neighbors and local leaders help establish a new soybean processing plant in your county. Your group develops a business plan, raises the necessary equity, finds and purchases an ideal site, then applies for and achieves government economic development grants and construction permits. Perhaps most importantly, your group finds your customers first. A decade later, your county commission unexpectedly enacts a new regulation that disallows the transport of soybeans on all county roads. The move upends soybean production in your area and puts the future of your processing plant in jeopardy.

Talking Turkey
That hypothetical situation might seem farfetched. But it serves as a reasonable analogy for what U.S. soybean farmers, and the majority of the global soy industry, now face with selling soy in Turkey. According to the soybean checkoff-funded U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC), customers there represent a sizable international market for U.S. soy, worth approximately $370 million.

A little over a decade ago, U.S. soybean farmer-leaders stepped up efforts after recognizing the country and region as a growing market opportunity.

“It’s now our 11th-largest international market,” notes Marc Curtis, United Soybean Board (USB) Vice Chairman and a soybean farmer in the fertile, flat Mississippi Delta. “It was a market identified as having potential. We have been able to reach out, serve it and increase U.S. soybean sales there.”

Last fall, the U.S. Embassy in the Turkish capital of Ankara learned of a new regulation from Turkey’s Ministry of Agriculture for biotech crops. It effectively stopped sales of U.S. soy from February until May.

“It proved to be a very stressful time since it significantly reduced Turkey’s animal feed supply,” says Bulend Ipek, regional director for AGP, the U.S.-based, farmer-owned cooperative. “The price of feed increased to outrageous levels.”

USSEC officials in Turkey have been working with Ipek, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Turkish feed industry to ensure decision makers know the facts about biotechnology.
Market Access Remains Critical

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) figures show U.S. soy exports to Turkey and other parts of the globe used 55 percent of the 2009 U.S. soybean crop. Record-breaking soybean crops in the United States and South America in the last year demonstrate that every market counts.

“We have to make sure we have open markets for the soybeans we grow,” says Curtis, who also serves as chair of USB’s Global Opportunities program.

Turkey wants to be a part of the European Union (EU), which has a history of disrupting sales of U.S. soy in its member countries. The EU has approved sales of biotech soybeans currently grown in the United States, but it has still found ways to keep U.S. soy out despite the need. The latest restriction on sales of U.S. soy in Europe took place last year after traces of biotech corn yet to be approved in the EU were allegedly found in shipments of U.S. soy.

“It caused quite a disruption and concern,” says Alexander Doring, who serves as secretary general of the association of feed manufacturers in the EU. “A long-term solution is needed because up to 120 new biotech events in agricultural crops could be introduced by 2015. It is absolutely crucial for farmers who want to use these crops to be fully engaged in the process of government reviews to gain approvals.”

Refocused Effort to Increase Sales of U.S. Soy

About a decade ago, U.S. soybean farmers adopted a more focused export approach for devoting checkoff dollars by U.S. soybean farmers has been matched or exceeded most years by USDA export promotion funds that help make U.S. agriculture the U.S. industry with the most positive trade balance. (See chart below).

“Soybeans have been a bright spot in the balance of U.S. trade,” says Roy Bardole, a long-time U.S. soybean farmer-leader who farms with his two sons in central Iowa. “I don’t think I can stress enough just how important it is to ensure open access for markets. Without it, we wouldn’t have the profit opportunities that exist today.”

Market Access Challenges Here at Home

Market access problems can be self-imposed, too. Take the condition of locks and dams on U.S. rivers. Transporting crops and other goods by river represents one of the most cost-efficient modes of reaching major customers. USSEC points out that 60 percent of U.S. soy gets transported by river, while the soy industry in Brazil (the world’s second-largest soy-producing country) still depends on trucking to transport the same percentage of its soybean crop.

