

SOY NOTES

for Kansas soybean farmers

News from the Kansas Soybean Commission — the soybean checkoff | June 2026

Biofuels Policy Outcomes Mean Business

Soybean farmers can expect to benefit from a secure domestic market this year.

2026 has been a year of extremes for biodiesel: plants shuttered by uncertainty have roared to life with recent policy actions. For the first time, the industry has a finalized Renewable Fuel Standard, a tax credit and reallocated small refinery exemptions in the same year, locking in biofuels demand.

Importantly for soybean farmers, the Renewable Volume Obligations under the RFS for biomass-based diesel were set at their highest ever, increasing dramatically from 3.35 to 5.6 billion gallons for 2026.

"This is a vote of confidence in our ability to produce efficiently," says Bob Haselwood, KSC representative to Clean Fuels Alliance America. "This was the first year EPA did not question feedstock availability as an issue."



EPA's main concern was soybean processing capacity, but that has grown suddenly in the last few years in response to demand and optimism. Kansas crush capacity nearly doubled in 2024, improving basis for many farmers. New U.S. plants coming online in 2026 will expand soybean oil availability by 1.69 billion pounds, using up more domestic feedstock and keeping the value-add and economy boost of processing within U.S. borders.

Soybean oil now sits at over 70 cents per pound, having more than doubled in the last six years. Since the early 2000's, checkoff investments and soybean advocacy efforts have grown the biodiesel industry from consuming less than 1% of the nation's soybean oil to more than half. Biodiesel now contributes 10% to the price of each bushel of soybeans, and it continues to grow. The stability of this domestic market means more security for the farm business.

New Fuel Terminal Promises New Impact for Farmers

On May 7, the Kansas Soybean Commission attended a ribbon cutting for the newly renovated Blue River Valley fuel terminal, which was retrofitted with blending capabilities for biofuels. With an 800,000 gallon biodiesel storage tank on site, the facility expects to go through 50,000 to 75,000 gallons of biodiesel per month.

Fuel terminals store and distribute large quantities of petroleum products, such as gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel. These facilities serve as critical links between refineries and end-users, receiving fuel and distributing it to tanker trucks for final delivery to retail stations.

"Biodiesel availability at the wholesale level has been a major barrier in the supply chain, keeping retail stations from being able to stock it," says Kaleb Little, KSC administrator. "Blue River Valley, a fuel terminal with biodiesel blending capabilities in a major metro area where biodiesel is also produced, will allow more biodiesel to end up in the system locally. This new facility will guarantee that more biodiesel ends up in Kansas fuel tanks."

Senator Roger Marshall cut the ribbon at the facility, noting the boost it signifies for Kansas farmers.

"I think it's important to all America," he says. "Like I said, starting off at the consumer level, it's going to be a cheaper fuel, it's going to be less pollution, there's less tailpipe emission from the biofuels, from the ethanol products as well. But it's especially important to the Kansas farmer."

Phil Near, who acquired the facility and began renovating it in 2021, echoes Marshall, saying, "When farmers do well, the community does well."



Senator Roger Marshall cuts the ribbon at the Blue River Valley fuel terminal Phil and Cheryl Near, right, acquired and renovated the facility.

Weed Control Strengthens SCN Control

Common weeds can undermine even active SCN management



Above: When left unmanaged, the presence of common weeds like purple deadnettle can allow SCN to complete at least one life cycle in non-soybean years.

Weeds in soybean fields are doing more than competing for resources like nutrients and water. Over 100 common weed species are hosts and creating refuge for soybean cyst nematode populations, potentially undermining farmers' active SCN management efforts.

A highly adaptable pest, SCN requires integrated management strategies like rotating to nonhost crops, such as corn and wheat, and planting SCN-resistant soybean varieties to reduce nematode population densities, says Jason Bond, nematologist at Southern Illinois University. "Although these practices are often more effective, even a small reduction of SCN through weed management can turn into long-term yield benefits for farmers," he says.

The SCN-weed relationship

More than 100 common weed species like purple deadnettle, chickweed and henbit can host SCN1 — allowing the pest to overwinter and complete at least one life cycle prior to soybean planting and possibly another after harvest during a warm fall. Depending on its environment, SCN can quickly reproduce and complete up to six generations during one soybean season.

"You could get a cycle of reproduction of SCN before you even plant your soybeans," says Bond. "Instead of having three to four life cycles of SCN in that soybean year, now you could be stretching that to five or six after you harvest your soybeans."

