

MISSOURI

Soybean Farmer

FEBRUARY
2017

Bringing in the Beans

Results are in from Missouri's annual soybean yield contest

Alternative Approach

The maintenance team at St. Louis' Lambert Airport counts on B20 biodiesel every day

Soybean Legacy

Robert Alpers is preparing the farm for the next generation, and the next generation for the farm

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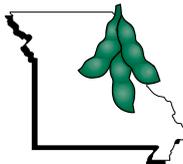
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« Cover Shot

This beautiful photo of grain bins at dusk comes courtesy of the United Soybean Board and soybean checkoff.





From The Field

Notes from Missouri Soybeans' leadership team

MSA Board Members:

Neal Bredehoeft, Alma
Kelly Forck, Jefferson City
Renee Fordyce, Bethany
John Hunter III, Dexter
C. Brooks Hurst, Tarkio
John Kleiboeker, Stotts City
Andrew Lance, Bernard
Matt McCrate, Cape Girardeau
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Todd Gibson, Norborne
Meagan Kaiser, Bowling Green
Lewis Rone, Portageville

ASA Board Members:

C. Brooks Hurst, Tarkio
E.L. Reed, Chillicothe



We get so busy taking care of what has to be done, it seems like I look up and the day is gone long before I've reached the end of my To-Do list. Or my unread emails.

At one of our soybean meetings this winter, an attendee described service as a civic duty – something we should all contribute to for the common good. Beyond the basics at home and work, with everything we need to squeeze into a day, where does volunteering fit into the mix? To some degree I'd say that gentleman is correct, but serving is also an investment. Whether it's the local ambulance, hospital or water district board, or something for youth, or taking time to advocate at the Capitol, we rely on volunteers to provide leadership and guidance on just about every level.

It seems like I hear fairly often that the strength of agriculture is in the people. I'd say the same is true for our rural communities, and most groups I've been part of over the years. Most people seem want to leave things a little better than they found them, so even when it's not convenient, they make some time to give back.

Thank you to all our volunteers. I appreciate your investment and look forward to working with you.

Matt McCrate - Missouri Soybean Association President



We talk quite a bit about getting the most out of our investments in the soybean checkoff, and about making sure we're moving forward in a way that benefits the bottom line for soybean farmers. As I've listened to the speakers and visited with people at different meetings this winter it seems that we generally understand the overall returns from the checkoff, but may not be so well versed on the individual returns.

When it comes time to sell our beans, we all benefit from the higher prices supported by checkoff research (biodiesel), and increased demand – but that's not making full use of our resources. Taking advantage of the individual benefits – from training for ourselves to bringing resources for youth in agriculture to our communities – takes more effort, yes, but it does pay off. Take a tour of the Bay Farm Research Facility and get the latest on new soybean varieties and sustainability practices, or attend a winter Profit from Pods meeting or summer Soybean College to sharpen your skills. There's also the See for Yourself program, that gives soybean farmers the chance to travel to see their checkoff dollars at work in the US and overseas – just have to apply (the deadline is April 1). Maybe it's time to bring the Ag Education on the Move program into your local schools too.

Throughout this issue, we highlight ways the soybean checkoff benefits growers' bottom line. I hope you'll join me in taking advantage of those benefits in 2017.

John Kelley - Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council Chairman



Letter from the Executive Director

The final 2016 Crop Production Report from the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service confirmed that we pretty well knew – 2016 was a bin-buster crop year. Missouri saw more than one million more soybean acres planted and harvested in 2016 than in 2015.

The 2016 crop was also a record breaker. Soybean production hit 271 million bushels – an 11 million bushel increase over the previous record set in 2014. We pushed our average yield record up too, from 46.5 bushels of soybeans per acre in 2014 to 49 for 2016. That made 2016 the third year in a row where Missouri's average soybean yield topped 40 bushels per acre.

According to the USDA report, this also makes three out of the last four and five out of the last eight years where Missouri produced more than 200 million bushels of soybeans. Missouri isn't the only state posting record-breakers.

That's a lot of beans going into the market. And while it's great to see those yields on the monitors during harvest, it also makes for a much more challenging marketing environment. It's a bit of a "Be careful what you wish for..." situation – we all want to see our yield numbers climb, but without the matching industry demand for the product and infrastructure to get it to those users, we'll see prices decline.

I've read predictions that we'll see \$6-7 soybeans before the end of 2017 if the weather holds. It's a scary thought. It's



also motivating. Focusing on transportation and business development, cultivating international markets, and supporting soy-based products, from biodiesel to plastics, positions us to grow soybean demand.

The thought of such challenging prices also serves as a reminder that we have to get out of our own way when it comes to regulations. Adding to the regulatory burden on agriculture will increase production costs. We face plenty of challenges from those who have no understanding of what it takes to raise crops and livestock, much less what it takes to bring a wholesome, sustainable, affordable food supply to market. This is a time to highlight the work we're doing to be sustainable and efficient, and to be good neighbors.

Transparency breeds trust, and we're going to need all of it we can get.

Gary Wheeler

Executive Director / CEO
Missouri Soybean Association
Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council
Mid-America Research Development Foundation



Yield Contest Results

Missouri soybean farmers again brought 90+ bushel per acre yields for the Association's annual contest. Thomas White III of Norborne had the highest overall yield with 96.5 bu/ac.

By Christine Tew

Missouri soybean farmers brought big yields for the Missouri Soybean Association's annual competition. Results from the Missouri Soybean Association and Merchandising Council's annual competition are now finalized with the highest yields well above 90 bushels per acre.

Top honors go to Thomas White III, of Norborne, who nearly doubled Missouri's statewide soybean average. White's 96.5 bushel per acre yield came through conventional tillage practices and without irrigation using Pioneer P45T48R soybean seeds. For irrigated soybeans, Ethan Stenger of Liberal led with 96.3 bushels per acre using Asgrow AG3832 seed.

For Stenger, details mattered.

"Paying attention to the small, but fundamental factors that grow soybeans—the science of what drives plant growth and pod count and the things that can really increase yield," was key to top yield, said Stenger.

Planting date was also an important factor, Stenger told Brownfield Ag News' Tom Steever in an interview about his



Missouri Soybean Association director of research and yield contest coordinator Greg Luce presents Thomas White III with district winner plaque during the District 2 soybean meeting in January. White had the top soybean yield in the contest, 96.5 bushels per acre.

statewide win in the irrigated category.

The Missouri Soybean Association's yield contest is made possible by generous contributions from the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and soybean checkoff, Asgrow, Baker Implement Company, Beck's Hybrids, Lewis Hybrids, Merschman Seeds, Missouri Crop Improvement Association, NuTech Seed, DuPont Pioneer, and Sydenstricker John Deere.

"It is outstanding to see growers



Statewide Winners – Irrigated Soybeans

	Entry	Community	County	Variety	Yield (bu/ac)
1 st	Ethan Stenger	Liberal	Barton	Asgrow AG3832	96.3
2 nd	Reed Kirby	Liberal	Barton	Asgrow AG4135	89.9
3 rd	Ethan Stenger	Liberal	Barton	Pioneer P39T67R	86.7

Statewide Winners – Non-Irrigated Soybeans

	Entry	Community	County	Variety	Yield (bu/ac)
1 st	Thomas White III	Norborne	Carroll	Pioneer P45T48R	96.5
2 nd	Brad Wilford	Laredo	Grundy	Pro Harvest 4366CR2Y	91.9
3 rd	Colton Lacina / Iowa Family Farms	Queen City	Schuyler	Asgrow AG34X6	89.2

District Winners – Conventional Tillage Soybeans

	Entry	Community	County	Variety	Yield (bu/ac)
1	Gary Waller	Faucett	Buchanan	Asgrow AG4034	76.6
2	Thomas White III	Norborne	Carroll	Pioneer P45T48R	96.5
3	Christy Nelson	Vandalia	Audrain	MFA MorSoy 4524 LL	74.0
4	Lucas Compton	Lamar	Barton	Pioneer 93Y84	77.8
6	John Brenner	Morrison	Gasconade	Pioneer P36T86R	87.3
7	Charles Hinkebein	Chaffee	Cape Girardeau	Asgrow AG4633	82.5