The Soy Transportation Coalition (STC), a group consisting of U.S. soybean farmers from state soybean checkoff boards, USB and the American Soybean Association, warns (continued on next page)
the competitive advantage currently provided by U.S. rivers and other modes of transportation could be in jeopardy. For example, the STC cites figures that show more than half of the lock chambers on U.S. rivers are more than 50 years old. In just the last year, two gates on locks along the Ohio River failed.

“I don’t care how good demand for soy is, it doesn’t matter if we can’t move it,” says Bardole. “If we don’t maintain our locks, dams, roads, bridges and railways, we’ve lost a competitive advantage that had been the envy of the world.” (See sidebar on right for more details.)

Why What Happens Beyond the Elevator Matters

USDA figures show domestic use of U.S. soy has been flat or dropping in recent years. Foreign customers now use a majority of rows harvested by U.S. soybean farmers.

“It doesn’t make much sense to grow something without a market, where our soybeans are needed most,” says Curtis. “If we are not out there trying to convey the truth and promise of biotechnology, the negative, biased other side will be the only information resource for some of these countries.”

The United Nations (UN) claims that half of the global population currently goes to bed hungry. The UN’s Food and Agricultural Organization believes the world population could increase to more than 8 billion people by 2030. Whether here at home or across our borders and overseas, improving market access for biotech, conventional and identity-preserved U.S. soy will impact our ability to meet the growing need for soy. Improved market access could also determine what kind of future will exist for your sons and daughters and others who will make up future generations of U.S. soybean farmers. Breaking down existing barriers, and preventing the building up of new ones, can help ensure the profitability and future of the entire U.S. soy industry and its ability to help feed a hungry, growing world.

Roy Bardole (left), a soybean farmer from Rippey, Iowa, takes part in a discussion with Daniel Elliott (center), chairman of the U.S. Surface Transportation Board, and Dwight Wallace, president of the Los Angeles Harbor Grain Terminal at Wallace’s grain and oilseed loading facility in Long Beach, Calif. Bardole, a USB farmer-director, serves with other farmers on the Soy Transportation Coalition who toured the Port of Los Angeles, the biggest U.S. container port, in early March.

(continues from page 5)
To help educate the state’s youth about how soybeans and agriculture help feed the world, the Alabama Soybean Producers provided soybean books and science kits to educators who attended an Ag in the Classroom workshop in Mobile earlier this month.

Visitors to the Delmarva Chicken Festival June 18-19 competed to win a highly coveted chicken hat, which promotes the Maryland Soybean Board’s www.ThankAChicken.com campaign. The site explains the benefits of the poultry industry and allows visitors to “discover their inner chicken.”

Illinois Soybean Association
Soy Ambassadors visited Chicago in June to learn about soybean marketing and transportation. The purpose of this two-year program is to give emerging leaders an opportunity to gain expertise, industry exposure and a global perspective of the soybean industry.

Because infrastructure is important to soybean marketing efforts, a state-wide study funded by the Indiana Soybean Alliance was done to analyze Indiana’s transportation infrastructure and determine how it impacts local economies and the economic development of agribusiness in the state. A copy of the study can be found under the “Grain Marketing” tab at www.indianasoybean.com.

The Kentucky Soybean Sentinel is a new quarterly publication that provides the most innovative and up-to-date information on this dynamic industry for Kentucky soybean farmers to increase their profit opportunities. Subscriptions are free for all soybean farmers by emailing jvincent@kysoy.org or calling 1-800-232-6769.

The Louisiana Soybean & Grain Research & Promotion Board met in conjunction with Louisiana State University’s Northeast Research Station Annual Field Day, June 17. The board invests checkoff funding in production research conducted at the station.

Michigan farmers provided. Michigan consumers responded. The website www.FarmersFeedUS.org received over 200,000 sweepstakes registrations from Michigan in 90 days seeking a chance to win free groceries for a year. More importantly, the site offered the opportunity to learn about Michigan agriculture and the farmers who raise their food.

The Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council helps expand awareness of the ways plants fuel our lives with the Powerhouse Plants exhibit at the University of Minnesota’s Landscape Arboretum. From now until Oct. 10, visitors will learn how soybeans help create renewable energy and environmentally friendly products.

The Nebraska Soybean Board launched a 3-month statewide radio campaign to educate consumers and help them make the connection between soybeans and animal agriculture. The “Kick Back & Grill Out” campaign includes radio spots, live producer interviews, call-in meat giveaways and a website aimed at consumers.

The North Carolina Soybean Producers Association sponsored a wildlife damage survey to benchmark damage to soybeans and other row crops. In 2009, wildlife caused over $19 million of damage to soybeans.

The Northeast Region Soybean Board has launched its new website, www.northeastsoy.org, and is promoting soy biobased products at the Dutchess County, N.Y., Fairgrounds, where the annual county fair midway runs on biodiesel blends.

Learn about soy bioproducts, disease and pest research, modern animal agriculture operations and much more on www.SoyOhio.tv. Created by the Ohio Soybean Council, SoyOhio.tv offers a variety of informational videos and other resources that can be shared with friends and colleagues through e-mail, Facebook or Twitter.

Thirty Qualified State Soybean Boards invest checkoff dollars to benefit soybean farmers. If you don’t see your state below, look for it to be part of the rotation in a future issue. Or visit www.unitedsoybean.org for an update on checkoff investments made by your state and others all across the country.
Why Market Access Matters

By Katie Holjevic

All around the world, barriers have been erected that stop your soy from tapping into valuable markets. Take this quiz and find out why market access matters to you.

1. What U.S. president said, “Full and permanent domestic recovery depends in part upon a revived and strengthened international trade.”?
   A. Barack Obama
   B. Franklin Roosevelt
   C. Ronald Reagan
   D. All of the above

2. What country did the U.S. trade representative cite in the most recent National Trade Estimate Report summary as having especially troublesome agriculture trade restrictions?
   A. China
   B. India
   C. Russia
   D. All of the above

3. According to the Waterways Council, how many locks on U.S. rivers have exceeded their economic design life and could endanger the ability to get U.S. soy to major customers?
   A. Over 120
   B. 50
   C. Fewer than 50
   D. 10

4. What country does the U.S. oilseed processing industry believe has a tax on its oilseed products for export that creates an unfair export subsidy?
   A. Argentina
   B. Malaysia and Indonesia
   C. Russia and Ukraine
   D. All of the above

Ships currently have a tight squeeze in the nearly 100-year-old Panama Canal, but that could soon change. Panama plans to have a new, third shipping lane completed in 2014, which should benefit U.S. soybean farmers by allowing larger ships to have a shortcut between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.


What Internet Tools Do You Use to Help Manage Your Farming Operation?

“I use online tools for basic research, weather, markets, buying and selling equipment, and gathering information about seed varieties. I use search engines to find information quickly. You may not always find exactly what you need, but it usually gives you a good place to start. You would be amazed at what you can find. If I have a specific question or problem, I find that others have often had the same problem and the Internet can be a great place to find those solutions.”

–Matt Hughes, Illinois soybean farmer

“We do some pricing of commodities online. It certainly helps us keep as up to date as possible. We also buy and sell equipment online. It opens up a lot of barriers as far as distance and availability. We can do a better job of making sure we are getting the best deals possible.”

–Woody Green, South Carolina soybean farmer

“Weather is what I use the Internet for the most. I also use it to help answer questions. If I find a strange-looking weed or bug, I can go online to find the answer. If you want information, it is out there. I also visit sites that have agricultural discussion forums. I find it helpful for agronomic machinery and precision ag questions and have found really good answers from other farmers.”

–Dennis Phelps, New York soybean farmer
Growing Asian Economy Sparks Demand for U.S. Soy

Increased demand for meat in Vietnam leads to an explosion of U.S. soybean meal exports.