The slower SCN numbers decline, the greater the need to implement more active management strategies like including nonhost crops in rotation plans.

Weeds weaken crop rotation

A single year in a weed-free nonhost crop like corn can reduce SCN populations by up to 55%,2 and the greatest threat weeds pose is allowing SCN reproduction during a non-soybean year.

"For example, if you have broadleaf weeds like purslane or waterhemp emerging late in the season and growing under that canopy in corn, even though they're not much of a threat to corn yield, you could get reproduction of SCN during the nonhost crop rotation year," says Bond. Other weeds like pigweed, clovers and thistles are also hosts for SCN, potentially increasing population numbers.

When managing SCN, Bond says farmers have to think beyond the current growing season. "It's not all about protecting the grain yield for that year," says Bond. "There could be additional benefits going into your soybean year by doing a good job with your weeds this year."

Herbicide resistance raises the stakes

Another layer of complexity, 14 of the known host weed species have resistance to eight herbicide sites of action (SOA), with four weed species resistant to more than one SOA. Not only does this limit farmers' current weed management options, it can also accelerate the development of weed resistance, creating long-term agronomic challenges that can make it harder to manage over time.

For SCN management, the most effective rotations combine nonhost crops with resistant soybean varieties that draw from different sources of SCN resistance. Because most commercial soybean varieties rely on a common source of resistance — PI 88788 — Bond emphasizes that rotating resistance sources is critical to slow SCN adaptation and maintain the effectiveness of resistant soybean varieties, including those derived from Peking.

Where to start?

To protect the effectiveness of soybean production tools and farmers' profitability, The SCN Coalition has created the Soybean Cyst Nematode Management Guide. Putting the power directly in the hands of soybean farmers, this guide shares proven active management recommendations, including crop rotation tips and a list of SCN host crop plants and weeds to help actively manage these pests and protect yield.

Visit thescncoalition.com to find this guide and more.

About the SCN Coalition

The SCN Coalition is a public/checkoff/private partnership formed to increase the number of farmers who are actively managing SCN. Our goal is to increase soybean farmers' profit potential and realize higher yields. Partners in The SCN Coalition include university scientists from 28 states and Ontario, grower checkoff organizations including the North Central Soybean Research Program, United Soybean Board and several state soybean promotion boards, and corporate partners.

KANSAS SOYBEAN COMMISSION

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

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Newest Commissioner Emphasizes Outreach

Meet Anna Unruh, District 6 Commissioner

Anna Unruh has been appointed Commissioner for District 6 following the retirement of Dennis Gruenbacher, Andale, from the Kansas Soybean Commission board. Unruh, who grew up on a dairy farm in Missouri, grows soybeans, corn and wheat on County Line Farms in Harvey County. She met her husband Jason after moving to Kansas for a nursing degree. They now farm together with his parents and their four young children.

Unruh became involved with Kansas Soybean when she and Jason participated in the American Soybean Association's Corteva Young Leader Program, earning her a seat on the Kansas Soybean Association board. As she dove into the world of farmer advocacy, she found opportunities to support checkoff work as well: radio interviews, networking with college students and even baking with soy ingredients on television.

One event was particularly impactful: a KSC-led ag immersion tour for master's students in dietetics. Unruh rode along to answer questions as these future professionals met the producers who raise their food safely, sustainably and efficiently. She saw how those conversations changed the perceptions of people who would go on to build diets for schools, hospitals and more.

As KSC's newest commissioner, it's outreach efforts like those that Unruh is most excited for, saying that someone has to be able to connect the dots from farmers to consumers in order to "move the pile."

"Without the checkoff, how would you, as a farmer, promote your product?" she says. "We have to get the word out not just to direct buyers like elevators or processors, but to feeding barns, companies trying to de-carbonize, urban families, customers across the ocean."

Unruh places an emphasis on stewardship in all aspects of her life and sees that as the main value of the checkoff. Unruh is excited to be part of the conversation around stewarding farmer dollars, helping to shape decisions around research projects, market development and outreach efforts.

"I have the perspective of a mom, nurse and primary grocery shopper, and I think it will be useful alongside the perspective we all have as farmers," Unruh says.

Unruh is available for farmers in her district to contact via her email, which is listed on the Kansas Soybean website at *kansassoybeans.org/commissioners*. She encourages farmers in District 6 to reach out with any questions, thoughts or requests.

"My hope is to become more connected with farmers in my district, and to build those relationships so people feel like they can share concerns and ideas," Unruh says.



Anna Unruh serves as Commissioner of District 6. encompassing 13 counties in South-Central Kansas.









