Volume 28, Issue 2 | September 2023

Father, son duo advance operation, legacy

The Litch farmstead has experienced many changes over the years. The current operators are Robert and Brandon Litch. In 1970, the farm nestled near Melvern Lake; Robert's dad bought the farm from his grandfather that year but the lake took ownership and they had to move. Since then, the Litch family has continued to grow their fifth-generation operation. The Litches grow soybeans, corn and hay, and run a cattle operation with seed stalkers as well as a cow-calf operation.

Robert and Brandon adventured down a path outside the farm returning full-time. Robert attended trade school after high school and became a mechanic for five years. He operated a seed business on top of running the farm for many years. The decision to farm full-time in 1990 was easy because it allowed him to attend more of his children's activities, he says. Brandon attended Kansas State University to pursue an agricultural education degree but switched to agronomy when he decided to return to the farm after college.

"It's in my blood, it's what I grew up doing," Robert says.

Over the years, many things have changed and advanced on the Litch farm, however the biggest was switching to notill in the '90s. Robert says he first discovered no-till while he served on the Kansas Soybean Commission board as the district nine Commissioner. He made the switch because the weather had such an impact on whether they could get in the field or not.

"I've been on several boards, but the Kansas Soybean Commission is one of the best I've been on," Robert says.

Together they work to increase vields in all crops. Robert and Brandon participate in the Kansas Soybean Yield and Value Contests each year.

"We've been doing test plots and trying to see how far we can push population fertility," Brandon says. "It is rewarding to see how you've improved."

Working with family can be challenging yet rewarding. Robert enjoys working with his son and being able to introduce his grandkids to the farming life.

"You know family is always going to be there and be reliable," Brandon says. "We can have disagreements, but then brainstorm together to solve them. At the end of the day, you're still family and you still sit down at the dinner table to have supper together."

The Litch duo believes there is importance to a membership with the Kansas Soybean Association. Robert expresses there are a lot of items the Association speaks out on in favor of farmers that farmers don't realize. Brandon values how the association works to protect farmers' rights to pesticides, uses of technology and much more.

"We need a voice because at the end of the day, there is a product o be sold and it needs places to be sold," Brandon says.







Left: Robert and Brandon Litch standing in a lucious green soybean field. Middle; The Litch family examining their crop. Right: L-R: Robert, Lisa, Brandon and Kelsey Litch









Take time to enjoy fall harvest

A couple of weeks ago I was sitting in a Kansas Soybean Commission meeting in Topeka. There was a nice representation of people from across the state of Kansas. What I found interesting was all of us had the same type of story when asked how our soybeans looked. Everyone commented that, "A month ago they looked like a record crop but now they are just average or less!"

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STRAIGHT ROWS

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Our nice July rains and cooler temperatures were replaced with the typical hot and dry August. As I get older, it puts a smile on my face to think we go through these same emotions every year, yet each growing season seems more extreme than the previous.

To recap events from this past summer, we have a great new addition to the Kansas Soybean Association staff, Josey Mestagh, who started in June. The KSA board met in Great Bend for our summer board meeting and Corporate Tour in July.

In terms of current events, south central Kansas is an ongoing lawsuit regarding water rights and the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. You'll read about it in this newsletter, but one potential implication is the forced shutdown of 800 center pivot irrigation systems on agricultural land. It could drastically affect the agricultural economy if not properly mediated. It is no secret as we move forward that water is, and will continue to be, a resource that will be fought over. This has become more apparent with that are of Kansas, and others, experiencing prolonged extreme drought conditions.

Kansas seems to be a state that attracts renewable energy. Wind farm adoption became somewhat mainstream in some regions of the state years back. Now, we are hearing from landowners who have been approached by solar companies looking for suitable



land to build panels. KSA takes no particular stance on this matter, though we can offer guidance on the decision-making process. If you happen to be approached, please exercise due diligence and have an attorney inspect the contract before deciding to sign up. These companies make terms look appealing up front, but a hidden clause could be a detriment to the landowner down the road — especially to the next generation owner. Read more insight on solar farm adoption later in this newsletter.

In closing thoughts, fall harvest is a very busy and hectic time with a lot of decisions to be made. Oftentimes, these decisions are made on the fly and it can be stressful. Please take time to enjoy fall harvest because it only comes once a year! Be safe, and if the work doesn't happen today, there is always tomorrow. Please reach out to me or the KSA office if there is any way we can be helpful. KSA is here for you — our members!

