Export council works to maintain access to China

Now, more than ever, China is on U.S. soybean farmers’ minds. While tariffs are of concern to everyone, the U.S. soybean industry continues to work on maintaining access to that important market. It has a lengthy track record of actively investing in programs that support China’s food security and safety.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) is the industry’s international marketing arm, building a preference for U.S. soybeans and soybean products through a global network of international offices and strong support stateside.

“USSEC wants soybean farmers to know that it and others in the industry are working on their behalf to build demand and expand market access for U.S. soy products in China,” said John Wray, Ottawa, who represents the Kansas Soybean Commission on the council.

Contests allow Kansas farmers to compete on yield, value

As fall harvest ramps up, farmers should think about the annual Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests. Entries must be postmarked no later than Dec. 1.

Kansas State University (K-State) Extension personnel or a designee must witness the harvest. A designee may be anyone not involved with the farm enterprise. For example, a family member or input supplier may not serve as the witness.

Pertaining to harvest, some of the contest rules’ highlights include the following.

- An entry shall consist of one field of at least five contiguous acres. Farm Service Agency measurements will serve to verify a field’s size if entered in its entirety. If not, the harvest witness must take measurements with a measuring wheel, GPS device or smartphone app. If using an electronic method, a color printout must accompany the entry.
- Contestants should notify their Extension county offices of when harvest is to begin as early as possible.
- The harvest witness must inspect the combine’s grain hopper and verify it is empty before harvest begins.
- Only official elevator-scale tickets shall verify the soybeans’ weight. While a minimum of 5 acres must be checked, the entire field’s weight may be taken.

Thanks to the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC), the highest dryland and irrigated yields in the contest each will receive a $1,000 award. In each district, first place will win $300, second will earn $200, and third will receive $100. A winner could earn an additional $1,000 for achieving or surpassing 100 bushels per acre.

The No-till on the Plains organization will supply additional prizes in the no-till categories.

Managed by the Kansas Soybean Association (KSA), the contests are free to all Kansas farmers. There is a limit of one entry per field. One person may enter multiple categories – conventional or no-till, dryland or irrigated.

Farmers may enter the value contest, which evaluates protein and oil contents, without entering the yield contest and vice versa.

The complete rules are available at http://KansasSoybeans.org/contests on the web, from the Kansas Soybean office (877-KS-SOYBEAN, 877-577-6923 or info@kansassoybeans.org) and in K-State Extension offices across the state.

Doug Shoup, Ph.D., Scranton, a former K-State crops specialist, coordinates the project for the KSA Board of Directors.

“This is an incentive for farmers to maximize soybean yield and protein and oil contents and an opportunity to share the production practices that achieve those high levels of yield and value,” he said.

Winners will receive their plaques, certificates and monetary awards during the Kansas Soybean Expo, January 9, 2019, in Topeka.
Biodiesel production contributes to Big 12 recycling championship

For the fourth time in the last five years, Kansas State University (K-State) won the annual Big 12 RecycleMania competition. The Big 12 recycling champions ranked 35th in the nation this year with a recycling rate of 45.32 percent and 486,286 total pounds.

K-State began its recycling program in 1989. Over the years, it has had several homes. Ironically, the former Wind Erosion Research Laboratory was damaged by a tornado, and that building became the current K-State Recycling Center soon afterward.

Through various grants and donations, the recycling program has grown immensely. Outdoor recycling bins are located all over campus, with thousands of deskside bins indoors.

K-State’s green movement does not stop there. Used cooking oils also are recycled and reused in the form of biodiesel. With funds from the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC), the Wildcats established a biodiesel-conversion laboratory to back its Biodiesel Initiative (http://j.mp/ksu-biodiesel). KSC also provided a pickup to transport used cooking oil from the dining halls and K-State Student Union to the lab.

Once there, student workers test the oil’s quality. Next, french fries and other solids are filtered from the oil. The quality-checked, filtered oil then is poured into a reactor and converted to pure biodiesel (B100). To fuel campus vehicles and equipment, the B100 is blended with petrodiesel to produce B20. K-State has reduced the amount of fuel it must purchase, thanks to its on-campus biodiesel production.

