Fall 2026

SD SOYBEAN Leader

A publication of the South Dakota Soybean Association

Sustainable Farming Practice

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FROM THE *President*

Ready or not, here it comes! By "it," of course, I mean the busy harvest season. In fact, it may already be too late to say it's on its way, as I've heard at least one South Dakota Soybean Association director has already started harvesting soybeans.

Every year, it seems like the time between the last pass with the sprayer and the first combines rolling through the field gets a little shorter. Hopefully, you've had time to complete the important maintenance and preparations needed to avoid any major surprises—but we all know that may be wishful thinking. No matter how prepared a farm is, breakdowns and delays are bound to happen when equipment is being pushed through long days and even longer hours.

Once harvest is over, it's always interesting to look back at the challenges that came up along the way—and the problem-solving, ingenuity and occasional "farmer fixes" that kept everything moving.

As harvest begins, things also shift for South Dakota Soybean staff and Association directors. After a busy summer schedule, our activities slow down for a few weeks while our farmer leaders turn their attention to the fields.

This summer provided many great opportunities for our boards to connect with farmers, consumers and elected officials. Events like Dakotafest, the South Dakota State Fair, Hefty Field Day and university tailgates give our board members the chance to hear directly from farmers about the issues affecting their operations and how the Association can help advocate on their behalf. These events also give us an opportunity to connect with consumers, share the story of South Dakota agriculture and highlight the many ways soybeans contribute to our state.

At Dakotafest, we had the opportunity to ask questions during a legislative panel featuring South Dakota's U.S. representative and senators. We appreciate our elected officials and their staffs continuing to seek input from farmers on legislation that affects agriculture. Several SDSA and American Soybean Association directors also traveled to Washington, D.C., for a summer fly-in, where they met directly with our congressional delegation.

Developing and maintaining these relationships with policymakers is an important part of our work. Farmers need a voice in the conversations and decisions that shape agricultural policy, and those relationships help ensure the realities of farming are represented as legislation is developed.

As we head into one of the busiest times of the year, there's one reminder I need just as much as anyone else: take it one day at a time. Above all, remember that the most important task you need to accomplish each day is making it back home safely.

There will always be another item on the list and another job that needs to get done before harvest is complete. But rushing and risking an accident or injury simply isn't worth finishing one day earlier.

In the middle of the long days, take a little time to appreciate the changing seasons and the small things that make this time of year special.

Good luck to everyone this fall. Here's to a safe, bountiful, and successful end to this year's growing season!

Brent Greenway

Brent Greenway
President, South Dakota Soybean Association

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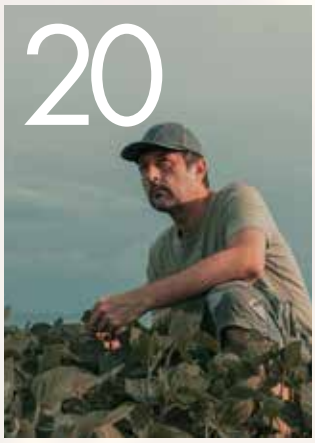

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FROM THE *Chairman*

Harvest Brings Perspective to a Variable Growing Season

As I write this, harvest is beginning to get underway across South Dakota. For farmers, harvest is always an important time of year. After months of planning, planting, scouting and watching the weather, we finally begin to see the results of the growing season.

This year, I think harvest will tell us a particularly interesting story.

One word that comes to mind when I think about the 2026 growing season is variability.

Rainfall has been extremely uneven across South Dakota. Some areas received timely rains and have excellent crop potential, while other areas went through extended periods of limited moisture. In some parts of the state, the difference in crop conditions from one area to another can be remarkable.

The heat we experienced this summer added another challenge. Soybeans can handle a great deal of stress, but heat combined with limited moisture during critical periods can have a significant impact on yield. At the same time, areas that received adequate and timely rainfall have the potential for very good soybean yields.

I farm in northern Brookings County, and this year's crop has given me another firsthand reminder of how much weather can shape a soybean crop. We have watched the rain clouds come and go, experienced the summer heat and wondered what those conditions would ultimately mean when the combine entered the field. As I look at my own soybeans, I expect my yields to be around average. But I also know that just a few miles—or several hundred miles—away, another farmer's story may be very different.

That is what makes South Dakota agriculture so unique. We share the same crop, but our growing seasons can be remarkably different. Each field has a story to tell, and harvest is when we finally get to read it.

As a newly elected chairman of the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, this growing season has also reinforced for me why the research supported by the soybean checkoff is so important.

Two areas of agronomic research that continue to interest me are soybean seeding population and row spacing. Every spring, farmers make decisions about how many seeds to plant and how we are going to space those plants across the field. Research can help us understand how those decisions affect yield and profitability under different conditions.

We also continue to invest in soybean disease research. Disease pressure can change significantly from one year to the next, with weather playing an important role. Research helps us better understand diseases, how they develop and how management practices can reduce their impact.

One of the strengths of our research program is the opportunity to conduct research in actual farmers' fields. South Dakota farmers face a wide range of soil types, weather conditions and production systems. What works in one part of the state may not produce the same results somewhere else. On-farm research helps us better understand those differences.

As harvest progresses, I encourage farmers to take a few minutes to look beyond the yield monitor and consider what this growing season has taught us.

Which areas handled the heat and dry conditions best? Where did timely rainfall make the biggest difference? How did varieties, seeding rates and row spacing perform? Were there disease issues we can learn from?

And, most importantly, share what you learn.

Talk with your neighbors. Share your observations with researchers and Extension specialists. Participate in on-farm research when you can. Those individual experiences, when combined, can help us better understand what works—and what doesn't—across the diverse growing conditions we have in South Dakota.

As the chairman of the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, I am proud that soybean farmers are investing their checkoff dollars in research that helps answer these questions. We can't control the weather, but we can continue to learn from it.

Let's make the most of this harvest—not only by bringing the crop safely out of the field, but by taking the lessons from this year with us into the next growing season.

What we learn this fall can help us make better decisions when we climb back into the planter next spring.

David Iverson
Chairman, South Dakota Soybean Checkoff

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SOY INDUSTRY *News*

Sunday at the State Fair, Powered by SD Soybean

The South Dakota Soybean Checkoff proudly served as the official Sunday Day Sponsor of the South Dakota State Fair, marking the inaugural SD Soybean Day.

Throughout the day, fairgoers connected with South Dakota Soybean while learning more about soybeans, agriculture and the future of family farms. Alan Hojer with Keep Farmers Farming and Travis Benson with Bassford Remele led sessions focused on planning for the next generation and keeping South Dakota farms in the family.

A highlight of the day was the SDSU Men's and Women's Basketball meet-and-greet, which drew a great crowd to the Day Sponsor Tent for photos and autographs with student-athletes.

From conversations about farm succession to connecting with fairgoers, the first SD Soybean Day was a great opportunity to showcase South Dakota agriculture at the State Fair.

South Dakota Soybean at the state fair

Soybeans, Mini Donuts & Yote Football

The South Dakota Soybean Checkoff helped kick off football season as a co-sponsor of Ag Appreciation Day at a University of South Dakota football game.

For the third year, South Dakota Soybean joined the tailgate festivities, serving hot, fresh mini donuts fried in Plenish® high oleic soybean oil. SD Soybean Director Bruce Haines visited with fans about South Dakota soybeans, the soybean checkoff, and the many ways soybean oil is used every day.

The event gave another opportunity to connect with consumers, celebrate South Dakota agriculture, and showcase soybean oil in a fun, delicious way before fans headed into the DakotaDome for a Yote victory.

SD Soybean Connects with Farmers at Dakotafest

South Dakota Soybean spent three busy days at Dakotafest in Mitchell, connecting with farmers and sharing the SD Soybean story.

Council and Association directors met with attendees to discuss soybean checkoff investments, policy priorities,

and the work being done on behalf of South Dakota soybean farmers. Visitors also enjoyed mini donuts fried in soybean oil and the "South Dakota Soy, Beyond the Borders" session featuring Houdek and Norwegian salmon.

Dakotafest provided another valuable opportunity for SD Soybean directors to connect directly with farmers and highlight the many ways South Dakota soybeans are making an impact at home and beyond.

South Dakota Hosts South Korean Trade Team

A South Korean trade team representing nine feed companies and importers visited South Dakota in August as part of a U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) trade mission.

