

AMERICAN
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People. Policy. Profitability.

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GROWING INFLUENCE
How Soy Farmers Effect
Change in the U.S. Capitol

SUSTAINABILITY
Mississippi Farmer Educates
Lawmakers on Conservation

SOY HORIZONS
Father and Son Team
Use Social Media to
Advocate from the Farm

SOY FUTURES
Young Alabama Farmer
Brings New Perspectives
to the Farm

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The American Soybean Association (ASA) represents all U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international issues of importance to the soybean industry. ASA's advocacy, education and leadership development efforts are made possible through voluntary membership in ASA by farmers in states where soybeans are grown.





If you believe, belong.




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SOY news

Soy Found to Improve Birth Rates for Couples Undergoing Fertility Treatment

Today, more than 1 percent of all infants born in the United States are conceived using assisted reproductive technology (ART), including fertility medication, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization.

A large-scale study at a Boston fertility center studied the relationship of dietary soy intake and the outcomes of women undergoing infertility treatment. The study followed 315 women who underwent ART cycles from 2007 to 2013, and assessing for soy isoflavone intake. The results show as consumption of soy phytoestrogens increased, so did the rate of live births. For women using ART, as they consumed more soy their probability of a live birth trended upward.

Source: Soyfoods Association of North America



U.S. SOYBEAN YIELD FOR THE LAST 30 YEARS



Yield measured in bushels per acre

Source: USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service

As technology improves throughout the years, farmers are more equipped than ever to battle weeds, pests and other natural disasters to increase yield. Check out this infographic from the United Soybean Board/Soy Checkoff to see how much U.S. soybean yield has increased over the last 30 years.

Source: United Soybean Board

BY THE NUMBERS



From left to right: Victoria from Reddit; Brian Scott, farmer; Connie Diekman, director of University Nutrition at Washington University in St. Louis; Dan Randolph, lead biologist, traits, genetics and technologies at Dow AgroSciences; and Cathy Enright, executive director of the Council for Biotechnology Information, answer questions on biotechnology at the SXSW trade show in March. Photo Credit: GMO Answers

Consumers Find GMO Answers at Annual SXSW in Texas

A group of experts who volunteer on the GMO Answers website came face-to-face with consumers' questions at the South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference & Festival in Austin, Texas. The annual festival features a combination of music, independent films and emerging technologies through screenings, demonstrations and panels.

GMO Answers teamed up with Ben & Jerry's in Austin for discussion about transparency and ways to work together and achieve common goals. GMO Answers also hit the SXSW Trade Show floor where a farmer, a scientist, a nutritionist and a biotech executive answered questions about GMOs and how food is grown. In addition to answering questions in person, the panel of GMO Answers experts participated in an "Ask Me Anything" (AMA) on Reddit, a social networking news and entertainment site. On the trade show floor, attendees got first-hand experience with live and interactive demonstrations. The panel included:

- Brian Scott, soybeans, corn, popcorn and wheat farmer
- Connie Diekman, director of University Nutrition at Washington University in St. Louis
- Dan Randolph, lead biologist, traits, genetics and technologies at Dow AgroSciences
- Cathy Enright, executive director of the Council for Biotechnology Information

SOURCE: GMO Answers

7,936

The number of attendees at this year's Commodity Classic in Phoenix, Ariz.

1,409

The number of first time Commodity Classic attendees in 2015

155

The average number of people one U.S. farmer feeds. (USDA)

63 percent

The percentage of conservation tillage acreage in today's 325,600,000 acres of farmland (American Farm Bureau Federation, National Agriculture Statistics Service)

596,062

The number of Indiana farmland acres planted to a cover crop, which helps improve soil health. (USDA)

\$152.3 billion

The record dollar amount of exports achieved by American agriculture in 2014. (USDA)

46 percent

The percentage of the world's soybeans that U.S. farmers produce. (United Soybean Board)

37 percent

The amount pesticide use has decreased with the use of biotechnology. (Foodinsight.org)

SoyFutures

Promoting Diversity

By **Lekan Oguntoyinbo**

Kyle Bridgeforth on his experience as an emerging black farmer.

Black farmers and young farmers may be dwindling demographics—but Kyle Bridgeforth, who falls into both groups, believes in ramping up efforts to promote diversity in the agriculture industry. He farms with four partners in Tanner, Ala., including his father Bill; uncle, Greg; his older brother Carlton and cousin Lamont. Bridgeforth, along with Lamont and Carlton are fifth generation farmers.

Farming fulltime, sooner than later, became a reality for Bridgeforth during his time at Morehouse College, where he majored in International

Studies: Business and Economics. Morehouse provided him with several international travelling experiences where he always prioritized learning about local agriculture.

“Agriculture is a mainstay to every viable economy, whether it’s production or import based, the populace needs a secure food supply,” Bridgeforth said.

The black community has suffered a dramatic decrease in agricultural representation. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), blacks accounted for 1.3 percent of all farm operators and 1.4 percent of all principal farm operators in 2007. The combined number of black farmers

was approximately 71,000—stark numbers compared to the turn of the 20th Century, when black land ownership peaked at 15 million acres and more than 200,000 black farmers were full or part owners.

“The declining number of black farmers can be accredited to several cultural and socioeconomic issues in and outside of the agricultural industry, namely the compounding problem of declining exposure and the high startup costs excluding the undercapitalized,” Bridgeforth said.

Bridgeforth appreciatively credits his forefathers for the opportunity to be where he is, quoting his grandfather, “We must dedicate ourselves entirely



Kyle Bridgeforth (second from left) is one of several fifth generation family members working on the farm, including cousin Lamont Bridgeforth (left), brother Carlton Bridgeforth (right) and brother Troy Woods (second from right).
Photo Courtesy of Kyle Bridgeforth

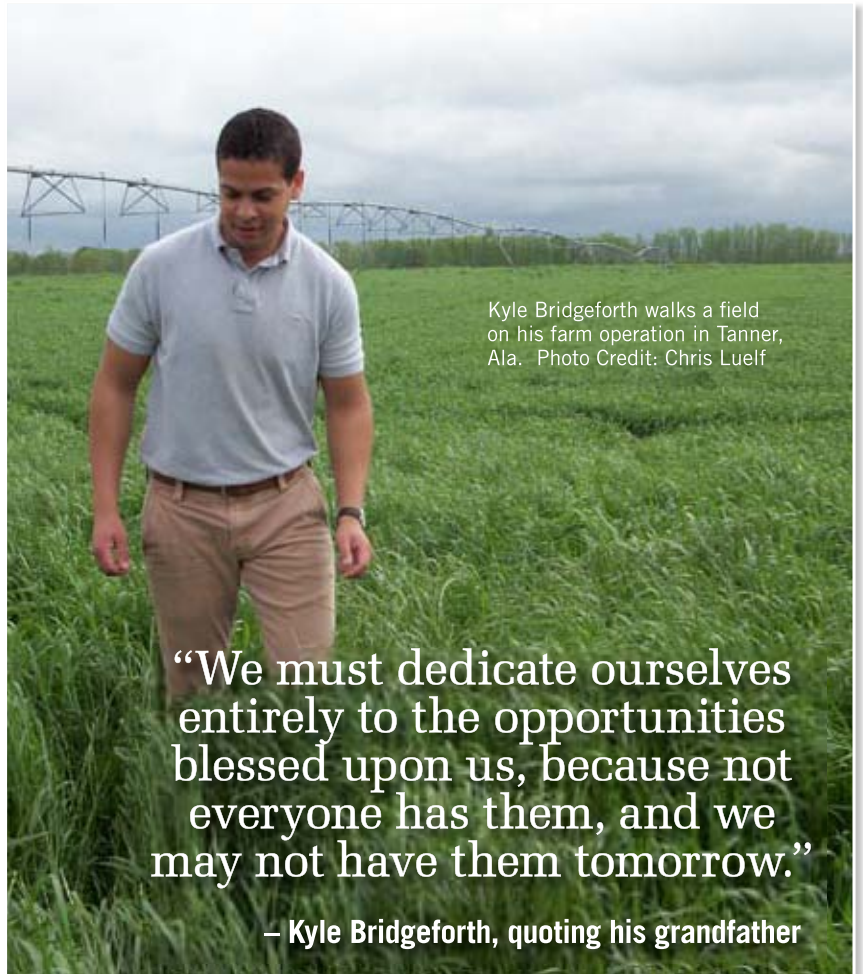
to the opportunities blessed upon us, because not everyone has them, and we may not have them tomorrow.”