Far left: Anna Unruh shows her two oldest children the workings of a soybean header.

Second left: The Unruh family: Jason and Anna; Eliza, 10; David, 7; Ruthie, 4; Gideon, 2.

Second right:Anna Unruh and her younger daughter explore soybean roots.

Far right: Jason and Anna Unruh stand together on their farm in Harvey County.

Help To Shape Future Agricultural Apps

Kansas State University researchers Drs. Lishan Su, Guarav Jha and Trevor Witt are continuing to collect insights on Kansas users' experiences with agricultural apps. Even limited experience is helpful. The survey is brief and should only take a few minutes. Please access the survey using this secure Qualtrics link through K-State: **https://tinyurl.com/AgAppKSU**

This will directly support ongoing research aimed at improving digital tools in agriculture. We appreciate your time and thoughtful input.

Kansas Soybean Commission FY27 Project Portfolio

Sound science proves soybean oil provides health benefits to the human body

June marks the end of fiscal year 2026, making way for a new round of checkoff-funded research, outreach and market development. In the project portfolio for FY2027, a few key themes emerged that demonstrated the commissioners' priorities going into the next growing year. These were a continued research focus on major pests and environmental challenges, leveraging new technologies and funding streams, and maintaining and growing markets for Kansas soybeans.

Research to protect yield from pests and Mother Nature remains a priority, seeking actionable results for farmers to use. This year's research shows a primary focus on Soybean Sudden Death Syndrome and Soybean Cyst Nematode, as well as drought tolerance and irrigation management. Other insect and weed pests are targeted as well.

Cutting-edge technologies and alternative funding streams are creative solutions that add value to checkoff funding. The 2027 research portfolio is full of projects testing new methods for solving persistent problems, or collaborating with other organizations and research teams to multiply funding or produce complementary results. Highlights include using gene editing to develop pest resistance and working to predict insect pest outbreaks with data analytics and modeling.

The importance of diverse markets for soybeans grows more important with each passing year. KSC addresses that challenge through partnerships with organizations like the U.S. Soybean Export Council, which works to build and maintain international trade relationships, or Clean Fuels Alliance America, which supports the biodiesel market and creates domestic opportunities to process and sell soybeans.

To reach out with questions or to recommend projects and focus areas to fund in the next fiscal year, contact the office at info@kansassoybeans.org.

Production Research Highlight

Intensive Soybean Sudden Death Syndrome Management

Kansas State University Plant Pathology, Agronomy

Objectives

1. Evaluate the influence of at-planting phosphorus application on SDS
2. Establish a robust seed treatment testing program for SDS control and yield enhancement
3. Validate an SDS prediction tool for estimating disease risk before planting
4. Generate and promote data-driven best management practices based on results of objectives 1, 2 and 3

Planting for this project has already occurred. Take a closer look into the process here.



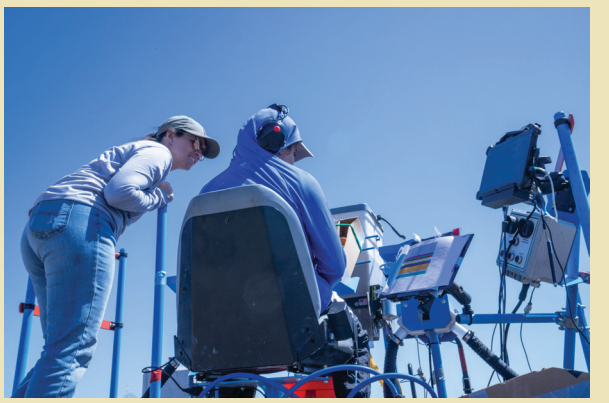
While much of the planting equipment functions exactly like a smaller version of a farmer's, there is one glaring difference: a student sitting atop the apparatus, dropping carefully ordered packets of seed into the hopper. Packets, each representing a different plot and treatment, were arranged in advance according to a master spreadsheet, which is marked off to the side.



The research team planted around 1,000 plots for more than 100 trials in just one field. Each plot is 4 rows wide and 25 feet long, testing different variables like fungicides, biologicals, seed variety, application method, row spacing and seed population.



One student walks alongside the planter to monitor the equipment. Careful observation is necessary, as a blockage or misplant would mean a loss of data from that plot.



Graduate student Madison Kessler leans over for a closer look as she learns how to navigate the complex spreadsheet of research plots. Maintaining the correct placement of seed, innoculum and other variable is essential to accurate data collection later.