



# THE NORTH DAKOTA Soybean GROWER MAGAZINE

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APRIL 2024

**INSIDE:**  
A Key Production  
Tool Returns

PAGE 16





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# Contents

- 6 From the Classroom to the Boardroom
- 9 Leading with Impact
- 9 Ask for Biodiesel
- 10 Northern Corn and Soybean Expo Finds Success at a New Venue
- 12 A Futurist View
- 13 NDSC Congratulates Scholarship Recipients
- 14 NDAWN of a New Day
- 15 Three Minute Thesis Winner Announced
- 16 Cover Story  
A Key Protection Tool Returns
- 18 Building a Policy Platform
- 20 Battling the Seedling Diseases
- 21 Fertile Ground for Livestock
- 22 New NDSU Staff
- 23 The Pigweed Awareness Campaign: Spreading the Word to Reduce the Spread
- 24 North Dakota Soybean Farmers Visit the Panama Canal: A Link in the Supply Chain Under Stress
- 25 United Soybean Board Announces Lucas Lentsch as CEO
- 26 Soy Many Culinary Opportunities
- 29 Soy Policy Priorities
- 30 North Dakota Soybean Growers Association 2024 Annual Meeting
- 31 Northern Corn and Soybean Expo Thank You Trade Show Partners!

# D

## epartments

- 4 ND Legislative Update
- 5 NDSGA President's Letter
- 8 NDSC Leader Letter
- 32 Getting to Know the NDSC County Representative
- 33 Getting to Know the Legislator
- 33 Bean Briefs

# O

## n the cover

Soybean farmers like Stephanie Cook of Davenport will once again have access to products that contain chlorpyrifos, used to control damaging insects. After several years of absence, the Environmental Protection Agency has cleared the way for farmers to use the pesticide on soybeans.

—Photo by Wanbaugh Studios



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# Further Conversation About Townships

In December, we introduced readers to Larry Syverson, the executive director of the North Dakota Township Officers Association (NDTOA). Townships provide an important, grassroots level form of government. In this issue, we conclude our two-part conversation with Larry Syverson.

### How long have you been on your township board and head of the NDTOA?

I got started on my local township board in the early 1980s and then got involved in the Traill County Township Officers Association and served on the association board. After I got elected president of the county association, I started attending the NDTOA annual meetings and was elected as a district director in 1999. Then, I began doing some lobbying as a district director and, in 2009, was elected president of NDTOA and served two 2-year terms. As past president, I continued working as one of the two directors of intergovernmental relations (lobbyists). In 2015, I became the NDTOA executive secretary after Ken Yantes retired.

### NDSGA members may appreciate hearing how the relationships work with other political subdivisions.

Townships have long had a very close relationship with the North Dakota Association of Counties. At the beginning of the 2023 legislative session, a new group formed, representing local subdivisions. Besides the townships and counties, the group includes the League of Cities, school districts and park districts. During the session, the group met weekly, with each entity taking turns hosting; these meetings were dubbed “Fight Club.” That was a bit of a misnomer as the meetings were never all that bloody, but they offered a chance for the representatives of these groups to sit down and talk about their issues, problems or successes. If a particular bill is causing a bit of friction between some of the group members, it is a good place to work out solutions to keep things friendly. The meetings will continue on a quarterly basis between sessions. Fight Club is setting up “Local Governments Week at the Capitol” in February 2025.

### Please address township funding and any recent changes.

The foundation of township funding is the 18-mill property-tax levy. If the township needs to increase the amount invested in their local roads, they can, with a special election, expand the levy by another 18 mills, which will be effective for five years. The effective



Phil Murphy

mill rate is determined by the budget passed by the township voters at the annual meeting held each year in March.

If the township has some kind of emergency, such as a natural disaster, they can, with a special election, vote to levy sufficient mills to supply the needed funds (an unlimited levy). This emergency levy expires in five years or less. State aid distribution is a very small share of the state sales tax collections that is distributed by a formula to replace the personal property tax collections after that tax was eliminated in 1969. Township mileage payments come from 2.7% of the Highway Users Fund, which comes from the motor fuels tax and motor vehicle registrations. It is paid out to the townships based on the number of miles they certify as maintained. Last year, it paid about \$126 per maintained mile. Operation Prairie Dog Fund comes from House Bill 1066 of the 2019 session. If this fund, generated by oil and gas production taxes, is sufficient to fill the “bucket” during the biennium, it will pay about \$9,300 per township in non-oil producing townships. Prairie Dog paid out for the first time earlier this year, and the outlook is good for it filling again in 2025. Finally, the Legacy Earnings Highway Distribution Fund (2023 HB 1012) distribution to non-oil townships is based on maintained miles and is estimated to pay about \$100 per mile per year.

Thank you, Larry, for sharing this information with our readers.



North Dakota Township Officers Association Executive Director Larry Syverson (far left) participated in Township Day at the state capital in Bismarck.



### Room to Grow

It doesn't matter if you're a beginning farmer just starting to work your own land or if you're a veteran producer with decades of agricultural experience, there is always something new to learn. The need to learn and grow isn't exclusive to farming, but with so many advancements and so much information at our disposal, if we stay the same, we'll certainly be left behind.

Technology and ag products are changing rapidly. Ongoing research is providing us with new agronomic information on a regular basis. To stay as productive and proficient as possible, we, as farmers, need to keep learning.

At the recent Northern Corn and Soybean Expo, I was struck by the wide range of people who attended the one-day event. Participants ranged from college students who are training for their future to farmers who have been a part of North Dakota's agriculture industry for many years. They all have varied backgrounds, view the world through different lenses and will chart different courses in the years ahead, but these attendees all came with a desire to learn.

The expo agenda provided some top-notch speakers who are leaders in the agriculture industry. Some of the presenters focused on

policy issues while others provided information about markets and emerging opportunities. Regardless of the topic, all the speakers were there to help us, as farmers, learn more about subjects that are likely to affect us in some way. The trade show and research pavilion also provided a venue for participants to learn about something new in agriculture.

Farming requires us to be in a nearly constant state of learning. We gain more understanding each year about our soil nutrients, about what seed varieties grow the best on our farm, and how policy or government action halfway around the world can have an influence on our farms. If we strive to constantly improve our farms, we can't do it in a vacuum. We have to keep learning and growing.

The Northern Corn and Soybean Expo is just one of many opportunities we have to learn about the factors that affect us. There are other events, such as the Commodity Classic, company webinars, open houses or a multitude of other activities, that we can tap into to help us learn how to better grow or market our crops and livestock.

There's a reason that farm productivity in North Dakota is on an upward trajectory and has been for decades. We're constantly learning how to better manage our soil, pick better



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seed varieties, and better control pests and weeds that try to steal yield. We're going to keep advancing the industry as long as we keep learning. I encourage you to take advantage of the learning opportunities that are presented to you. Who knows where the future will take you as a result?