By Jeff Brown

By unloading just one ship, Vietnam recently imported more U.S. soybean meal in one day than it did in all of the last marketing year.

After importing the U.S. soybean meal equivalent of less than 350,000 bushels of whole soybeans in all of marketing year 2008-09, Vietnam in recent months welcomed the largest single shipment of U.S. soymeal in that country's history, a haul of more than 2.2 million bushels worth.

Six container vessels arrived in the Southeast Asian country between January and April. Combined, these six ships carried meal representing the equivalent of 11.6 million bushels of U.S. soybean meal. According to one estimate, sales of U.S. soybean meal to Vietnam for the current marketing year could eclipse the equivalent of 18 million bushels. By comparison, only four countries imported more U.S. soybean meal last year.

Joe Meyer, a soybean checkoff farmer-leader from Williamsburg, Ind., says checkoff-funded efforts helped bring about the growth by fostering partnerships between Vietnamese importers and U.S. container exporters. Meyer says this led to more container shipments of U.S. soybean meal to Vietnam. The next step, Meyer says, will be working with exporters to ship U.S. soybean meal to Vietnam in bulk vessels.

“Vietnam’s growing economy sparked an explosion of demand for meat, particularly pork,” Meyer says. “We saw this growth coming, but our ability to ship from the United States was limited. When I was there in 2007, they only received smaller vessels. But now, by importing container ships of U.S. soy, Vietnam is in the big leagues.”

Checkoff Connection

The checkoff works to boost international demand for your soybeans by demonstrating the quality of high-protein U.S. soybean meal for use in animal feed.

Focus on Soybeans” Webcasts – Boost your on-farm profit potential

“Focus on Soybeans” webcasts provide U.S. soybean farmers and farm managers with the latest news in soybean production practices and soybean research efforts. These segments are free to access for one month and new webcast(s) will be available the last Monday of each month.

Look for the “Focus on Soybeans” module on the official soybean checkoff website at www.unitedsoybean.org.
By allowing farmers to cut back on tillage trips and crop protection products, biotech crops enhance the sustainability of agricultural production. A new report funded by the soybean checkoff and compiled by the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) proves the environmental benefits of biotechnology. In fact, in 2007 alone, U.S. farmers reduced their herbicide applications by 47.4 million pounds and cut insecticide use by 8.67 million pounds by planting biotech crops. Meanwhile, no-till production of full-season soybeans soared, jumping nearly 70 percent between the 1996 introduction of Roundup Ready soybeans and 2008.

The result has been dramatic reductions in soil erosion and related air and water pollution. No-till and conservation tillage also conserve moisture and reduce agriculture’s carbon footprint by sequestering carbon, minimizing the release of carbon dioxide from cropland and lowering fuel consumption – in fact, the nation’s 65 million acres of no-till and conservation-tillage crops save an estimated 253.5 million gallons of diesel per year.

Biotech crops also show promise to help breeders meet or exceed the current average annual improvement in soybean yield. Those improvements will be vital to keep up with huge demand for food, fuel and fiber from population growth and improved living standards. For instance, to meet the projected soybean demand of 2030 – when the world population could be over 8 billion – farmers will have to add 168 million acres of soybeans if global yields remain the same as they are now, or double today’s yields in order to harvest enough soybeans on current acreage.

The document is a tool growers can use to explain to landowners why they want to adopt no-till or conservation tillage or as a reference when explaining to non-farm neighbors the environmental benefits of modern agricultural technology.

The paper, which was reviewed by a multi-disciplinary panel of experts, is available online at www.ctic.org/BiotechSustainability or in hard copy by calling CTIC at (765) 494-9555. The new document also appears in the United Soybean Board’s online library of information on agricultural biotechnology accessible at www.unitedsoybean.org/programs/biotechnology.aspx.

**Biotech Benefits Environment**

New report highlights biotechnology’s positive impact on the environment.