The group toured a South Dakota farm, learning about soybean production, equipment, and grain storage before visiting the Central Farmers Cooperative grain terminal in Lyons and a local beef feeding facility. The visitors were highly engaged throughout the tour, asking questions and gaining a firsthand look at South Dakota agriculture.

The following day, the group joined discussions on U.S. and Brazilian soybean feed trials and heard presentations from Agtegra and South Dakota Trade. The visit also provided an opportunity to reconnect with Korean industry representatives who had previously met South Dakota agricultural leaders during a trade mission to Korea.

The team continued to Chicago for additional farm tours and the Soy Connext conference, further strengthening relationships between U.S. soybean producers and an important international market.

Soybeans Take the Spotlight at Sioux Empire Fair

South Dakota Soybean joined the Soybean Feature Day at the Pipestone

Discovery Barn during the Sioux Empire Fair, connecting with more than 100 children and adults.

Visitors learned how soybeans show up in everyday products, with displays featuring familiar items such as Oreos, crackers, shoes, and more. Kids also took home soybean-themed prizes, while adults received meat thermometers.

Promoting U.S. Soy in Thailand

South Dakota Soybean Director Terry Jaspers joined soybean leaders from across the Midwest on a trade mission to Thailand in July to strengthen relationships and explore opportunities for increased U.S. soy exports.

The group met with several of Thailand's largest soybean users, feed manufacturers, and the Thai Feed Mill Association. Discussions focused on

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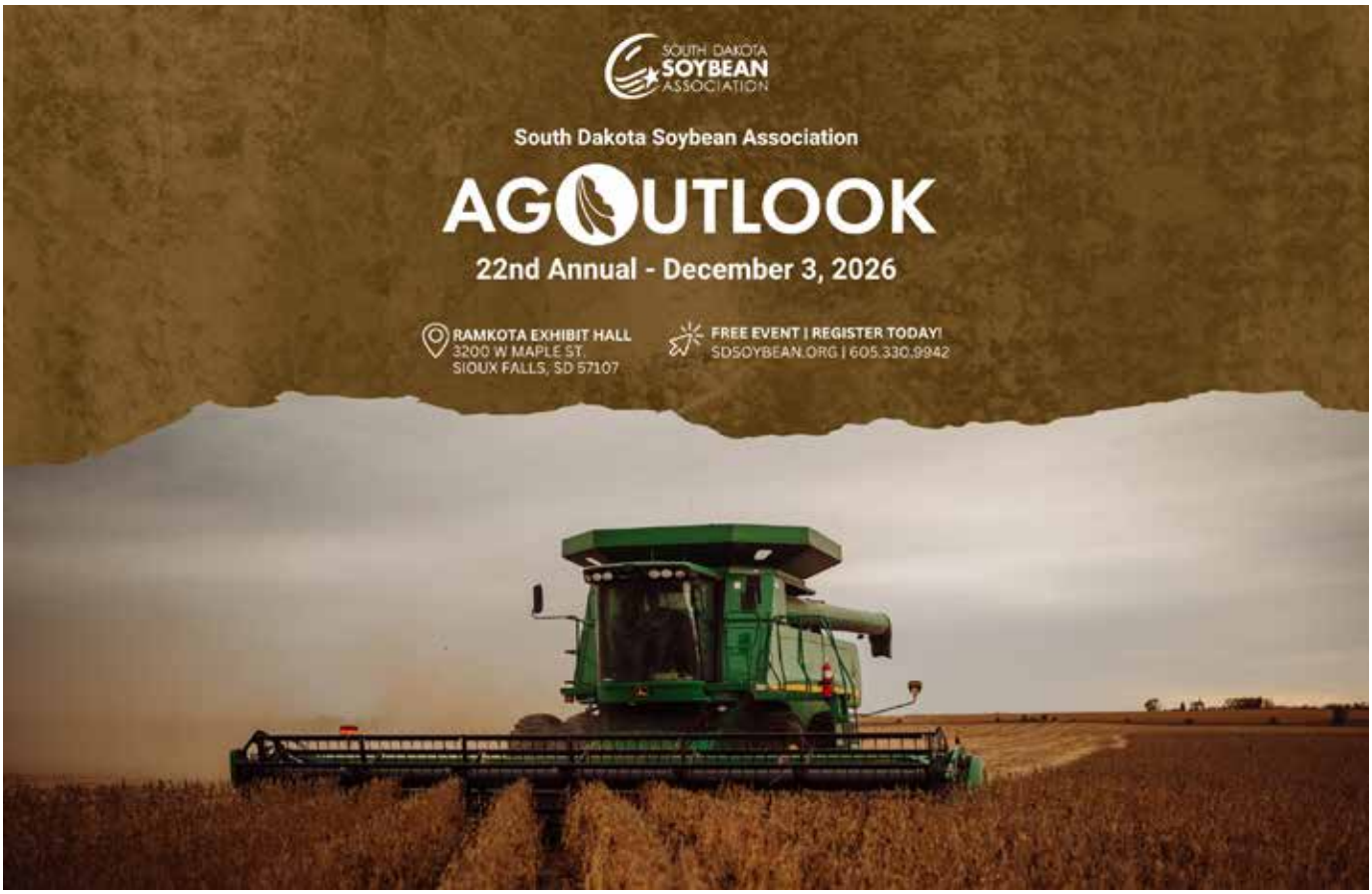


SOY INDUSTRY NEWS (continued from page 7)

U.S. crop conditions, farming practices, sustainability and the nutritional value of U.S. soy.

While Thai buyers often consider crude protein levels when making purchasing decisions, the delegation highlighted the strong amino acid profile, quality, and sustainability advantages of U.S. soy. Rising costs for synthetic amino acids could also encourage buyers to consider a more comprehensive approach to evaluating soybean meal quality.

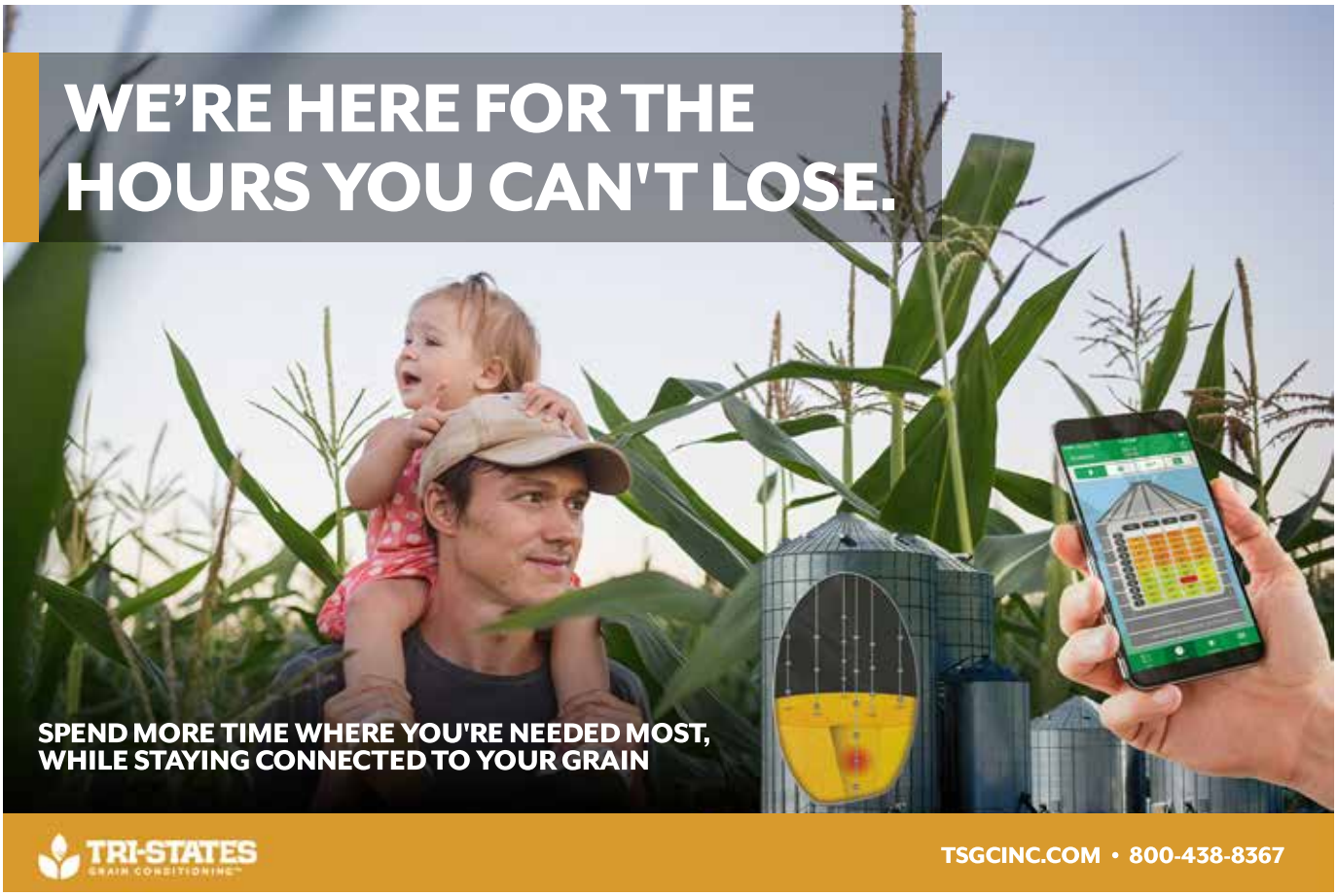
The mission provided an opportunity to better understand the needs of Thai customers while demonstrating the value U.S. soybean farmers can bring to the country's growing livestock, poultry, and aquaculture industries.

