KANSAS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

STRAIGHT ROWS

Volume 31, Issue 1 | July 2026

Different people, operations with one goal: serve

Production operations vary across the country, and even across a state, making it crucial for leaders in agricultural organizations and programs to be filled with a variety of farmers. Bringing in different perspectives and ideas is valuable as the Kansas Soybean Association works to advocate for all soybean farmers.

To that end, Kansas was represented in the 2025 Corteva Young Leader Program by Katey and Deven Foster, Columbus, and Levi and Teresa Manche, Hiawatha.

Katey farms around 2,300 acres of row crops and 300 head of commercial cattle alongside her father. Deven is a sales agronomist at Farmers Cooperative Association.

Levi farms 2,700 row crop acres and a cow/calf herd with his father- and brother-in-law. Teresa works for an agricultural lender.

The Young Leader Program is not the first leadership venture the individuals have participated in. Levi and Katey participated in Kansas Soybean's Emerging Leaders Academy, where they learned about the Young Leader Program and became more interested in the soybean industry.

"Going into this program, I was excited to get new ideas and views on issues in the agriculture industry," Katey says. "I felt it would help provide insight of what all goes on behind the scenes."

Phase one convened in Iowa. Participants had a deep dive into the different soybean organizations and completed leadership trainings to accelerate their advocacy efforts.

The couples traveled to San Antonio for phase two of the program in conjunction with Commodity Classic.

This phase covered sessions on the importance of engagement, telling your story and advocating to elected officials on behalf of your fellow farmers. Other time was spent exploring the trade show and participating in events with Kansas Soybean.

Katey Foster and Levi Manche obtained board seat positions on the Kansas Soybean Association board that comes with participating in the Young Leader program. Both will serve a two-year term.

When asked why he looks forward to serving, Levi says "Right now, we have less farmers that are feeding the world, and we need to have a voice for our industry for lawmakers to fight for our business so that we can help everybody in the world out and our state."

Below left: Katey Foster repairs equipment. Below middle: Deven and Katey Foster and Levi and Teresa Manche attend Commodity Classic. Below right: Levi Manche checks seeds.







PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Brett Neibling, Highland

Summer tends to fly by for everyone. People say, "Oh, in two weeks it'll slow down"; we are all guilty of it, but truly it never slows down in farming because we are always preparing for the next challenge. I can't help but think how another summer is almost gone and combines will be rolling before we know it.

Volume 31, Issue 1 | July 2026

STRAIGHT ROWS

is published bi-monthly by the

Kansas Soybean Association

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The Kansas Soybean Association has also not slowed down as we work to be the best voice and advocate for Kansas soybean farmers.

In mid-July, the Kansas Soybean Association and Commission gathered for the annual corporate tour and farmer dinner. Each year the location rotates, opening our eyes to new places and businesses in Kansas. This year the group was in the north central region.

The first day kicked off with a preview of K-State's new L. Eldon Gideon Agronomy Research and Innovation Complex. The Commission was among the first investors in this building, pursuing their mission of improving profit potential for all Kansas soybean farmers. This new center will serve as a demonstration site for public and private partnerships focused on best practices in sustainable agriculture, crop production innovation, technology development and training, and conservation and protection of natural resources.

We then toured Landoll's manufacturing facilities and learned about how the business has grown in 50+ years of operation.

Our tour ended with plot tours at Ohlde Seed Farm and a dinner with local farmers and industry stakeholders. If you haven't had the chance to attend one of our socials or dinners, I highly encourage you to when one is near you. Many of the conversations I've had over the years have stayed with me and given me new ideas to try on my operation whether it



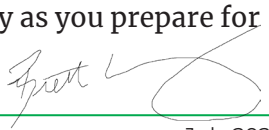
be advice on planting dates, pesticide application, financials or transition plans.

Connecting farmers, as people and their ideas, is one of my favorite parts of what we do. After hosting our farmer dinner this summer, that continues to ring true.

In the end, the reason we do this is because of all of you. These events give board members an opportunity to showcase what we've been doing and allow us to listen to what Kansas soybean farmers need.