District Winners - No-Till Soybeans

	Entry	Community	County	Variety	Yield (bu/ac)
1	Josh Oswald	Fairfax	Atchison	Pioneer P33T72R	88.0
2	Brad Wilford	Laredo	Grundy	Pro Harvest 4366CR2Y	91.9
3	Cliff Mahar	Curryville	Pike	Asgrow AG4135	76.1
4	Tony Brackman	Concordia	Lafayette	Pioneer P44T63R	72.2
5	Brian Martin	Centralia	Boone	Asgrow AG4533	82.1
7	Glenda Hinkebein	Chaffee	Cape Girardeau	Asgrow AG4934	84.0

come together for friendly competition and continuous improvement through the annual yield contest,” said Matt McCrate, a southeast Missouri farmer and president of the Missouri Soybean Association. “Stewardship and efficiency are key to success on the farm, and our winners demonstrate innovation and commitment to those keys in reaching these high yields. Congratulations to all our participants in the 2016 soybean yield contest and to the growers statewide who continue to raise the bar.”

Winners are listed at right, along with the seed variety used to reach their top-tier yields.

There is not a no-till winner for district 6, nor a conventional tillage winner in district 5, as no entries met all requirements for those categories.

Thanks to the partnership of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, and industry partners, prizes including a trip to the 2017 Commodity Classic in San Antonio, their own UAV – drone – and accessories, and gift cards to Cabela’s and for biodiesel – will be awarded to statewide winners. District winners in each category will also receive their choice of \$750 in biodiesel

or in Cabela’s gift cards.

Missouri’s 2016 statewide average soybean harvest was 49 bushels per acre, a new state record, according to the USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service. Missouri’s previous statewide record average was 46.5 bushels per acre, set in 2014.

Participants in the Missouri Soybean Yield Contest were required to enter their fields into the competition prior to harvest. The 2016 entry deadline was

September 1. At harvest, participants were required to have a designated judge verify their yield results for the competition and to submit their verified results no later than November 15.

Contest rules are posted online at mosoy.org. Details for the Missouri Soybean Association’s 2017 Yield Contest will be posted online at mosoy.org and announced in this magazine during the spring of 2017. To learn more about the contest, or the Missouri Soybean Association, visit mosoy.org. ■



Agriculture, You're Welcome

Missouri's Agri-Ready designation identifies counties that encourage farm industry growth

By Allison Jenkins, Mill Creek Communications

In rural Missouri, jobs are sometimes hard to come by. Scott County presiding commissioner Jamie Burger knows this all too well.

That's why he was thrilled to find out that Delta Gilts, LLC, had chosen his southeast Missouri county to build an \$18 million sow operation, which will employ local residents and purchase local grain to feed the company's 5,500 hogs. The facility is currently under construction with plans to open in mid-2017.

"We just don't have a lot of people knocking down Scott County's door for a major investment like this — \$12 million for infrastructure and \$6 million to fill the houses," Burger says. "It'll put money in our farmers' pockets and put money back into our economy. Anytime you can create jobs, it's a good thing, and agricultural jobs are sound. This group wants to be a good corporate

neighbor, a good employer and good to the community. I'm excited about it."

Such economic development wouldn't be possible if local ordinances and regulations restricted agricultural growth and expansion. That's why Scott County is among 20 others across the Show-Me State that have sought the Agri-Ready County Designation from Missouri Farmers Care (MFC), a coalition of 45 leading agricultural groups in the state, including the Missouri Soybean Association and the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council.

The Agri-Ready initiative launched in December 2015 as a voluntary program to identify counties that create an environment conducive to agricultural opportunity, according to Ashley McCarty, MFC executive director. The designation shows these communities are proactively supporting the state's largest industry, which has a total economic impact of \$88.4 billion, according to a new extensive study commissioned by the Missouri Department of Agriculture and Missouri Farm Bureau.

"The intent of Agri-Ready is to bring Missouri agriculture into partnership



Summertime sunrise over a soybean field in Scott County.

with county leaders,” McCarty says. “So many conversations and decisions about ag policy occur at a local level, and there have been times that farm leaders have been left out of the conversation. This allows us to work together to promote the best agricultural opportunities throughout our state.”

Along with Scott, Agri-Ready counties currently include Atchison, Audrain, Carroll, Chariton, Cole, Cooper, Dallas, Dent, Gasconade, Marion, Moniteau, New Madrid, Oregon, Pike, Saline, Scott, St. Clair, Stoddard and Webster. In designated counties, MFC partners with government leaders, farmers and agribusinesses to advance local agricultural enterprises and workforce readiness while promoting youth education.

“More than anything, Agri-Ready’s first and most basic component is to be a tool for a county to promote the fact that it has an ag-friendly climate, whether that means recruiting another business or encouraging someone who’s already invested in the county to expand or change the way they do business,” McCarty says. “We’ve had conversations ranging from the wine industry in Gasconade County to a multi-generational family dairy from New York that’s seriously thinking about relocating to Audrain County. We don’t come in with a preconceived notion of what agricultural growth should look like.”

In contrast, McCarty points out that 23 counties in Missouri have passed local ordinances that restrict agriculture, often with long-term implications for the industry. She says over time some

Why Scott County Is An
**Agri-Ready
County**

A program of Missouri Farmers Care

AgriReady Counties are open to promoting the growth of Missouri agriculture and do not have laws, ordinances, or regulations impacting agriculture more stringent than state law.

Carroll | Audrain | Pike | Cole | Dallas | Cooper | Webster | Chariton
New Madrid | Scott | Gasconade

Market value of agriculture products sold: **\$188 MILLION**

Based on 2012 USDA Census:

Scott County is **2nd** in production of vegetables, melons, **POTATOES &** sweet potatoes.

Missouri Farmers Care
Protecting Missouri agriculture through communication, education and advocacy.

counties have begun to reconsider those actions, and MFC wants to help them walk through the process of pushing back their regulations to achieve Agri-Ready status.

“Local decisions to restrict agriculture have lasting ramifications on farmers, ranchers and agribusiness in a county. These restrictive ordinances increase risk, which can make obtaining operating capital more challenging, and create an environment that dissuades new business and processing. The Agri-Ready program exists to help solve problems on the front end and help

counties promote agriculture as a strong foundation to build a healthy local economy on.”

The Missouri House of Representatives generated the Agri-Ready concept two years ago, McCarty explains, but the bill was caught in Senate gridlock the last week of session before it could be approved and implemented. That’s when MFC stepped up to take the reins.

“We saw the opportunity to join conversations we previously didn’t have a voice in,” she says. “The partnership is best served as a partnership among

farmers, ranchers and local government leaders. As a coalition of 45 agricultural groups, MFC members have local leaders in every county who can be a point of contact and help to shepherd our relationship with county leaders.”

Another key component of the Agri-Ready partnership is MFC’s Agriculture Education on the Move™ (AEOTM) program for third-grade classrooms in designated counties. While recruiting business is a longer-term proposition, implementing this educational aspect is a more immediate benefit, McCarty says.

“Agriculture Education on the Move™ has been in place for several years with paid educators, but budget limitations forced us to focus on students in urban markets who don’t drive by soybeans, corn or cattle every day,” she explains. “But we also know there are plenty of students in rural areas who may not know where their food comes from and how it was raised, so we’ve developed this program specifically for Agri-Ready counties.”

MFC provides curriculum and materials and recruits local 4-H and FFA leaders to provide 10 hands-on, interactive lessons and activities about such subjects as crops, livestock, soil and water conservation, nutrition and agricultural careers.

“Agriculture Education on the Move™ has increased ag literacy among third-graders in the Marshall community,” says Sydnee Mason, AEOTM educator with Marshall FFA in Saline County. “The feedback I have received from teachers, administrators and parents about the program is positive. It is crucial to highlight the importance of agriculture

nationally, statewide and in Saline County. I am overjoyed to be a part of this program and share my passion with these students.”