25th Annual Soybean Open Draws More Than 140 Golfers

The South Dakota Soybean Association celebrated the 25th Annual Soybean Open on July 20, bringing together more than 140 golfers for a day of competition, networking, and fun.

Despite the summer heat, participants played 18 holes before gathering for dinner and an awards ceremony recognizing tournament winners, pin prize winners, and sponsors.

Thanks to the board directors, staff, volunteers, sponsors, and participants who helped make the milestone 25th Soybean Open another successful event.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RESEARCH Portfolio

The South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council annually invests in research that solves today's challenges while creating opportunities for tomorrow.

Agronomic Research

Achieving 100 Bu/A Soybean Yields: On-Farm Research and Sharing High-Yield Protocols with South Dakota Soybean Producers

Dr. David Clay
South Dakota State University
$100,000

This proposal funds a long-term, farmer-centered research and outreach effort led by SDSU to help South Dakota soybean producers move toward 100-bushel yields, improve profitability, and confidently adopt soil health and sustainability practices. The program is especially valuable because it delivers unbiased, on-farm results, builds practical decision tools (precision agriculture and best-management resources), creates education and outreach that directly supports producers and crop advisors, and helps expand soybean markets. In short, this project translates research into action at the field scale, helping South Dakota farmers make better input decisions, reduce risk, and strengthen long-term productivity and market competitiveness.

Addressing the Problem of White Mold in South Dakota

Dr. Shyam Solanki
South Dakota State University
$57,074

The project targets practical outcomes by screening hundreds of soybean lines for stronger resistance using South Dakota pathogen isolates, evaluating how manure and soil amendments may worsen disease pressure, and refining RNAi-based biofungicide technologies for future precision disease control. If successful, the work would strengthen long-term disease management options for South Dakota growers and reduce costly yield losses in high-risk environments.

Assessment of Mid-Late Season Foliar Diseases of Soybeans

Dr. Shyam Solanki
South Dakota State University
$49,708

This proposal addresses a clear and costly challenge for South Dakota soybean growers: mid-to-late season foliar diseases that reduce yield, quality, and profitability. The project combines statewide scouting and mapping, molecular testing for fungicide resistance, and soybean resistance screening against both established and emerging pathogens, especially the newly identified Fusarium luffae. The work will deliver practical, updated disease-management information and help ensure that South Dakota farmers have effective fungicide guidance and improved varietal resistance strategies to protect yields in the years ahead.

Continuing Development of a Biosurfactant for Effective Treatment of Soybean White Mold

Dr. Matthew Cole
Pioneer BioTechnology, LLC
$50,000

This project moves a promising, soybean-based biosurfactant from the laboratory into real-world field testing. By evaluating both disease control and economic feasibility, the research aims to determine whether this product can become a practical, cost-effective option for South Dakota soybean farmers. The research of this project aims to reduce yield losses, add value to South Dakota soybeans, and position the technology for future commercialization and outside investment.

Red Crown Rot in Soybeans

Dr. Madalyn Shires
South Dakota State University
$5,495

Red Crown Rot on soybeans is an emerging and highly destructive soybean disease in the Midwest. Its relevance to South Dakota has increased with a recent confirmation in a Minnesota county directly bordering South Dakota. The pathogen is soilborne and spreads primarily through infected plant debris and contaminated soil moved on equipment. Although this disease was first documented in peanuts in the southern states, its shift to soybeans has left growers with limited management options for this pathogen. Because it persists in soil, the pathogen can remain undetected for years before visible symptoms and yield losses occur. Effective management strategies and genetic resistance are still largely unknown due to the disease's recent emergence. This project represents a proactive initiative aimed at the management and surveillance (tracking) of an emerging plant disease in the Midwest. By characterizing the pathogen's distribution and evaluating resistance within widely planted soybean varieties, the project seeks to generate applied, decision-support information. These efforts will enable producers to implement timely management strategies and mitigate the further spread of red crown rot.

Livestock Research

Strategic and Timely Inclusion of Roasted Soybeans for Finishing Cattle

Dr. Zachary K. Smith
South Dakota State University
$108,042

This project tests a practical, science-based strategy to increase the value of soybeans by feeding them to cattle only during periods when they deliver the greatest benefit. By improving cattle performance and maintaining profitability, the research has the potential to create new demand for South Dakota soybeans while providing actionable guidance to feedlot operators. If successful, the findings could strengthen both the livestock and soybean sectors through more efficient and targeted use of soybean products.

Roasted High-Oleic Soybeans to Counteract Insulin Resistance in Finishing Cattle

Dr. Zachary K. Smith
South Dakota State University
$95,436

This project tests whether roasted high-oleic soybeans can improve cattle performance while addressing insulin resistance, a growing issue in modern beef production. If successful, the research could improve feed efficiency for cattle feeders and open a meaningful new, value-added market for South Dakota soybean growers. The relatively modest investment has the potential to increase soybean demand, support farmer profitability, and strengthen the link between crop and livestock agriculture in South Dakota.

Strengthening Domestic Soybean Markets and Beef Cattle Reproductive Efficiency

Dr. Rebecca Swanson
South Dakota State University
$69,503

This project aims to enhance the economic resilience of South Dakota soybean and beef industries by evaluating soybean hulls as an energy source for nutritionally flushing beef heifers to improve reproductive efficiency and expand domestic markets for soybeans. In other parts of the country, nutritional flushing - the practice of additional energy before breeding - has been shown to improve multiple indicators of reproductive efficiency. However, it is not a widely-implemented practice in South Dakota. We will use 75 beef heifers, either fed a standard diet or an energy-dense soybean hull diet preceding breeding and evaluate body condition, hormones, ovarian activity, and pregnancy success. We expect the heifers fed the soybean hull diet to have improved reproductive performance, and therefore, provide proof of concept for this management practice in the Northern Plains, which will create new domestic demand for soybeans.

Rethinking Protein for Growing Bulls: Performance Responses to Dried Distillers Grains with Solubles or Soybean Meal Products

Dr. Cody Wright
South Dakota State University
$41,374

The study will follow 48 Angus and Simmental-cross Angus bulls, measuring growth, feed efficiency, carcass characteristics, scrotal circumference and semen quality. Researchers will also track individual feed and water intake to better understand how each protein source affects overall performance and reproductive development. Ultimately, the project aims to develop practical, science-based feeding recommendations that benefit both of South Dakota's major agricultural industries of soybeans and beef cattle.

Stacking the Deck: Combining Growth Promoting Technologies with Soy Protein to Increase Cattle Growth

Dr. Warren Rusche
South Dakota State University
$55,743

This project addresses two key issues facing South Dakota agriculture, namely developing new market opportunities for soybeans and increasing output of beef to meet consumer demand. Previous research from SDSU demonstrated that feeding heat-treated soybeans with a growth promotant (Experior, Elanco Animal Health) resulted in faster, more efficient growth with increased carcass weight compared to distillers' grains. This project aims to compare distillers' grains with both heat-treated soybeans and soybean meal while Experior is fed to finishing beef heifers. Soybean meal is more readily available, and if successful, could be brought to market rapidly. This research will result in a higher-margin feed additive for feed manufacturers, increased profits for cattle feeders, and new market opportunities for soybean farmers.