July also brings the American Soybean Association's summer board meeting, which includes visits to elected official's offices. I foresee conversations about trade, more specifically USMCA, as Mexico is a critical market for Kansas producers. Other topics we plan to address include the Farm Bill, biofuels, MAHA, etc.

As we head into the last six weeks or so of the growing season, I wish you all favorable weather conditions and safety as you prepare for harvest.





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MEET A BOARD MEMBER Levi Manche, Hiawatha

Leadership program interest brings involvement in soybean industry



I grew up around Hiawatha, and still live there with my wife, Teresa, and our three kids. After high school, I studied at Highland Community College and then at Kansas State University for my bachelor's degree.

Elliott Farms Inc. is an operation I run with my father- and brother-in-law. We raise soybeans and corn and we have a cow/calf operation.

I earned a seat on the Kansas Soybean Association board through my involvement in the Corteva Young Leaders program. Many years ago I found out about the program and after more research I wanted to do KSA's Emerging Leaders Academy first to gain a statewide knowledge before a national knowledge to serve my fellow farmers to the best of my ability.

Having a seat on the board and participating in these leadership programs helped me gain a broader understanding of the Kansas soybean industry. I want to be a voice for farmers in my area, we are all farmer-leaders working hard to help other Kansas farm operations out.

Aside from my position on KSA's board, I am on the Roy's Creek Watershed board and volunteer in my community by coaching, refereeing and helping kids in our 4-H club.

I'm excited to see what the rest of my time on the board brings, the relationships I will make and knowledge I will gain.

Federal policymakers visit KS, meet with producers



Relationship building with federal officials goes beyond meetings on Capitol Hill. The farmer voice is valuable and needs to be heard in D.C., whether that is in a meeting on Capitol Hill, a crop field or a boardroom in Manhattan.

On May 27, Kansas agricultural stakeholders met with Luke Lindberg, USDA Under Secretary for Trade and Foreign Agricultural Affairs, along with Senator Jerry Moran and Representative Tracey Mann.

Andy Winsor, Grantville farmer, participated in a roundtable with all three officials to discuss key priorities for agriculture, including expanding export markets and the recent move of the Kansas-born Food for Peace program back USDA. Kansas agriculture contributes 16% to the Kansas economy, so it's important to keep farmers in front of federal officials.

"Kansas is at the epicenter of feeding the world," Under Secretary Lindberg says. "Not only is it an exporting powerhouse for beef, wheat, corn, soybeans, sorghum, and other agricultural products that the world has come to enjoy; it's also the home to the American generosity of the global food security movement. I am thankful to Representative Mann and Senator Moran for showcasing the best of Kansas to me this week."

On June 27, Richard Fordyce, USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, visited Kansas for a roundtable discussion on USDA program delivery, technology modernization and the future of Farm Service Agency programs.

"It's always nice to have a conversation directly with the administration about key things impacting us, including the One Farmer, One File initiative which was developed to help producers and employees" Brett Neibling, Highland farmer, says. "However, there have been some concerns and I felt those were addressed as Under Secretary Fordyce noted it is not intended to replace workers and our personal information will be protected."

Above left: Kansas industry leaders meet at Kansas Wheat with federal officials.

ASA pushes forward on key agricultural policies in D.C.

Blair Shipp, State Policy Communications Coordinator, American Soybean Association

Several key agricultural policy issues have advanced in Washington in recent weeks, with implications for soybean farmers in Kansas and across the country. From the farm bill and crop protection to fertilizer costs, USDA staffing, and market opportunities, ASA continues engaging with Congress, the administration, federal agencies, and state soybean affiliates on behalf of soybean growers.

A top priority remains advancing a comprehensive, long-term farm bill. In June, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman John Boozman released a discussion draft outlining priorities for the next farm bill. ASA welcomed the framework, which includes priorities for soybean growers such as conservation, research, rural development, market opportunities, fertilizer research, precision agriculture, expanded technical assistance, rural broadband, and domestic market development through biobased products and renewable fuels.