### Membership Application

To join the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association and the American Soybean Association, complete and return this application with payment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Farm/Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Occupation (Please check all that apply)

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Do you raise:   ☐ Cattle    ☐ Hogs    ☐ Poultry    ☐ Dairy

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Soybean Acres: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Acres Farmed: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about NDSGA? (Please circle one)

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Name on Card (Please print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail application with payment to: North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, 4852 Rocking Horse Circle South, Fargo, ND 58104



A large photograph of Brian Jodock, an older man with glasses, wearing a grey zip-up jacket over a dark shirt. He is smiling and leaning against a red wooden wall. In the background, a blue pickup truck is parked on a dirt road, and a house is visible.

# From the Classroom to the Boardroom

**B**rian Jodock and his son work together on their farms in the Northwood, North Dakota, area. Before he started farming full time, Jodock was at home in the classroom.

"I was a music teacher for a while," Jodock says. "I taught at the elementary and high school level, but that was a long time ago."

Jodock, who has a music education degree from North Dakota State University, returned to the family farm when his father passed away. These days, he and his son raise soybeans, corn, wheat and edible beans, including pinto and navy beans.

Jodock served on the board of directors for the local Northwood Equity Elevator, including

serving as the cooperative's president. Several years ago, Jodock took another step. In 2019, he was elected to be a director on the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC).

"That was the first time I had been on a statewide board," Jodock explains. "I've been on the local co-op elevator board for a long time, close to 20 years, but

my time on the Soybean Council was the first time I served on a commodity board."

When his term on the NDSC was up, Jodock lost his re-election bid. He wasn't out of service long.

"I was combining last fall when I got a phone call asking me about serving on the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA) board," Jodock recalls.

Jodock agreed to serve and now represents NDSGA District 6, which includes Grand Forks, Walsh, Ramsey, Towner, Cavalier and Pembina Counties.

## Full View

Having served on the NDSC before joining the NDSGA gives Jodock a perspective about how both organizations operate and can work together.

"The Growers Association is not involved in the checkoff, but I think some of the things that the boards can do is very important to the future of soybeans, whether through research or promotion," Jodock says.

North Dakota's soybean industry is changing rapidly as in-state soy processing capacity comes online. The dynamic is shifting in the state, which presents opportunities and challenges.

"We're in a time where change is happening fast. It's been a long time coming for these soybean plants; now, they're here," Jodock



The Jodock family has farmed in the Northwood area for generations.



Before serving on the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, Jodock was a board member for the NDSC.



states. “It remains to be seen how we find uses for all the soybean meal that these plants produce, but I can only assume that this processing is going to be a good thing for our markets rather than having to haul soybeans all the way to the West Coast.”

As Jodock becomes more immersed in policy activities, he recognizes the importance of farmers being involved with promoting and advocating for their industry.

“There’s strength in numbers, and any board or organization needs advice from its members. They’re the ones who have ideas of which direction things should go,” Jodock asserts. “We can’t please everyone, but we need input on which actions to take.”

### Thoughtful Consideration

The NDSGA pays attention to more than just agriculture-centric actions. Legislative and govern-

mental activities which are not specific to farming can still have far-reaching consequences for farmers and rural communities.

“The Growers Association is very involved in policy and lobbying with lawmakers. Recently, we were asked about our position on an upcoming referral that is probably going to be on the ballot in North Dakota and putting our strength with other groups,” Jodock explains. “The referral is to repeal property tax in North Dakota. While a lot of people are going to think that’s a good idea right off the bat, most things have unintended consequences, and this action could certainly have those.”

Learning about issues and advocating for farm-friendly policies comes with the territory. Jodock describes how one of the enjoyable parts about serving on the NDSGA board is making connections with fellow farmers



**Brian Jodock (right) now farms with his son Karl.**

and knowing that the work done is for the betterment of North Dakota’s soybean industry.

“One of the pluses of being on a board like this is getting to know other farmers and industry people, and seeing how others feel about issues while trying to

come to some kind of a consensus and being a positive force for soybeans,” Jodock says.

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by Ten Little  
Chickens Photography

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# Consider Biodiesel This Spring

**A**s the planting season approaches, I encourage you to support your own industry by using biodiesel on your farm this spring. Embracing biodiesel to power our equipment presents an excellent opportunity to support ourselves as well as the efforts of the soybean farmer-leaders and organizations that helped to develop the biomass-based diesel industry that exists today. There are many reasons to consider utilizing B10 (10% biodiesel, 90% petroleum diesel), or B20 (20% biodiesel, 80% petroleum diesel) in your agricultural operation this year.

Biodiesel stands out as a superior, high-performance fuel that is suitable for our farm equipment and diesel vehicles. Even at lower blends such as B2 and B5, biodiesel provides outstanding lubricity, which minimizes engine wear and tear. Notably, biodiesel also boasts a natural high cetane content and low sulfur levels. Beyond these advantages, biodiesel serves as a renewable, eco-friendly fuel, promoting a cleaner-burning process that benefits both the user and the environment.

### Quick Facts About B20

- B20 has undergone more field testing than any other biodiesel blend.
- B20's solvency acts like a premium diesel with enhanced lubricity and a detergency effect to keep the injectors and fuel system clean.
- B20 contains higher cetane for quicker starts and less smoke.
- B20 effectively reduces tailpipe emissions for pre-2007 equipment.
- No vehicle modifications are required to use biodiesel blends up to B20.
- Power and performance remain virtually unchanged when using B20 as your fuel.

Getting started with biodiesel is simple. Ask your fuel supplier for a biodiesel blend of B10 or B20.

If you have never used biodiesel before and have questions about it, reach out to the North Dakota Soybean Council's (NDSC) partner, MEG Corp, to have a sample of your

fuel tested. MEG Corp operates the Regional Diesel Helpline to answer questions about diesel, biodiesel, fuel handling, storage and use. They also help troubleshoot fuel-related problems. Contact the Helpline as needed at no cost to you. See the highlighted box below for more information.

It's always advantageous for diesel and biodiesel users to follow the best practices regarding diesel storage, use and handling. It is always good practice to check your fuel storage tank once a year to make sure that you don't have water or sediment that can cause filter plugging. It is an especially good idea to test your fuel to make sure that you do not have any pre-existing issues in your tank before introducing a new fuel like B10 or B20.

Water is the most common cause of fuel related issues. Water can enter the tank when the fill cap is missing or loose. This issue also occurs when there is excess head space in the tank and temperatures fluctuate. On warm, muggy days, water in the air filling that head space condenses at night as the temperature falls, and water continues to accumulate as this process is repeated day after day. Keeping tanks as full as possible will help prevent this problem.

Water is heavier than diesel, so the water falls to the bottom of the tank. In cold weather, water can cause icing in filters and in the tank bottom. Free water in a tank can lead to corrosion and bacterial growth. Prior to ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD), microbial problems were rare because sulfur was a natural deterrent to microbial growth. Bacteria grow when water is present. Filter plugging results when bacteria or fungus catches on the filter and grows, re-



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stricting filter flow. Microbial contamination can also cause tank corrosion.

Sediment from dust, dirt and rust can also accumulate at the bottom of your fuel tank. These contaminants may result in a shorter fuel filter life. If you are changing filters more frequently, cut open the filter, and examine the filter pleats for debris. If debris is found, tank cleaning is recommended.