New Uses

Valorizing the Crush Surplus: Engineering "Water-Free" High-Loading Soy Meal Filaments with Intrinsic Antimicrobial Properties

Dr. Ren Yang
South Dakota State University
$51,905

This project turns a looming soybean meal surplus into an opportunity. By transforming low-value meal into high-value, antimicrobial bioplastic materials, the research creates a new industrial demand that supports soybean prices, strengthens South Dakota's value-added economy, and delivers practical benefits to livestock producers. If successful, the work provides a scalable pathway to protect farmer profitability in an increasingly oil-driven soybean market while positioning South Dakota as a leader in renewable, agricultural-based manufacturing.

Strategic Partnerships

North Central Soybean Research Program

$225,000

The North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP) is a farmer-led, multi-state initiative that funds collaborative soybean research to address regional production challenges and advance innovation. It brings together universities, industry and state checkoff boards to support breeding, agronomics, pest and disease management and sustainability efforts. Through strategic partnerships and coordinated outreach, NCSRP delivers research-based solutions that enhance productivity, profitability and long-term viability for soybean farmers across the Midwest.

Soy Connext 2026 Highlights Dividends of Export Diversification Strategy

By Erin Worrell, Communications Manager, U.S. Soybean Export Council

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) has increased its emphasis on global market diversification as the competitive focus for U.S. Soy exports. That was fully displayed during Soy Connext 2026.

USSEC's annual global conference gathers U.S. Soy customers, exporters, farmers, supply chain members and industry experts. Soy Connext 2026 welcomed over 800 attendees from more than 65 countries to Chicago, August 4 to 7, thanks in part to South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council's sponsorship.

U.S. Soy remains the top agricultural export from the U.S., despite declines this year due in part to trade tensions with China. Soy exports are projected to grow in the next marketing year (MY), October 2026 to September 2027, recovering much of those losses.

Two main factors drive the projected increase in exports: increasing soy demand across more markets and a projected return to more normal trade relations with China. Both of those factors were evident at Soy Connext.

- More than 30 customers from China attended, signaling U.S. Soy's value to the country.
- The European Union has increased U.S. soybean meal imports nearly 500,000 metric tons compared to last year, and more than 50 customers from EU-27 nations attended.
- The Soy Connext delegation from Indonesia represented a market where imports of whole U.S. soybeans track about 500,000 metric tons ahead of last year.
- More than a dozen customers came from Colombia, the third-largest importer of U.S. soybean meal.
- Egyptian participants represent a market that has rapidly expanded U.S. whole soybean imports, increasing purchases 27% over the past 5 years and nearly 68% over the past 10 years.

"I've visited our soybean customers in China, Morocco and Spain and hosted many trade teams on my farm, so I've seen some of our diverse markets," says Jeff Thompson, a farmer from near Colton, South Dakota serving as vice

Jeff Thompson spent additional time in Chicago with the South Korean customers that visited his farm prior to Soy Connext 2026

At Soy Connext 2026, more than 800 attendees from 65 countries connected with others in the soy value chain a nd gained insight on global market dynamics, sustainability and trends, strengthening the soy supply chain.

chair of SDSRPC who attended the event. "My soybeans go to the west coast or to a local processor, and then the soybean meal goes to the west coast, where the products are exported."

USSEC analysis shows that U.S. Soy exports to all markets besides China have increased approximately 6.6% over this time last year (through mid-August 2026), on top of a record set the year before. That's evidence that more countries are recognizing the U.S. Soy advantages in value, quality, reliability and sustainability.

"We have found that U.S. Soy offers better digestibility, especially for our chickens," says Soy Connext attendee Amir Boussouf, general manager of Milavita, an integrated poultry and dairy operation in Algeria with its own feed mill. "We see digestibility problems with soybean meal from soybeans of other origins, while we have zero problems with U.S. Soy. So, we buy soybean meal from crushers when we know they are using U.S. soybeans."

The Soy Connext agenda reinforced those advantages with insights from industry experts, panel discussions and countless conversations across the supply chain. The Trade Team Invitational alone connected 134 key buyers and 42 exporter companies through one-on-one meetings to strengthen trade relationships and conduct business. Many attendees also participated in trade team tours before and after the conference.

For example, a team of South Korean customers visited Thompson's farm after attending the grand opening of the AGP terminal at the Port of Grays Harbor, Washington. He took them to a local rail loading facility and livestock farm, as the group included feed company representatives. SDSRPC then hosted meetings and updates for this trade team before they continued on to Soy Connext.

"The team asked lots of questions, and I often explain our crop rotation to visitors like these," Thompson says. "They may have been on information overload, but they enjoyed taking photos on the farm."

Soy Connext emphasized the ability of U.S. Soy, including South Dakota farmers, to meet growing global demand for protein and oil. Global soybean stocks are projected to tighten even as U.S. and global soybean production grows. Domestic crush is also expanding, and South Dakota has capacity to crush 52% of its 2025 soybean crop of 237.8 million bushels. But the 2026 U.S. soybean crop is forecast at a record level of 4.5 billion bushels, supported in part by South Dakota's 300,000-acre increase in soybean planting. Plus, U.S. soybean meal exports totaled a record 16.3 million metric tons (MMT) in MY 2024/25. Through two-thirds of MY 2025/26, soybean meal exports track roughly 1.4 MMT ahead of that pace.

"The more buyers you have, the more they drive competition," Thompson adds. "That's good for the market."

South Dakota farmers will continue to benefit from USSEC's export diversification strategy and efforts to demonstrate the value, reliability, quality and sustainability of U.S. Soy. As global markets experience these advantages, demand for South Dakota soybeans will grow.

Amir Boussouf (center), a U.S. Soy customer from Algeria, attended Soy Connext as part of a delegation from North Africa. Boussouf has seen the value of feeding soybean meal from U.S. Soy to his poultry and dairy cattle.

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 CheckoffSM 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

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.

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

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

South Dakota Soybean Producers Find Hope in Global Market Opportunities

Even in a difficult market environment due to ongoing trade challenges abroad, there's still plenty of room for optimism for South Dakota soybean producers. And not all of those good vibes are driven by continued growth in demand for biofuels, either.

According to Michael McCranie, the positive outlook has much to do with groundwork that has been laid by farmers through the work of U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and their qualified state soybean board. "You've got to remember that, in South Dakota, almost seven rows out of every 10 are exported," said McCranie during an interview at the recent Midwest Agricultural Export Summit hosted by South Dakota Trade. "It's imperative that South Dakota and, even at the national level, we have to export."

To that end, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) figures estimate that roughly 54 percent of this year's soybean crop in the U.S. will be exported, underscoring the importance of nurturing relationships with key trade partners around the world.

The importance of trade relationships

McCranie farms outside of Claremont and formerly served as District 7 Director for South Dakota Soybean Research & Promotion Council. Today, he represents his home state as a director for United Soybean Board (USB) and chairs the USSEC board as well. He observed that challenges with U.S.-China trade relations have made it all the more imperative for USSEC to diversify global markets.

"You have to keep working at [relationships with prospective buyers]," said McCranie. "And even after you build relationships and you get business, you have to keep doing it."

South Dakota Soybean Association District 1 Director Tanner Hento echoed these sentiments during the same interview. "The worst thing to do is go into coast mode," said Hento, a fifth-generation farmer from Avon. "So we have to keep showing up and making sure that while we expand other markets that we don't neglect the ones that we currently have."

In its efforts to tap into new and emerging destinations for U.S. Soy, USSEC utilizes market analysis tools to evaluate where its resources are going to be best allocated. "It's all data-driven," said McCranie. "You have to analyze all the different aspects of a market. Farmers' dollars are what fund [USSEC], and so we don't want those dollars to go to waste."

Trade missions play a big role in nurturing relationships with buyers in foreign markets. "It's really hard to form a relationship through a screen," said Hento, who most recently participated in a checkoff-sponsored trade mission to Vietnam. "Being able to promote the quality of U.S. Soy in person means a lot."

Sometimes it takes years for a trade relationship to bear fruit, but it's all part of the process to expand markets and support global demand for U.S. Soy.