The Agri-Ready collaboration also includes promotion of the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s voluntary Agricultural Stewardship Assurance Program, which was launched in 2015. MFC helps make farmers in Agri-Ready

“It’ll put money in our farmers’ pockets and put money back into our economy. Anytime you can create jobs, it’s a good thing, and agricultural jobs are sound.”

-Jamie Burger

counties aware of this verification program that champions Missouri farms that are responsible stewards of the land, provide safe food for consumers and use science-based technology in their operations. The goal is to aid producers in their marketing efforts and provide them with the tools they need to be successful in an ever-evolving industry.

County commissions must unanimously agree to apply for Agri-Ready status, which must be renewed annually. As interest in the program grows, McCarty says MFC will be actively working with these local leaders to ensure they see value in the program and are using it to their full advantage.

“November’s election brought a significant turnover of county commissioners, so we’ll be touching base with designated counties to build stronger relationships and make sure counties are tapping into their potential for agricultural growth,” she says. “Our goals also include talking to consumer groups about the opportunities Agri-Ready brings and spreading the word to

producer groups about what Missouri Farmers Care does and why. I see growth in the year ahead and a lot of continued investment in this effort.”

Back in Scott County, Burger says he and his fellow commissioners didn’t need much convincing to realize that the Agri-Ready program would be a win-win for farmers, businesses and local residents. More than 81 percent of the county is farmland, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Scott ranks among the state’s top 10 counties for value of agricultural products sold, with farmers selling \$1.2 billion of agricultural, forestry and related products per year.

“It didn’t take a whole lot of debate and discussion because we are very pro-agriculture here,” Burger says. “We have a wide realm of agriculture in this area, from soybeans, cotton, corn and rice to orchards, watermelon and peanuts and all types of livestock. Farming is what drives Scott County. Agriculture is something we welcome, and the Agri-Ready program puts us on the map for people who are looking to diversify their operation, put in a new facility or expand their business. They know Scott County is the place to be.”

Any Missouri county is eligible to apply for the Agri-Ready designation but can have no restrictions on agriculture more stringent than state law and must support agricultural stewardship, growth and opportunities. After an application is received from the county commission, the MFC Agri-Ready Review Committee examines local ordinances, zoning regulations and statements of support prior to awarding designation. Once a county is approved, MFC begins working with local leaders to position and promote their county as Agri-Ready.

Application materials and more information are available online at mofarmerscare.com or by contacting McCarty at ashley@mofarmerscare.com or (660) 341-8955. ■

The Agri-Ready and Ag Education on the Move programs are partially funded by soybean checkoff dollars, including directed funds from the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and a Freedom to Operate grant from the United Soybean Board.



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Following the Crop

Missouri's top commodity organizations partner with the University of Missouri to create a new opportunity for the next generation of agribusiness leaders.

By Logan Jackson

Photograph courtesy of the University of Missouri

Collaboration is at the center of the mission of the University of Missouri College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources. It's also key to the Missouri Soybean Association and Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council's work on soybean farmers' behalf.

A recent study abroad trip to Argentina showcased that collaboration and its importance.

MU Extension specialists Ray Massey and Ryan Milhollin led a group of 10 students who traveled to Argentina to learn more about the agricultural landscape. A partnership with the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council and the Missouri Corn Growers Association strengthened the experience. Not only did the two organizations provide their representatives with industry experience to participate on the trip, they also provided financial support for the program through checkoff dollars.

"It's quite unique to have those representatives with us," Massey said. "We're trying to foster that relationship. We were fortunate that both groups were interested and willing to assist us. We're hopeful that this collaboration can continue into the future."

The host institution for the trip was Bolsa de Cereales, which has ties to the grain and oilseed industries in Argentina. The group heard from other key Argentine institutions as well.

"Bolsa de Cereales is the Buenos Aires Grain Exchange, the oldest commercial institution in Argentina," Massey said. "Throughout the week, there was a mix of classroom learning and on-site business tours in Buenos Aires and the surrounding countryside. The emphasis was on learning the agricultural policies and markets of Argentina. We looked at the different resources available to farmers."

The goal of the trip was to showcase

Tony Stafford, second from left, leads business development efforts for the Missouri Soybean Association and Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council. In that role, Stafford works to build relationships with producers, processors, buyers and many others along the soybean value chain to create opportunities for soybean farmers and grow demand for their soybeans.

the value chain of bringing something all the way from the farm to the end user. The students learned about the processes that crops go through to get to the consumer.

“We wanted to do this in Argentina so that we could get a different perspective,” Milhollin said. “Argentina is a great platform. They are a great commodity producer and exporter.”

Topics covered included learning about the history of Argentine agriculture, the current economic situation in the South American country and its agricultural policies. The group also visited the Louis Dreyfus Company offices in General Lagos, which is a soybean crush plant that produces biodiesel. LDC is one of Argentina’s largest companies.

“The CAFNR study abroad trip to Argentina has not only been a truly educational experience, but has allowed us all to develop strong bonds with our peers and the people we’ve met here in Buenos Aires,” said Maria Kuhns, a sophomore majoring in agribusiness management. “Our world views have been expanded and we’ve stepped outside of our comfort zone. As I head back to MU, I’m confident that this experience will serve me well in my studies through not only the knowledge I’ve gained about international agriculture, but also the thought processes I use every day. Before studying abroad, I was unaware of what I was missing by not having an international perspective.”

Students were also able to take in the culture of Argentina. They traveled to the Iguazu Falls, the largest falls in the Americas. They also took tango lessons and performed at two different tango venues alongside Argentines.

“One of the benefits of this, in addition to learning about economics and business, is learning about the culture,” Massey said. “That’s important for these students as they head into the workplace.”

Of the 10 students who took the trip, six were agribusiness management majors. Students from the Division of Animal Sciences, the Division of Plant Sciences, and the geography department in the College of Arts and Science were also on the trip.

This is the first year of the program.

“There was no South American business education opportunity in CAFNR,” Massey said. “There are some South American trips, but they deal more with equipment. We wanted to look at the business aspects of South America.

“As the maiden voyage, we expect things to change year to year. We’re hoping that we can build on this trip in the future.”

Matthew Amick, director of grower services with Missouri Corn, and Tony Stafford, director of business development with Missouri Soybean, traveled with the CAFNR group.

Stafford earned his bachelor’s degree in agriculture business from Missouri State University and holds a master’s degree in public administration from Mizzou. Stafford had worked in a variety of roles with the Missouri Department of Agriculture before becoming the director of business development for Missouri’s soybean organizations.

“Missouri Soybean has a long-standing relationship with CAFNR and is honored to be part of the program,” Stafford said.

Want to See for Yourself in 2017?

For soybean farmers wanting to know more about their customers beyond the elevator, and the soy checkoff’s role in marketing U.S. soy to those customers, the United Soybean Board invites them to participate in the checkoff’s See for Yourself program.



Russell Wolf of Tipton represented Missouri in the 2016 program, and had the opportunity to see operations at the newly-expanded Panama Canal as part of the program.

“Even as an experienced farmer, I continued to learn more and more about the soybean industry and the checkoff program,” he said.

See for Yourself offers 10 soybean farmers from around the country the opportunity to see and evaluate the work of the checkoff firsthand. From the use of soy by U.S. companies to increasing export demand among customers around the world, See for Yourself will show you the checkoff’s role in the global soy industry.

All U.S. soybean farmers over the age of 18 can apply for the See for Yourself program. The 2017 program will be held in August.

To apply, farmers should complete the form online at UnitedSoybean.org/SeeforYourself.

The board of directors of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council oversees the investment of soybean checkoff dollars for research, promotion and education projects that improve the bottom line for Missouri soybean farmers.

Where the Money Goes

By Christine Tew



John Kelley



Harold Gloe



Robert Alpers

The Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council works to improve the bottom line for soybean farmers and support innovation across the soybean value chain. Success is most directly measured by return on investment.