Best Regards,

Lat Lyle

Water rights: a continuous challenge for farmers

With water levels decreasing, issues are rising for farmers and ranchers in the central part of Kansas. An estimated 800 privately-owned irrigation wells could be in danger of being shut down by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Due to the extreme, lasting drought, Rattlesnake Creek water levels have declined, limiting the amount of water fed into the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Since Rattlesnake Creek has senior water rights and the irrigation wells have junior water rights, the creek should receive water first. Since 2019, Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have been working to find a solution in favor of both sides.

In 1957, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service filed for and received surface water rights for Rattlesnake Creek as the main source for the Quivira National Wildlife Refuge. Recently, this has become an issue as rainfall has decreased dramatically. According to a 2016 report done by the agency, the irrigation wells are at fault for Quivira's low water levels by using the water from Rattlesnake Creek. With Rattlesnake Creek being dependent upon rain to keep the stream moving, the

recent drought has diminished the amount of water available to distribute between the refuge and irritation wells.

Most wells were drilled in the '60s, abiding by legal rules and regulations. With irrigation wells costing between \$50,000 and \$100,000, according to Home Guide, many farmers are still paying off the wells drilled for their property.

"It's a heck of an investment to improve their income, just for it to be taken away," Keith Miller says. Miller is a Great Bend farmer and former GMD5 board member.

Closure of 800 irrigation wells could have major economic impacts on farmers and the local communities. Cumulatively, irrigation farmers in the area may lose up to \$1 billion per year according to GMD5. Farmers would no longer have access to the source of their increased income but still must pay for the well implementation. Tax dollars in local towns could take a drastic hit, as there is a significant difference between irrigated and non-irrigated taxes. This could result in a decrease of money for the local schools, businesses and

GMD5 proposed drilling 30

small wells close to the refuge and irrigation farmers agreed to pay for them to keep their privately-owned wells operational. This proposal was declined. The Kansas Department of Agriculture's Division of Water Resources and its chief engineer, Earl Lewis, are working alongside GMD5 to continue develop an effective resolution - the Rattlesnake Creek Watershed Plan. While this plan has made progress, there is still additional impacts that need to be evaluated with hopes to have the plan complete in the first quarter of 2024.

Miller says small communities rely on farmers to fuel the local economy, and wells being shut down means many farmers may not be able to afford their farms anymore.

"A lot of farmers are upset, and I understand because it's their livelihoods," Miller says. "I foresee an increase of farm sales from these water challenges."

GMD5 says they are actively speaking with representatives in Washington, D.C., and other organizations involved to find a solution. To learn more about the watershed plan and voice your concerns, visit *qmd5.orq/* watershed-plan.

KSA Annual Member Meeting Notice

The Kansas Soybean Association scheduled its annual member meeting to coincide with the luncheon of the Kansas Soybean Expo Jan. 10, 2024, at Heritage Hall in Topeka. During meeting business, the KSA board intends to review and approve the 2023 annual meeting minutes, share officer reports, approve and distribute the 2024 policy resolutions and fill any open board seats. Other agenda items may be added per the discretion of the KSA board. All members of the association are invited to attend and participate in the meeting, which requires 15 present members to reach quorum.



MEET A KSA BOARD MEMBER Brice Bunck, Topeka, KS

I grew up in Everest on my family's farm. We still farm there as well as operate a soybean production facility which has been around since 1938. I graduated from Kansas State University in 2002 with a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy. Choosing to attend K-State was an easy decision because agriculture is all I have ever known.

I work as a Regional Agronomist with Simplot, an agricultural company based in Boise, Idaho. Simplot has retail locations that expand across the U.S. and is committed to researching and developing new innovations related to plant nutrition and food processing, animal feed and sustainable ecosystems. For the past nine years, I have lived in Topeka with my loving wife, Allison, and our four children: Cole, 19, who is following in his parent's footsteps at K-State;



Tenly, 17, Sawyer, 13 and Creighton, 10. If I am not in a producer's field, you can find me at one of our kids' sporting events or activities.

I first became involved with the Kansas Soybean Association when my wife and I were selected to complete the Young Leader Program through the American Soybean Association. Upon completion in 2012, I stepped into the Young Leader board position. Since then, I have also served as the At-Large 1 position and now I serve as the District Two director and am on the Executive Committee as the Treasurer. Little did I know back then the privilege I would have today to work with the great KSA staff and leadership team to help support the greatest farmers (The Kansas Farmer) in America.