Value-added agriculture supports farmers' bottom lines

One aspect of soybean trade that has caught the attention of many farmers is what Hento described as "value-added agriculture" and its impact on their bottom line. The term can be applied to many different facets of agriculture; in this context, it refers to the transformation of a whole soybean into one or more uses that returns more value to producers.

Take biofuels, for example. Because of demand for biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), more and more domestic soybean processing facilities have come online in recent years. These plants extract soybean oil for use in biofuels, but they also produce soybean meal. The resulting surplus of soybean meal allows USSEC to reach new markets.

"We have instances where we are working with crushers that actually buy beans from all over the world, but they are small crushers," said McCranie. "And so what they're doing is they're importing meal as well to send to their customers because their markets have increased, but their crush has not. So they're grabbing that part of the market as well, which is a real plus for us."

Hento pointed to rising livestock production driven by growing appetites for protein in developing countries and demand for commercial soy-based products as real opportunities for soybean producers on the global market. "If we can get those products — all that oil, all that meal, all those end products made in the U.S. — then we can ship those directly to the countries," said Hento. "And that's what makes the difference."

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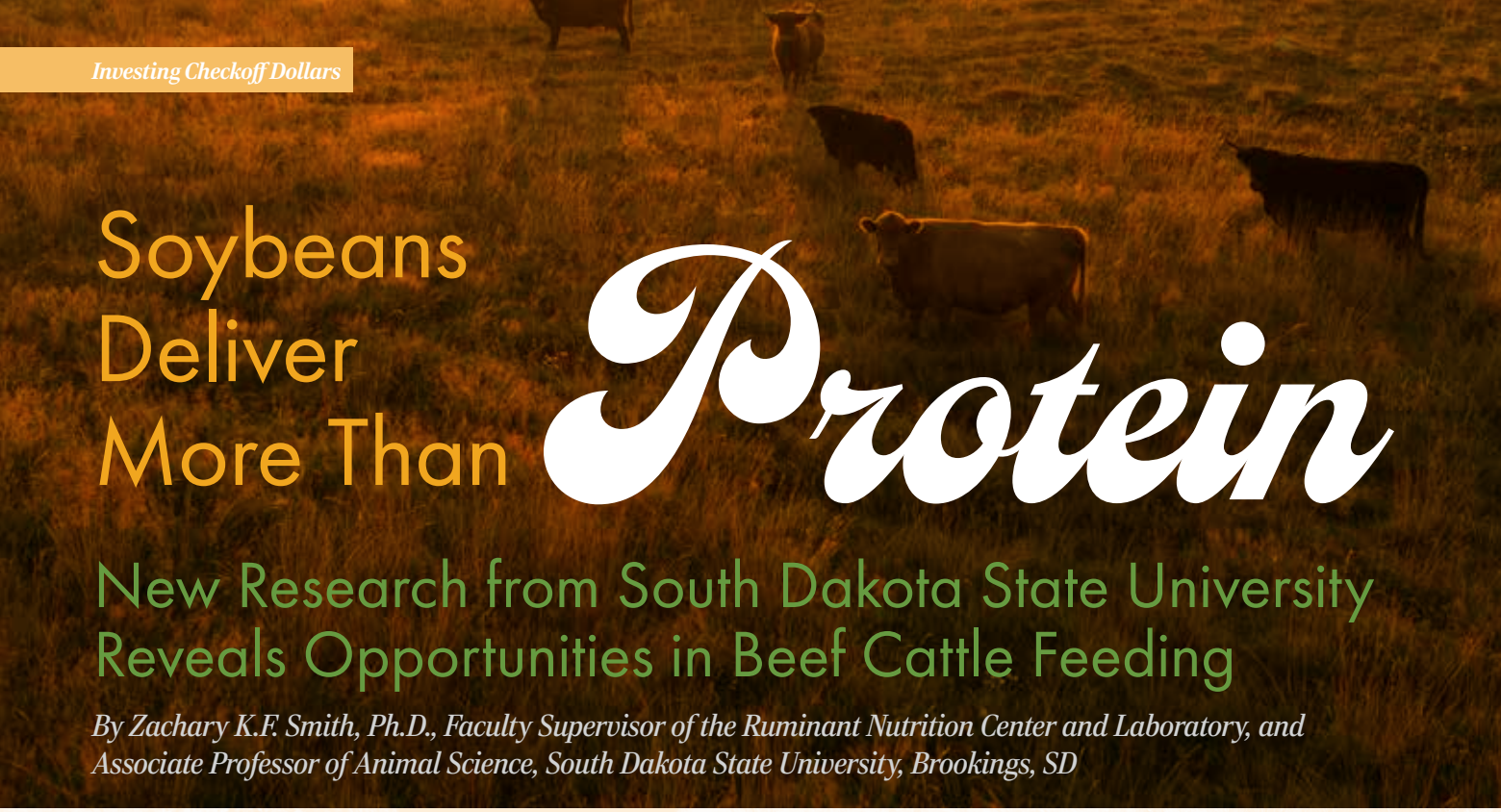

Soybeans Deliver More Than Protein

New Research from South Dakota State University Reveals Opportunities in Beef Cattle Feeding

By Zachary K.F. Smith, Ph.D., Faculty Supervisor of the Ruminant Nutrition Center and Laboratory, and Associate Professor of Animal Science, South Dakota State University, Brookings, SD

For years, distillers grains have dominated feedlot nutrition throughout the Midwest. Abundant supplies from the ethanol industry made corn co-products an economical source of both protein and energy, and many assumed soybean meal had become largely obsolete in finishing cattle diets.

But market conditions are changing.

Expansion of soybean crushing capacity to supply the renewable fuels industry is increasing the availability of soybean products across the United States. As a result, nutritionists and cattle feeders are revisiting an important question: What role can soybeans play in modern beef production?

Research conducted at South Dakota State University suggests the answer may be considerably larger than previously thought.

Across multiple experiments evaluating soybean meal, extruded-expelled soybean meal, and heat-treated full-fat soybeans, a remarkably consistent pattern has emerged. Soybean-based ingredients have maintained or improved cattle performance, often increasing average daily gain and carcass weight while supporting feed efficiency. These responses are creating renewed interest in soybean-derived feeds as tools to improve profitability and expand domestic soybean demand.

Beyond Crude Protein

Historically, soybean meal has been valued primarily as a source of crude protein. However, emerging research suggests that the quality of that protein may be equally important.

Soybeans provide greater concentrations of essential amino acids, particularly lysine, than many traditional feedlot protein supplements. Heat treatment and extrusion technologies can further increase the proportion of rumen undegradable protein reaching the small intestine, improving the supply of metabolizable amino acids available for growth.

These improvements may help explain why soybean-fed cattle often outperform expectations based solely on dietary energy or crude protein values.

Soybean Meal Successfully Replaces Distillers Grains

One of the earliest questions facing cattle feeders was whether soybean products could effectively replace distillers grains without sacrificing performance.

Research at SDSU demonstrated that soybean meal can successfully substitute for modified distillers grains while maintaining growth performance and carcass quality. This finding alone is significant because it provides nutritionists with greater flexibility when ingredient prices shift or regional feed supplies become limited.

For cattle feeders, having additional competitive feed ingredients can help reduce risk and improve ration formulation options.

Extruded Soybeans Increase Gain and Carcass Weight

More recent studies have moved beyond simple replacement and examined

whether soybean products can actively improve cattle performance.

In a large feedlot study involving 240 steers, extruded soybeans were evaluated as a complete replacement for modified distillers grains. Despite similar dietary protein concentrations and comparable fat levels to alternative treatments, steers fed extruded soybeans consistently outperformed cattle fed distillers-grain-based diets. Average daily gain increased, feed efficiency improved, and final body weight was greater throughout the feeding period. Most importantly for producers, hot carcass weight increased by approximately 30 pounds compared with cattle fed low-fat modified distillers grains.

We also compared extruded soybeans to distillers-grain diets supplemented with additional corn oil. If energy from fat alone explained the response, both diets would be expected to perform similarly. Instead, cattle fed extruded soybeans remained superior, suggesting benefits beyond energy concentration alone. The results point toward improved amino acid nutrition as a likely contributor to enhanced performance.

Even Partial Replacement Produces Benefits

Perhaps most encouraging for commercial feedlots, improvements do not require complete replacement of distillers grains.