By Dan Towery, Ag Conservation Solutions

**Erosion on Cropland by Year**

Cropland includes cultivated and non-cultivated cropland. Source: USDA NRCS Natural Resources Inventory, 2010, Conservation Technology Information Center.

**Rapid Growth in Adoption of Biotech Crops Continues in the United States**

Data for each crop category include stacked varieties with both HT (herbicide-tolerant) and Bt (insecticide-producing) traits. Source: USDA NASS (2009), Conservation Technology Information Center.
Yielding More From Less

Recent study shows U.S. farmers becoming more sustainable by growing more efficiently.

By Jeff Brown

A recent soybean checkoff-funded study proves the U.S. soybean industry continues to reduce the size of its environmental footprint. The independent life-cycle profile study, using data from 2001-2007, shows U.S. soybean farmers and processors reduced greenhouse gas emissions and energy usage, compared with the previously used data from 1998-2001.

Checkoff farmer-leader John Cooper, a soybean farmer from Wynne, Ark., says U.S. soybean farmers, through their willingness to embrace sustainable farming practices, brought about this progress.

“All U.S. soybean farmers should be very pleased with these results,” Cooper says. “The data show we, as farmers, continue to do great things to improve the environment. We’re getting so much more output from every acre than we used to while putting in less.”

Key findings of the study include:
• The 2009 soybean crop removed from the atmosphere the carbon equivalent of removing 21 million cars from the road.
• A 12 percent increase in soybean yields.
• An 85 percent decrease in the release of nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas associated with soil and manure management.
• A 20 percent decrease in farmers’ direct energy consumption, including diesel and gasoline usage.
• A 45 percent decrease in soybean processing facilities’ energy consumption.
Living with Animal Ag

Do local livestock and poultry operations affect your health?

By Mandy Heth

Claims stating that proximity to large animal agriculture operations caused health problems number in the thousands and are difficult to prove and evaluate. The soybean checkoff and the National Pork Board (NPB) partnered to fund a scientific review process that would evaluate the documented cases and research on these claims and provide a conclusion as to whether it could be proved that animal agriculture was the cause of any negative effects on residents’ health.

To accomplish this, two panels of seven experts were selected to evaluate 19 studies from North America, the European Union, the United Kingdom and Scandinavia. These studies were filtered down from a search that identified nearly 5,000 potentially relevant studies. Each of these studies was then screened for relevance and duplication, a process that narrowed the studies down to 19 that would be reviewed and further slimmed down to five final studies that were evaluated and reviewed.

Each of the studies focused on respiratory, gastrointestinal and mental health outcomes in human study subjects that lived near, but did not work on, animal feeding operations (AFOs). Overall, the panels found that consistent evidence for a strong association between community health and proximity to AFOs was lacking, primarily because of the lack of true measurement of the illnesses or health impacts.

“As human beings, we all have different tolerance levels for respiratory health, and, possibly, due to lifestyles of our own choices, we have caused ourselves health issues,” says Jim Schriver, a USB Director from Montpelier, Ind. “Sometimes, because a neighbor has a large animal facility, some people try to blame him and his business for their problems. Most studies have shown no strong association between animal agriculture and community health.”

The full report can be found in the Public Library of Science journal.

The Protein Slide

Declining protein levels lead to lower prices for your soybeans.

By Keith Warden

Oil and protein: the two products derived from U.S. soybeans that customers demand when they buy U.S. soybeans.

“Farmers need to keep in mind that we’re providing a product and that product has to meet our customers’ demands – protein is an essential part of our product,” says Lewis Bainbridge, Chair of the checkoff’s Domestic Marketing program and South Dakota soybean farmer.

Over the last eight years, the protein level of U.S. soybeans has declined, leaving U.S. soybean farmers at risk of market-share losses in exports and domestic high-protein meal. The immediate impact to farmers is seen in lower estimated processed value (EPV) and, ultimately, lower prices received for soybeans. Here, as much as 15 cents/bu. is lost.