I also enjoy fishing, hunting, and playing sports with the kids, trying to relive those glory days.

KSA collaborates with Bunge to thank area farmers

A Kansas Soybean Association membership benefit

The Kansas Soybean Association partnered with Bunge in Emporia to host a farmer appreciation dinner in August. Collaborating with Bunge and other industry organizations builds a stronger relationship between all who are working for the benefit of soybean growers. During this dinner, local farmers were able to learn more about what Bunge has to offer to improve their opperations. KSA connected with numerous attendees to discuss how KSA is their voice in policy. Staff and board members attended.

Top right: District 6 director James Moreland discusses the importance of KSA and its voice in policy. Bottom right: Board member Adam Phelon engages in conversation with attendees.





Timely soybean harvest is important to maximize yields

By Matt Essick, Pioneer Agronomy Manager

Minimizing soybean harvest losses leads to higher yields at harvest time. Losses at harvest can be caused by several factors including delayed harvest or improperly adjusted equipment. According to Extension engineers, harvest loses can be reduced to 3 to 5%. Achieving

this low level of harvest loss involves inspecting field operations and trying to harvest when soybeans are close to 13% moisture. Growers will want to start harvesting when soybeans are close to 14% to provide a wider window of harvest. There can be small discounts

			an Yield Los		Whe		
	Harvest Moisture Level of Soybeans						
	13%	12%	11%	10%	9%	8%	7%
Yield Loss	Bu./Acre Yield Loss						
0.7 bu./A	0	0.7	1.3	2.0	2.7	3.4	4.1
per point							
0.6 bu./A	0	0.6	1.1	1.6	2.2	2.8	3.4
per point							
0.5 bu./A	0	0.5	0.8	1.2	1.8	2.3	2.7
per point							
0.3 bu./A	0	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.4	1.7	2.1
per point							

when sovbeans are harvested above 13% moisture, but moistures less than 13% result in less weight delivered to the end user. A standard bushel of soybeans weighs 60 pounds and is 13% moisture and 87% dry matter which is 52.2 pounds of dry matter. If soybeans are harvested at 12% moisture, you still have 52.2 pounds of dry matter but the beans now weigh 59.318 pounds instead of 60 pounds. This is a 1.137% yield loss. See table for yield loss associated with drier sovbeans due to loss of weight as the soybeans dry below 13%.

Quality soybeans? Prove it.

Are you and your neighbor discussing whose beans are better? We can settle it for you. Enter the 2023 Kansas Soybean Yield & Value Contests and find out how your beans stack up. Kansas farmers utilize innovation and expertise throughout the growing season to manage environmental factors prior to harvest. Send in your crop now and you can earn extra money or even a trip to Commodity Classic in March 2024.

These annual contests sponsored by the Kansas Soybean Association and Kansas Soybean Commission are designed to recognize outstanding Kansas soybean farmers, provide fun incentives, and share information with other farmers to entice production of more profitable soybeans.

The Kansas Soybean Commission sponsors a monetary prize for the top three finishers in each district, as well as an ad-

ditional \$1,000 for the overall dryland and irrigated winners. The amounts per district are that first place receives \$300, second receives \$200, and third receives \$100. All participants receive a T-shirt for entering.

Districts are determined by region, tillage method and irrigation status, with a total of 18 districts in consideration. Entries must be from one field of five contiguous acres as verified by the Farm Service Agency, GPS printout or manual measurement. Individuals may enter multiple categories, but only one entry may be accepted per district. To enter, you will need to attach your official elevator-scale tickets with moisture percentage and foreign matter included. Each entry also needs a non-relative witness to ensure accuracy.

The statewide Kansas Soybean Value Contest that analyzes protein, oil and other soybean qualities is also open for entries. Submissions are taken in 20-ounce samples, which are evaluated by Ag Processing, Inc. to determine value. Monetary awards are also given to the three highest-value entries. Farmers may enter both the yield and value contests.

The contests are open and free of charge to any Kansas soybean grower or individual involved in a farming operation. Invite your neighbors to enter the contest. Recognition takes place during the Kansas Soybean Expo in January 2024.