A 520 percent return on investment is the type of number that makes a skeptic of many. But, when it can be clearly explained, stands to make even the most cautious bankers' hearts soar. Soybean farmers have that return – a \$5.20 return on every dollar invested in the soybean checkoff, coming back to growers in the form of higher prices for their soybeans than if they were without the research, promotion and market development efforts made possible through that one-half of one percent contribution at the soybeans' first point of sale.

The soybean checkoff amounts to just one-half of one percent of the net sale prices of soybeans at the time of first purchase. Of the funds collected, half stay within the state and half are directed to national programs. Those funds must be invested toward improving the overall profitability for soybean farmers. Funds may be used for research, promotion and education efforts; soybean checkoff dollars may not be used for lobbying, membership or similar efforts and are watched closely by the USDA to ensure compliance with the Soybean Promotion, Research and

Consumer Information Act and the USDA Soybean Promotion and Research Order.

In Missouri, the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council oversees those state checkoff funds. The Council is comprised of a board of thirteen farmers elected by their peers. Board members represent seven districts across Missouri and are elected to three-year terms. That board of directors of takes the charge to invest farmers' checkoff dollars very seriously and works throughout the year to make decisions that most positively impact farmers' bottom line in both the near and distant future. The board is currently led by chairman John Kelley of Faucett, vice-chairman Harold Gloe of Hermann, and secretary/treasurer Robert Alpers of Prairie Home.

Investing checkoff dollars wisely to ensure growers continue to benefit from such a strong return on their checkoff investment is key to long-term success, and the farmer leaders of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council are looking at the long view.

Through their checkoff, Missouri soybean farmers have invested \$37 million into research and breeding programs in the state since 1983, leading to more than 100 new patents or soybean varieties. A recent soybean breeding partnership between MSMC and the University of Missouri is



Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council chairman John Kelley loading soybeans during harvest 2016.

providing farmers with seven new soybean varieties for 2017. Another partnership between the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, University of Missouri, USDA and United Soybean Board recently received a patent for a method to produce soybeans with high oleic acid content, which will make non-transgenic high oleic soybean available for production. Between those new varieties – without technology fees – and the opportunity for added value from the non-transgenic high oleic trait, growers stand to see clear benefits to their bottom line well into the future.

Investments made years ago are paying off now too. The soybean checkoff, mainly through the work of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, was the main driver in establishing the biodiesel industry in the early 1990s. Biodiesel helps increase demand for soybean oil and other feedstocks, which consequently raised soybean prices by 63 to 74 cents per bushel from 2006 to 2015. A more recent economic analysis pinned the number at 15 percent of the price of soybeans being supported by biodiesel – so \$1.50 of a \$10 bushel. As the second largest producer in the nation, Missouri produces nearly 200 million gallons of biodiesel annually, with one and a half gallons of biodiesel able to be produced from the soybean oil of one bushel of beans.

Growing demand for soybeans is another area where the soybean checkoff makes a significant difference on the bottom line for farmers. Through partnerships with the US Soybean Export Council, World Initiative for Soy in

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Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council Statement of Activities Fiscal Year 2016

Revenue

Assessment Revenue Collected	
First Purchases	\$11,077,058
Other States	\$116,169
Less Assessment Revenue	
Remitted to Other States	\$3,125,650
Remitted to United Soybean Board	<u>\$4,533,927</u>

Net Assessment Revenue	\$4,533,650
Contract Revenue	\$60,960
Returned Funds	\$837,5612
Other Income	\$70,303
Interest Income	\$50,222
Royalty Income	<u>\$112,823</u>

Total Revenue **\$5,665,519**

Expenses

Program Expenses	
Promotion	\$356,246
Research	\$3,906,831
Consumer Information	\$437,996
Industry Information	\$513,372
Producer Communications	\$626,256

Administration \$1,419,630

Total Expenses **\$7,260,331**

Decrease in Net Assets **\$1,594,812**

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Human Health and other checkoff-supported initiatives, staff and farmer leaders are working to ensure existing markets remain open to U.S. soy exports, and exploring new export market opportunities. In Missouri, roughly every other row of soybeans is exported. Across the US, that number climbs higher with soybean exports accounting for nearly 60 percent of US soy demand. It would be tough to understate the impact losing such demand and markets could have on domestic soybean prices.

During the 2016 fiscal year, which ran July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016, the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council invested in both ongoing and new programs with the goal of increasing the profitability of Missouri soybean growers. Each year, those investments, as well as the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council's internal management of checkoff funds, are audited by an outside, accredited accounting firm. The Statement of Activities accompanying this report includes those audited financials.

Readers with a sharp eye might notice a significant increase in research spending during the past fiscal year as compared to the numbers for last fiscal year. That increase is not a change in overall budget, but rather a change in billing and invoicing procedures in our partnerships with the University of Missouri to ensure research program costs are promptly reflected and accounted for without delay. The corresponding decrease in net assets is likewise a reflection of those changes. The staff of the Missouri Soybean Association and Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council greatly appreciate the trust placed in their hands by the farmer leaders of the boards of directors and by the soybean growers across Missouri.

Providing transparency in how those



The Bay Farm Research Facility is a hub for soybean checkoff-supported research in Missouri. The facility, owned by the Missouri Soybean Association, includes state of the art laboratory space, seed and equipment storage, as well as nearly 300 acres of crop land.

dollars are spent is an important aspect of the responsibility for managing the dollars paid into the soybean checkoff. In Missouri, the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council's annual budget is divided into categories, subcategories, programs and projects reflecting those checkoff investments. The budget and those investments are summarized in this report using the following categories: Promotion, Research, Consumer Information, Industry Information, Producer Communications and Administration.

Promotion

Promoting Missouri-grown soybeans to stakeholder groups is a key component of investing the soybean checkoff. This budget area includes those general efforts to raise awareness within the market for Missouri soybeans, including working with buyers along the soybean value chain – from grain elevators and processors, to retailers and end users – like livestock producers. This budget area also includes efforts to build demand for Missouri soybeans and soy products around the world

through partnership with organizations like the U.S. Meat Export Federation, USA Poultry & Egg Export Council and the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health.

Research

The largest portion of Missouri farmers' checkoff dollars goes to support research projects directly benefitting soybean farmers. Each year, the board of directors solicits, reviews and selects research proposals for funding. Selected projects are subject to strict reporting and are posted online at mosoy.org. This budget area also provides for on-farm work at the Missouri Soybean Association's Bay Farm Research Facility, for soybean variety testing through the University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service and for participation in the North Central Soybean Research Program.

Consumer Information

The Consumer Information budget area is the home for efforts to connect the vast majority of Missourians not living on a farm or ranch to the incredible



radio network, the Brownfield Ag Network or other radio stations are benefitting from the work done under this budget area, as are producers who participate in grower meetings, field days, educational tours or who learn about new practices through this magazine.

This budget area also provides support for youth in agriculture programs, including partnerships with the Missouri FFA Association, Missouri 4-H, Agriculture Future of America and Missouri's Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow program.

Administration

This budget area includes the cost of overseeing and investing Missouri's soybean checkoff dollars. Costs within the Administration area include management, personnel and necessary compliance audits, as well as facilitating elections and meetings of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council's board of directors.

Within each of these areas, staff of the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council coordinate with not only the Council's board of directors in Missouri, but also with directors and staff of the United Soybean Board and many other partners.

Headquartered in St. Louis, the United Soybean Board and its affiliates are charged with investing half the soybean checkoff funds collected in national-level programs focused on improving overall profitability for soybean growers. Projects are coordinated between the state and national levels, ensuring the value of every dollar is maximized and duplication of effort is limited.

To learn more about the United Soybean Board and national-level soybean checkoff investments, visit unitedsoybean.org. For more about soybean checkoff investments made on behalf of Missouri's soybean farmers, visit mosoy.org or call (573) 635-3819.

importance of agriculture. This area encompasses helping consumers understand how their food is grown and raised, and how that food is marketed, from production methods to labeling. Missouri's CommonGround program, the Ag Education on the Move program for elementary school students and school administrators and participation in the Missouri State Fair and other large public events all are part of this category.