Informed seed selection by all U.S. soybean farmers can counter the protein slide. Visit the “Soybean Quality Toolbox” at www.unitedsoybean.org today for soybean variety quality performance information. And start selecting high-quality seed that benefits your bottom line.

The soybean and pork checkoffs researched the health effects of animal ag operations.
Ag Jobs Decline with Economy

Global economic crisis sees ag unemployment rate nearly double from 2007 to 2009.

By Scott Brown, Ph.D., Food and Agriculture Policy Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri.

The unemployment rate for FFF occupations has a very pronounced seasonal pattern given annual production timelines in agriculture. The annual unemployment rate for FFF occupations fell to a historically low level of 8.5 percent in 2007 but jumped to 16.2 percent in 2009. More disturbing is that the monthly data show that the unemployment rate has continued to rise in FFF occupations despite the turnaround in total employment rates.

The FFF occupations data capture only the direct effects from agriculture job losses. Other industries depend on agriculture, from meat cutters to textile workers. As unemployment rates have risen for FFF occupations, related industries have also seen an increase in unemployment rates. For example, the food manufacturing unemployment rate went from 6.5 percent in 2008 to 8.5 percent in 2009. The out-of-work scale for food services and drinking places went from 9.0 percent in 2008 to 11.7 percent in 2009.

U.S. net farm income fell by over $30 billion in 2009 to $56.4 billion. Current projections by the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) at the University of Missouri suggest slow recovery in U.S. net farm income over the next three to four years. By 2013, FAPRI projects net farm income at $76.5 billion.

Lower unemployment rates and general economic recovery go hand in hand. Current projections by many forecasters suggest a slow and steady recovery in income around the world. A rebound in global economic growth should result in more demand for U.S. agricultural products. This should require new jobs to meet the recovered demand picture. This projected recovery should help cut the unemployment rate in FFF occupations, but it may prove difficult to return to the low levels of 2007 anytime soon as the gains in productivity seen during these lean economic times will not be lost.

Job losses in U.S. agriculture have also increased. Employment figures for farming, fishing and forestry (FFF) occupations have fallen steadily across time as productivity continues to rise, reducing available jobs. In 2000, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) estimated a total of 1.168 million jobs in FFF occupations. By 2009, that number had fallen to 926,000.

One major consequence of the global economic collapse of the past two years has been an increased unemployment rate. The U.S. unemployment rate jumped from 5 percent in December 2007 to 10.1 percent in October 2009 and has only fallen slightly since that time. It is critical for economic recovery in the United States that unemployment rates continue to fall.

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Arkansas Farmer Gives Back

Ellis Bell’s past inspires him to give back to the youth of today.

By Abby Stutsman

Like many farmers, Ellis Bell proudly reminisces about his days showing livestock in 4-H.

“I’ve always loved farming. I always wanted my hogs and cattle to be the best that they could be,” he says, his eyes fixed in the same contemplative gaze as an age-worn photograph of young Ellis leading a curly-haired Hereford past a mechanical cotton picker.

“I always had my own hogs and my own cattle. That’s the way I made my own money on the farm. Being self-sufficient is what drives me.”

Growing up during the civil rights era presented Ellis with unique challenges. Segregation was the norm and extended to programs like 4-H and Future Farmers of America. He recalls separate fairs for black children, which lacked crowds and amenities.

“There weren’t barns or fences so we tied our livestock to trees and equipment,” he says. “I had to walk by the barns where the white kids had their fair almost daily. They had nice sheds for their animals. My teacher wanted me to show my animals against the white kids.”

Watching his father face discrimination as a sharecropper further enforced his desire to become self-sufficient. Today the fourth-generation farmer splits his time between his Forrest City, Ark., farm and his office at Bell & Associates, Inc., the independent insurance agency he founded in St. Louis.