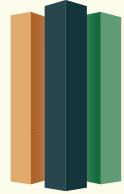
A full guide of contest rules and regulations, as well as the digital entry form, are available at <u>kansassoybeans.org/association/contests</u>. Questions may be directed to the Kansas Soybean office by phone at 877-KS-SOYBEAN (877-577-6923) or to local KSRE offices.



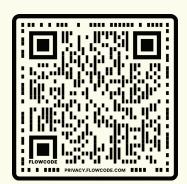
WISHH connects Trade, Development & Food Security is ambodia where fish account for 61% of household

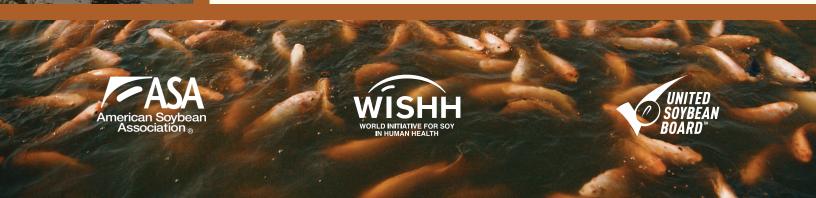
WISHH connects Trade, Development & Food Security in Cambodia where **fish account for 61% of households' animal protein** intake. We cultivate trade with Cambodian feed mills that are buying U.S. soybean meal for the growing aquaculture industry that WISHH is developing. Our trade and development work makes protein more available in the country where **45% of Cambodians live in moderate or severe food insecurity.**

Find out how WISHH's three pillars of trade, development and food security cultivate new markets for U.S. Soy protein.









Solar moves into Kansas, brings decision time

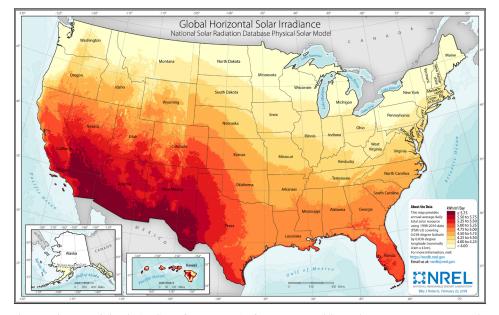
The Kansas Soybean Association supports a landowner's freedom to operate and therefore takes no particular stance on investing in solar energy production on farmland. KSA's role on this topic is to serve as guidance in the complicated decision-making process and offer resources for a landowner's consideration. This article is not intended to serve as a legal resource.

Having productive land is the ultimate goal in row crop farming. The traditional route to achieve this is growing a quality commodity and selling it at the elevator, though landowners have begun to look toward a new avenue to profit from their acres – leasing land to solar companies to construct panels.

A report by Shannon Ferrell, agricultural economics professor at Oklahoma State University, says solar companies seek relatively flat land with bright, abundant sunlight. The ideal location is clear of obstructions like trees, hills or buildings, and is near existing power transmission lines. Land that has been in agricultural production, especially in Kansas,

checks many of these boxes.

When landowners are proached by developers, the terms to convert the land to solar use can be enticing. On the surface, a solar agreement promises diversified income with minimal input and offers relief from being at mother nature's mercy during the growing season. Payouts vary by source, but are substantial by all accounts. Contrary to wind turbines, which allow for shared use of the land, solar panels tend to completely replace the land's crop production, according to Ferrell's report. The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy at energy. gov states that opportunities do exist to co-locate solar technology and crop production. Called agrovoltaics, this coopetition most often looks like grazing sheep beneath the panels or growing vegetables and pollinator habitats in the accessible soil. EERE materials discuss modifications to traditional solar technology that would allow farmers to grow other crops, saying that system could tout benefits while also requiring a trade-off between energy output and crop productivity.



The annual average daily solar irradiance for Kansas varies from 4.25 to 5.25 kilowatt-hours per square meter per day. Irradiance defines the electromagnetic radiation power received from the sun per unit of area. The map indicates Kansas is mid-tier in terms of ability to capture energy from the sun with some regions being more effective than others. Map created by the National Solar Radiation Data Base and downloaded from the National Renewable Energy Laboratory at https://www.nrel.gov/gis/solar-resource-maps.html.