ASA is also working with USDA on implementation of the voluntary base acre update enacted through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. Landowners are encouraged to review their Base Allocation Summary and complete any necessary updates before the August 31 deadline. ASA will continue providing guidance as additional information becomes available.

Earlier this summer, ASA urged Congress to address staffing shortages at USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). These local offices are essential to delivering farm programs, conservation assistance, disaster programs, and technical support. Adequate staffing remains critical to ensuring farmers receive timely service.

ASA also remained actively engaged on EPA's Draft Fungicide Strategy, which outlines how the agency plans to comply with the Endangered Species Act while maintaining access to important crop protection tools. Working alongside state soybean affiliates and other agricultural organizations, ASA successfully urged EPA to extend the public comment period by 21 days, moving the deadline to July 21. ASA also developed a comment template for state affiliates and continues advocating for a practical, science-based strategy that recognizes existing stewardship practices while preserving access to essential fungicide tools.

Crop protection remains another priority. In late June, EPA approved several new crop protection technologies that provide soybean farmers with additional tools to manage weeds, protect yields, and support conservation and regenerative farming practices. ASA has also opposed a recent petition seeking antidumping and countervailing duties on glyphosate imports, emphasizing that farmers depend on affordable, reliable, and competitive access to critical crop protection products.

Managing input costs is also a key focus. In June, ASA applauded President Trump's Executive Order suspending countervailing duties on imported phosphate fertilizer. Fertilizer remains one of the largest annual production expenses on many farms, and ASA has consistently advocated for competitive fertilizer markets that improve availability and help reduce costs for producers.

ASA is also advancing new market opportunities for U.S. soy. USDA's recently finalized Regenerative Feedstock Rule represents an important step toward implementing the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit. ASA worked closely with USDA throughout development of the rule and continues urging Treasury and the Internal Revenue Service to finalize tax guidance so soybean farmers can benefit from growing domestic demand for renewable fuels.

International trade also remains central to ASA's policy agenda. In June, ASA Executive Committee member and Minnesota soybean farmer Jamie Beyer was the only farmer invited to testify before the House Agriculture Committee during a hearing on the future of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA). Beyer emphasized the importance of preserving duty-free market access, strengthening science-based trade rules, and providing certainty for soybean farmers. Since then, USMCA has entered its required six-year joint review process. While the United States declined to extend the agreement in its current form, the agreement remains in effect as negotiations continue. ASA continues advocating for a strong USMCA that preserves market access, strengthens science-based trade rules, and provides certainty for soybean farmers and their customers.

With a limited legislative window before the August district work period begins, ASA will remain engaged on these priorities and continue advocating for policies that strengthen opportunities for soybean farmers.



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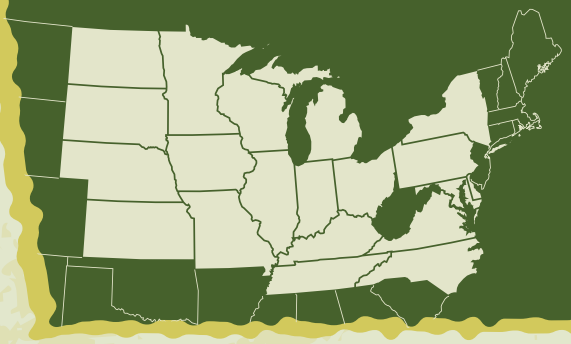
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Leadership programs improve operations



For Everest farmer Sam Heinen, participating in farmer leadership opportunities has been a part of life, as his dad was on the Kansas Soybean Association board for 13 years and he grew up going on trips and attending meetings with him. But now his role has changed.

"There's more to life than farming," Heinen says. "You have to leave and absorb new information, or your operation will never be as successful as it could be."

As a kid, Heinen says he knew his dad was on a board, but didn't know what exactly that meant; he just saw it as a chance to go do fun things. However, as time went on he joined in on meetings and other engagement opportunities that truly showed him the important work his dad was doing.

"I started to see how my dad was helping out the Kansas farmer," Heinen says. "He was volunteering his own time and energy, and sharing his knowledge with others in our area."