K-State is not the only Kansas school working with biodiesel. The University of Kansas, North Central Kansas Technical College and Seward County Community College do, too. Together, the four schools make up the Kansas Biodiesel Consortium.

While still an informal network, the consortium already has influenced the biodiesel industry. In January, it hosted its first daylong workshop to explain biodiesel-production basics, biodiesel’s properties and how to implement biodiesel in fleets. Activities like that help to spread the word about renewable fuels and their effects on agriculture.

Weekly radio program adjusts schedule, expands online presence

Kansas soybean farmers face important issues in the field and the market. Listen to the Kansas Soybean Update, brought to you by the Kansas Soybean Commission, to keep up with the latest in soybean programs, news from the field, and interviews with soybean experts and industry leaders. The weekly, three-minute program helps soybean farmers make informed decisions and learn where their checkoff dollars are going.

In July, a couple of radio stations moved the Update to new time slots. You now can catch the program, hosted by Kansas farm broadcaster Greg Akagi, on the following schedule.

- KFEQ-AM 680, Saint Joseph, Missouri, Monday at 12:20 p.m.
- KBUF-AM 1030, Garden City, Wednesday at 5:30 a.m.
- WIBW-AM 580, Topeka, Wednesday at 6:40 a.m.
- KBUF-AM 1030, Garden City, Wednesday at 8:52 a.m.
- KXXX-AM 790, Colby, Wednesday at 10:20 a.m.
- K-State Radio Network, Thursday at 10:40 a.m. (during Agriculture Today)
- KRVN-AM 880, Lexington, Nebraska, Thursday at 1:43 p.m.
- KFRM-AM 550, Clay Center, Friday at 1:30 p.m.


In addition, the Ag A.M. in Kansas TV show incorporates the Update into its “Farm Factor” program every Tuesday. Watch on these stations.

- KSNF-TV 16, Joplin, Missouri, at 5:10 a.m.
- KTMJ-TV 43, Topeka, at 5:10 and 6:10 a.m.
- KSCW-TV 33, Wichita, at 6:10 a.m.
- Cox Communications Channel 22 (Yurview Kansas), at 11:40 a.m.

The Update has moved into podcasting, too. Castbox, Google Play Music, iTunes, SoundCloud, Stitcher and TuneIn all carry the program. If you use the Amazon Alexa cloud-based voice service, enable the AnyPod skill on your Alexa-supporting device, then say “Alexa, ask AnyPod to play the Kansas Soybean Update.”
WISHH partners prefer U.S. soy after IGP training

West African poultry producers saw the value of U.S. soy as a result of the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health’s (WISHH) sending them to Kansas State University (K-State) to participate in an IGP Institute feed-manufacturing short course in June.

Through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded AMPLIFIES Ghana project, WISHH is improving Ghana’s poultry-feed production capacity and increasing efficiency in poultry value chains. K-State has a contract with WISHH to provide feed-milling and grain-handling consultations to the Ghanaian feed and poultry industries.

WISHH, therefore, selected representatives of two Ghanaian poultry enterprises that have their own feed mills and currently are growing a combined total of nearly 15,000 layers and broilers. Together, they have the capacity to raise 22,000 birds per year.

“If you want quality product or quality soybeans, you do not talk about the price, you talk about the quality,” one of the participants said after the Kansas training. “Because of this course, I know, if I depend mainly on American soybeans because of the high-quality protein, it will help my poultry farm grow.”

WISHH Executive Director Jim Hershey said the IGP Institute has excellent courses to help educate prospective customers about the advantages of using U.S. soybean meal or whole soybeans.

“One of our next steps is to further work with Seaboard to be an intermediate supplier that can offer the specific volumes needed by local buyers to increase access and availability of U.S. products,” he explained.

AMPLIFIES connects trade and development programs, revitalizing Ghana’s poultry industry while supporting ongoing chicken and feed-ingredient free trade with Ghana. That enables competition and increased export opportunity for U.S. products.

WISHH’s success in securing AMPLIFIES and other government funding has allowed it to leverage soybean-checkoff resources from the Kansas Soybean Commission and other state soybean boards by more than 6-to-1 over the last five years.