Opportunities and resources take many forms; since taking up full-time farming, Bridgeforth has availed himself of several resources. One of the most influential of these has been the National Black Growers Council, an organization whose mission is to improve the efficiency, productivity and sustainability of black, row crop farmers.

“The council provides a support system for its members and the black farming community as a whole,” he said. “We utilize the most advanced agronomic and managerial technologies commercially available and want to expose others to the benefits.”

Bridgeforth says being involved with the American Soybean Association’s Dupont Young Leader (DYL) Program and the United Soybean Board’s (USB) See For Yourself Program has prepared him to assume leadership and outreach roles in the agricultural industry. The DYL Program taught him how to advocate on behalf of farmers to both the community and government leaders, through training sessions in Des Moines and Phoenix. Through the USB See For Yourself Program, Bridgeforth travelled to Panama and Ecuador to see firsthand the impact of U.S. soybeans on foreign markets.

Do you know someone who represents the diverse, changing face of agriculture that should be featured in Soy Futures? If so, send an email to jbright@soy.org.



Kyle Bridgeforth walks a field on his farm operation in Tanner, Ala. Photo Credit: Chris Luelf

“We must dedicate ourselves entirely to the opportunities blessed upon us, because not everyone has them, and we may not have them tomorrow.”

– Kyle Bridgeforth, quoting his grandfather

Bridgeforth appreciates and applauds these groups for these opportunities, but he still emphasizes the need for more diversity in agriculture.

“Minority underrepresentation is not a self-solving issue, we must promote diversity in all aspects of our industry,” he said. “As the global marketplace changes, we must change with it.” ▣

Kyle Bridgeforth has immersed himself in opportunities to grow as a farmer, from joining the National Black Growers Council, to participating in ASA’s DuPont Young Leader program and the United Soybean Board’s program See For Yourself.

SOY HORIZONS

Father-Son Team Harvests the Benefits of Social Media

Quint Pottinger uses social media to tell the story of agriculture—whether it be conversations about herbicide applications or genetically modified organisms (GMOs), and not just with farmers. His social network includes a diverse set of people from different backgrounds.

INFLUENCING

Breaking new ground

Social media offers farmers fertile ground to tell agriculture's story and connect with a wider audience that's hungry for information. Nearly three-fourths (74 percent) of all Americans who are online use social networking sites, according to 2014 research from the Pew Research Center's Internet Project. This study also found that:

- 71 percent of online adults use Facebook. Also, 2014 marked the first time when more than half of all online adults 65 and older (56 percent) used Facebook. This represents 31 percent of all seniors.
- 23 percent of online adults use Twitter.
- 26 percent use Instagram.
- 28 percent use Pinterest.
- 28 percent use LinkedIn.

In addition, multi-platform use is on the rise. More than half (52 percent) of online adults use two or more social media sites, a significant increase from 2013, when it stood at 42 percent, according to Pew research.

"My wife is encouraging me to try Instagram," said Quint Pottinger, who is active with the Kentucky Farm Bureau Young Farmers, Kentucky Corn Growers and Kentucky Soybean Association board. "I'm interested in finding new ways to advocate online for agriculture."



Ramey Pottinger (*left*) encourages his son and partner Quint Pottinger (*right*) to post photos of their daily operations on Affinity Farms, to show consumers where their food comes from and a glimpse of life as a grower.

Quint Pottinger added an important item to his daily list of chores, and it goes far beyond driving a tractor. He's sharing the story of his family's Kentucky farm, one Facebook post and tweet at a time.

"We were working on the planter the other day, and Dad said, 'You should post a picture of this on Facebook,'" said Quint Pottinger, who farms with his father, Ramey, near New Haven, Ky. "We live in a digital world, and he understands the power of social media."

Using social media effectively can establish farmers as thought leaders and influencers.

"It's good to communicate with people and give them a better idea of what goes on at the farm," said Ramey Pottinger, who has farmed for

nearly 50 years. "Even people who live in rural areas don't necessarily understand where food comes from."

Social media offers a convenient, effective way to share an inside look at the Pottinger family's Affinity Farms. Located in the area where their ancestors settled in 1780, the family's operation includes 800 acres of soybeans, corn and wheat, as well as vegetables and herbs that Quint Pottinger and his wife, Leah, sell at the weekly Bardstown farmers' market.

"Farmers shouldn't be afraid to use social media," said Quint Pottinger, whose online friends and followers include customers, landlords and urban residents. "Your social media updates can give you a competitive advantage."

THE CONVERSATION

| By Darcy Maulsby

(continued on page 10)

(continued from page 9)

While his first foray into social media started in 2006 with a Myspace page, Quint Pottinger discovered the true power of social media during college when he attended a New Century Farmer conference about four years ago.

"They had a half-day session on how to use social media productively," recalled Quint Pottinger, who helped pay his college tuition selling wheat to Maker's Mark Distillery in Kentucky. "I learned why farmers need to promote their farms online and share a positive message about agriculture."

He stressed this isn't just a job for communications professionals.

"I don't use a formal social media strategy," said Quint Pottinger, who earned his degree in agriculture economics from the University of Kentucky. "I just post pictures on our farm's Facebook page, track our farm activities through the year and share information I think is valuable."

This sometimes includes words of wisdom gleaned through various farm meetings. "An amazing presentation to the U.S. Soybean Export Council this morning," tweeted Quint Pottinger this winter as he quoted a professor of economics from Webster University in St. Louis. "The future is not a place you are going; it's a place you will create." —Benjamin Ola Akande."

Being smart and strategic about the information you share online pays dividends. "It's amazing how many people follow Quint online and share positive feedback about his posts," Ramey Pottinger said. "Social media keeps your name out in front of people and keeps agriculture top of mind."

Public relations becomes part of the job

Quint Pottinger, who was honored in 2014 by the White House as a

"Champion of Change for Agriculture," reflects a new generation of ag leaders who are harnessing the power of social media. In the 2014 American Farm Bureau Federation's annual outlook survey of Young Farmers & Ranchers participants, the majority (69 percent) consider communicating with consumers a formal part of their jobs. Many use social media to accomplish this.



Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Krysta Harden (right) recognizes Pottinger (left) with the 2014 "Champion of Change for Agriculture" award given by the White House. Pottinger reflects a new generation of ag leaders who are pioneering the power of social media.