Heinen dove into a short leadership role by hosting a group of dietitians on his operation where they rode in the combine and had the opportunity to ask questions about pesticide use, soil health and more.

"This group really opened my eyes to how important it is for farmers to share their operation with consumers and answer the questions they have," Heinen says. "I started doing research to see what I could participate in and decided it would be fine if I stepped away from the operation for a few days to learn."

Always in pursuit of providing Kansans with valuable programs, Kansas Soybean hosts the Emerging Leaders Academy – a leadership program to provide Kansas agriculturists with a deeper understanding of the soybean industry and agriculture as a whole.

"I've really enjoyed being in this program," Heinen says. "I've been thrown so much information in a short amount of time that I could go home for a week and absorb it all as I worked in the fields and around the farm."

Phase one promotes a better understanding of the Kansas Soybean Association and Commission, what these organizations do, the impact they have and their scope within the greater agricultural industry. Participants gathered in Topeka at the Kansas Soybean office where they met each other and heard from industry experts on soybeans' connection to exports, biofuels, policy and animal agriculture.

Phase two focuses on the soybean industry in Kansas through tours and conversations. Class nine had the opportunity to tour Frito Lay, BNSF, Cargill, IGP and Corteva in Wamego. The group also met with dietitians who had been through the Kansas Soybean Ag Immersion program to talk consumer trends and how to bridge the gap from farm to consumer.

Phase three gives participants insight on the national and global impact of Kansas soybeans and how farmers fit into the whole system. This year, the group sat in on the United Soybean Board's general session in a meeting and met with industry representatives to discuss biofuels and high oleic oil. They also connected with U.S. Soybean Export Council CEO Jim Sutter, World Initiative for Human Health CEO Gena Perry, ASA farmer-leaders and Beck's Hybrids to discuss innovation and practical farm research.

The Emerging Leaders Academy program is developed with input from the class on what topics they want to learn more about in depth, and each phase brings techniques and programs to improve participants' leadership skills as they represent their operation, agriculture and their communities.

Class nine participant and PhD student Madison Kessler reflects on her time in the program with the following sentiment: "Participating in the Emerging Leaders Academy has helped me see the bigger picture of the soybean industry beyond the lab and field research. As a Kansas Soybean Commission-funded researcher, it's been rewarding to connect with growers, understand the value of their investment in research, and see how my work has the potential to make a meaningful impact for soybean production in Kansas."

Kansas Soybean is searching for the tenth class of the Emerging Leaders Academy. ELA is open to anyone who has vested interest in learning more about the Kansas soybean industry, including: soybean farmers, researchers, ag professionals, etc.

Learn more and apply at kansassoybeans.org/ela or scan the QR code on the next page!



KANSAS SOYBEAN

Emerging Leaders Academy • Class 9



Mike Beying

Melvern

Agronomy Manager and operate a cattle, hay and alfalfa operation.



James Coover

Parsons

Crop Production Agent for KSRE while pursuing a PhD in soil fertility and operates a cow/calf



Sam Heinen

Everest

Farms with family raising soybeans, corn and cattle.



James Hudson

Pratt

Co-owns Thrive Ag Services, selling Beck's Hybrids, cotton seed and other inputs.



Ryan Johnson

Berryton

Operates a soybean and corn operation with family.



Madison Kessler

Manhattan

Plant Pathology Ph.D. student at K-State focusing on Sudden Death Syndrome.



Nick Peters

Hillsboro

Operates a soybean, wheat and corn operation with family.

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Celebrating 35 years of the national Soy Checkoff

Dear U.S. soybean community,

For U.S. soybean farmers, the decision to come together 35 years ago and form the national Soy Checkoff℠ was a defining moment that would reshape American agriculture for generations. Through collective investments into food, feed, fuel, industrial, exports and sustainable production, U.S. soybean production has grown from 1.8 billion bushels in 1990 to over 4 billion today. Because of what farmers have built together over 35 years, we've been able to create entirely new markets from the ground up like biodiesel, expand exports around the world to 90 countries and develop tools that protect yield on the farm.