*If you have questions, contact the Regional Diesel Helpline at (800) 929-3437 or email [info@megcorpnmn.com](mailto:info@megcorpnmn.com). Follow the Regional Diesel Helpline's Facebook page, [facebook.com/RegionalDieselHelpline](https://facebook.com/RegionalDieselHelpline), for seasonal reminders, answers to diesel questions and webinar notifications.*



# Leading with Impact

**N**orth Dakota soybean farmer-leaders of the North Dakota Soybean Council and the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, along with staff, attended the 2024 American Soybean Association's Soybean Leadership Academy, January 10-12. This educational event provides ag industry leaders with training to effectively promote the soy industry; communicate key agricultural messages; and work to expand U.S. soybean market opportunities, domestically and internationally, while networking with growers from across the country.

—Story and photo by staff



From left to right: Stephanie Cook, Davenport; Josh Gackle, Kulm; Ted Brandt, Enderlin; Justin Sherlock, Dazey; Shireen Alemadi; Nancy Johnson; Dallas Loff, Wahpeton; Chris McDonald, Leonard; and Miki Miheguli.



**Good for Your Equipment,  
Better for the Environment and  
Best for Your Bottom Line**

**W**ith the cold weather finally giving way to warmer temperatures and fieldwork beginning, it's a great time to start utilizing a biodiesel blend. Blends such as B20 are a quality, high-performance fuel that meets strict qual-

ity standards. Biodiesel blends up to B20 can be used in your diesel equipment with no modifications, and farmers can easily go back and forth from using biodiesel blends to using straight No. 2 without concern. Although biodiesel availability and use are on the rise in North Dakota, farmers need to

request biodiesel from suppliers. Here are some reasons why farmers want to ask for biodiesel.

## Biodiesel is Good for Your Equipment

Just like No. 2 diesel, biodiesel meets the strict standards specified by the ASTM (international standards organization). Biodiesel blends, up to B20, have the same power and performance as petroleum diesel. Biodiesel enhances ultra-low sulfur diesel by providing excellent lubricity, preventing wear and prolonging engine life. Biodiesel also has fantastic solvency, which keeps the fuel system and injectors clean.

## Biodiesel is Better for the Environment

Biodiesel reduces tailpipe emissions for older equipment. Because biodiesel reduces lifecycle greenhouse gases by more 50% compared to petroleum diesel, biodiesel is designated as an Advanced Biofuel by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## Biodiesel is Best for Your Bottom Line

Biodiesel production uses soybeans as a primary feedstock; half of all the biodiesel produced in the U.S. comes from soybean oil. As U.S. biodiesel production increases, so does the demand for soybeans. A study shows that the biodiesel industry adds up to 13% to the value for a bushel of soybeans: a \$1.00 or more!

If farmers have any questions about biodiesel or need help troubleshooting a fuel-related problem, contact the Regional Diesel Helpline: 800-929-3437.

For locations on where to purchase or order biodiesel in North Dakota, scan the QR code.

For more information on biodiesel, visit the Clean Fuels Alliance America at [cleanfuels.org](http://cleanfuels.org).



—Story by staff; photo by Wanbaugh Studios





# Northern Corn and Soybean Expo Finds Success at a New Venue

**T**he Butler Machinery Arena on the Red River Valley Fairgrounds proved to be a worthy venue for the 2024 Northern Corn and Soybean Expo. The

event attracted more than 600 attendees from around the region.

A host of top-notch speakers, dozens of vendors, and the opportunity for farmers to connect with industry experts and their

fellow farmers proved to be a winning combination. The annual event was presented by the North Dakota Soybean Council, the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, the North

Dakota Corn Growers Association and the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council.

The Northern Corn and Soybean Expo featured marketing and policy experts from the corn



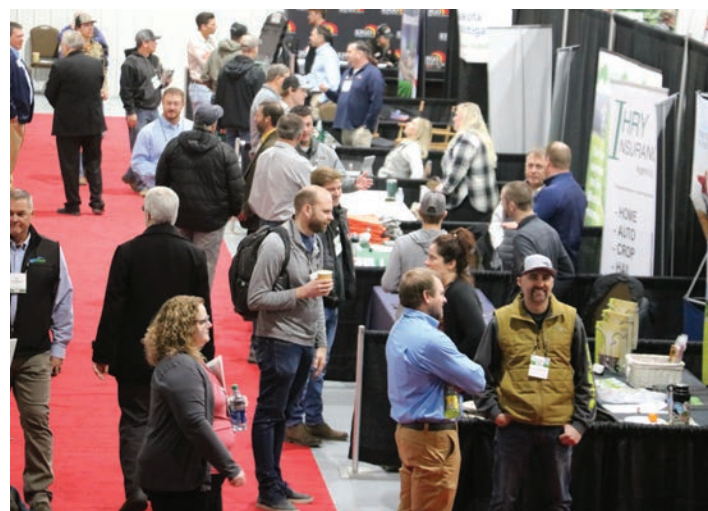
NDSC Director Jim Thompson chatted with vendors on the trade show floor.



Futurist Peter Zeihan delivered the day's keynote address.



Radio host Mick Kjar served as one of the Expo's emcees.



Expo participants enjoyed easy access to vendors on the tradeshow floor.





Attendance was strong for the Expo's inaugural event at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds.



NDSC Director Dallas Loff engaged in a conversation with a Expo vendor.



NDSC Vice Chairman Rob Rose (foreground) welcomed attendees to the Northern Corn and Soybean Expo.



Mark Ewens of Home on the Prairie Weather provided insights into possible weather conditions for the spring.

and soybean industries as well as a long-range weather outlook. Nationally recognized author and speaker Peter Zeihan closed the event in front of a packed house.

Video presentations of the 2024 Northern



Corn and Soybean Expo can be viewed by scanning the QR code.

The 2025 Northern Corn and Soybean Expo is scheduled for February 4, 2025, at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo.

—Story and photos by Daniel Lemke



Expo visitors were greeted by some cheerful mascots.



Brandi Buzzard of Buzzard's Beat talked with attendees about advocating for agriculture.



Emcee Katie Pinke (left) moderated a trade panel with Cary Sifferath (center) of the U.S. Grains Council and Rosalind Leek from the U.S. Soybean Export Council.



American Soybean Association Executive Director of Government Affairs Christy Seyfert addressed policy issues.



NDSC Research Programs Coordinator Miki Miheguli talked with visitors to the Research Pavilion.



# A Futurist View



**N**orthern Corn and Soybean Expo keynote speaker Peter Zeihan set the tone for his presentation early.

“No one brings me in to feel comfortable,” Zeihan said to open his talk.

The nationally known speaker, futurist, author and business adviser walked attendees through a thought-provoking collection of global demographic information, economic analysis and geopolitical factors that he expects will have a major influence on the world in the next decades. Zeihan raised the specter of a global famine which he predicts will keep the world from reaching the projected population levels.

“We’re never going to reach 9 billion people,” Zeihan asserted. “If we’re lucky, we’ll hit 2050 with 8 billion.”

