

# STRAIGHT ROWS



*Digital Edition*

NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE SPECIAL | *November 2024*



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## Policy Perspective

Here we are at the end of the year and again we do not have a new Farm Bill, but I am not telling you anything you don't know. In January there was a spark of interest in getting the Farm Bill through committee and to the floor for a vote, but due to some negotiations and disagreement in the Senate, like a candle on a windy day, it went out.

This was very frustrating and here we are again wondering if the Farm Bill will be resuscitated in the lame duck session or passed to the next administration. Meanwhile, farmers are making plans for the next planting season with many unknowns. However, as farmers, we are no strangers to the unknown and will continue to push forward. The American Soybean Association and Kansas Soybean Association have been working tirelessly to push for a Farm Bill to be passed this year and have spent many hours with policymakers and their staff to note the importance of passing an effective and impactful Farm Bill.

Thanks to you all, the Kansas Soybean Association policy team has successfully worked with all members of the Kansas Congress and Senate to relay your concerns and the importance of having a farm safety net available and a solid Farm Bill. Your membership dollars help staff and farmers travel to Washington, D.C. and Topeka to meet with policymakers to advocate on your behalf.

Outside of the Farm Bill, ASA has been diligently working on other policies that are taking aim at agriculture. There are species potentially being added to the endangered species list, which could cause a loss of vital pesticides for farmers. The California Air Resources Board is making recommendations for biofuels that are unfriendly to soybean farmers. ASA is working to educate and provide information that debunks the calculations that CARB is using to measure the carbon footprint of our fuels.

I am saddened that this is my final year on the ASA board of directors for Kansas after serving since 2016. During my tenure on ASA, I served on the Executive Board and was the chairman of the Conservation & Precision Ag action team and chairman for the 100th Anniversary Celebration for ASA. With my term coming to an end this December, I will also be stepping down from my seat on the KSA board. It has been my pleasure to serve in various leadership roles with the Kansas board over the last 22 years, including president and chairman of the board.

I have had the opportunity to meet people all over the world who purchase U.S. soybeans and present to them how sustainable and superior our product is and why they should purchase them.

I encourage you all to get involved and continue advocating for agriculture and how important it is to our economy. Kansas policy makers like to put a face behind the farm and engage with Kansas farmers to hear about your operation and how policies impact you.

Even though some of us do not like dealing with politics, I can tell you that ag policy is NOT a spectator sport. If you want to see a change, you need to get involved.

While I am stepping away from ASA, I will still be heavily involved in the soybean industry. My role will change as I move over to the United Soybean Board's farmer-led national checkoff board, as appointed by Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack last December.

In this new role, I will be working with other board members to assist in the investment of future products, tools and technologies to enhance the soybean industry. The ultimate goal is for U.S. Soy to be the preferred choice to those purchasing and using soybeans.

*Charles Adkinson*



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## U.S. Election Recap, Outlook

The 2024 U.S. election has concluded with Donald Trump securing the presidency and Republicans gaining control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Trump won with 312 electoral votes, marking his return to the White House for a second non-consecutive term. The transition process is now underway, and ASA is closely monitoring developments.

In the Senate, Republicans flipped four seats in Montana, Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia, securing a 53-47 majority. Last week, Senate Republicans elected U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-SD) as leader, putting him on track to become Senate Majority Leader in the new Congress. ASA congratulates Sen. Thune, who has a long history of working with soybean growers, and looks forward to continuing that partnership in his new role. Thune's record on agriculture and trade policy, including his work on the farm bill and crop insurance, has been invaluable to the industry.

In the House, Republicans are projected to hold a 222-213 majority, with key members of the House Agriculture Committee retaining their seats, including Reps. Zach Nunn (R-IA), Don Bacon (R-NE), Don Davis (D-NC) and others.

ASA also welcomes President-elect Trump's nomination of former U.S. Rep. Lee Zeldin to serve as EPA Administrator. ASA CEO Stephen Censky praised Zeldin's bipartisan approach and his experience with agriculture issues, noting his familiarity with the EPA's impact on the industry. As we head into 2025, ASA will continue to track policy developments and leadership changes that may affect the agricultural community, with key dates ahead, including the new Congress being sworn in on January 3, 2025, and the presidential inauguration on January 20, 2025.

*Contributed by the American Soybean Association*



## Endangered Species Act Update

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) was designed to protect species at risk of extinction, but its implementation, particularly in relation to agriculture, has raised concerns for farmers. Across the U.S., soybean growers are especially concerned about how the EPA's integration of the ESA into pesticide regulations may impact their farming practices.

The ESA identifies species as "endangered" or "threatened" and mandates the designation of "critical habitat" for their

recovery. Federal agencies must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service if their actions, like pesticide use, could harm these species or habitats. A key provision is the prohibition of the "take" of listed species, which could include restrictions on pesticide applications and land management practices. Farmers can create Habitat Conservation Plans to continue farming while protecting these species.

Recent EPA initiatives, like the Vulnerable Species Action Plan and draft pesticide strategies, have raised alarms. ASA argues that the EPA is using overly conservative risk assessments, often without real-world data, which could lead to unnecessary, costly restrictions. These might include requiring farmers to create buffer zones, riparian zones, or change land management practices, significantly raising costs.

For example, proposed pesticide restrictions could cost farmers in the Midwest up to \$5.5 billion. If similar policies affect soybean growers, the financial impact could be devastating.

ASA has called for EPA to revise its risk assessments to reflect real-world data and adopt more practical solutions that protect species without harming agricultural productivity. The goal is to find a balanced approach that supports environmental conservation and the viability of American farms.

*Contributed by the American Soybean Association*

## CARB Update

Development continues to unfold for the Low Carbon Fuel Standard from the California Air Resources Board. After over a year of workshops, CARB proposed amendments in December 2023 with a plan to cap the amount of biodiesel and renewable diesel made from soybean or canola oil that would qualify for the state's low carbon fuel standard.

On November 8, CARB approved amendments to update the Low Carbon Fuel Standard after a 12-hour public meeting. California's main goal of this amendment is to reduce the state's transportation emissions by 90% by 2045 while increasing LCFS credit values to help drive clean fuel adoption. However, the policies to get there have created new challenges for the soy-based and biomass-based diesel industry.

The American Soybean Association and the Kansas Soybean Association are focused on these key issues:

- Failure to update key data — The GTAP-BIO model is used to determine the land use change penalty for soybean oil. However, it has not been updated to reflect the latest data. Failure to update the model may result in an unfair disadvantage to soy-based biofuels.
- Virgin Vegetable Oil Feedstock Cap — A 20% cap on the use of virgin vegetable oils (including soybean) in BBD was placed in the amendment. This will artificially limit market opportunities for soy-based biofuels.
- Sustainability Reporting Requirements — New proposed requirements around sustainability could create significant burdens and restrictions for soybean feedstocks, complicate compliance and limit market access for soy-based biofuels.

The CARB board supported a resolution to the LCFS rulemaking that outlines directives to CARB staff following the finalization and implementation of the regulations. This leaves the door open for further consideration of the vegetable oil feedstock cap and sustainability reporting requirements. While there is not a finalized timeline, the resolution outlined a 12-month timeframe to convene a public forum on updating lifecycle modeling and explicitly calls out coordination with the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ASA is actively engaged by meeting with CARB staff and board members, attending LCFS workshops and educating a variety of individuals involved in the process about the basics of soybean farming and the soy biomass-based diesel value chain. KSA supported ASA's efforts by signing on to letters and providing comments to CARB during the rulemaking process from the Kansas perspective.



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Thank you to all of our **corporate partners** who support KSA's efforts.

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