The partnership between farmers and the Soy Checkoff traces back to a pivotal moment in American agriculture. For many soybean farmers, the drought of 1988 exposed the need for a national checkoff. Soon after, farmer leaders on the American Soybean Association voted overwhelmingly to pursue one, making investments available for international and domestic marketing as well as dedicated research into new uses. USB Secretary and Minnesota soybean farmer Tom Frisch believes the opportunity for every soybean farmer in the country to pool their resources and make a collective impact remains just as important 35 years later. "We need to continue to work together as U.S. soybean farmers and not isolate ourselves. We, as U.S. soybean farmers, need to champion our industry every day, every month, every year," says Frisch.

Qualified State Soybean Boards (QSSBs) have been there every step of the way, serving as the connective tissue between national strategy and on-the-ground reality. "When I view QSSBs, they are at the grassroots



USB Past Chairs gather for a photo in the Soy Checkoff booth at Commodity Classic 2026 in Austin, Texas.



USB Past Chair Sandy Ludeman participates in a Soy Checkoff town hall in 1992.



USB is formed from the publication of the Soybean Promotion and Research Order under the 1990 Farm Bill.

level navigating concerns and opportunities with their farmers across the state. They are in touch with their local agriculture community about what's happening in their backyard," says USB Past Chair and Mississippi soybean farmer Philip Good.

As the Soy Checkoff thinks about the next 35 years, every investment made aims to grow demand, improve resiliency of the soybean crop and bring additional revenue back to the farm. "The Soy Checkoff isn't just about dollars invested from the half-million U.S. soybean farmers — it's about giving them the power to shape their own future and deliver lasting impact," says Indiana farmer and USB Treasurer Don Wyss.

One example of how powerful this partnership has proven to be is the advancement of high oleic soybean research and farmer adoption. We've seen over a million acres of high oleic across states like Indiana, Ohio, Missouri and the Delmarva region with QSSBs helping promote premiums of $0.75 to $1.25 per bushel. And there's potential to reach 5-7 million acres a decade from now. High oleic soybeans have returned nearly $400 million in premium payments to farmers — a direct return on the $130 million checkoff investment through 2025.

Another great example of partnership is the lower Mississippi River dredging project which added an additional $461 million in revenue to U.S. soybean farmers. Through checkoff investment in research, analysis and design, which kickstarted deepening the lower Mississippi River from 45 to 50 feet allowed for an increase of 500,000 bushels per ocean vessel and saves 13 cents per bushel of freight. This investment spanned collaboration with USB, the Soy Transportation Coalition, U.S. Soybean Export Council, the American Soybean Association and multiple QSSBs. "Investing in the research and engineering side of that project was a new venture for us, but it encouraged strategic thinking of how we can use checkoff funds in unique ways to improve all soybean farmers' bottom line," says Good.

As the United Soybean Board celebrates its 35th Anniversary we are proud of the work we've accomplished for every single U.S. soybean farmer. With our continued partnerships with the QSSBs we look forward to what this next chapter brings for the U.S. soybean industry. Together we can continue to deliver sustainable soy solutions to every life, every day.

Here's to the next 35 years of the U.S. soybean industry!



Brent Gatton

Brent Gatton
USB Chair
Kentucky

Cover crop program opens for 2026

Building soil health on your operation can be one of your most important investments. The Farmers for Soil Health program provides a monetary return on investment for farmers using cover crops.

With an updated payment structure, producers can earn $35 per acre, per year, for planting cover crops on up to 2,000 acres. The new structure also gives producers the flexibility to re-enroll on their own terms and at a consistent payment rate.

"These updates more accurately reflect on-farm costs and the agronomic value of cover crops," Ben West, executive director of Farmers for Soil Health, said. "They also reflect Farmers for Soil Health's commitment to supporting row-crop farmers interested in adopting conservation practices that improve soil health and long-term farm resilience. By offering financial assistance that better mirrors the costs of cover crop adoption, simplifying the contract structure and maintaining technical support, the program aims to make participation more accessible for growers."

A little over 6% of farmers in Kansas use cover crops, totaling to 2,766,441 acres using cover crops in the state.