Zeihan anticipates a radical transformation of the global economic system, in large part, because many industrialized

countries are running out of workers. Among the industrialized nations, including Korea, Germany and China, populations and workforces are shrinking. With fewer workers, productivity will dwindle. As the bulk of workers who helped build the economy and society head to retirement, the economies of many nations will change.

“In the next decade, we’ll be heading for an economic model not based on consumption or production or investment,” Zeihan explained. “We have no idea what that model will look like because it’s never happened before in human history. We’re making it up as we go along.”

Zeihan contended that Korea and Germany face a population collapse. The U.S. is facing some workforce challenges, but not to the same extent as other nations and with a longer timeline to address the situation.

Zeihan painted a bleak picture for China’s economic future. He

described how China is one of the five fastest aging populations in human history. Along with older people, labor costs that have increased 15-fold, reduced productivity and major economic issues, Zeihan cast doubt on China’s long-term role as an economic superpower.

“Best case scenario, China ceases to exist as an integrated, industrialized nation-state within 10 years,” Zeihan stated.

Zeihan had similar concerns about Russia. With fewer workers, geopolitical challenges within the region and its invasion of Ukraine, Zeihan questions Russia’s long-term future. The outcome of the conflict with Ukraine will have global ramifications, but Russia also has domestic challenges. Over the decades, Russia has absorbed territory around it where the populations are not ethnic Russians.

“One of the many, many reasons that the Russians launched the war when they did was

because they know they’re going to lose control of their own country,” Zeihan said. “Whether it’s for financial reasons, sanctions reasons, war reasons, lack of technology reasons or maintenance breakdown reasons, or insurgency, this place is going away.”

If China and Russia no longer exist as they do today, that scenario could have a serious influence on global food production. Both countries are major exporters of fertilizer products, including nitrogen, potassium and potash. Because many of the world’s food production regions rely heavily on industrial fertilizer inputs, a lack of access to those products could lead to famine in many parts of the world.

Unlike much of the U.S., Zeihan contends that, in many parts of the world, including South America and Africa, food production only happens with the help of imported industrial inputs such as fertilizer, fuel, pesticides and equipment. Because the United States has its own domestic sources for most products and equipment, he expects that the U.S. will be able to weather global collapses better than most other countries, and the situation will set up some opportunities for farmers.

“I’m bullish on soy because it can be repurposed for human consumption. I’m more bullish on wheat because we’re going to have a catastrophic reduction in the world’s ability to grow it as those inputs go away and most wheat production on a global scale just stops,” Zeihan said.

Farmers are encouraged to mark their calendars for next year’s 8th Annual Northern Corn and Soybean Expo, February 4, 2025, at the Red River Valley Fairgrounds in West Fargo.

—Story and photo  
by Daniel Lemke





**A**nually, the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) sponsors scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students at North Dakota State University (NDSU).

The NDSC's Undergraduate Scholarship is awarded to sophomores or juniors in crop and

weed sciences, soil science, food science, animal science, agribusiness or agricultural economics who have a demonstrated tie to soybeans, are U.S. citizens and have a minimum 3.0 GPA.

The NDSC's Graduate Student Scholarships are awarded to graduate students who are involved with research that benefits



**Alivia Erickson**

the soybean industry.

This year, Alivia Erickson, Cooperstown, North Dakota; and Jacob Rexin, Sykeston, North Dakota, were awarded the ND-

SC's Undergraduate Scholarships. Forrest Hanson, Webster, North Dakota, was awarded the NDSC's Graduate Student Scholarship.

—Story and photos by staff



**Forrest Hanson, right, with his NDSU adviser, Carrie Miranda, Ph.D., left, assistant professor and soybean breeder.**



**Jacob Rexin**

## Do You Want to **GET IT RIGHT?**

### **2024 Getting it Right Soybean Production Conference Videos Now Available**

Did you miss North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension's Getting it Right in Soybean Production webinar on December 19? That's not a problem! Recordings of the webinar sessions are now available to view.

Scan the QR code to watch and to learn more about how to keep your operation running smoothly during the upcoming growing season.



**NDSU**

EXTENSION

# NDAWN of a New Day



**F**ew people pay closer attention to the weather than farmers and for good reason. Weather conditions often dictate what work needs to be done on a particular day, plus it plays a starring role in determining crop productivity each year.

For nearly 35 years, the North Dakota Agricultural Weather Network (NDAWN) has provided farmers and others across the state with important weather information.

Director Daryl Ritchison says that NDAWN started in 1989 with the original intention of placing weather stations at each of the North Dakota State University Regional Extension Centers. In the early 1990s, a potato grower in northeastern North Dakota thought the weather data would be helpful to manage blight, so he helped get more stations installed. In 1993, the state saw heavy rains and very wet conditions. Ritchison states that potato growers credited the NDAWN information with

helping them save their crop that year. The situation also encouraged other commodity groups to support expanding the network of reporting stations.

“NDAWN started to expand pretty rapidly thereafter,” Ritchison asserts. “Now, we are up to 193 stations in Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota, plus 13 rain-gauge-only sites. We’re currently up over 200 sites.”

Ritchison describes how NDAWN is much more than data-gathering weather stations.

“NDAWN is a weather risk-management tool,” Ritchison explains. “We use weather to help forecast crop growth, for crop guidance, disease guidance, to help determine when insects are going to emerge, a whole number of things. Our uses also go far beyond agriculture.”

In addition to collecting information about basic conditions such as temperature, wind speed and rainfall, more detailed data are also gathered. Ritchison says that about half of the current stations have soil moisture probes

in the ground, which gives an indication of what’s available for crops to utilize, plus it can be helpful to understand potential flood risks and impacts. Nearly half of the NDAWN stations also have deep soil-temperature probes that go more than seven feet into the soil. Temperature sensors also

probe depths of two, four, eight, 20 and 40 inches. Ritchison states that the information is used in conjunction with other data to help transportation officials determine when the spring weight restrictions should be put in place to prevent road damage.

Measuring moisture is a key aspect of the NDAWN stations. Ritchison explains that there are snow-depth sensors at many of the sites to gauge snowpack. An increasing number of locations feature gauges that measure how much water is in the snow.

“We have a lot of stations now that have all-season rain gauges. What these gauges do is measure the liquid in the snow. Knowing the snowfall is great, but it’s really the liquid that’s in the snow that is the most relevant thing, so we know what’s going to be available in the spring, what might potentially go into the soil and what may potentially cause flooding in the spring. That’s really the one climate parameter that we were lacking,” Ritchison states.

Having a robust network of stations across North Dakota offers growers access to localized weather information. Because



**NDAWN Director Daryl Ritchison says the weather network is continuing to expand.**



weather conditions can vary widely in a short distance, having stations dispersed across the state delivers information that farmers can use to make decisions.

"You can never have enough rain gauges because it varies so much from spot to spot," Ritchison contends. "That local information is very important for some government and crop insurance programs."

There are also geographic differences. Being located on a hilltop versus a valley can make a significant difference to crops.