In a recent experiment conducted at SDSU's Southeast Research Farm, we replaced approximately one-third of the modified distillers grains in finishing diets with extruded full-fat soybeans. The response was substantial.

Steers receiving the soybean-containing diet increased average daily gain by more than 7 percent while tending to improve feed efficiency. Final body weight increased by 43 pounds and hot carcass weight increased by 27 pounds compared with cattle fed the standard distillers-grain diet. Dry matter intake remained unchanged, indicating that performance

improvements occurred because cattle utilized nutrients more effectively rather than simply consuming more feed.

These results suggest producers may not need to completely reformulate feeding programs to capture value from soybean products. Strategic inclusion of extruded soybeans alongside existing ingredients may be sufficient to enhance performance.

A Consistent Biological Pattern

One of the most interesting findings across soybean studies has been the consistency of animal responses.

Growth advantages frequently appear during periods of rapid lean tissue accretion, particularly early in the feeding period, immediately following implant administration, and during the beta-ligand feeding period. In the partial replacement study, cattle fed soybeans exhibited significantly greater gains during the 28 days after implanting. Similarly, the complete replacement study observed significant performance advantages during the first 63 days on feed and again during the final feeding phase.

This repeated response suggests amino acid supply may be limiting performance in some finishing situations. As cattle experience rapid growth, supplying additional metabolizable protein from soybean-derived ingredients may help support greater muscle accretion and improved feed efficiency.

While additional research is needed to fully understand the biological mechanisms involved, the consistency of these growth responses is difficult to ignore.

Creating New Markets for Soybean Growers

The implications extend beyond the feedlot.

As soybean processing capacity expands nationwide, identifying high-value domestic uses for soybean products becomes increasingly important. Beef production represents a tremendous opportunity. Feedlot cattle consume large quantities of concentrate feeds and protein supplements, creating a natural market for soybean-derived products.

The SDSU research demonstrates that soybean products can do more than simply occupy space in a ration. They can improve growth performance, increase carcass weight, and potentially generate additional revenue for cattle feeders while simultaneously increasing demand for soybeans grown by American farmers.

Looking Ahead

The beef and soybean industries are becoming increasingly interconnected. Renewable fuel expansion is driving additional soybean processing, while cattle feeders are seeking nutritional strategies that improve performance and profitability.

Research conducted at South Dakota State University continues to show that soybean-derived feeds deserve renewed attention. Whether used as soybean meal, extruded-expelled soybean meal, or heat-treated full-fat soybeans, these ingredients have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to support efficient beef production.

The message from the feed bunk is becoming clear: soybeans are more than a replacement ingredient. They may represent one of the most promising opportunities to add value to both soybean production and beef cattle feeding in the years ahead.

Paid for by USB

REDEFINING Strength

Men's Mental Health Matters

By Ella Kolb and Andrea Bjornestad

When we think about health, we often think of physical well-being; exercise, nutrition, sleep, and regular checkups. While these things are all very important, mental health is also just as important. Unfortunately for many men, talking about mental health can still feel uncomfortable, difficult, or even shameful. For generations, men have been taught to be strong, independent, and resilient. These qualities are very positive but can also create unrealistic expectations. Many men grow up hearing messages like, "tough it out," "don't show emotion," or "handle your problems on your own," and over time, these beliefs can make it much harder to recognize when support is needed, and even harder to ask for help.

The reality is that mental health challenges do not discriminate. Men are less likely to be diagnosed with a mental health condition compared to women, yet they are much more likely to die by suicide or struggle with a substance use disorder. The suicide rate is nearly four times higher for men than for women, and men account for approximately 75–80% of all suicide deaths in the United States (CDC, 2026). Stress, anxiety, depression, grief, burnout, and loneliness can affect everyone, yet many men suffer in silence in fear of being judged, appearing weak, or burdening others. The stigma around men's mental health can prevent men from seeking support early on, which allows for their struggles to grow into larger challenges.

Changing the way in which we define strength can challenge the stigma around men's mental health. True strength is not about pretending everything is okay but having the courage to acknowledge when you are struggling and taking the necessary steps to care for yourself. It takes courage to ask for help, talk about difficult emotions, and accept the help provided. Creating a culture where mental health conversations are normalized for everyone is key to challenging this stigma. Checking in on a friend, asking how someone is really doing, or sharing your own experiences can help break down barriers and remind others that they are not alone.

Mental health support does not have to begin in a therapist's office. It can start with a conversation, a trusted friend or family member, a faith leader, or a healthcare provider. What is important is taking that first step and recognizing that seeking help is a sign of self-awareness, not weakness.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2026). Suicide data and statistics.

South Dakota State University Extension

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American Soybean Association Policy Update

Fall is shaping up to be a busy stretch for agricultural policy in Washington. With a short legislative window ahead of the midterm elections, ASA and its farmer leaders are working on several priorities, including biofuels, the farm bill, trade, and regulatory issues.

Biofuels remain front and center. In August, small refinery exemptions under the Renewable Fuel Standard became a major concern after ASA learned the administration was considering an approach that could significantly reduce domestic biofuel demand. ASA estimated that failing to fully reallocate exempted volumes could eliminate demand for roughly 500 million gallons of biomass-based diesel and result in nearly $1 billion in lost value for soybean farmers.

Following engagement from ASA and its farmer leaders, state soybean associations, biofuel groups, and members of Congress, EPA announced its 2025 small refinery exemption decisions and proposed fully reallocating the affected Renewable Identification Numbers through supplemental rulemaking. ASA welcomed the commitment and continues pushing for full reallocation.

The 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit has also seen movement. In September, the Department of Energy updated the 45ZCF-GREET model to recognize certain regenerative agricultural practices, while the IRS provided additional emissions-rate guidance. ASA is advocating for a flexible book-and-claim system that would allow qualifying farmers to benefit without requiring physical segregation of soybeans throughout the supply chain.

The farm bill also remains a priority as Congress returns to work this fall. The Senate Agriculture Committee did not advance the Agricultural Act of 2026 during its August markup, and ASA is pushing for bipartisan negotiations to resume on a comprehensive five-year bill. ASA Director Drew Peterson joined soybean growers and other commodity groups in Washington in September for a farm bill fly-in to reinforce that message with lawmakers.

Trade remains another priority. At the time of writing, ASA was looking ahead to an anticipated Sept. 24 meeting between President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping as China increased purchases of U.S. soybeans. ASA is also engaged in the 2026 review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, advocating for continued duty-free access for soy and soy products, science-based trade rules, and stable, predictable trade across North America.

WOTUS is also back in focus. EPA and the Army issued a supplemental proposal in September as they work toward a final definition of waters of the United States consistent with the Supreme Court's Sackett decision. ASA is reviewing the proposal and will submit comments as the rulemaking moves forward.

Association Director Tanner Hentp, ASA Director Drew Peterson, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, ASA Director Brandon Wipf, ASA Director Jordan Scott, Young Leader Blake Foxley

Sustainable FARMING PRACTICES

Terry Jaspers' Commitment to the Land

For Terry Jaspers, farming has always been a part of who he is.

"I've always loved agriculture, and I got involved at a very young age. It's always been part of me. I'm a farm boy."

Today, Terry farms near Eden, South Dakota, in southeastern Marshall County. He farmed part-time for most of his life before retiring from his full-time career five years ago and becoming what he calls a "full-time farmer."

While Terry enjoys being back on the farm full time, farming is about more than just growing a crop. For him, it's about making the most of the land while taking care of it along the way.

Taking Care of the Land

One of the ways Terry does that is through sustainable farming practices like no-till farming.

Terry has been no-tilling on his farm for more than 30 years. Instead of turning over the soil each year, he plants soybeans directly into the residue left behind from previous crops, including wheat and corn.

That crop residue might not look like much, but it plays an important role in the field.

No-till farming helps Terry reduce the amount of machinery and labor needed on the farm while also helping protect the soil from erosion. And because his farm has some rocky areas, no-till means less time spent working around rocks, too.

For Terry, it's about finding ways to make the farm work efficiently while also caring for the resources he depends on.

"We look at the land resources and we use the land so that it provides the maximum financial benefit to us, but at the same time, conserving the resources that are here."

Making the Most of Every Acre

Terry doesn't believe every piece of land needs to be farmed.

The poorest-quality soils on his farm remain in grassland, either as pasture or in the Conservation Reserve Program. He focuses his farming on some of the best land available.