Facebook is used by the vast majority (74 percent) of those surveyed. Nearly one fourth (22 percent) said they use Twitter, 16 percent have a farm blog or web page and 13 percent use YouTube to post videos of their farms and ranches.

"Social media opens up more conversations," said Quint Pottinger, who goes online to explain production practices on his farm, including herbicide applications and genetically modified organisms (GMOs). "While sharing information is important, so is listening."

Rather than counter people's concerns about modern agricultural practices by overloading them with facts, Quint Pottinger invites them to visit his farm. "While most don't

take me up on the offer, the invitation calms their fears. They don't think we're hiding anything."

Transparency is important. "While a lot of people get wound up about GMOs, social media is a good way to share information on how farmers are providing a safe food supply," Ramey Pottinger said.

Expanding the social media circle helps these messages reach a wider audience. "As farmers, we shouldn't just preach to the choir," said Quint Pottinger, whose diverse group of friends online includes occupational therapists and other professionals outside of agriculture. "I want to show people we care about our community, the land and the food we produce."

Social media is a handy tool, 'like a good wrench'

While Ramey Pottinger uses an iPhone to stay connected, he lets his son handle the day-to-day social media updates. "I support what Quint's doing, because I know people are on the go all the time and get a lot of their information through smartphones and social media."

Quint Pottinger wasn't surprised that his father has encouraged his efforts to share news from Affinity Farms through social media. "Dad has been a pioneer since he started farming. He was in high school when our family started using no-till, and he was one of the first farmers around here to use auto-steer."

Ramey Pottinger was also quick to see the potential of computer and Internet technology, which more growers continue to adopt. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 70 percent of U.S. farms had access to a computer in 2013, up 5 percentage points from 2011.

In addition, 67 percent of farms in the United States now have Internet



Technology is an integral part of today's farm operations, from auto steering in ag equipment to precision technologies in spraying and planting. Social media is a technology that helps Quint Pottinger promote agriculture online.

access, compared with 62 percent in 2011. DSL was the most common method of accessing the Internet, with 35 percent of the farms in the United States using it, compared to 38 percent in 2011. Wireless was the second most common method of Internet access at 24 percent in 2013, up from 20 percent in 2011.

High-speed Internet is used by 71 percent of young farmers surveyed in 2014 by American Farm Bureau Federation, with 28 percent relying on a satellite connection. High-speed connections and mobile technology make it easier to stay informed while enhancing the efficiency of farm business management.

"Before I get out of bed in the morning, I pull out my iPhone and check Twitter," Quint Pottinger said. "By the time my feet hit the floor, I know the big issues that are happening in ag, the issues that are making headlines around the world and what the markets have done."

Technology also makes it easier for Quint Pottinger to get involved with the American Soybean Association, while staying connected to the

farm. His iPad proved invaluable during the 2014 planting season when he had to travel to Washington, D.C. for a meeting.

"I got a text that there was an issue with singulation on our precision planting system," Quint Pottinger said. "I was able to walk my dad through it, even though I wasn't at the farm."

Technology that makes communication simpler is a lot like social media, since both open up new opportunities for progressive farmers. "My generation is passionate about passing the farm onto the younger generation," said Ramey Pottinger, who noted that it's important to inform landlords about what's new at the farm. "Social media is like a good wrench—it's a handy tool to get the job done."

It's a tool Quint Pottinger wants to maximize as he focuses on the future of his family's farm. "I'm motivated to keep promoting agriculture online not just to spread the message in my local area, but across the world." ▣

Social Media 101

Want to accelerate your social media efforts? Michele Payn-Knoper, principal of Indiana-based Cause Matters Corp. (www.causematters.com.) and one of North America's leading farm and food advocates, offers some tips.

Q: Are only younger people involved in social media?

A: No. There are all ages involved across social media, from the 60-year-old farmer on Facebook to the college student on Snapchat. Different social media tools fit different personalities. For example, people who don't read the owner's manual and like information flying at them will likely enjoy Twitter, whether they're 25 or 50. A more visual person will enjoy Instagram.

Q: Why does social media matter to agriculture?

A: Outside of shaking hands and visiting in person, social media is the most effective way to foster conversations about farming and food. Only 1.5 percent of the U.S. population is engaged in farming and ranching, so the images and stories you share from the farm are a novelty to people. Moreover, anti-agriculture activist groups are talking every hour of the day about what's happening on a farm, and I don't believe they best represent how farmers care for the land and animals.

Q: How can farmers use social media to "ag-vocate" more effectively?

A: First, clarify your purpose with social media. Do you want to focus on moms, reach out to elected officials or connect with teachers? Next, start with one tool, and use it for three weeks before you add another. Finally, show people how deeply you care about the land and animals by grabbing a quick photo or video with your phone while you're in the barn or field. Food buyers want a glimpse into the world of food production.

ASA in Action

Soy Growers Converge on Washington for Annual Spring Board Meeting

ASA's Board of Directors, staff and state affiliates gathered in Washington D.C. for the annual spring meeting in March, where discussion focused on several key issues at the forefront of the soybean industry, including trade, biotech and biodiesel.

Sarah Bittleman, agricultural counsel to Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden, spoke to the board, highlighting the committee's progress on legislation that would grant trade promotion authority to the White House. Trade Promotion Authority is at the top of ASA's priority list, enabling the administration to craft and finalize trade agreements that help to keep soybeans atop the nation's agricultural trade. Also the board's Public Affairs Committee hosted briefings from staff at the Coalition for Safe and Affordable Food, the U.S. Biotech Crops Alliance and the National Biodiesel Board on GMO (genetically modified organism) labeling, biotech trait approvals and biodiesel issues, respectively.

Representatives from each of ASA's 26 state and regional affiliates visited the offices of their House and Senate members, while ASA's Executive Committee met with Alexis Taylor, deputy undersecretary of farm and foreign agricultural services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), to discuss trade issues.

ASA President Wade Cowan and Chairman Ray Gaesser joined Director Bob Henry and Kansas Soybean Association Executive Director Kenlon Johannes to present ASA's Soy Champion Award to Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts of Kansas.

"In a Congress that has so few lawmakers that really understand life on the farm, it's extremely important that we recognize those allies that we do have," said Cowan. "We're honored to present the Soy Champion Award to Chairman Roberts and look forward to working with him long into the future."

The ASA Action Partnership (ASAAP) also met and heard a presentation from the agricultural attachés at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington. The normalization of trade with Cuba continues to be a key part of the expansion of agricultural trade, and an issue that ASA strongly supports. The members of the ASAAP joined agricultural dignitaries from across the country at USDA for the annual AgDay dinner and celebration of agriculture. ■



ASA joined PrecisionAg Institute for a Big Data Workshop in Ohio. ASA Director Jerry Bambauer discussed the important role of precision agriculture and data, particularly as tools to help farmers demonstrate sustainability. *Photo Credit: Michelle Hummel*

DuPont
YOUNG LEADER PROGRAM
American Soybean Association

The 31st class of ASA DuPont Young Leaders (right) completed their training, in Phoenix, Ariz. in conjunction with the annual Commodity Classic Convention and Trade Show. The program fills a critical role in the soybean industry by identifying new and emerging leaders and then training them to be strong voices and advocates for agriculture. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



ASA presents a Soy Champion Award to Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts of Kansas. *From left to right:* ASA Chairman Ray Gaesser, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, ASA Director Bob Henry from Kansas, and ASA President Wade Cowan.