“I spend 160 to 170 days a year on the farm, and there are people that don’t know that I don’t live there,” he says.

Bell double-crops soybeans and wheat on 500 acres, including 86 acres that have been in his family nearly 170 years.

“We have one of the oldest deeds in the area,” Bell says. “My great-great grandfather came to what is now St. Francis County with a land surveyor before the land was ever deeded to anyone to divide the land. Of course black people didn’t own land then, but the surveyor deeded some of the land to my great-great grandfather.”

Ellis and his family have little information about his great-great grandfather. Because he could read, they assume he was a servant for the land surveyor. He later farmed the land deeded to him, and a receipt from a general store shows he purchased seeds, a shovel, plow parts and work boots.

Bell’s experiences as a minority farmer inspired him to create more opportunities for all Americans in agriculture. Through a nonprofit organization he helped create, he founded Future Agriculture Resources for Minority Youth (F.A.R.M.Y.), a program to educate African-American youths and others about careers in agriculture.

“Kids today don’t always see the good in agri-sciences so I want to make them aware of the job opportunities in agriculture,” he says. “I want to help create a few more farmers to help replace farmers that are in their 60s and 70s.”

Visit bellsenterprises.com/farmy to learn more about F.A.R.M.Y.
From Our Fields to Theirs

By Chris Krull

Soy-based turf backing finds its way into AstroTurf® fields across the country.

As you sit down to watch your favorite sports teams this year, know that as a soybean farmer you may be playing an integral part in the game. That’s because soy-based turf backing can be found on many sports fields across the country incorporated into AstroTurf®.

“All of the backing AstroTurf uses comes from Universal Textile Technologies (UTT) in Dalton, Ga.,” says Andy Belles with AstroTurf. “We pride ourselves on using a product that’s not only manufactured in the United States but also grown here – as opposed to using petrochemicals from overseas.”

Odds are you’ve watched some sporting events that took place on fields using this soy technology. The St. Louis Rams, Buffalo Bills, Duke University and Wichita State University represent just a few of the colleges and professional sports teams that play on fields using the soybeans grown in your fields.

“Soy backing is one of the most popular backings used for turf,” says Belles. “Right now, we have projects at Stanford University as well as eight fields being installed at West Texas A&M.”

The use of soy in backing isn’t just about using less petrochemicals, the backing also offers performance advantages.

“The soy backing is a better product,” says Belles. “It’s durable, safer to work with than petrochemical products and much more fire retardant. stadiums and other parks and recreation facilities that use the soy backing can also apply for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design points.”

Soy polymers, like the ones used in turf backing to replace petrochemicals, represent one large potential market for soybeans. This year, all of the industrial uses for soybeans will use between an estimated 1.15 and 1.35 billion pounds of soybean oil, or the oil from nearly 120 million bushels. That’s up from 80 million bushels used in 2006.

For more information on soy products, visit the online Soy Products Guide housed on www.soynewuses.org. To learn more about AstroTurf and to see more sports teams that use AstroTurf soy backing, visit www.astroturfusa.com.

Your soybean checkoff provided funding to UTT to aid in the development of the soy-based backing used in Astroturf. New soy products like this one mean more demand for U.S. soybeans.

CHECKOFF Connection
YOUR SOYBEAN CHECKOFF IS HERE.
Supporting the poultry and livestock producers who help support you.

Animal agriculture represents one of the largest customers of U.S. soy. In fact, poultry and livestock consume nearly 98 percent of soybean meal in this country. Your soybean checkoff supports your number one customer through both research aimed at improving soybean meal and partnership programs designed to maintain and grow the U.S. animal agriculture industry.

“I really appreciate the support that the soybean checkoff provides to the pork industry. It’s important for all farmers to work together to promote agriculture.”

Tim Bierman
President of the National Pork Board, Iowa Pork Producer

www.unitedsoybean.org

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