Industry Information

Projects involving partners along the soybean value chain, especially efforts in business development and relationship building, make up the Industry Information budget area. Efforts including working with feed, seed and chemical companies, as well as manufacturers, to identify new management practices and uses for soybeans and soy products.

Producer Communications

This budget area includes the many ways checkoff funds are used to connect with soybean growers. Farmers who hear soybean news on their local farm

How USB Works for Farmers



The United Soybean Board, the national soy checkoff organization, is charged with overseeing the half of the soybean checkoff contributions not kept at the state level. The 73 farmer-directors of USB oversee the investments of the soy checkoff to maximize profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers, investing and leveraging checkoff funds to build preference for U.S. soy by addressing and meeting end-users' needs, specifically in the areas of meal, oil and sustainability. Investments in each of those areas are focused on meeting strategic objectives:

Meal Strategic Objective: USB will help develop, communicate and capture the full value of U.S. soybean meal in feed, food and industrial applications.

Oil Strategic Objective: Build preference for U.S. soybean oil in the food and industrial markets differentiating U.S. soybean oil through promotion, as well as research.

Sustainability Strategic Objective: Effectively enhance and communicate U.S. soy sustainability performance so that buyers and end users prefer U.S. soy as the best raw material choice to meet their own sustainability and social responsibility goals.

To learn more about the United Soybean Board and national-level soybean checkoff investments, visit unitedsoybean.org.

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INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Renewables on the Runway

As St. Louis' airport logs three decades of using biodiesel in its maintenance fleet, staff praise the fuel for longer engine life and reliability.

By Allison Jenkins, Mill Creek Communications

St. Louis Lambert International Airport fleet manager Mike Bernich has just returned from a staff meeting that turned into an emergency weather briefing. A major ice storm is on its way, and the maintenance crew must be ready to keep the airfield cleared.

If his equipment doesn't run, planes don't fly.

"I've been out here at the airport for 27 years, and in that time, I've only seen the airport shut down once," Bernich says. "That's how critical it is that we

maintain our fields. If the pilots decide not to land here, that's a call on them. We will maintain our runways to be open at all costs."

For nearly 30 years, the airport has counted on the reliability of biodiesel to fuel its entire fleet of maintenance and emergency response equipment. The airport uses B20, a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent diesel, in more than 200 vehicles and power equipment, from massive snow removal machines and specialized aircraft rescue and firefighting units to deicers, street



emissions. It's been problem-free — no icing, no gelling, no worries.”

In 2016, nearly 14 million people flew through St. Louis Lambert, the largest and busiest airport in Missouri. These passengers couldn't make it to and from their destinations, however, without the work of the 24 employees in the airport's fleet maintenance division, which Bernich oversees, and the 80 employees in airfield maintenance. As 260 flights depart daily, these crews work behind the scenes to repair, supply, support, protect and maintain the airport's four runways, taxiways and grounds that encompass roughly 3,900 acres.

This time of year especially, the maintenance departments spend a tremendous amount of time preparing for bad weather with well-choreographed plans to deal with whatever might happen, says Bernich, who likens the operation to a “aircraft carrier on land.”

“Saint Louis Lambert is a major Midwest airport that needs to remain in a ready state for any situation, whether routine or emergency,” Bernich says. “Our specialized equipment performs

supply of petroleum based fuel products was finite,” he says. “Looking and searching for alternative fuel sources was a goal to see how cost effective and performance effective it would be against petroleum-based fuel.”

Before committing to biodiesel, Bernich says airport officials did their research about what to expect when using a nonpetroleum-based fuel. The exploratory use of biodiesel at the airport came just as the University of Missouri and the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council began to fund studies on this soy-based fuel as an alternative to traditional diesel in the early 1990s.

“We didn't step into this blindly,” Bernich explains. “We ran tests on the product at various dilution ratios from 5 percent to 50 percent to see how it would react to cold, heat and other variables prior to mixing with our diesel supply. We found that a 20-percent blend worked best for us. Drivers and workers near the equipment commented that they saw no difference in performance and it didn't burn their eyes and nose like plain diesel. Some even said it sort of smells like someone is cooking french fries.”

Bernich says his crew discovered

“We've seen increased engine life in our equipment, performance is comparable to petroleum diesel, and we have the environmental benefit of lower emissions.”

-Mike Bernich

sweepers, generators, trucks, tractors, mowers, passenger shuttles, fuel tankers, blowers and many others.

Bernich has seen the use of biodiesel evolve from experimental phase in the late 1980s to widespread use.

If it runs on diesel, it runs on biodiesel, Bernich says.

“It has been a fantastic product,” he says. “We've seen increased engine life in our equipment, performance is comparable to petroleum diesel, and we have the environmental benefit of lower

functions critical to the operation and requirements of maintaining a first-class airport.”

The St. Louis airport was a pioneer in the biodiesel industry, starting when this alternative fuel was merely in the demonstration phase. In 1987, members of the United Soybean Board approached the airport with a proposition to run an experimental program using this eco-friendly, soy-based fuel, Bernich says.

“We were aware of the escalating cost of fuel nationwide and the oil shortages that had occurred and also that the



Mike Bernich

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Lyndon Morgan fuels one of the airport's fire trucks with B20 biodiesel.

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additional biodiesel benefits after the Environmental Protection Agency began to phase in ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) regulations in 2006 to reduce exhaust emissions and improve air quality. All diesel vehicles in the U.S. are now required to use ULSD, which has been refined so that its sulphur content is 15 parts per million or less compared to standard diesel with an average of 500 parts per million of sulphur.

“Reducing sulfur in diesel also reduces

“ Biodiesel, when used at the present 20-percent ratio, adds lubricity to the engines and helps them run with fewer problems. ”

-Mike Bernich

the natural lubricants, making it a very ‘hard’ fuel,” Bernich explains. “Biodiesel, when used at the present 20-percent ratio, adds lubricity to the engines and helps them run with fewer problems.”

The only alternative fuel to have fully completed the health effects testing requirements of the Clean Air Act,

biodiesel produces 86 percent fewer lifecycle greenhouse gases than petroleum diesel, creates 47 percent less particulate matter and reduces hydrocarbon emissions by 67 percent, according to the National Biodiesel Board.

Lower emission levels mean that biodiesel removes the equivalent of 2 million passenger cars from Missouri roads in one year of average driving.

The environmental benefits of biodiesel fit well with the airport’s extensive efforts to be more “green,” adds Bernich.

“The airport has a representative that sits on St. Louis Clean Cities region board, we participate in Earth Day activities in Forest Park and also display units at the St. Louis Car show,” he says.

“Biodiesel is a big part of those efforts. We are very proactive in making others aware of the benefits of ‘clean’ fuels.”

St. Louis Lambert’s longtime, comprehensive commitment to using alternative fuels has even captured the attention of the Discovery Channel, which shot footage at the airport in mid-November for a documentary that will broadcast in late 2017. The film plans to tell the story of an emerging biodiesel industry trying to gain a substantial foothold in the U.S. energy supply.

“We were one of the first to be interviewed since we’d been using alternative fuels for an extended period of time,” Bernich says. “This is a win-win situation for us. The general public becomes aware that we our doing our diligence to preserve the environment for future generations as well as becoming an educator for others just beginning in the alternative fuel use. We are very proactive in making others aware of the benefits of ‘clean’ fuels. Anything that we can do to make a difference is worthwhile.”

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Using biodiesel also makes a difference for the state's economy and the farmers who grow soybeans — Missouri's top commodity.

A national leader in biodiesel, Missouri ranks second in production and fourth in production capacity, trailing only Texas, Iowa and Illinois. Eight Missouri biodiesel plants produce roughly 200 million gallons of the renewable fuel per year, with expansion pushing estimated annual capacity value upwards of 211 million gallons. Of the state's estimated current capacity, 88 percent is devoted exclusively to processing soy oil into biodiesel.