ASA Directors Mike Cunningham (*right*) and Ron Moore (*center*) from Illinois review and discuss ASA resolutions with State Delegate Bill Raben during the Voting Delegates session in Phoenix. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



Soybean Leadership College attendees had the chance to participate in a general session presentation by Dr. Jermaine Davis, of Seminars and Workshops Inc. Dr. Davis discussed leading and working in an inclusive environment with diversity. *Photo Credit: Jordan Bright*



Denise Cannatella (*left*), participates in a mock interview with Lauri Freking, of Wixted, (*right*) during a communications and media training session ASA hosted in Nashville this spring. *Photo Credit: Jordan Bright*



IT ALL HAPPENED AT COMMODITY

ASA President Wade Cowan (right) kicks off the presidents' roundtable with emcee Mark Mayfield (left) during the General Session. Cowan discussed the importance of commodity groups working together to unify positive messages on biotech and new technologies. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



Even the youngest Commodity Classic goes enjoy a hands-on experience while walking the trade show floor. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



ASA Director and Auctioneer Eric Maupin (third from left in orange shirt) calls out a bid for ASA Treasurer Davie Stephens during the 10th annual ASA Soy Social and Auction. The auction raises money for SoyPAC, which supports lawmakers who champion soybean farmer priorities and policies that protect and increase the market value and opportunities for soybean growers. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*

CLASSIC 2015

FROM WHERE THE TRAIL BEGAN...
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Phoenix^{AZ} 2015



United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack tours the trade show floor, speaking with exhibitors and growers at Commodity Classic in Phoenix, Ariz. For the sixth consecutive year, Vilsack gave the keynote address at the Commodity Classic General Session. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*

The 2015 Commodity Classic Grower Committee cuts the ribbon to open the sold out trade show floor in Phoenix. The show featured an all-time high of 355 participating companies, representing a record 170,500 net square feet of booth space. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



Country star Craig Morgan closed down the 20th annual Commodity Classic rocking the house with hits like "International Harvester," for the annual Evening of Entertainment sponsored by Monsanto. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



A caricature artist uses an iPad to draw attendees as they stop at ASA's booth to speak with staff and growers on the Commodity Classic trade show floor. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*



During the Evening of Entertainment, Commodity Classic Grower Committee members pump up the crowd for next year's show in New Orleans, La. by handing out "save the date" Mardi Gras beads. The 2016 Commodity Classic show is March 3—5. *Photo Credit: Steve Dolan*

Industry Perspective

Tax Policy Push: Taxing But Necessary

| By **Candace Krebs**

Last year's 11th hour extension of Section 179 bonus depreciation expensing limits was a wake-up call for equipment manufacturers and farmers.

"From Kinze's standpoint, we kept thinking it would go through and probably waited too long to get involved in the push," said Brian McKown, the company's chief operating officer.

The Williamsburg, Iowa-based manufacturer of planters and grain carts finally sent two executives to Washington to meet directly with elected officials last November and learned they were the first manufacturer to approach them about the issue.

The belated tax victory wasn't as meaningful as it could have been, McKown and other industry representatives said.

"Our sales are off between 35 and 50 percent of the volume of previous years, and part of that is bonus depreciation, we know that," he said.

Chuck Studer, director of industry relations for Deere and Company, agreed.

"I don't think we saw the activity we would normally see at year's end because of it," Studer said, adding that tax implications are the third biggest factor influencing equipment purchases, behind overall profit and the growth cycle of a business.

Fast-forward to this spring and equipment companies and industry groups are starting earlier in the calendar year with a full court press on the issue.

"We're hosting some senators at our factory in the coming month, and that's certainly one of the topics we'll be discussing with them," McKown said.

Farm profits will likely be lower due to lower commodity prices this year, but that doesn't reduce the urgency associated with renewing the tax provisions, company officials said. Some segments of agriculture are booming, notably livestock.

"I think you could make the case that when margins shrink, having the latest technology to drive the best margins from the production you have is even more critical," Studer said.

McKown believes Congress was prompted to act last year when it hit home that in addition to farmers and dealers being hurt, large equipment manufacturers had begun to lay off workers.

Along with a large coalition of other business interests, the Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) continues to stress the economic implications, according to Nick Yaksich, AEM's vice president of government and industry relations. But, he added the value of farm groups like American Soybean Association (ASA) and its farmer-members can't be overestimated.

"There is no better lobbyist than the constituent who has the relationship with their elected officials and can simplify complex tax issues into direct, meaningful benefits of increased economic productivity," Yaksich said. ■



Brian McKown, chief operating officer for Kinze



Chuck Studer, director of industry relations for Deere and Company



Nick Yaksich, AEM's vice president of government and industry relations

SoyTown Hall

As the world relies more on technology to connect, we asked lawmakers:

How do you and farmers interact through social media?
Here's what they said:



@SenPatRoberts

(Senate Agriculture Committee
Chairman Pat Roberts, Kansas)



"Social media is another way we can share our message directly with farmers and ranchers. But most important, we appreciate the direct feedback we receive from producers, consumers and taxpayers on platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Social media has expanded the awareness of agriculture in America and can be a useful tool in advocacy."

@RepAdrianSmith

(Rep. Adrian Smith,
3rd District, Nebraska)



"Through social media, Third District farmers can keep me up to date on the issues they face in real time. In return, I provide updates on our efforts in Washington to get government out of the way of innovation and open export opportunities for American agriculture products. Last year I started #RegulationRewind to fight the bureaucratic obstacles affecting Nebraskans. I hope more farmers will interact with me on Twitter @RepAdrianSmith."



@repcleaver

(Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II,
5th District, Missouri)

"Face to face meetings are frankly ideal, but I like to stay in touch with my Ag Advisory Council with my e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These tools are key for communication, and for educating all constituents about farming issues."



@RepLynnJenkins

(Rep. Lynn Jenkins,
2nd District, Kansas)

"Social media enables me to keep in direct touch with the farmers that help make our economy in Southeast Kansas strong. They in turn make sure to keep Washington accountable, and ensure that solutions help hardworking farmers get ahead and achieve a better life."



@SenSherrodBrown

(Sen. Sherrod Brown, Ohio)

"Social media – like the roundtables I hold around the state – allows me to connect with Ohioans firsthand and hear their concerns. These conversations have been invaluable as I've worked to advance Ohio farmers' priorities including urging the EPA to finalize biodiesel standards to provide reliable forecasts for producers. I welcome all Ohioans to reach out to me on Twitter – @SenSherrodBrown."