A program of the American Soybean Association, WISHH is the U.S. soybean industry’s “trailblazer for trade.” It focuses technical transfer and behavior-change efforts on weak links in agricultural value chains, delivering growth to local economies and improved nutrition to people and animals.

Above: Ghanaian poultry-feed millers Isaac Essiaw and Adu Douglas participate in a feed-manufacturing short course at K-State’s IGP Institute. WISHH selected them for the training to help solidify their preference for high-quality U.S. soy. (IGP Institute photo)

Export council works

Former commissioner-at-large Jerry Jeschke, Robinson, congratulates Laci Strickland of the Labette County FFA Chapter on her state oil-crop production proficiency award, which the Commission sponsors. (Kansas FFA photo)

Strickland has gone from riding in the tractor and combine to learning how to operate the machinery herself. She first helped out by cleaning facilities and equipment, then she helped move equipment between fields, and now she is gaining knowledge in various aspects of the enterprise.

Her knowledge of modern technology has been a true asset to Strickland Family Farms, and she has mastered the auto-steer system. One of her most important jobs is driving the tractor during harvest so they can dump on the go.

Approach involving the entire U.S. soybean supply chain from farmer to exporter. The new policy will identify all soybean shipments that contain more than 1 percent FM. USSEC believes that will improve the quality of U.S. soybean exports over time and is optimistic the agreement will help the United States maintain its reputation as a reliable, responsive supplier.

Biotechnology is a matter in which the U.S. soybean industry has been engaged for some time. In 2017, a peer-reviewed white paper, “The Potential Economic Impacts of Delayed Biotech Innovation in Soybeans,” detailed the benefits of biotech-enhanced crops for countries that accept them.

It also documented the economic effects of delays in regulatory approval, showing that a three-year postponement in global approval of soybean traits anytime in the next 10 years would cost farmers and consumers nearly $19 billion, compared with typical approval timelines.

USSEC has introduced a three-prong approach to help ease those issues.

- Engage the Chinese industry to talk with its government about potential supply problems if the biotech-approval process does not move expeditiously.
- Build consumer confidence and combat misleading media reports about biotechnology through programs like U.S. Farm Moms to China, which helps create a dialogue about food and families.
- Work through the International Soybean Growers Alliance of like-minded countries to oppose market restrictions, excessive tariffs and scientifically unsound trade barriers. Adapted from an article that originally appeared in the Missouri Soybean Farmer magazine’s June edition.

Soy Notes is a service of the Kansas Soybean Commission – the soybean checkoff.

1000 SW Red Oak Place, Topeka, Kansas 66615
phone: 785-271-1040 | fax: 785-271-1102
toll-free: 800-328-7392 or 877-KS-SOYBEAN (877-577-6923)
www.KansasSoybeans.org | info@kansassoybeans.org

Commissioners
Districts 1, 2 & 3.................Kurt Maurath, Oakley
..........................................kurtmaurath@stel.net
District 4..................Ron Ohlde, Palmer
..................................................ohldefarms@bluevalley.net
District 5.................Kent Romine, Great Bend
............................................kromine@opwireless.com
District 6............Dennis Gruenbacher, Andale
dg6901@aol.com
District 7..............James Zwonitzer, Horton
zwonitzer1@hotmail.com
District 8..............Bob Haselwood, Berryton
bhaselwood@aol.com
District 9...............Mike Bellar, Howard
...........................................mbellar@stegolab.net
At-large: Rayen Prekor, Mohern
..................................................pfeifnerfarms@gmail.com
Lance Rezac, Onaga
rezacfarms@yahoo.com

2018–2019 Officers
Chairman.................................Kurt Maurath
Vice Chairman.....................Lance Rezac
Secretary...............................Mike Bellar
Treasurer.................................Bob Haselwood

United Soybean Board Directors
Dennis Gruenbacher, Andale............dg6901@aol.com
Ron Ohlde, Palmer
..................................................ohldefarms@bluevalley.net
Lance Rezac, Onaga
rezacfarms@yahoo.com

Staff
Administrator........................Kenlon Johannes
Director of Field Services..............Dennis Huppe
Director of Communications............Brad Parker
Director of Operations..................Adam O’Trimble
Program Manager.....................Jancy Hall
Accounting Assistant..................Dawn Bradley
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..................................................ohldefarms@bluevalley.net
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**Trip important as trade with Mexico faces challenges, opportunities**

Mishek Inc. and Associates – an international marketing consultancy – conducted a trade mission and orientation in Mexico for farmer-leaders as part of a Latin America project with the Kansas Soybean Commission and other state soybean boards. The trip to the northwestern states of Sonora and Sinaloa took place July 8–13.