Biodiesel supports nearly 2,500 jobs and has created \$1.7 billion in value-added benefit to Missouri's gross domestic product since 2007, according to the Missouri Soybean Association.

Biodiesel production also creates helps increase demand for soybean oil and other feedstocks, which consequently raised soybean prices by 63 to 74 cents per bushel from 2006 to 2015. A more recent economic analysis suggests 15



St. Louis Lambert Airport maintenance employee Raymond Lewis tests one of the biodiesel-powered snow removal machines in advance of a winter storm mid-January.

percent of the price of soybeans is supported by biodiesel, or \$1.50 of a \$10 bushel.

"Biodiesel has been great for the airport and helps keep jobs and agriculture in our backyard," Bernich says. "Using a homegrown product lets others know we are dedicated to helping make Missouri great."

More information on biodiesel, its benefits and blends that are acceptable in your diesel system, visit the National Biodiesel Board at nbb.org.

Biodiesel resources are also available online through the Missouri Soybean Association and Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council at mosoy.org.

HONOR WALL

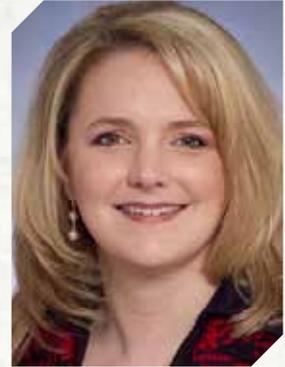
Good news from those working on behalf of Missouri soybean farmers

Chinn to Serve As Missouri's Next Ag Director

Governor Eric Greitens has named Chris Chinn of Clarence to be Missouri's next director of agriculture. Chinn, a long-time figure in Missouri agriculture, is often recognized for her leadership in agricultural organizations and her advocacy work on behalf of family farms.

"Chris and her husband are fifth-generation farmers," Governor Greitens said when making the announcement. "They raise hogs, cattle, corn, soybeans, and hay on their farm in Northeast Missouri. It's tough enough to run a successful farm, which the Chinn's do, but Chris is also a leading agriculture advocate. She has become a voice for Missouri farmers, and she has repeatedly stood up to critics and activists. She writes and speaks around the state and country about what a farm can do when it is run with care."

Chinn began work as acting agriculture director following the Governor's inauguration January 9. Her appointment as Missouri's director of agriculture and head of the Missouri Department of Agriculture is pending Senate confirmation.



Chris Chinn

Missouri Farmer Elected NCSRP Vice President

Rock Port farmer and Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council (MSMC) director Cecil DeMott was recently appointed vice president of the North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP).

"Joint research is fantastic," DeMott said. "We can get different investigators working together, what one doesn't understand another can fill in and vice versa. The cooperative approach is the way to do it."

DeMott has been involved with NCSRP for three years. NCSRP is a farmer-led organization that invests soybean checkoff dollars in regional research. Along with Missouri, 11 other state soybean associations actively participate and fund NCSRP including Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

"Cecil is a champion for building even greater Missouri engagement in the NCSRP and for increasing multi-state partnership opportunities with and across all NCSRP member state university researchers and farmers," said Ed Anderson, NCSRP executive director. "The NCSRP is again in good hands and will continue to make a difference for Midwestern soybean farmers and for the entire soybean industry."

The 12 member states of the NCSRP grow nearly 85 percent

of the soybeans produced in the United States and represent more than 350,000 farmers. The farmers representing these states on the NCSRP board have a shared vision and commitment to regionally coordinated research and communication efforts.

The biggest issue DeMott sees in the coming year for NCSRP is soybean cyst nematode. Although there has been headway made, he believes the research needs to find direction.

"Right now we're wandering around and I think we need to find direction and come up with a way for people to work together," DeMott said. "Researchers need to share their research and make it more of a team effort."

In addition to DeMott's election, Gene Stoel of Minnesota was elected president and Mike Cerny of Wisconsin was elected treasurer.



Cecil Demott

Missouri's 2016 Ag Educator - Darrin Peters

The Agriculture Education Leader of the year for 2016 is a chemistry teacher.

Darrin Peters didn't grow up on a farm and he didn't study agriculture in school. A native of Fenton, Missouri, he teaches chemistry at Rockwood Summit High School. There, he uses biodiesel to connect students to where their food and fuel comes from, how it's made and the ways in which they might use those science and technology skills in the future. Each day, he connects the lives of hundreds of urban and suburban young people to production and value-added agriculture. His students don't have an agriculture education program or FFA chapter, but with his leadership they've formed an afterschool club and sought grants to expand their biodiesel projects beyond the classroom.

The Missouri Agriculture Awards recognize producers and industry leaders for their commitment to innovation, supporting their communities, committing to good land stewardship and being a great example for future generations. The awards were presented during the 47th Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture.

Award winners are selected annually by a committee of representatives. Judges consider innovative farming techniques, examples of commitment to land stewardship, community engagement and leadership. Nominations can be submitted by any organization, group or individual.

Under Peter's leadership, students at Rockwood Summit High School took a classroom project on biodiesel to practical application, and with his support the program and their achievements continue to grow.

The program has grown steadily, with a 2014 grant allowing for the construction of a small building dedicated to the biodiesel program on school grounds. Peters, along with school principal Renee Trotier and other faculty and staff, brought partners from the agriculture community, including Monsanto, National Corn Growers and the Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council together to make it happen, and hosted a well-attended ribbon-cutting ceremony to share the partnership with the suburban community.

Students at Rockwood Summit High School got another boost in 2015, as the chemistry classes and club entered production agriculture. Building on the success of the program that started with waste vegetable oil from the cafeteria, Darrin led his students to work with Missouri farmers, including longtime leader Warren Stemme, to plant soybeans on the school grounds. The students then crushed their beans by hand to explore another step in the process of converting the oil into biodiesel – which can then be used in school vehicles.

In 2016, Darrin expanded the student's crop space and worked to bring a small-scale soybean crusher into the school through a grant from the Missouri Soybean Association to help his students further understand the connection between row crops, the agriculture industry and their daily lives. Darrin has taken his chemistry classes from the school's laboratory to the real world, and in that process he's overcome the challenge of connecting urban and suburban young people with production agriculture in a meaningful dialogue.

Students from the program have gone on to graduate and pursue careers in fields from automotive technology to engineering and science. To learn more about the program, visit the school district online at rsdmo.org, or check them out on Facebook.



Darrin Peters, on left, accepting the Agriculture Education Leader of the Year award during the Missouri Governor's Conference on Agriculture in December 2016.





Legacy In Progress

Robert Alpers leads by example to preserve his family farm, promote agricultural industry

By Allison Jenkins, Mill Creek Communications

Photography by Adam Buckallew and Christine Tew

There's What do a contingent of Chinese grain buyers and a group of urban school teachers have in common?

They've all been guests on the Prairie Home farm of Robert Alpers, whose commitment to advancing agriculture extends well beyond the boundaries of his family's 4,500-acre row-crop and cattle operation. He says improving relations among producers and consumers is as important as improving the farm for future generations. That's why he embraces the opportunity to host farm tours and lead organizations such as the Missouri Soybean Merchandising

Council, representing district five on its board of directors, overseeing checkoff investments and serving as secretary/treasurer.

"There are fewer and fewer of us farmers to speak up, so we need to be advocates for agriculture," Robert says. "We need to make sure everyone understands it's important to us to keep our land and livestock healthy and productive. Farmers are the start, and the consumer is the finish. We're all just a big team."

Such forward-thinking philosophy is among the reasons Robert was



Nathan, Paige and Robert Alpers on their farm outside Prairie Home, in Moniteau County.

The Alpers farm legacy began with Robert’s parents, Dorsey and Libby, who established the operation in the early 1960s and then transitioned it to their three sons. Robert and his brothers farmed together until the eldest, Gary died of esophageal cancer three years ago. Their younger brother, Mark, decided to phase himself out of the operation at the time.