Soy SHOTS

Submit Your Soy Shots at:

membership@soy.org



Soybeans begin to sprout on Jenny Rohrich's farm in Ashley, N.D. *Courtesy of Jenny Rohrich*



Andrew Moore shares a photo of a beetle on his farm in Rensaca, Ga. to demonstrate a common bug farmers may find in their yards, which can bring havoc to crops. *Courtesy of Andrew Moore*



Brian Knudtson shows his son the placement of soybean seeds in his north Iowa field near Forest City. Knudtson takes every chance he can to talk to his son about the family's farming operation. *Courtesy of Iowa Soybean Association*



John Heisdorffer's grandchildren, Jackson and Halle, lend moral support during spring planting on his farm in Keota, Iowa. *Courtesy of John Heisdorffer*

Allen Armstrong prepares the equipment for spring planting on his farm in South Charleston, Ohio. *Courtesy of Allen Armstrong*



Dennis Bogaards checks the depth of his soybean seeds before planting a field on his Pella, Iowa farm. *Courtesy of Iowa Soybean Association*



Issue Update

Who's Who: A look at the new faces on the House and Senate Agriculture Committees for the 114th Congress

A total of 18 lawmakers will work on agriculture issues in the 114th Congress as members of the House and Senate Agriculture Committees. These include four new faces, all freshmen Republicans, in the Senate; and 14 Representatives in the House. Here's a look at who the industry will work with in the new Congress. ■



Joni Ernst

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
State: Iowa
Soybean Acres: 9,900,000(■)



Rick Allen

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 12th District, Georgia (Augusta, Dublin, Statesboro)
Soybean Acres: 118,407



Ann Kirkpatrick

Party: Democrat
Term: 3rd
District: 1st District, Arizona (Flagstaff, Casa Grande, Marana)
Soybean Acres: None



David Perdue

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
State: Georgia
Soybean Acres: 300,000



Pete Aguilar

Party: Democrat
Term: 1st
District: 31st District, California (Rancho Cucamonga)
Soybean Acres: None



John Moolenaar

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 4th District, Michigan (Midland)
Soybean Acres: 408,491



Ben Sasse

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
State: Nebraska
Soybean Acres: 5,400,000



Brad Ashford

Party: Democrat
Term: 1st
District: 2nd District, Nebraska (Omaha)
Soybean Acres: 63,351



Dan Newhouse

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 4th District, Washington (Yakima, Kennewick)
Soybean Acres: None



Thom Tillis

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
State: North Carolina
Soybean Acres: 1,750,000



Mike Bost

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 12th District, Illinois (Belleville, Carbondale)
Soybean Acres: 733,412



Stacey Plaskett

Party: Democrat
Term: 1st
District: At Large, U.S. Virgin Islands(▲)
Soybean Acres: None



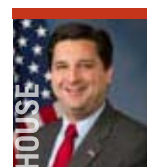
Ralph Abraham

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 5th District, Louisiana (Monroe)
Soybean Acres: 802,028(*)



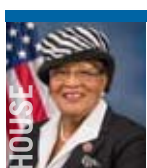
Gwen Graham

Party: Democrat
Term: 1st
District: 2nd District, Florida (Panama City, Tallahassee)
Soybean Acres: 6,754



David Rouzer

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 7th District, North Carolina (Bolivia, Smithfield, Wilmington)
Soybean Acres: 281,454



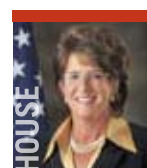
Alma Adams

Party: Democrat
Term: 2nd
District: 12th District, North Carolina (Charlotte, Greensboro)
Soybean Acres: 8,939



Tom Emmer

Party: Republican
Term: 1st
District: 6th District, Minnesota (St. Cloud, Otsego)
Soybean Acres: 222,288



Jackie Walorski

Party: Republican
Term: 2nd
District: 2nd District, Indiana (Mishawaka, Rochester, South Bend)
Soybean Acres: 555,960

All Photos Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

■ Planted acreage by state per USDA-NASS 2014 Crop Production Summary

* Planted acreage by congressional district per USDA-NASS 2012 Census of Agriculture

▲ As a delegate from a territory, rather than a state, Rep. Plaskett is unable to participate in House floor votes.

Republican ■ Democrat ■



GROWING INFLUENCE



How Farmers Effect Change
in Washington and Beyond



By **Tamara Hinton**

The United States may have begun largely as a rural nation with most people living on farms and in small towns, but that is not the case today. The dynamics have changed. Roughly one percent of the population farms and nowhere is this statistic more apparent than in Congress. Not even 10 percent of the members of Congress have agricultural experience or a connection to farming.

With these statistics, it would be easy to dismiss the reach and influence of farmers in Washington, but in reality, thanks to coordinated outreach efforts, America's agricultural producers have a few remarkable accomplishments to be proud of.

"There aren't many of us left, but by utilizing our commodity organizations, we do have a voice and we can influence policy," said Danny Murphy, a soybean farmer from Mississippi and former president of the American Soybean Association (ASA).

Farmers, their respective commodity organizations and the broader agricultural community are largely responsible for getting a new farm bill on the books. It was a challenging effort that took longer than anticipated, but those who work in production agriculture were not about to give up. Ultimately, the Agricultural Act of 2014 was one of the few pieces of legislation that was enacted into law in the last Congress.

More incredible was the fact that it was a bipartisan effort that is estimated to save money.

A key component to getting it across the finish line was the relationships farmers had forged with their senators, representatives and their respective staff. Countless phone calls and letters, visits to Washington, D.C., town hall meetings—you name it, America's soybean farmers were on it.

"I rely a lot on producers and those involved in production agriculture for telling me about problems that they face," said Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.), the former ranking member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry and one of the four principal negotiators of the 2014 Farm Bill. "It's a real team effort between farmers and legislators."

It is a year-round effort to stay on top of the issues and maintain those relationships. Wade Cowan, the new president of ASA and a soybean producer from Texas, knows firsthand. At press time, he was preparing for the annual fly-in meetings with legislators in Washington. It is a fast couple of days with a packed schedule, but Cowan said it's worth it.

"The farther you are from Washington, when you're in their offices, they really listen because they know the effort it took and the time being away from the real job," Cowan said.

Growing Relationships

Like growing crops, growing relationships with policymakers takes time and effort, but it does not have to be a daunting process. There are a variety of ways to be engaged and a little outreach goes a long way.

"In my experience, it doesn't start or stop at any one door," said Rob Joslin, a soybean grower from Sydney, Ohio and former ASA president. "You have to weave a rug to be effective."

For Joslin, following politics and advocating for good policy have always come easy. As a young man, he used to visit his sister in Washington, D.C. so that he could sit in and watch congressional hearings. "I was exposed to the process before I had any dream of ever having the opportunity to participate," he recounted.

But, participation soon followed when he was asked to fill a term on the Ohio Soybean Board. It was also during this time that his then local congressman and now Speaker of the House, John Boehner, started hosting an annual farm forum to discuss the issues affecting farmers. Joslin became a regular and recognizable face at the event often catching up with Boehner privately when there was a break during the sessions. "It was honestly some of the best times I had to advocate for farmers and I never went 10 miles from my home," added Joslin.

(continued on page 22)

"There aren't many of us left, but by utilizing our commodity organizations, we do have a voice and we can influence policy." – Danny Murphy



Mississippi soybean farmer and ASA past-president Danny Murphy (*left*) in one of his meetings with Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.). Also in the photo is Lesly Weber McNitt, director of government relations & program development for Farm Journal Media/Farm Journal Foundation.

Years later, when Boehner was the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, Joslin testified before the committee on an initiative to provide soy milk in the school lunch program. In 2010, the House Committee on Agriculture invited him to testify on farm programs in hearings leading up to the reauthorization of what became the 2014 Farm Bill. Joslin explained that farmers can advocate and tell their story better than anyone else because they speak to the issues from a personal standpoint. “The vast majority of them want to know what’s on the farmer’s mind,” Joslin said.

Jane Ade Stevens, who has been involved with agriculture for more than four decades and now works as the Chief Executive Officer at the Indiana Soybean Alliance, tells farmers in her state that just showing

up to town hall meetings makes a huge difference in the long run.

“The number one task is to make sure you know your congressman’s name and he or she knows you personally,” she said. Through the years, Stevens has coordinated visits to Washington, D.C., as well as to the state House and Senate so farmers can have face time with policymakers. “It doesn’t take very long for relationships to start and then members of Congress are calling you, asking for your opinion on these issues.”