It's one example of how farmers can make decisions based on what works best for both the land and the farm.

And the benefits of those decisions can reach beyond the crops themselves.

"We're improving the health of the soil. We're keeping the land from eroding. We're promoting wildlife in the area."

For Terry and his family, that wildlife habitat is an added bonus. Conservation farming has created opportunities for family and friends to enjoy the outdoors and the land around them.

Farming for More Than Today

Ask Terry why caring for the land is so important, and his answer goes back to something pretty simple: land is where our food comes from.

"When you look at land here on this farm, or if you look at land in general, it's what provides food for mankind."

That's why Terry sees caring for the land as both a responsibility and a privilege.

"It's our duty and privilege to care for the land and make sure that it's better than when we first were involved with it."

It's a mindset that has shaped Terry's approach to farming for decades. Instead of only thinking about this year's crop, he's thinking about what the land will look like years from now.

A Family Farm With a Future

That long-term perspective is also an important part of family farming.

Terry knows he's only one part of the farm's story. He's had the opportunity to work the land, improve it and care for it, but he also knows the land will be here long after he's gone.

"I'm here for a short amount of time, and I've had a chance to work on this farm and develop it. And the land is always gonna be here after I'm gone."

His hope is that someone involved in agriculture today will eventually continue farming the land.

For Terry, that's what makes taking care of the farm so important. He wants the next person who has the opportunity to farm this land to be able to continue doing what he loves.

A Farmer, Neighbor and Community Leader becoming Mayor of Sisseton

Terry's commitment to stewardship doesn't stop at the farm gate.

His first experiences with leadership came through 4-H and FFA, eventually leading him into local government. He served on his city council for 15 years before becoming mayor in 2013.

He sees plenty of similarities between farming and serving his community.

Both require solving problems, making financial decisions and thinking about how today's choices will aff ect the future.

"On the farm, you're a steward of the land."

Whether he's making a decision in a field or helping make a decision for his community, Terry approaches both with the same goal: leave things better than he found them.

Growing Something That Lasts

After more than 30 years of no-till farming and a lifetime spent around agriculture, Terry has learned that farming is about more than what you can grow in a single season.

It's about the soil beneath your feet. It's about the wildlife around you. It's about family, community and the people who will come after you.

And most importantly, it's about taking care of the land that makes it all possible.

"We're seeing good things happen on the farm."

For Terry, those good things are a sign that sustainable farming practices and a commitment to caring for the land can help keep South Dakota farms growing for generations to come.

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TO CHECK IT OUT

Homemade Pumpkin Roll

YIELD: 8 | PREP TIME: 10 minutes | COOK TIME: 15 minutes | AUTHOR: Hungry for Truth

Ingredients

OUTSIDE

- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2/3 cup canned pumpkin *(or homemade pumpkin puree)*
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

FILLING

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 tablespoons butter, softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup powdered sugar, plus more for dusting

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Line 15”x10” jelly roll pan with parchment paper, leaving extra inch sticking up on both long sides. You’ll be able to easily lift the cake out after baking.
- In a large bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon, and pumpkin pie spice.
- In a separate bowl, mix eggs, sugar, vanilla, and pumpkin until smooth.
- Add dry ingredients to the wet bowl and stir until combined.
- Spread the batter evenly in the prepared pan.
- Bake for 15 minutes.
- Whisk together filling ingredients until smooth while baking.
- Take the cake out of the pan and immediately roll the cake inside the parchment paper to minimize cracking.
- Once the cake is cooled, unroll and spread filling evenly onto cake.
- Roll cake up with filling and serve.

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High Inputs, Dry Weather Make No-Till Soybeans Worth a Look

If you're still tilling, no-till soybeans may be your lowest-risk, practical option to save on fuel costs, cut expensive N use, and hold onto moisture.

By Buz Kloot

This year illustrated why no-till is often the choice of corn and soybean growers in central and western South Dakota. As is often the case, moisture conservation was vital in those parts of the state affected by hotter, drier weather.

But as severe drought extended to southeast South Dakota this year, along with higher input costs for all growers, 2026 may also be a warning to eastern corn/soybean producers to at least consider no-till. Overall, about half the cropland in South Dakota is farmed with no-till; most of the rest is in some kind of reduced till system. With the always lurking possibility of drought and increasingly likely prospect of high input costs for fuel and fertilizer, the ever-important question for a row-crop producer is whether every fall and spring tillage pass is going to earn its place. This is not a philosophical argument. It is a question of managing risk and cutting costs.

Why soybeans make sense as a first no-till crop

If you're going to try no-till on part of your land for the first time, soybeans are a logical first crop for several reasons. An obvious but important point in times of rising input costs is that soybeans don't require purchased nitrogen. Soybeans are also generally more tolerant than corn of surface residue and cooler seedbeds. Eliminating fall and spring tillage cuts diesel use, machinery wear, labor, and tractor time. The bonus of leaving corn stalks undisturbed reduces evaporation, protects the soil, and, when corn stalks are left standing, helps catch and hold snow over the winter.

SDSU's Beresford study challenges the "no-till, no-yield" assumption

A long-term study at SDSU's Beresford Research Farm offers encouraging yield comparisons. Over 27 years in a corn-soybean rotation, while conventional-till corn averaged 6.1 bushels per acre more than no-till corn, no-till soybeans averaged 1.8 bushels per acre more than conventionally tilled soybeans. In the study's longer three- and four-year rotations, no-till gained ground in both crops, while soybeans had a 1.4- to 2.5-bushel-per-acre advantage.

Why no-till can fit a dry South Dakota weather pattern

No-till may fit a dry South Dakota pattern particularly well. One major global meta-analysis, published in Nature, examined 5,463 paired yield comparisons from 610 studies across 48 crops and 63 countries. Across all locations and systems, no-till yields averaged lower. In particular, in cooler, more humid settings where no-till was used without rotation or residue retention, yield losses were more likely.

But the picture changed when no-till was paired with residue retention and crop rotation. In dry, rain-fed areas like much of South Dakota, no-till systems often outperformed tilled fields, apparently because they retained more water and protected soil structure.

A second meta-analysis examined 6,005 yield comparisons from 678 studies and reached much the same conclusion. In dry climates, no-till outyielded tillage in 55% of comparisons.

Rotation and residue make the difference

The Beresford results and broader research from SDSU's Dakota Lakes Research Farm point in the same direction: crop rotation and residue management matter as much as the absence of tillage itself. Diverse rotations—particularly those that include small grains—can improve the performance of no-till systems, while cover crops can add another layer of living cover where they fit.

Jesse Hall, who farms in eastern Kingsbury County, has seen that on his own operation. After adding oats as a third crop to his corn-soybean rotation, he says, "Our corn yields and soybean yields have gone up

continued on page 28

NO-TILL SOYBEANS (continued from page 27)

significantly. Our infiltration rates have increased."

Small grains also create an opening for cover crops and livestock grazing. "It kind of works it all," Hall says. "It's basically a systems approach."

Small grains, cover crops and livestock can further strengthen the system where they make agronomic and financial sense.

Farming with dry years in mind

"In this part of the country, we're going to go through a time of the year when it's too hot and too dry. That's just the way it is in South Dakota," says Matt Bainbridge. "We need the soil to be able to hold on to the water that we do have out there."

No-till is at the center of a diverse, risk-management-oriented system Matt and his brother Neal use near Mitchell in Davison County. They grow corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa, and some milo in a diversified operation that includes a cow-calf and calf-backgrounding enterprise. The brothers grew up with no-till—they learned from their father, Lewis—and it has been the system on their farm for more than 30 years.

They also grow cover crops after winter wheat, and graze cattle on cropland and covers. Matt says no-till can be a little frustrating, especially in the first two or three years as you learn to manage residues. He recommends trying it on a few acres or just one field to start, then expanding as you learn.

Protect the margin, build the soil

The goal for most no-tillers is to hold, not chase yields. No-till systems that hold yield—particularly in dry times—while requiring fewer field operations and less costly nitrogen and diesel in a volatile market, can improve the family-farm margin and reduce exposure to unneeded risk. Where they fit the operation, cover crops and livestock grazing can strengthen soil function and add income or forage options. Over time, the combination can increase yields as well.

Best advice to growers ready to try no-till? Don't bet the farm on no-till. Test it on the acres where soybeans are most likely to shine: well-managed corn stubble, fields with good residue distribution, and places where holding moisture and avoiding unnecessary passes may matter most.