"Many farmers in Kansas utilize cover crops already, why not earn money for utilizing a sustainable practice?," Charles Atkinson, Barton County farmer says, "Cover crops can improve a farmers' bottom line, especially if you can receive an incentive from it."[JM2.1]

To learn more about the Farmers for Soil Health program, and to enroll visit *FarmersForSoilHealth.com/program-incentives.*

This project is made possible by the Soy Checkoff, Pork Checkoff and National Corn Growers Association.



Two different organizations, one complimentary mission

By: Carissa Dalquest, Kansas Soybean Intern

Kansas soybean farmers are represented by two organizations, each with a distinct role. The Kansas Soybean Association is a member-funded advocacy organization that serves as a voice for farmers on legislative and regulatory issues. The Kansas Soybean Commission oversees the soybean checkoff and invests in research, promotion, education and market development to build long-term value for soybeans. While they are separate entities by law, neither's work would be complete without the other.

Trade and market access show the partnership clearly. Tariffs, global market uncertainty and questions around China's soybean purchases have underscored the need for dependable trade relationships. KSA and the American Soybean Association advocate for trade agreements, tariff relief and predictable access to key customers, including recent support for United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement renewal. Meanwhile, KSC and the United Soybean Board support efforts that build demand and trust with buyers around the world.

USSEC, the U.S. Soybean Export Council, is a way checkoff investments help turn market access into demand. USSEC works to create preference for U.S. soy by building relationships and demonstrating value to international buyers. Kansans have joined recent USSEC trade missions to Turkey and Egypt and have hosted trade teams on Kansas farms to strengthen relationships with trade partners. Association policy work helps keep markets open, while these checkoff investments help turn that access into demand.

Biofuels are another current example of policy work and checkoff investments meeting in the marketplace.

"So much of this market is driven by policy rather than purely by supply and demand," Brett Neibling, KSA President, says.

KSA and ASA advocate for renewable fuels policy, including the Renewable Fuel Standard, biodiesel and renewable diesel tax credits, and other programs that support clean fuels demand. These policy decisions shape demand for soybean oil in biodiesel, renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuel markets. When KSA advocates for strong renewable fuel standards and supportive tax policy, it helps protect one of the most important growth opportunities for soybean oil.

The Commission supports the biofuels market by promoting their value and partnering with groups such as Clean Fuels Alliance America. That work supports technical research, fuel quality efforts, environmental analysis and education about biomass-based diesel, building confidence in the product and demonstrating why these fuels are reliable, sustainable options.

As biodiesel demand grows, soybean oil becomes more valuable, crush margins improve, and Kansas farmers benefit from stronger local demand. KSA helps protect the policy environment for biofuels, while KSC helps build market confidence and opportunities for these fuels.

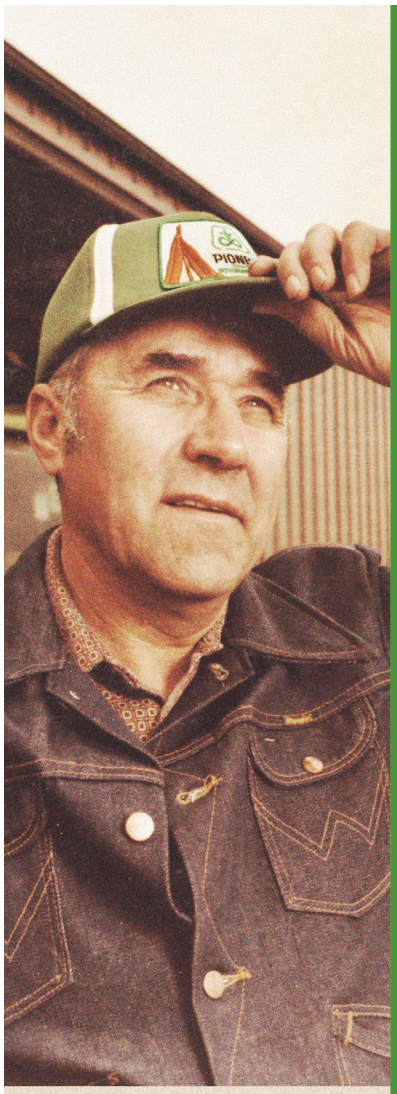
Infrastructure connects Kansas soybeans to every market they reach. A soybean may move by truck to an elevator, by rail to a processor, or through river and port systems to reach an overseas buyer.