United States Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) can attest to this fact, calling farmers in his state an “invaluable resource” to him and his staff, especially during crucial legislative moments. “The Hoosier [agricultural] community was a critical partner when we were working to pass the five-year farm bill,” he said. Whether it’s welcoming me to their farms or visiting my office in D.C., their input helps me to better advocate for policies or the elimination of policies in order to support their businesses.”

Additionally, one of the best ways to grow relationships with representatives in Washington is through their staff. “They’re your first contact point; you have to develop those relationships first,” Cowan said.



Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.) (*center*) meets with Indiana soybean farmers in his Washington, D.C. office.

Like growing crops, growing relationships with policymakers takes time and effort, but it does not have to be a daunting process.

And those who have made the rounds on Capitol Hill vouch that meaningful results are achieved through coordinated outreach with staff because the schedules for legislators can be so tight that there is little time to dig deep into the issue. "I have one or two staffers for a number of elected officials that I know I can call on. I don't call them every day, but when I do call, they know it's important," said Bruce Hall, ASA director from Virginia.

Growing Effects

Brent Burchett, who works as the program director for the Kentucky Soybean Board, goes even further to explain that getting to know a legislator's district staff is even more important. A congressional aide in Washington can be working on many different issues besides agriculture, whereas district staff can be singularly focused. "The greatest advantage that we've had is being able to provide district staff with concrete examples about the implications of different policies," Burchett said.

This has been particularly effective in highlighting regulatory issues that are dogging farmers in Kentucky. Burchett said that they have even reached out and partnered with a number of other agricultural and environmental groups to explain the overall impact of certain regulations on farmers. He said this goes a long way in establishing credibility with lawmakers because it demonstrates a desire to solve problems.



Kentucky Soybean hosts a Kentucky General Assembly Forum at a local soybean farm.

"It shows we've already done the legwork on this, we've already done the research and we're being proactive as opposed to just showing up at a meeting and complaining," he said.

Additionally, the soybean board has reached out to legislators on the state level by hosting events with members of the General Assembly and farmers. They provide literature and fact sheets on the state's agricultural economy. "It's important for them to know our name, our issues, our farmers and the economic impact of soybean production," Burchett said.

Another example of the collective influence farmers have on policy decisions is in regards to the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recently proposed rule to expand its regulatory reach under the Clean Water Act. When the rule was

proposed, many in the agriculture community believed it would put their farming operations in jeopardy with costly and unnecessary regulations and wrote to the EPA and the Department of Agriculture voicing concerns about it. More than 900,000 letters poured in and the EPA withdrew one part of the rule.

Sometimes advocacy extends to campaigns and farmers have played a critical role and achieved success in this arena, too. For example, last year when it became clear that Cochran was gearing up for a tight Mississippi primary campaign to gain the Republican nomination, Murphy harnessed the power of farmers on social media to get out the vote.

The technique surprised some who may have had an antiquated view of how farmers and their families communicate and get their news,

(continued on page 24)

(continued from page 23)

but it is undisputed that it energized farmers in the state and served as a positive contribution to the winning campaign.

The effort started simply enough, Murphy created an organization with producers in the state called “Farmers for Thad” and then worked with Patrick Delaney, the policy communications director for the American Soybean Association, to develop the digital media component to extend the reach.

Delaney created a Facebook page to highlight Cochran’s work as one of the primary negotiators on the 2014 Farm Bill and also his efforts, generally, as a friend to America’s farmers. In a short time, the page generated nearly 600 likes with a total reach of more than 65,000 Facebook users through shared posts. All told, Delaney and others posted more than 260 times in 14 days. Cochran won the primary and later the general election.

Murphy said the takeaway message from the effort was how effective social media is in not only telling the important story of production agriculture, but also multiplying the message.

‘A Good Recipe for Success’

Indeed, amplifying the message will be part of the ongoing challenge before the agricultural community. The farm bill may be on the books for the next five years, but there is still

work left to do. In fact, some would argue that the work never ends as it relates to advocating for America’s farmers and it is necessary to stay engaged year-round.

“There are a lot of issues beyond the farm bill,” Stevens said. “It’s shocking that more members of Congress are not pushing for passage of Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) when agricultural trade is so critical for our industry and our nation’s economy.”



A young farmer supports Sen. Thad Cochran (R-Miss.) as part of the “Farmers for Thad” campaign effort.

Additionally, critics of farm policy and the rural way of life are relentless. “I feel like the farmer has the potential to lose ground every day,” said Hall.

Whether it is an attempt to re-open the farm bill to cut agriculture spending and jeopardize the farm safety net or an attempt to add layers of regulatory burdens on farming operations, farmers will need to keep up the fight.

Cowan added that the system doesn’t get fixed if growers don’t step up and let their voices be heard. “We need to speak for agriculture with one voice. That’s when we’re going to win the battles,” he said.

That one voice entails being a member—and an active member—of a commodity or agricultural organization, continuing to cultivate relationships with both state and federal lawmakers, reaching out to other groups to find common ground on issues and simply showing up at town halls and farm forums. “The more members, the more people involved, the better,” Murphy explained.

The farm population may be small, but that does not discount the efforts of farmers and commodity organizations across the country that put in hours on and off the farm on behalf of American agriculture. “There’s a cynical view that no one in Washington listens and the little guy can’t make a difference, but that’s not what I’ve seen,” Murphy said.

And, it is important to remember that despite a Congressional body that largely lacks experience in farm life, this effort of outreach and education is not lost on lawmakers. “They are a source of genuine and important information to those of us who serve in Congress,” Cochran said. “It’s a good recipe for success. It helps strengthen our nation.” ■

“We need to speak for agriculture with one voice.
That’s when we’re going to win the battles.” – Wade Cowan



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The American Soybean Association is looking out for the best interests of U.S. soybean growers by doing important farm and trade policy work on Capitol Hill:

- ASA fights for biodiesel tax incentives
- ASA advocates legislation fair to soybean farmers
- ASA promotes trade agreements for soy exports

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Soy Checkoff News from the United Soybean Board

Relabeling vegetable oil as soybean oil increases sales

One item found in most pantries across the United States has roots in soybean fields – and consumers don't even know it. Soybean oil has been labeled vegetable oil since the 1960s, so many consumers don't equate this kitchen staple with soy. However, the soy checkoff is working to change that by relabeling soybean oil to connect consumers with its health properties and local origins.

The soy checkoff partners with regional grocery chains to label bottles of "vegetable oil" as "soybean oil." According to research conducted by the checkoff, this helps bridge the knowledge gap, improving positive perceptions and driving soybean oil purchases by as much as 62 percent in participating stores.

Additionally, signage on store shelves promotes the health benefits of soybean oil and educates consumers on its locally produced nature. These messages grab consumer attention and increase sales.



According to checkoff research, labeling "vegetable oil" as "soybean oil" helps bridge the knowledge gap, improving positive perceptions and driving soybean oil purchases by as much as 62 percent in participating stores.

"The results of our first labeling campaign and partnership with the checkoff strongly support the '100% Soybean Oil' message as being well received by consumers," said Frank Lennartz, manager of scan data resources for Schnucks, a grocery chain partnering with the checkoff. "We are looking at the possibility of permanently incorporating it into our own brand of vegetable oil products."

This year, Schnucks will conduct further sales testing and partner with the checkoff again to call out

"100% Soybean Oil" on the label for a limited time.