Guiding Resources

- Kansas Farm Bureau Renewable Energy Legal Resources
 www.kfb.org/KFB-Legal-Foundation/Legal-Resources/Renewable-Energy
- National Ag Law Center Renewable Energy Publications
 https://nationalaglawcenter.org/center-publications/renewableenergy/#solarfarm
- AgriSolar Clearinghouse
 https://www.agrisolarclearinghouse.org/
- Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy https://www.energy.gov/eere/solar/farmers-guide-going-solar

Despite potential benefits, there are numerous factors for landowners to consider before signing a contract. One of those factors is the contract itself.

Charles Atkinson resides in Great Bend, but is involved with his family's operation in Columbus. As a farmer, he's seen the surge in land leasing proposals sent to neighbors by solar companies.

While he agrees with freedom to operate, Atkinson says, "My concern with the whole thing is that farmers who are approached and would like to lease a solar farm need to look those contracts over very closely."

Atkinson encourages his peers to seek a reputable attorney who can review the legalese within the contracts and ensure the terms are fair. The OSU report points out that solar companies enlist their own legal team whose professional obligation is to create a document favorable to the developer.

Discussion amongst the agricultural community calls out downsides associated with land conversion - including holes within contract terms, infrastructure left behind if a company goes bankrupt, lack of commitment by solar entities to assist in cleaning up past lease expiration and extra land tied up in a contract that is not being compensated. Atkinson also sees absentee landowners as a target for solar companies

and worries about the negative implications for renting farm-

"My other concern is that they are going after productive crop land," he shares. "There are other potential sites available, such as rangeland or much less productive land. They are after crop land because it is clean and cleared."

There are social factors involved in the decision, as well. A publication from the National Ag Law Center flags family matters and community relations as important considerations. It advises landowners to check if a solar agreement fits with existing estate or farm transition plans and encourages a discussion among all family members with interest in the land. The NALC guide also cautions that choosing to install solar technology could invoke opposition from neighbors. Converting farmland is a hot button issue among farmers and may lead to conflict because of the changed landscape aesthetic, noise and traffic during panel construction or other reasons.

Landowners are also encouraged to research the companies that contact them, seek testimonials from current lessors, calculate tax and insurance costs and exercise due diligence every step of the process before signing their name and legally binding themselves to a solar contract.

Before You Go Solar

- 1. Consult with experts and peers to help guide your decision. This includes an attorney with experience in solar contracts, family, neighbors, extension educators or others who can assist in making an informed decision. Surrounding yourself with rational voices ensures your decision was made in good faith.
- 2. Set an appointment with your accountant and insurance provider. These experts can help you understand financial obligations and determine necessary liability coverage. It is also important to ensure your property title is free of burdens.
- 3. Research solar developers and relevant testimonials. Know who is on the other end of this business transaction. Organizations like the Better Business Bureau can provide clarity on the developer's history and bring red flags to light.
- 4. Understand documents and terms clearly. Your hired attorney is the best line of defense against ambiguous or outright shady language. Once a contract is signed, you are legally bound to abide by the requirements within.
- 5. Establish a solid recordkeeping system. If and when the solar contract is signed, secure and organize all current and succeeding documents in the event that an issue arises later. Document any instance of property damage or breach of contract by the other party.

State Solar Stats

KANSAS RANKS IN SOLAR INSTALLATION

TOTAL SOLAR INSTALLED UP 108 MW FROM 2022

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Kansas Agriland engages consumers of all ages

Connecting society with how the agriculture industry works and plays a role in their everyday life, the Agriland booth at the Kansas State Fair achieves the checkoff's educational objective.

the Kansas State Fair achieves the checkoff's educational objective.

Agriland is possible due to the collaboration of multiple Kansas commodity groups. Fairgoers can milk a cow, sit in a combine, watch how a cotton gin works and much more. Some agriculture education teachers use it as a learning



opportunity for their students. This is an enjoyable and educational experience for people of all ages.

Members of Buhler FFA and other chapters assisted in the booth throughout the week.



Left: Buhler FFA members pose with Maybelle the dairy cow. Middle: Milking a cow is fun for all ages. Right: Dodge City students complete a school assignment to learn more about agriculture.

Patton shares her joy for soy at Kansas State Fair



Above: Three of the recipes Patton demonstrated. Top right: Attendees enjoy samples and have a chance to talk with Patton. Bottom right: Joyce Conard (L) first place dessert with mixed berry delight and Margaret Miller (R) second place dessert with quick chocolate peppermint pie.