“It was quite a shocker,” Robert says. “Luckily, we had estate plans in place. I can’t stress the importance of that enough for farm families. We’d been working on ours for years before we even knew he was sick. We designed it for retirement or death. Unfortunately, death came first.”

“To me, it’s about improving this farm for the next generation and giving them an opportunity to make it even better.”

-Robert Alpers

recognized in December with the Missouri Agriculture Soybean Legacy Award, given to a producer who exemplifies “great leadership in their field of agriculture” and is positioned “to meet future economic and business challenges.”

“The word ‘legacy’ to me means carrying on to the future and being more than sustainable,” the 59-year-old says. “I hear that term a lot, but I like the word ‘progressive’ instead. To me, it’s about improving this farm for the next generation and giving them an opportunity to make it even better.”

Now, the family farm is transitioning again as Robert’s 32-year-old son, Nathan, begins to take over the operation, which includes corn, soybeans, 500 head of commercial cattle and a small herd of registered Simmental. Although they’re not involved in the farm, daughters Shanna Henderson and Heather Wilson also live near Robert and his wife, Kathy. Robert and Kathy have five grandchildren as well.

“I think that’s the best blessing I’ve ever had — to be close to all my kids — and get to work with one of them is a great feeling,” Robert says. “Nathan has wanted to farm ever since he could walk, and I believe this is his calling. He has



Robert Alpers accepting the Soybean Legacy Award during the 2016 Missouri Governor’s Conference on Agriculture. Presenting the award is Richard Fordyce, director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Chris Klenklen, director of the Department’s Grain Inspection and Warehousing division.

the same goals as I do. Make the farm better and more fertile, keep erosion to a minimum, and just do a good job overall.”

Incorporating cover crops is one of the progressive moves the father-son team has implemented in recent years to control erosion on their rolling landscape in central Missouri.

“We have to protect the soil because it’s so fragile,” Robert says. “Once it’s gone, it’s gone.”

Despite farming’s inherent changes and challenges, the veteran producer says he can’t imagine a better way of life.

“There’s still nothing that compares to walking out in your field, when the plants are knee-high and the sun is coming up and there’s dew on the leaves,” he says. “It’s a real special feeling you just can’t get anywhere else.”



Profitability Through Conservation

Johnny Hunter focuses on stewardship as he expands, diversifies his family's Bootheel farm

By Allison Jenkins, Mill Creek Communications

Photography by Christine Tew, and courtesy of University of Missouri Cooperative Extension Service

Johnny Hunter planned his future at age 10.

That was in 1992, the year his father, John, died unexpectedly at 52, leaving his wife, Patricia, to figure out what to do with the family's southeast Missouri farming operation near Dexter. She sat her young son down and asked if he was interested in farming someday. Without hesitation, his answer was, "Yes."

"I knew at 10 years old that I had to pick up where Dad left off," says Hunter, now 34. "Mom told me she'd try to hang on to as much ground as possible if I wanted to farm. She sold some land to service our debt but kept our main headquarters, about 1,700 acres. She's a very special woman to do that for me."

After attending college and working for other farmers along the way, Hunter returned to the family farm in 2006. The third-generation Missouri Bootheel producer is now growing soybeans, corn, popcorn, rice and cotton and raising black Angus cattle on more than 6,000 acres, expanding the operation



Johnny Hunter

exponentially last year through a partnership and buyout agreement with a local farmer.

Expansion isn't the only dramatic change to Hunter's operation in recent years. The innovative farmer has focused intently on soil health and conservation by reducing tillage, implementing a diverse mix of cover



crops and installing soil moisture sensors to help make in-furrow irrigation more effective and efficient.

“We’re very conscientious of what we’re doing to our ground,” Hunter says. “We believe tillage, while sometimes necessary, can be detrimental to the health and productivity of our soil. We also feel the use of cover crops is economically justifiable in terms of controlling erosion, nutrient loss and weed pressure. Plus, it helps with water infiltration. Having residue on the soil surface year round helps capture the God-given rain we get rather than using expensive irrigation.”

“For my farm to be as profitable as it can be, it needs to be as efficient as it can be. As soil health increases, my cost of production goes down. To me, it’s a no-brainer.”

-Johnny Hunter

Such efforts helped Hunter earn the 2016 Missouri Agriculture Environmental Steward Award, given to a producer who is an “example of environmental stewardship while also improving production and profitability.”

“That award was really for my father and grandfather and mother,” Hunter says. “Without their hard work and vision of what they wanted to achieve, none of this matters.”

Hunter admits that using cover crops and no-till methods are still outside the norm in his region, but he is adamant that these practices are critical to the

future of his operation, which he hopes to pass down to his and wife Jessica’s children, 3-year-old Emerson Marie and 9-month-old John Howard Hunter III.

“At the end of the day, you have to do what’s best for your farm,” Hunter says. “For me, it’s profitability through conservation. They walk hand-in-hand. For my farm to be as profitable as it can be, it needs to be as efficient as it can be. As soil health increases, my cost of production goes down. To me, it’s a no-brainer.”

Despite the demands of his highly diversified operation, Hunter finds

time for agricultural advocacy and education through organizations such as the Missouri Soybean Association. The MSA board member says he’s proud to share his perspective as a young producer in an aging industry while learning from those who paved the way before him.

“Involvement is a two-sided coin,” he says. “It’s important to have a voice in the industry, and it also makes me a better farmer and businessman. Being a young person in agriculture, I feel like we’ve got the world by the tail because the opportunities over the next 20 years are unlike anything we’ve seen.”



Johnny Hunter accepting the Environmental Steward Award during the 2016 Missouri Governor’s Conference on Agriculture. Presenting the award is Richard Fordyce, director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Ken Struempf, director of the Department’s Agriculture Business Development division.

Do you know a Missouri soybean farmer who is going above and beyond to make a difference on the farm and in their community? Let us know by emailing ctew@mosoy.org. They may be featured in an upcoming issue.



Casey Wasser serves as the director of policy for the Missouri Soybean Association and Merchandising Council. He represents Missouri soybean farmers on policy issues at the state and federal levels.

Policy Update

from Casey Wasser

The Missouri General Assembly returned to the Capitol January 4. Unlike last year where both the House and Senate saw new leadership, the 2017 legislation session started with a measure of consistency through the re-election of Speaker Todd Richardson and President Pro Tem Ron Richard. Right-to-Work legislation and a complete ban on lobbyist gifts are at the top of the legislature's priorities as things take off.

Over the past year, securing a full payout of the Missouri Qualified Biodiesel Producer Incentive Fund has been a top priority for the Missouri Soybean Association. We are proud to say that more than \$9 million was appropriated during 2016 toward paying down the debt owed through the Incentive Fund, meaning only around \$740,000 remains. Although the majority of the funding

was appropriated last year, payments are made quarterly. As Governor Greitens takes office with a budget shortfall on the horizon, the Missouri Soybean Association is again prioritizing these payments, to ensure the funds are protected and paid on schedule to complete the goal of achieving a zero-balance due to Missouri's biodiesel producers.

Transportation funding is another area we'll be watching especially closely over the next few months. In our pre-election Question & Answer session with Governor Greitens, he said that he "will prioritize port and highway infrastructure improvements, in order to create greater farm-to-market access for Missouri's farmers and ranchers." However, the week before Inauguration, then Governor-Elect Greitens told

reporters he did not favor raising taxes on Missourians to fund our highway infrastructure needs.

Missouri's transportation system is vital to the success and long-term health of agriculture in our state. Over the past several years many ideas have been presented through bills in the General Assembly and initiative petitions through the Secretary of State's office to address our transportation infrastructure needs, but nothing has become law. With a new Governor, and new chairmen for both the House and Senate transportation committees, now

may be the time to find solutions to some of these issues. We look forward to being part of that process.

Beyond biodiesel and transportation funding, there are several key policy pieces coming forward for consideration this legislative session.