"Permanent labels would be a big change for the entire industry, but this is a major first step," said United Soybean Board Domestic Opportunities Target Area Coordinator Lewis Bainbridge, a soybean farmer from Ethan, S.D. "The possibilities here are endless." ▣



Resources Available to Help Farmers Communicate with Consumers

In the United States, where options are in abundance, consumers have the ability to make choices about their food. However, with so many opinions about important agricultural topics floating around, it's important to provide credible information that will help consumers gather a better understanding of agriculture.

This gives farmers an excellent opportunity to step up and engage in conversations with consumers to

answer concerns about their food and how it's produced. Here are five industry-specific websites that provide the facts and information to help farmers talk to consumers and tackle tough questions head-on:

- 1. U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance (USFRA)** – This group of farmer- and rancher-led organizations works together to engage consumers with conversations about today's food.
- 2. GMO Answers** – Utilizing a collection of subject-matter experts, this group can help address consumer questions about biotechnology.
- 3. Best Food Facts** – Maintained by the Center for Food Integrity (CFI), this site connects users with subject-matter experts, and provides farmers with information to effectively communicate with consumers.
- 4. CFI Engage Resource Center** – This site provides a platform for the agricultural industry to tackle misconceptions, misinformation or issues in the media.
- 5. CommonGround** – This coalition of volunteer farm women use both experience and third-party, credible research to provide moms with facts about how U.S. farmers raise food. ▣

A Simple Approach to Weed Control: Diversity key to weed-management plans

Pat Sullivan has what he calls a “pretty simple plan” when it comes to weed control on his south-central-Minnesota farm. It may be simple, but it’s exactly what many scientists promote as the way to prevent herbicide resistance.

“We use a pre-emerge herbicide on all our soybean and corn ground, then come back in post-emergence with different concoctions, using different products,” Sullivan said. He’s careful to use different modes of action in spraying early while weeds are still small, before they become more difficult to kill.

His plan also involves paying attention to detail and doing things many other farmers aren’t. That includes hand pulling troublesome giant ragweed and waterhemp from fields and every fence line, hand spraying

and completely mowing road ditches twice a year to prevent weeds in uncontrolled areas from going to seed.

These different practices are the essence of the diverse weed-management plans being promoted as a way to fight resistance. That diversity can come in many forms, including:

- Herbicide site of action
- Herbicide chemistry
- Pre-emergent herbicides
- Post-emergent herbicides
- Tillage practices
- Row spacing
- Crop rotation
- Cover crops

Having a diverse weed-management plan is an important tool farmers can use to keep resistance at bay.

“Farmers need to have a diverse approach that deals with the weeds

they have and the tillage system that works for them,” added Mark Loux, weed scientist at Ohio State University. “They need a strategy that fits their weeds and utilizes herbicide diversity.”

Visit www.TakeActionOnWeeds.com to find free resources that can help you develop your own weed-management plan. ■



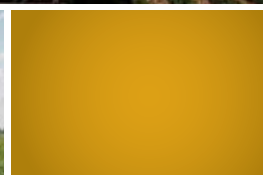
Palmer Amaranth in the field.



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SoyWORLD

Aquaculture Handbook Helps Pakistani Farmers Improve Food Security

Pakistan's fish farmers and entire aquaculture industry have a new resource to encourage success. The American Soybean Association's (ASA) World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) produced the *Aquaculture Handbook—Fish Farming and Nutrition in Pakistan*, through the U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded FEEDing Pakistan project. The handbook, released in February at a launching ceremony in Karachi, shares knowledge from the three-year FEEDing Pakistan project and insight from international experts. There is no charge to access the book that is available to download through WISHH's website. WISHH's FEEDing Pakistan has assisted approximately 2,000 Pakistani fish farmers and helped increase the market value of fish produced—tilapia—from zero at the beginning of the project to an estimated 450 million rupees (\$4.5 million USD) in 2014.

An ASA/WISHH assessment found that Pakistan had an extensive system of fish farming but no commercial, high-protein, floating, extruded fish feeds were produced in the country. To implement FEEDing Pakistan, ASA/WISHH partnered with Kansas State University (KSU)

The *Aquaculture Handbook—Fish Farming and Nutrition in Pakistan* contains 12 chapters on the entire farm-to-consumer aquaculture value chain. Lead editor is Kevin Fitzsimmons, Ph.D., past president of the World Aquaculture Society. Co-editor is R.S.N. Janjua, Ph.D. Local lead author is Muhammad Ashraf, Ph.D., Dean, Faculty of Fisheries and Wildlife, University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, Pattoki Campus, Punjab-Pakistan.



to capitalize on their world-renowned expertise in feed production technology.

During the project, ASA/WISHH provided U.S.-soy formulated floating feed for feeding demonstrations reaching hundreds of farmers. FEEDing Pakistan demonstration tilapia fish averaged 600 grams per fish—double the weight of traditional Pakistan fish harvests. The tilapia received a premium in the local market place and increased enthusiasm for further development. Pakistani fish farmers had never seen such results. ASA/WISHH also worked directly with a variety of farmers who are now selling live tilapia in multiple markets. ■

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Sustainability

Preach What You Practice

By **Barb Baylor Anderson**

Showcase Conservation Efforts to Educate Lawmakers

In the mid-1970s, Danny Murphy's farm was a traditional tillage cotton operation that also included soybeans. He used rear-mounted blades to fill in eroded gullies. That changed in 1985, as conservation compliance came into play. Murphy built terraces to reduce erosion.



Danny Murphy's Canton, Miss. farm was all no-till by 2010. He decided he could only advocate sustainability to lawmakers, regulators and customers if he did a good job himself. He routinely shared his conservation and farm policy thoughts with Mississippi Sen. Thad Cochran and legislative assistant Daniel Ulmer.

Then Roundup Ready crops revolutionized conservation again in the mid-1990s.

"Spraying weeds worked. We went from full tillage to minimum till in our cotton," said Murphy, who farms near Canton, Miss. "We were subsoiling and letting winter weeds hold the soil in place until we did a burndown in the spring. Less tillage and ground cover reduced erosion and pointed the way to the benefits we would find with no-till in later years."

Cotton challenges mounted in 2000, and Murphy added corn to his rotation. He switched to all corn with his soybeans in 2007, which still meant three or four tillage trips.

"As a director of the American Soybean Association, I was part of a task force to document U.S. soybean sustainability. I learned about the benefits of no-till, and how it contributes to sustainability," he said. "I converted a couple of fields, and saw no negative differences in production. We transitioned to one third no-till and two-thirds minimum till."

By 2010, Murphy's farm was all no-till. "Using fewer inputs made sense. As a representative for U.S. soybeans here and internationally, I decided that I only could advocate sustainability to lawmakers, regulators and customers if I did a good job myself," he said.

Murphy's more public role placed him in regular contact with Mississippi Sen. Thad Cochran and legislative assistant Daniel Ulmer. Murphy routinely shared his conservation and farm policy thoughts with the duo, especially during farm bill discussions.

"Danny Murphy's interactions with members of Congress provide valuable insight from the farmers' perspective," Ulmer said. "Hearing from farmers directly is often the best way to let Congress know which programs are working, and which need to be reformed or improved."

Advocate from the Farm

To work productively with legislators, Congressional staffers offer these tips:

1. Be active in local, state and national agriculture trade organizations.
2. Openly advocate for your current and future needs.
3. Make sure your national organization accurately represents the needs of your state.
4. Find ways to work better with agriculture and conservation policy stakeholders.