A PRACTICAL FIRST STEP

Planting soybeans into undisturbed corn stubble can be a sensible place to start with and test the practice. It does not require a whole-farm commitment or the assumption that every field should be managed the same way.

1. **Start with soybeans after corn.** Soybeans are usually the lower-risk crop for a first-time no-tiller.
2. **Choose a no-till-ready field.** Avoid fields with serious ruts, unresolved compaction, drainage problems or uneven residue distribution.
3. **Make residue management a harvest job.** Spread corn residue evenly behind the combine. Standing stalks and evenly distributed residue can protect the surface and catch snow without creating a heavy mat.
4. **Set the planter up for residue.** The planter must cut through residue, place seed consistently, and close the furrow properly.
5. **Plan for weeds and scout for insects.** No-till changes the early-season environment; it does not remove the need for a sound herbicide program or field scouting.
6. **Compare the whole budget.** Realize yield isn't everything. Measure it, but also give economic credit to reducing tillage passes, and resulting savings on diesel, machinery wear and tear, and time in the field. Also note stand establishment and how the field handled moisture.

YOU GROW THE WORLD'S MOST SUSTAINABLE SOY. WE GROW DEMAND FOR IT.

USSEC builds preference for U.S. Soy by bringing international buyers directly to American farms, where they can meet growers firsthand and see the care, consistency, and sustainable practices behind every harvest.

SCAN TO SEE HOW USSEC SHARES U.S. SOY'S SUSTAINABILITY WITH CUSTOMERS AROUND THE WORLD.

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From South Dakota to the Pacific

Farmers See Where Their Soybeans Go

Ritz Ag Consulting

South Dakota soybean farmers traveled to the Pacific Northwest for a firsthand look at the infrastructure, transportation, and market development that help move their crop from local elevators to customers around the world.

For soybean farmers, harvest may end when the crop leaves the farm, but the journey of those soybeans is just beginning.

Ten South Dakota soybean farmers traveled to the Pacific Northwest July 6–10 as part of the South Dakota Soybean Checkoff's 2026 See For Yourself tour. One media representative, South Dakota Soybean staff member Kevin Scott, and directors Ross Tschetter and David Struck also participated. The trip was designed to give producers a firsthand look at how soybeans move through the export supply chain and ultimately reach customers throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

For South Dakota, the Pacific Northwest serves as an important gateway to international markets. Throughout the week, participants visited ports, export terminals, and transportation companies while learning how grain handling, rail transportation, vessel logistics, and international demand all connect back to the price farmers receive at home.

Following Soybeans to the Water

One of the tour's stops brought the group to the **Port of Grays Harbor**, where participants saw firsthand the infrastructure required to move agricultural products overseas.

The port has operated since 1911 and now receives about 80% of its revenue from marine terminal operations. Its largest tenant, Ag Processing Inc. (AGP), was preparing to open an additional export terminal at the port at the end of July.

For South Dakota farmers, the AGP expansion has a particularly strong connection to home. AGP is a farmer-owned cooperative made up of 172 local cooperatives representing more than 200,000 farmers throughout the Midwest, along with five regional cooperatives. With the new terminal operating, AGP expects to ship approximately 6 million metric tons of product annually through Grays Harbor, including an estimated 2 million metric tons originating from South Dakota soybean farmers.

But getting soybeans to a port is only part of the process.

During a visit with **Blue Water Shipping Company**, participants learned about the coordination necessary to move vessels safely and efficiently in and out of ports. The company handles approximately 1,200 port calls annually and coordinates services ranging from scheduling and rail and barge logistics to inspections and documentation.

The group learned that about one out of every 20 inspected vessels is rejected and must undergo additional cleaning or repairs before it can proceed to an elevator for loading—an example of the many steps that happen behind the scenes before U.S. agricultural products can begin their journey overseas.

Moving Commodities Down the Columbia

Transportation on the water came to life during the group's visit with **Shaver Transportation**, the oldest family-owned and operated tugboat company on the West Coast.

Founded in 1880, Shaver operates 15 tugboats and 22 barges and provides ship assistance, bulk commodity transportation, harbor and marine services, and emergency response. Participants even had the opportunity to board the Samantha S, one of the company's largest tugboats, powered by 8,400 horsepower.

At **United Grain's Vancouver Export Terminal,** the scale of the export system became even clearer.

United Grain sources commodities from more than 2,000 producers throughout the Pacific Northwest and Northern Plains.

Its Vancouver facility is the largest grain export terminal on the U.S. West Coast and can ship up to 6 million metric tons of grain and oilseeds each year.

The company's network also stretches directly into South Dakota. Twenty inland terminal facilities across Oregon, Montana, Idaho, North Dakota, and South Dakota help move commodities toward export markets. At Vancouver, 221 silos store about 178,000 metric tons, while another 30,000 metric tons can be held on railroad tracks. Unit trains can be unloaded in less than 10 hours.

For farmers accustomed to watching trucks leave their fields for a local elevator, seeing the size and speed of the export system offered a different perspective on just how far their crop can travel.

Soybeans Fuel More Than Food and Feed

The tour also demonstrated that growing demand for soybeans isn't limited to traditional export markets.

At Portland International Airport, participants learned about renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel initiatives designed to reduce transportation's carbon footprint. The airport is expanding its fuel storage capacity to 7.6 million gallons and uses about 640,000 gallons of fuel each day.

Clean Fuels Alliance America also highlighted the connection between soybean demand and renewable fuels, including biodiesel, renewable diesel, and sustainable aviation fuel.

According to information presented during the tour, renewable fuels currently add an estimated 8–13% to the cash value of soybeans, while StoneX estimates biodiesel contributes $1–$2 per bushel. Participants also heard projections that the renewable diesel market could grow from 1.9 billion gallons in 2020 to approximately 5.9 billion gallons by 2030.

Those markets create another source of demand for soybean oil and demonstrate how developments hundreds or even thousands of miles from South Dakota can ultimately influence opportunities for farmers at home.

Seeing the Checkoff at Work

The goal of See For Yourself is contained in its name: give farmers the opportunity to see where their soybeans go and how checkoff investments help develop markets for their crop.

Following the trip, participants were surveyed about their experience. All 12 respondents said they better understood international marketing and its value to South Dakota soybean farmers. All respondents also said the meetings, tours, and cultural activities made the trip educational and informative.

When asked what could have made the trip better, most participants said they wouldn't change anything, describing it as a well-rounded and informative experience. Suggestions for future trips included seeing a vessel loaded with soybeans, taking a Columbia River barge excursion, and adding more opportunities to see where checkoff dollars are being invested.

Ultimately, the miles traveled in the Pacific Northwest helped connect the dots between a soybean field in South Dakota and markets around the world.

From local elevators and unit trains to barges, export terminals and ocean vessels, every link in the supply chain plays a role in moving South Dakota soybeans to customers. And for the farmers who made the trip, See For Yourself offered an opportunity to witness those connections and the work being done to build demand for their soybeans firsthand.

SOY CHECKOFF℠

THE POWER OF YOUR SOY INVESTMENT

GLOBAL DEMAND. LOCAL RETURN.

The value of your state and national Soy Checkoff is ***stronger than ever***.

IN THE LAST 5 YEARS, YOUR INVESTMENTS HAVE...

CREATED JOBS AND GROWN THE ECONOMY

$9.8B
added to the U.S. GDP

30,932
U.S. jobs created

~$1B
generated in tax revenue in 2023 alone

$36M county
$244M state
$655M federal

$2.6B*
in U.S. employment income

DRIVEN DEMAND FOR U.S. SOY

1.8B* BUSHELS

OR 18% INCREASE IN U.S. SOYBEAN EXPORTS

Increase in meal exports by 5.2M short tons and oil exports by 3.4B pounds

1B BUSHELS

OR 9% INCREASE IN DOMESTIC DEMAND

Increase in meal demand by 10M short tons and oil demand by 4.6B pounds

DELIVERED VALUE TO YOUR FARM

$12.30
return for every $1 invested

AT LEAST 4.5-TO-1 RETURN ACROSS FOUR CATEGORIES:

1. Export market development
2. Domestic demand-enhancing research
3. On-farm production research
4. Soybean promotion

LEARN MORE AT SOYCHECKOFF.ORG

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

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