HB71, sponsored by Rep. Joe Don McGaugh, specifies that the continuing authority requirement to obtain a construction or operating permit through the Clean Water Commission is satisfied if the applicant is a registered LLC or other business organization.

HB84, sponsored by Rep. Craig Redmon, prohibits the power of eminent domain from being exercised for any electric transmission line project if the project is constructed entirely with private funds and users of the line pay for the transmission line. The prohibition is written to apply in Adair, Knox, Marion, and Schuyler counties. The prohibition will not apply to any rural electric cooperative or municipally-owned utility.

HB175/SB77, sponsored by Rep. Bill Reiboldt and Senator Jay Wasson, prohibits political subdivisions from adopting any ordinance or regulation relating to the labeling, cultivation, or other use of fertilizers or soil conditioners.

HB218/SB79, sponsored by Rep. Craig Redmon and Senator Jay Wasson, respectively, establishes the Show Me Rural Jobs Act encouraging private investment in rural Missouri in exchange for results-driven tax credits.

Addressing off-label herbicide use is also a hot topic this session. In 2016, the Missouri Department of Agriculture saw a sharp increase in complaints related to Dicamba, especially in the bootheel. The Missouri Soybean Association is working closely with legislators, including Rep. Don Rone, on ways to prevent the off-label use of herbicides that can result in damage to neighboring crops.

Meet Casey Wasser, Director of Policy

As I write my first Policy Update, I'm reflecting on the whirlwind the last two months have been with new leadership taking the reins on many levels – especially within our state. The start of a new legislative session also brings a wealth of new ideas and priorities to the Capitol. .

I am excited for the changes happening already, and for those to come, chief among them my new challenge as your director of policy. Prior to joining the team at the Missouri Soybean Association, I served as the Missouri Department of Revenue's legislative director. I've greatly appreciated the warm welcome I've received in this new role. .



The Missouri Soybean Association is known and respected in the Capitol and we have many champions in the House and Senate. It's an honor to be part of the team and I look forward to representing our Association members and working to improve the bottom line for soybean farmers across our state through policy, advocacy and education.

Thank you for the opportunity to represent you, Missouri's soybean farmers. As a life-long Moniteau County resident, I've been fortunate to be surrounded by agriculture. As you can see above, I've also been blessed with a great family. My wife, Brooklyn, and I have two amazing kids. We live in California, Missouri where I was raised, are members of the Annunciation Catholic Church in California, and are blessed to have our extended families nearby.

Again, thank you, and I look forward to getting to know you and to working with you.

--Casey

In addition to the pending legislation and opportunities for new solutions to known challenges, Missouri will have a new director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture. On December 27, 2016, Chris Chinn was announced as Governor Greitens pick to lead Missouri's agriculture department and to represent agriculture in the Governor's Cabinet.

Chinn is a fifth-generation farmer from Clarence, Missouri, where her and her husband raise hogs, cattle, corn, soybeans and hay. Chinn's resume includes extensive participation with Farm Bureau, including serving on the board of Directors of Missouri Farm Bureau. She has also been an outstanding advocate for Missouri



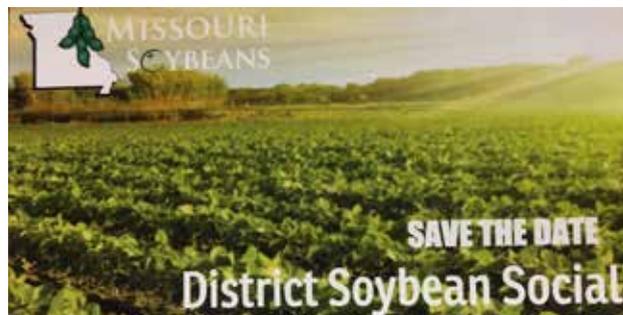
agriculture, and in 2013 was named a winner, one of only four in the country, in the U.S. Farmers & Ranchers Alliance's Faces of Farming & Ranching program.

Have questions about these bills or other pending legislation affecting your bottom line? Contact Casey Wasser at cwasser@mosoy.org or (573) 635-3819 for more information. ■



Upcoming Events & Activities

- January 18** *Extension Soybean Meeting - Sikeston*
- January 23** *“Profit from Pods” Soybean Meeting - Hannibal*
- January 23** *“Profit from Pods” Soybean Meeting - Chesterfield*
- January 31** *Missouri Soybean Association Annual Meeting*
- February 14** *“Profit from Pods” Soybean Meeting - Sikeston*
- February 15** *“Profit from Pods” Soybean Meeting - Springfield*
- March 2-4** *Commodity Classic - San Antonio, TX*
- April 5** *Missouri Soybean Center Symposium - Columbia*



Missouri Soybean Association members, watch your mailbox for cards like these inviting you to district soybean social events in your area. These farm shop dinners are fellowship events and part of the grassroots mission of your Association. There is no cost to participate and all growers and industry partners are welcome to attend.

Want More?

Visit us at mosoy.org to learn more!

“Like” us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

PROFIT FROM PODS

A Soybean Short Course with Chip Flory



Pesticide Collection Events Set for 2017

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources Pesticide Collection Program provides free collection events for farmers and households throughout the state of Missouri to properly dispose of unwanted waste pesticides. The Pesticide Collection Program will be conducting six pesticide collection events in 2017.



Portageville, March 11, 2017, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., University of Missouri – Fisher Delta Research Center, 147 W. State Highway T, Portageville, Mo.

Fairfax, March 25, 2017, 8 a.m.-12 p.m., University of Missouri, Graves-Chapple Research Center, 29955 Outer Road, Fairfax, Mo.

St. Peters, June 3, 2017, 8 a.m.-12p.m., University of Missouri Extension Center – St. Charles County, 260 Brown Rd., St. Peters, Mo.

Sikeston, June 24, 2017, 8 a.m.-12p.m., DeWitt Auction Company, 220 DeWitt Dr., Sikeston, Mo.

Chillicothe, July 15, 2017, 8 a.m.-12p.m., Litton Ag Center, 10780 Liv 235, Chillicothe, Mo.

Lockwood, October 14, 2017, 8 a.m.-12p.m., S & H Farm Supply, 7 State Rd. A, Lockwood, Mo.

For more information, please visit <http://dnr.mo.gov/env/hwp/pesticide/>.

LEGAL NOTICE TO MISSOURI SOYBEAN PRODUCERS

An election will be held to elect five (5) soybean producers to the 13 member Missouri Soybean Merchandising Council, which manages the funds collected through the soybean checkoff program. The terms of office will be for three (3) years and the election will be as follows: five (5) members are to be elected; one (1) each from Districts 4, 5, and 6, and two (2) from District 7. Ballots will be mailed by the Missouri Department of Agriculture March 3, 2017, to each registered producer in the four (4) Districts. Ballots must be returned to the Missouri Department of Agriculture in Jefferson City, by mail, postmarked no later than April 7, 2017.

Any duly registered commercial producer of soybeans is eligible to vote for the Council candidates from his/her District. Producers must be registered to vote. Current registered producers whose address has changed in the last five (5) years should re-register or contact the Missouri Department of Agriculture at 573-751-5633 or P.O. Box 630, Jefferson City, MO 65102 by February 1, 2017, in order to receive a ballot. Non-registered producers must register prior to February 1, 2017, at the USDA County FSA Office or online at www.agriculture.mo.gov/councils/ to receive a ballot for this election.

Any qualified producer may be nominated and have his/her name placed on the ballot, provided he/she presents the Director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture a nominating petition signed by at least 100 soybean producers prior to February 1, 2017. Such petitions are available at the Missouri Department of Agriculture in Jefferson City, Mo. Please direct any questions to Missouri Department of Agriculture, P.O. Box 630, Jefferson City, MO 65102, or (573) 751-5633.

For more information, visit mosoy.org or call (573) 635-3819.



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You might not think about it, but it takes miles of cable from your electric co-op to keep us connected and fully charged. Thankfully, it's all at an affordable charge. Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.



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