Since 1996, Charlene Patton has been working with the Kansas Soybean Commission to show consumers how to reap the benefits of soy in everyday recipes.

At the Kansas State Fair, Patton shared four of the commission's favorite recipes with over 50 attendees. Recipes included: strawberry smoothie, mexican black bean and corn salad, peach and blueberry dessert and classic oatmeal cookies.

Each attendee received a liquid measuring cup and samples of the recipes demonstrated.

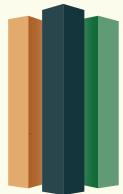
Following the demonstration, KSC sponsored the Heart Healthy Foods Competition, where Patton and Sherry Seifert judged three categories: main dish, dessert and quick snacks.





You Grow a Protein Powerhouse for Global Food Security

Find out how ASA/WISHH's soy checkoff-supported work with Edesia Nutrition led to the company developing a product that contains **25% more soy flour** than earlier formulations. Adding more soy allows Edesia to reach more people throughout the world.







Top photo courtesy of SNI Global



Taylor wants to be your seed company

In a world that keeps growing more complicated, there is an alternative. At Taylor Seed Farms, we believe simple can be better. We are American-owned and operated, based just up the road in White Cloud, KS, for over 40 years. So it's simple: We run our business with small-town values and treat our customers like family. We want to be successful together.

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through the Taylor Select Research program, the best gets planted into your fields and only the best. Selecting seed shouldn't be a guessing game, and our combination of technology and genetics ensures it isn't. Our sales representatives live and work where you do and are always happy to help. We know what will work best for your field conditions because we have Taylor Select Research test plots all over our area. We are happy to meet you at a test plot or in your field and answer questions. We're proud of our products and are confident in their results.

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to filter through complicated sales and rewards structures, so with Taylor Seed, the price you see is the price you get.

We want to work with you if you're looking for an independent seed company with excellent customer service and exceptional hybrids and varieties created for Kansas. Let us succeed together in 2024!

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We look forward to meeting you and adding you to the Taylor Seed Farms Family.



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Corporate partners and advertisers are vital to the success of the Kansas Soybean Association. They provide the Association with financial support and link our state's soybean farmers to the allied industries that provide inputs and capital to manage our enterprises. KSA also relies on corporate partners to keep us up-to-date with the latest breakthroughs in production technologies, and we all work together to create and implement environmental and trade policies that benefit the soybean industry.































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15



The voice for Kansas' 16,000 soybean farmers

1000 SW Red Oaks Place Topeka, Kansas 66615-1207

Calendar of Industry Events

Oct. 2	Kansas Soybean Roadshow/harvest lunches; Sabetha
Oct. 3	Kansas Soybean Roadshow/harvest lunches; Atchison
Oct. 4	Kansas Soybean Roadshow/harvest lunches; Wichita
Oct. 27	Kansas Soybean Roadshow/harvest lunches; Emporia
Nov. 6-8	Clean Fuels Alliance America member meeting; Washington D.C.
Nov. 7-9	Grass and Grain Farm Show; Manhattan
Nov. 8-10	U.S. Meat Export Federation Strategic Planning; New Orleans, LA
Nov. 15-16	Kansas Water Office Governor's Water Conference; Manhattan
Nov. 15-16	Kansas Agri-Business Expo; Wichita
Nov. 17	Kansas Soybean Association Board Meeting; Topeka
Nov. 23-24	Kansas Soybean office closed for Thanksgiving holiday
Nov. 27-28	No-till on the Plains Board Meeting; Manhattan
Nov. 29-Dec. 1	KLA Convention and Trade Show; Wichita
Nov. 30-Dec. 2	Wichita Farm and Ranch Show; Wichita
Dec. 2-4	Kansas Farm Bureau Annual Meeting; Manhattan
Dec. 4-7	United Soybean Board Meeting; St. Charles, Missouri
Dec. 10-13	USA Poultry and Egg Export Council winter meeting; Washington D.C.
Dec. 14-16	Kansas Soybean Commission board meeting; Topeka
Dec. 17-21	Soy Transportation Coalition; Panama
Dec. 25-26	Kansas Soybean office closed for Christmas holiday
Jan. 1	Kansas Soybean office closed for New Year's holiday
Jan. 9-11	Topeka Farm Show; Topeka
Jan. 10	Kansas Soybean Expo; Topeka (Save the Date!)
Feb. 28-March 2	Commodity Classic 2024; Houston, TX

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