"Sometimes, a 300- or 400-foot elevation change could mean

a difference of 75 to 100 growing degree units, which could be the difference between corn reaching black layer or not," Ritchison asserts. "Your area may have a little bit of a microclimate, so maybe you should be planting an earlier maturing corn hybrid or earlier maturing soybean variety, for example. After a couple of years, a lot of farmers will notice these differences, and our weather data can bear that out."

In addition to accessing current weather and climate information, NDAWN has historical information from many of the sites that dates back to when they were

first installed. Ritchison says that the temperature information and rainfall records can be downloaded from the NDAWN website.

### Expanding Reach

In the coming months, NDAWN will be expanding its connections to the east. In 2023, the Minnesota state legislature allocated \$3 million to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to build weather stations. Ritchison describes how those weather stations will use NDAWN's servers and computer programming.

"Working with us will be a huge cost savings to the taxpayers of Minnesota, plus it allows

Minnesota to quickly build out a lot of weather stations," Ritchison states. "Right now, the plans are to build maybe 40 to 50 new stations with the allocated funding."

Ritchison is hopeful that the network could expand to over 100 stations in Minnesota's agriculture areas in the near future.

Information from NDAWN's sites can be found at [ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu](http://ndawn.ndsu.nodak.edu), or by scanning the QR code.



—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
graphic courtesy of NDAWN,  
photo by staff

## Three Minute Thesis Winner Announced

**M**arcel Roy Domalanta, a doctoral student in coatings and polymeric materials, was announced as the champion of the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Graduate School's Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition during the final round on Thursday, February 15, 2024.

Domalanta's presentation titled "Soy Much Better: Making Non-Stick Materials Stick", a research project which was funded by the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC), focused on his current research, which seeks to find a simple, cost-effective and environment-friendly solution to improve the adhesion and corrosion resistance of non-stick fluoropolymer coatings that are commonly utilized in non-stick cookware by using soybeans. Domalanta is advised by Eugene Caldon, Ph.D., an NDSU assistant professor of coatings and polymeric materials.

Winning the 3MT® competition not only recognizes academic achievement, but also emphasizes the importance of effective science communication. It signifies the ability to engage and to educate a broader audience about the new uses of soybeans.

Domalanta's victory contributes to sustainable solutions for the soybean industry, aligning with the NDSC's mission to innovate and to support soybean growers by creating new opportunities and ensuring the farmers' continued success and contribution to the green

building sector.

To conclude the competition, Domalanta was presented with a \$1,000 check. He is invited to represent NDSU at the Western Association of Graduate Schools' regional competition in March.

"It feels nice. It feels exciting being a part of this event and also, at the same time, having the opportunity to talk about my research in the most general way to capture different people. I liked not just talking about the technical side, the science behind it, but also the fun part of it," Domalanta said.

During the Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) competition, students are given three minutes to present their research clearly and concisely. A total of 38 students presented their research projects in the competition's preliminary round, where six students were named finalists. Each finalist received \$250. NDSU held its first Three Minute Thesis competition in 2015.

Australia's University of Queensland developed the first Three Minute Thesis competition in 2008, and the concept has spread to institutions around the world.

—Story and photo courtesy of NDSU



**Marcel Roy Domalanta was presented with a \$1,000 check and is invited to represent NDSU at the Western Association of Graduate Schools' regional competition.**

# A Key Protection Tool **RETURNS**

**A**fter several years of forced absence, the pesticide chlorpyrifos is, once again, available for North Dakota farmers to help control yield-robbing insects, including soybean aphids.

In December, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its decision to restore the use of chlorpyrifos on 11 crops, including soybeans. The EPA's decision aligns with a November 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling which determined that the EPA had neglected to consider its own scientists' findings in ending what were found to be safe chlorpyrifos uses. The court vacated the EPA rule, restoring all agricultural uses of the pesticide.

The EPA decision reversed a 2021 effective ban on chlorpyrifos use for food and feed crops.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) and the North Dakota Soybean Grow-

ers Association were among 20 agricultural groups that joined a 2022 lawsuit brought against the EPA. The groups urged the court to reinstate chlorpyrifos tolerances that the EPA had deemed safe. The suit argued that the EPA arbitrarily revoked those safe tolerances for chlorpyrifos, which effectively ended agricultural uses of the important pesticide. The groups contended that the EPA's decision to revoke all tolerances had inflicted enormous costs on thousands of farmers across the country and had undermined the growers' ability to protect their crops from insect pests.

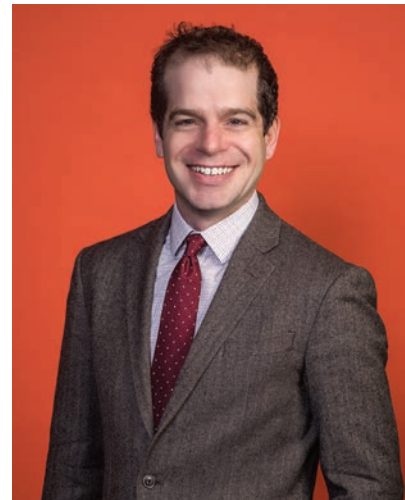
At the heart of the lawsuit was the EPA's arbitrary and capricious rule revoking all chlorpyrifos tolerances despite finding, on multiple occasions, that at least 11 high-benefit crop uses, including soybeans, could be maintained safely. To attempt to reverse the unscientific, unlawful rule, the suit argued that the EPA

attempted to contort its statutory obligations under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act.

"You can't just ignore your own science and your own scientists when they say that something is safe and they make a safety finding; you have to consider that, and EPA chose not to," explains Kyle Kunkler, ASA director of government affairs. "So, the Eighth Circuit has directed the agency to go back, account for all of the science and all of the data as they're required to by the law and come up with a real safety finding. That's where we find ourselves right now."

Farm groups, including the ASA, had voiced concerns about blanket bans on chlorpyrifos, highlighting the negative effect on crops and farmers' livelihoods when agencies disregard their own science and processes.

While the EPA allows all revoked uses of chlorpyrifos to resume, the agency plans to



**Kyle Kunkler is American Soybean Association director of government affairs.**

propose a new rule to revoke pesticide residue tolerances for all uses except the 11 specified by the court. These 11 uses, including crops such as alfalfa, soybeans, citrus and peaches, rely on chlorpyrifos to control various insects.

Kunkler said that the federal registration for chlorpyrifos never went away. Farmers couldn't use the product because the tolerances had been revoked.

"If you used it and there were detectable residues on any crop, that crop could be found to be adulterated and destroyed," Kunkler stated. "Now that the tolerances have been restored by the court, if you have a product that's under a legal registration, you can use it as long as your state has approved it."

Chlorpyrifos is approved for use on soybeans in North Dakota.

Kunkler expects that a regulatory proposal from the EPA will ratchet down the approved uses for chlorpyrifos to the 11 crops where favorable safety findings have already been made.

"We're cautiously optimistic that this product will remain available for soybean farmers to use in the long term," Kunkler contends.