Murphy said growers must be in regular contact with and educate their legislators to continue to produce crops profitably and sustainably."

"To stay in farming, U.S. farmers are going to have to advocate about what they do, as well as be efficient to be competitive," he said. ■



Daniel Ulmer (*left*), with Senator Cochran's Office, touring a conservation operation recently with Will Long (*center*), of St. Rest Planting Company, and Kurt Readus (*right*), acting state conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Mississippi.

SoyForward

Connecting Farmers, Lawmakers Improves Policy

By **Pat Roberts**

In a global economy with a 24-hour news cycle, always-evolving science and new technology, you don't need me to tell you this is not your grandfather's agriculture. The principles are the same: producers raise the food and fiber to meet world demand while also running a family business and being a steward of the land. But today, both in agriculture and the politics of agriculture, we face unique challenges. One of those challenges is the bombardment of information and the diversity of interests up and down the rural – and now global – economy.

Like farmers and ranchers, members of Congress need to stay informed about all aspects of agriculture. From federal policy making and regulations to the field and the kitchen table, we need to know it all to best represent your interests. Like you, we need to know everything from the prices at the elevator to the status of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organization (WTO). We need to know what challenges you meet in your day-to-day operations so that we can ensure the federal government is an ally in your success – not an adversary.

We have no better proof of this than the current regulatory climate in the Obama Administration. It has been regulate first, ask questions later. This short-sighted agenda, driven by regulatory assault on farm country, is what I am determined to fight as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee.

This is where advocacy organizations like the American Soybean Association (ASA) come in. These member organizations are the first phone call we make to help us talk directly to farmers to fix the problem, avoid mistakes and promote your livelihood.

In putting the farmer first, we rely on advice and counsel from you. At our first hearing this year, we had farmers testify about Farm Bill program sign-ups.

Then we had U.S. Secretary of Agriculture testify on the second panel. We were able to communicate directly to him the concerns from farmers regarding enrollment in the new SCO (Supplemental Coverage Option) and PLC (Price Loss Coverage) programs. Days later, the deadline was extended. Message received.

A week later, farmer and Chairman of the ASA Board of Directors, Ray Gaesser briefed Senate staff on GMOs (genetically modified organisms). This direct contact and information sharing on headline-grabbing topics like GMOs is just one of the many tools organizations like ASA use to communicate your needs to policymakers every day. It may not make the headlines, but the value of this highly targeted outreach is effective.

I know ASA works hard to strengthen and improve the soybean industry, but it also makes a clear contribution to our work on your behalf in Washington. I am grateful for the advice and counsel I receive from farmers and ranchers and groups like ASA. If you'll forgive a Kansan for using this analogy, it helps separate the wheat from the chaff so we can best serve you. ■

Chairman of the Agriculture Committee U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts



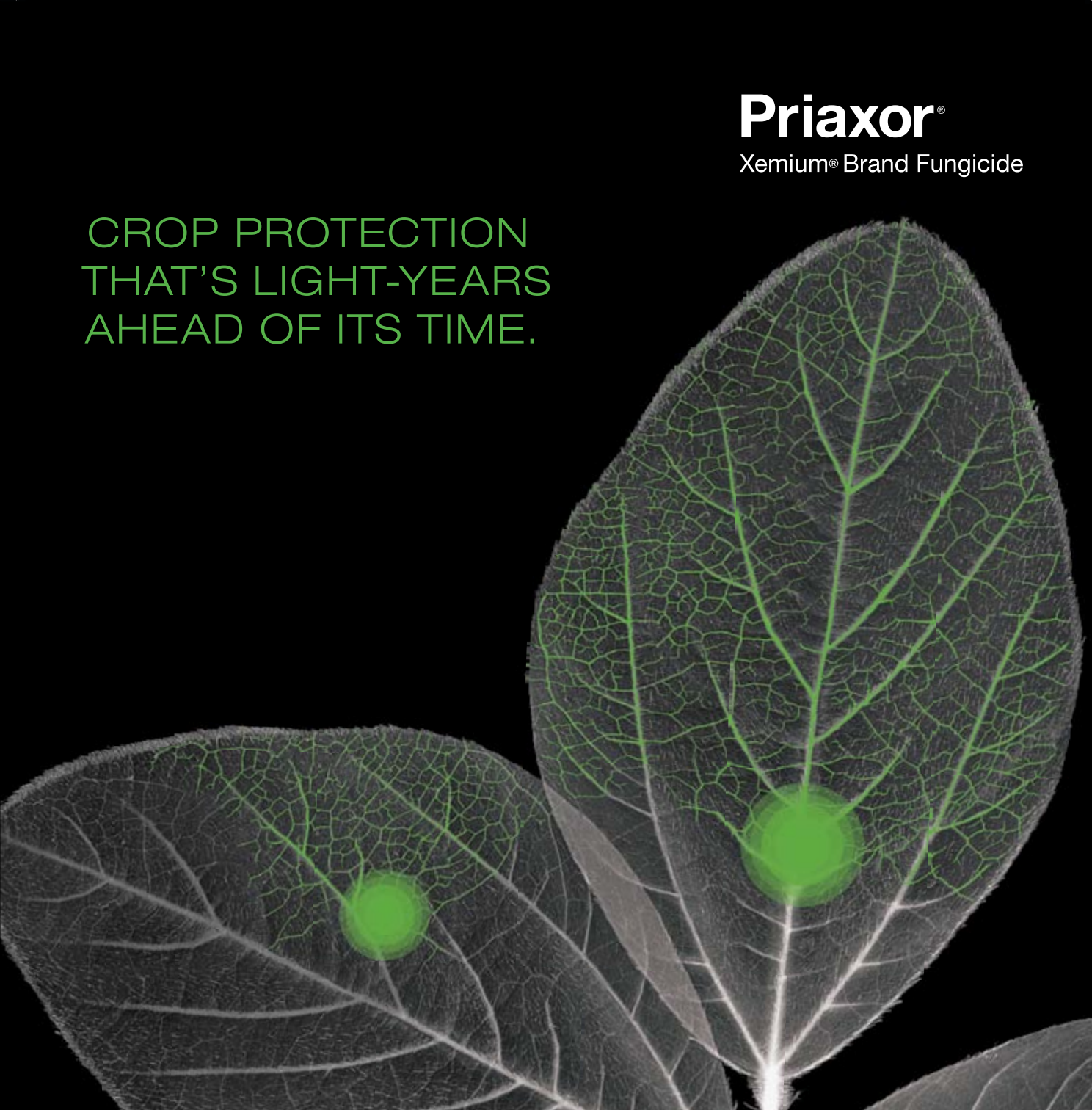
Photo Credit: Senate Agriculture Committee

Pat Roberts is the senior senator from Kansas, now in his fourth term. He serves as the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry, and is the only lawmaker ever to serve as chair of the Agriculture Committees in both the House and Senate. Chairman Roberts is also a 2014 recipient of ASA's Soy Champion Award.

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I am a soybean farmer,
trade advocate,
and ASA member.



David Ausberger, Jefferson, Iowa

We are soybean farmers,
animal ag supporters,
and ASA members.



Phyllis & Mark Legan, Coatesville, Ind.

I am a soybean farmer,
biodiesel proponent,
and ASA member.



Jerry Peery, Clinton, Ky.

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