In partnership with Ag Processing Inc. (AGP), the project builds relationships and grows the market for U.S. soybeans and soy products in Mexico.

The trip was a chance for farmers to meet customers, see their facilities and accomplishments, and gain a better understanding of Mexico’s market potential. KSC Treasurer Bob Haselwood, Berryton, was in the group.

With both challenges and opportunities ahead for trade with Mexico, it was important to increase the project partners’ efforts to get better acquainted and strengthen relationships.

**USB’s new CEO visits Topeka**

**United Soybean Board (USB) CEO Polly Ruhland (front) visited the Kansas Soybean office May 9. On her way home to Saint Louis, Missouri, she tweeted: “Meeting staff and learning about @KsSoybean programs today in Topeka. What a fantastic #USsoy family we have! Proud of our OSSB partners.”**

Ruhland took the reigns at USB Nov. 1, 2017.

**Workshops inform future mechanics**

Diesel mechanics and automotive technicians are key players in the acceptance of biodiesel, and the Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC) has known that for some time.

During the 2017–2018 school year, MEG Corp. Fuel Consulting conducted workshops for diesel-mechanics students at six technical colleges in Kansas. They received in-depth training about the history of diesel, refinery process, physical characteristics of diesel, the history of biodiesel, biodiesel-production process, common feedstocks, benefits of biodiesel, quality standards, biodiesel blends, biodiesel and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), and troubleshooting common filter-plugging issues.

As part of its support for biodiesel, KSC has been sponsoring biodiesel education at the state’s technical schools for several years. Slightly more than half of all U.S. biodiesel is made from soybean oil. Studies have shown that biodiesel has increased the price of soybeans by at least 63¢ per bushel.

The program was a response to repeated reports of diesel technicians’ blaming biodiesel for problems customers were experiencing with their vehicles. Mechanics have a lot of influence with their customers.

“It was troubling when we would hear that farmers were being told not to use biodiesel by their local mechanics,” said Hoon Ge, founder of MEG Corp.

**Soybeans feed the poultry that feed Colombia**

Colombia hosted its fourth annual Cocina Viva chef competition this summer. The Kansas Soybean Commission (KSC), USA Poultry and Egg Export Council (USAPEEC), and USA Rice again were the main sponsors.

The event’s goals are to increase U.S. poultry offerings throughout Colombia and to educate hotel, restaurant and foodservice chefs about the flavor, price and quality of U.S. turkey, duck and chicken.

Thanks to funding from KSC, the competition has gained recognition and credibility. Hundreds of chefs have been exposed to it and have become ambassadors for U.S. poultry products. They continue to include U.S. poultry on their menus, which can have a multiplier effect.

Building demand for poultry benefits the soybean industry because, as U.S. poultry exports increase, poultry production increases, requiring more soybean meal for feed.

Ten chefs competed each day of the three-day “Living Kitchen” competition. The first and second competitions were July 23–24 in Bogota. The last 10 chefs competed July 25 in Barranquilla.

USAPEEC received more than 80 applications from professional chefs, and a jury selected the 30 competitors. They prepared recipes based on modern or traditional techniques using U.S. poultry (duck, chicken or both) and U.S. rice as the main ingredients.

The winner of each day’s competition will attend a culinary educational excursion to Miami Beach, Florida, including a visit to the Americas Food and Beverage Show, Oct. 1–2. During that trip, they will get to visit and experience U.S. culinary marketplaces from grocery stores to top restaurants.

**A competitor presents his chicken-and-rice dish to the jury. (USAPEEC photo)**