*—Story and photo by Daniel Lemke, photo courtesy of ASA*



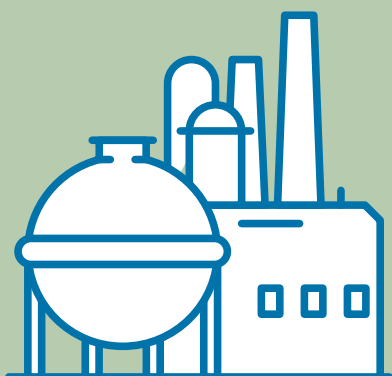
**Farmers can once again use products with chlorpyrifos as an ingredient on soybeans to control insects, including soybean aphids.**



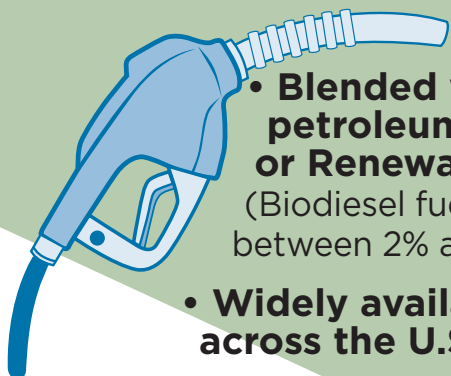
# Biodiesel and Renewable Diesel are NOT the Same

## BIODIESEL

Made from:



**Transesterification**



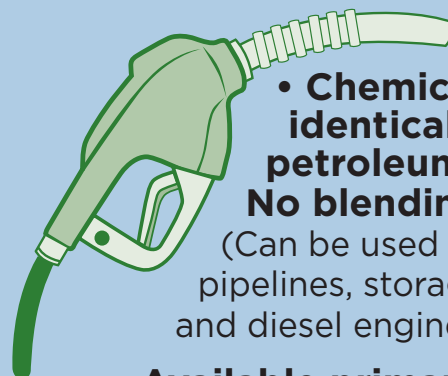
- **Blended with petroleum diesel or Renewable Diesel**  
(Biodiesel fuel makes up between 2% and 20%)
- **Widely available across the U.S.**

## RENEWABLE DIESEL

Made from:



**Hydrotreatment and Isomerization**



- **Chemically identical to petroleum diesel. No blending required**  
(Can be used in existing pipelines, storage tanks and diesel engines)
- **Available primarily on the west coast in markets with low carbon incentives**



[ndsoybean.org](http://ndsoybean.org)



**NDSGA representatives participated in the American Soybean Association delegate meeting, setting the organization's policy priorities for the coming year.**

that the ASA policy book isn't going to stay on the shelf. ASA staff and farmer-leaders used the information as the basis for March visits to lawmakers on Capitol Hill. ASA staff and leaders will rely on those policy priorities when meeting with legislators and staff in the coming year.

"We're using it right away and distributing it to the Hill, to committees and to staff to make sure that they know what ASA has approved for the year," Gackle states. "We'll be there in person as farmers because that's the most effective tool when we're there face-to-face and sharing the information we have and the policies that are important to the group."

The ASA policy book is available at [soygrowers.com](http://soygrowers.com).

*—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff*

**G**rassroots policy development was on full display in Houston, Texas, the site of the 2024 Commodity Classic. The event is the national convention for several agriculture groups, including the American Soybean Association (ASA).

Delegates from the state soybean associations, including the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association (NDSGA), met in state or group caucuses to work through resolutions that would be voted on by the ASA delegates.

"We rely on our state partners, our state affiliates, our delegates from across the soybean growing parts of the country to develop our policies that we're going to pursue and promote in Washington, DC," says Kulm, North Dakota, farmer and ASA President

Josh Gackle.

Bringing resolutions to the Commodity Classic is a months-long process that involves state groups meeting with the ASA advocacy team in order to refine resolutions that will be voted on by the full body. North Dakota representatives caucused with farmer-leaders from South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin and New York.

"The end result is a vote from the full voting delegates to develop the policy book for 2024," Gackle states, "and that's what our team in DC will be using to advocate for soybean growers on the policies and the priorities that are important."

Not surprisingly, passage of a new 5-year farm bill remains a priority issue for the nation's soybean farmers. Within the farm

bill's umbrella, income support programs and crop insurance are key programs that soy growers want to maintain and to improve. Maintaining access to crop protection products, protecting the soybean checkoff and growing the biofuels industry are among the ASA's foundational issues.

Gackle asserts that the ASA is also committed to important trade policies and programs.

"We're always working really hard in the trade space on foreign market development and expanding opportunities for soybean growers," Gackle explains.

"We need to have dependable, long-term relationships with international buyers to make sure that we have a place where our product can go. So, we're looking at additional funding for those types of programs."

The ASA works with the U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) and the World Initiative for Soy in Human Health (WISHH) committee, approving a package of funding and programs to partner with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to build those foreign markets.

Gackle contends that the ASA is committed to making sure soy-based feedstocks are going to qualify for government programs for low-carbon fuels such as sustainable aviation fuel.

Once approved, Gackle says



**North Dakota soybean growers were well represented by their fellow farmer leaders at the ASA session during Commodity Classic.**



**Klum farmer Josh Gackle addressed the ASA Awards Reception during Commodity Classic in Houston. Gackle is the current ASA president, the second ever from North Dakota.**






[unitedsoybean.org](http://unitedsoybean.org)

# RESEARCHING A BETTER BEAN

*Whether you're dealing with drought, flood, heat or other climate-related stress, the soy checkoff is working behind the scenes to diversify U.S. soybean genetics and increase stress tolerance. We're looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And it's helping make a valuable impact for soybean farmers like you.*

*See more ways the soy checkoff is maximizing profit opportunities for soybean farmers at [unitedsoybean.org](http://unitedsoybean.org)*

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# Battling the Seedling Diseases



**R**egardless of the sport, many coaches know how hard it is for their team to overcome a slow start. The same concept holds true for soybeans. Getting plants off to a fast start sets the foundation for strong yield potential.

A fast start may be hampered by seedling diseases that can limit seed growth or kill tender, young plants. North Dakota State University (NDSU) Soybean Pathology Specialist Wade Webster, Ph.D., says that there are several primary pathogens in North Dakota which can cause seedling diseases and plant death.

“The majority of the pathogens across the state are what we call ‘oomycetes,’” Webster contends. “They’re not typical fungi. What we see primarily are phytophthora and pythium species. Phytophthora is a bit interesting because it is only able to infect soybeans, whereas the pythium can affect a wide range of different plants.”

## Several Culprits

Webster explains how phytophthora is, typically, a disease that thrives in warmer and wet soils while pythium can occur in a wide range of temperatures and soil conditions. Webster states that he’s not sure how North Dakota’s winter snowpack will

affect seedling diseases this year, but high-water tables for the majority of the state could support soybean pathogens.

Among the suite of seedling diseases that farmers battle, Webster asserts that other fungi, such as rhizoctonia and fusarium, can also be troublesome. Rhizoctonium species prefer wet conditions while fusarium appear in drier conditions and can be particularly harmful to plants which are already stressed due to soil compaction or being planted in no-till fields.