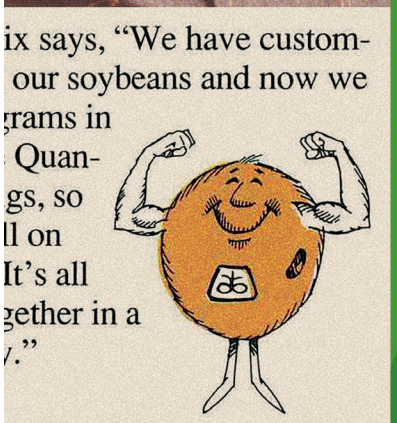
KSA advocates for investment in rural roads, bridges, rail, locks and dams, and port access. KSC supports logistics research and analysis that identify where transportation bottlenecks limit competitiveness. As crush and export investments grow, Kansas soybeans, meal and oil need reliable routes to processors, livestock feeders, fuel markets and global buyers.

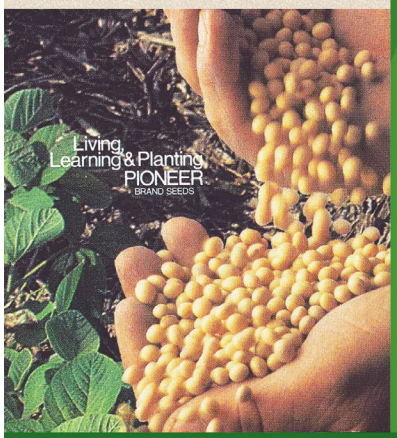
Animal agriculture is another important link between policy and checkoff work. Soybean meal is a key feed ingredient for livestock, poultry, dairy and aquaculture, making strong animal agriculture markets important to soybean demand.

KSA works on policy issues that affect those customers, including meat exports, transportation, foreign animal disease preparedness and science-based regulation. KSC supports the demand side through feed research, animal agriculture partnerships and tools like U.S. Soy CAN, which helps customers understand the value of U.S. Soy in feed rations.

These efforts are the most recent steps in a decades-long partnership built for Kansas soybean farmers. KSA and KSC do not serve farmers in the same way, and they are not supposed to. The Association gives farmers a voice in policy decisions, while the Commission invests checkoff dollars to increase demand for U.S. Soy. Together, they help protect today's opportunities while building new ones for the future. From trade and biofuels to livestock feed, infrastructure and sustainability, both organizations are working toward the same goal: creating more value for every Kansas soybean bushel.







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KANSAS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION

STRAIGHT ROWS

Volume 31, Issue 1 | July 2026

The voice for Kansas' 12,000 soybean farmers

1000 SW Red Oaks Place
Topeka, Kansas 66615-1207

Calendar of Industry Events

August 3-5	North Central Soybean Research Program Meeting; Ankeny, IA
August 4	Becknology Days; Salina
August 4-6	Crop and Cattle Conference; Kansas City, MO
August 5-7	U.S. Soybean Export Council Soy Connext; Chicago
August 7	KARL Benefit Golf Tournament; Manhattan
August 8-11	Soy Transportation Coalition Meeting; Quebec
August 17-18	Kansas Cooperative Council's Leadership Symposium; Manhattan
August 19	Ohlde Seed Know2Grow Field Day; Palmer
August 19-21	Kansas Soybean Commission Meeting; Manhattan
August 20	Kansas Ag Summit; Manhattan
August 20-21	Risk and Profit Conference; Manhattan
August 25-27	Soy Nutrition Institute Meeting; Chicago
September 11-20	Kansas State Fair; Hutchinson
September 13	Soy Foods Demo at the Kansas State Fair; Hutchinson
September 21-22	Ag Outlook Forum; Kansas City, MO



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