Webster says that phytophthora and pythium are often called water molds because they thrive in flooded conditions.

“If we have low spots within a field where we know we have water retention, those are going to be areas where you can gently dig up the seedlings. If you see poor root development, that’s going to be an indicator of a seedling disease,” Webster explains.

Rotting or wilting of the taproot and lateral roots is an indicator of fusarium while rhizoctonia can be identified by an exposed rusty colored canker on that stem, typically right on the soil line.

## Seed Treatments

The farmer’s best line of

defense against soybean seedling diseases is often seed treatments.

“We have a wide availability of different active ingredients for controlling these seedling diseases,” Webster asserts, “but understanding which of these active ingredients are effective against which pathogens is really important.”

Webster states that, in many cases, the cost of treating soybean seed is worth the investment. However, there are a wide range of factors that can determine if the treatments will pay off.

“There are a lot of different environmental conditions that are going to contribute to seedling disease issues,” Webster says. “If farmers are planting into a reduced tillage situation, seed treatments

are most likely going to pay for themselves. If farmers are planting at a reduced or lower seeding rate, this could also increase the return on investment, if they have severe compaction issues.”

During wet springs or in years when farmers can plant early, Webster recommends that growers use seed treatments to protect the crop and to get the seeds off to a head start.

In addition to fighting seedling diseases, Webster suggests that farmers who are dealing with high infestations of soybean cyst nematode (SCN) should consider seed treatments.

“If we do put a seed treatment on for SCN, then we could potentially be able to slow down SCN population increase enough where it would be economically feasible to use seed treatments,” Webster asserts.

More information about managing soybean diseases is provided in the “2024 North Dakota Field Crop Plant Disease Management Guide” that is available from NDSU Extension.

To access the guide, scan the QR code.



—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos by staff



Wade Webster, Ph.D.



# Fertile Ground for Livestock

**H**ogs have been a part of Dale Stevermer's life since he was a kid. The Easton, Minnesota, farmer and director on the National Pork Board grew up around pigs; pork production has been in his family for more than a century.

"The farm site I'm on was started by my grandfather in 1917, and his farming operation had been started raising pure-bred Chester Whites," Stevermer recalls. "There have always been pigs on this site, so they're something I grew up with, and I definitely saw the business value of raising pigs."

Stevermer, owner of Trails End Farm, a feeder-to-finish and diversified crop operation, was the keynote speaker at the Fifth Annual North Dakota Livestock Alliance Summit in Fargo. Stevermer sees the opportunity for increased livestock production in the state for several reasons.

"Pork production certainly is an opportunity to, perhaps, bring in a younger member of the family to join the operation or to be able to grow a farm," Stevermer says. "Plus, you can use the homegrown feedstocks to feed your own animals or help support the basis of corn and soybeans in the area by buying those products locally."

Stevermer is committed to sustainability on his 450-acre farm. In addition to raising about 5,000 hogs each year, he practices reduced tillage and plants cover crops on most of his farmed acres. Applying manure from the hog operation to his corn and soybean ground is a key component of that sustainability.

"There's been advances in liquid manure application equipment, so there are ways to inject the manure into the ground in a low disturbance manner. I use



a large wavy coultter, and it cuts about a two-inch slot in the soil for the manure to go in, and there, it's instantly covered up by dirt," Stevermer explains. "It really doesn't disturb much, and yet, the manure is in the ground feeding the microbes in the soil, plus it reduces some of the environmental gases we worry about. Then, it's there, and the crops will utilize it quite quickly. I've seen the improvements of yield and soil quality on my own farm."

Stevermer describes how he has seen substantial yield increases for his corn and soybeans that are attributable to the manure. The potential for utilizing hog manure instead of paying for commercial fertilizer is an attractive option for many farmers.

## Worth a Look

Stevermer sees opportunities for increased livestock production in North Dakota. The growth with corn and soybean production, plus new soybean processing capacity, will make soybean meal, a primary ingre-

dient for many livestock rations, more widely available. The state's wide-open spaces are also favorable from a biosecurity perspective because potential disease exposure should be reduced. Stevermer says that farmers who are considering entering pork production could set up their operations to tap into some new or expanding markets, such as antibiotic-free pork.

"I can see the space, the need for natural nutrients to be put

into the soil as being some real strong pluses for North Dakota," Stevermer contends. "The feedstuffs are there; they don't have quite the infrastructure yet for production of feed, but that comes along with the with the need for feed. Then, it's just a matter of where is the market for the animals going to be."

The North Dakota Department of Agriculture has established the Agriculture Diversification and Development (ADD) Fund to support new or expanding value-added agriculture businesses that demonstrate financial feasibility, enhance profitability for farmers and ranchers, create jobs and grow North Dakota's economy. North Dakota farmers could be eligible for grants up to \$500,000 for the construction of livestock production facilities. Stevermer points to this program as another positive reason for farmers to consider diversification through livestock.

To learn more about the North Dakota Livestock Alliance, scan the QR code.



—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos courtesy of North  
Dakota Livestock Alliance



Minnesota hog producer and National Pork Board director Dale Stevermer delivered the keynote address.





### Kirsten Butcher, Ph. D.

Kirsten Butcher, Ph.D., joined the faculty at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in August 2023 as the assistant professor of soil health. Butcher grew up in Missouri and earned undergraduate degrees in biology and environmental science from St. Louis University, a master's degree from NDSU and her doctorate at Utah State University.

"About 90% of my appointment is research, and most of that work, thus far, has been oriented towards carbon and nitrogen cycling by microbes as well as carbon sequestration and practices that help build soil organic matter," Butcher says.

Butcher expects her work to look deeper into microbial activity.

"A lot of my previous research has looked into the effects of drought on microbial activity and plant productivity," Butcher explains. "My hope is to eventually look into ways that we can use soils and microbial activity in soils to buffer the effects of droughts on plant productivity through things like increased nutrient cycling, or even disease or pest suppression."

Butcher researched soil-salinity issues for corn and soybeans in the Red River Valley while she earned her master's degree at NDSU.

"One of the best things about being back is that NDSU and producers in this area have such a strong relationship," Butcher asserts. "Being able to actually work with producers and sort out issues that they have through our re-

# New NDSU Staff

search here on campus is probably the best part about being back."



### Brady Goettl, Ph. D.

Brady Goettl, who will earn his Ph.D. from NDSU in May, has been hired as the new assistant professor of Extension soil health. The Wisconsin native grew up on a dairy and crop farm.

"I didn't like cows enough to stay on the farm and keep milking, so right out of high school, I got into agronomy," Goettl states.

Goettl earned a bachelor's degree in crop and soil science from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls before working abroad as an intern at a German farm. His host parents encouraged him to continue his education when he returned to the U.S.

Goettl started his master's degree at NDSU, working on a combined soil health and soil fertility project.

Goettl says that soil health means something different to every person, but he describes how improved soil health provides an opportunity for all farmers to make their soil more productive.

"Growing up on a farm in Wisconsin, soil erosion was and still is in my mind, a huge problem. An avenue to address that is through improved soil health practices to reduce erosion," Goettl contends. "From a soil fertility management standpoint, there's a lot of soil health practices that are going to

help increase nitrogen management or decrease leaching. No matter where you are in the agricultural world, there's something that you can associate with soil health."

Goettl's appointment is 90% Extension and 10% research. He'll be involved with producing Extension circulars and online content as well as working with county-level Extension agents, so they're equipped to help farmers with soil health.

"I'm really excited," Goettl states. "The last three years now of working for NDSU Extension has been awesome. There are a lot of great people across the state that I've had the opportunity to meet, including a lot of the county Extension agents and other specialists across NDSU. It's a really good group of people."



### Carlos Pires, Ph. D

Carlos Pires, Ph.D., developed a passion for agriculture early in his life. Growing up in southern Brazil, Pires explains how his ancestors had the philosophy to never stop exploring and transforming.

"I believe I inherited this way of thinking," Pires says. "Helping my grandfather at his 50-acre farm developed in me a passion for agriculture, and it is one of the things that guides me the most. Whether I am doing research in a lab, greenhouse or field, it needs to apply to my grandfather, and I need to be able to communicate

that to him. I have learned that research questions and presentations must be impactful and address the critical challenges that farmers face."

Pires will bring his passion and experience to NDSU as the assistant professor of Extension soil health. He will begin his work at NDSU in May.

Pires earned his university degrees in Brazil before completing his Ph.D. in agronomy at Kansas State University. His NDSU appointment includes 90% Extension and 10% research. He will be responsible for delivering programming about soil health, with an emphasis on the prevention and mitigation of soil salinity and sodicity as well as research on regenerative agriculture strategies, cropping system resilience, applied soil biology, tillage management and cover-cropping practices.

"I strongly believe that sustainable agriculture and the resilience of our ecosystems are fundamentally connected to the health of our soil," Pires asserts. "The chance to connect plants and soil and to consider the system as a whole is what excites me. Agriculture cannot be approached with a one-size-fits-all mentality, and enhancing soil health is one of the major challenges in today's agriculture."

Pires says he's excited about the chance to share his knowledge with North Dakota farmers.

"NDSU already has one of the best soil health programs in the country, and I want to contribute. North Dakota is a natural laboratory due to its diverse nature, which brings many challenges for agriculture, but also numerous opportunities," Pires explains. "I know agriculture is at the heart of North Dakota, and NDSU has a strong community of passionate people. This motivates me to work for the people of North Dakota."

—Story by Daniel Lemke,  
photos courtesy of NDSU



# The Pigweed Awareness Campaign: Spreading the Word to Reduce the Spread

**M**any farmers are knowledgeable about the weeds that grow in the crop fields and what to do about those weeds. Other farmers don't regularly deal with these pesky plants and may inadvertently create weed issues in the crop fields. Joe Ikley, Ph. D., a North Dakota Extension weed specialist, is working to change this situation.

Ikley is leading the Pigweed Awareness Campaign, a project which is supported by the North Dakota Soybean Council and the North Dakota Corn Utilization Council. This effort aims to inform farmers and others about



**Palmer amaranth can spread to new fields in various ways, including contaminated livestock feed. The weed is thriving in a Grant County, North Dakota, pasture after being deposited on the field with cattle manure. Many weed seeds remain viable through the cattle's digestive process.**

how problematic pigweed species are spread and how to reduce field infestations.

"Specific pigweeds like waterhemp have been problematic for farmers in North Dakota, and we have had several instances of Palmer amaranth arise via introduction or infestation," Ikley says. "Through conversations with staff at these two commodity groups, I agreed to be the point person to get more information out regarding these weeds. We want to create awareness of how they are spread and how difficult it is to control them."

Waterhemp, Palmer amaranth and other pigweeds can produce a multitude of seeds per plant. Herbicide resistance and weed escapes are problems that compound the control challenge. Ikley and other weed-management experts are identifying additional ways, beyond the traditional methods, that these weeds are getting into fields.

"A number of the Palmer amaranth infestations have originated from animal feed," Ikley explains. "Those who raise livestock may

not have been exposed to information about these pigweeds like crop farmers have. We want them to be aware of how animal operations could be part of the spread and how bad these weeds can be for crop production."

For instance, livestock farmers may feed their cattle grain screenings, which is grain that has been docked due to reduced quality, including shrunken or broken kernels and hulls, volunteer grain, chaff and weed seeds. Varieties of pigweed seeds have been found in grain screenings. Also, if livestock is grazed and these weeds are present in the pasture, cattle may eat the weeds. The weed seeds pass through the animals into the manure, which is then spread onto fields as fertilizer. Many of those weed seeds stay viable throughout this process.

Additionally, Ikley and his research team have found Palmer amaranth that is resistant to five herbicide modes of action, glyphosate (HRAC Group 9), atrazine (Group 5), ALS (Group 2) and HPPD (Group 27) inhibitors, as well as 2-4,D and dicamba (Group

4), in at least one source of contaminated grain screenings, making weed control quite difficult.

Ikley describes how a pre-emergence herbicide application with multiple active ingredients is a good start. In his herbicide trials, he found that a post-emergence application mix of glyphosate and dicamba was reasonably effective for waterhemp when applied at the appropriate time: when weed escapes were 1 to 2 inches tall. When the weeds are taller than 2 inches, they become harder to control.

The Pigweed Awareness Campaign is providing this information to livestock farmers and others who may not be as informed about these noxious weeds. Ikley and his team have been busy spreading the word.

"Last summer, we produced a video series that we've shown to several groups," Ikley states. "Last fall and winter, we presented the information to groups at meetings and trade shows. We have a life-size Palmer amaranth plant that we display at these events to draw people to our booth. It is a unique way to start the conversation."

*—continued on page 25*



**This life-size Palmer amaranth plant can garner attention at trade shows and meetings. The model has been a conversation starter for Ikley and his team of weed specialists to talk about how this noxious weed can spread in North Dakota.**



**A Palmer amaranth plant rises above a millet field in North Dakota. The millet in this field is approximately 4 to 5 feet tall and will be used for livestock feed.**



# North Dakota Soybean Farmers Visit the Panama Canal: A Link in the Supply Chain Under Stress

**T**he Soy Transportation Coalition's (STC) board of directors held its annual meeting in Panama City, Panama, on December 17-19, 2023. Each year, approximately 600 million bushels of U.S. soybeans transit the Panama Canal en route to international customers.

During the annual meeting, Chris Brossart, a soybean farmer from Wolford, North Dakota, and the current chairman of the North Dakota Soybean Council, was re-elected chairman of the Soy Transportation Coalition.

"I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to continue serving as chairman of the STC," says Brossart. "Farmer profitability is strongly connected to how efficient and economical our transportation system is. It is a critical issue for the future of our industry. I look forward to continuing to be engaged in the work of this important organization."

In addition to the business meeting, the STC board visited both the Atlantic and Pacific sides of the Panama Canal as well as seeing the original "Panamax" locks that opened in 1914 and the larger "Neopanamax" locks that opened in 2016. Only 50 miles wide at its narrowest point, the country of Panama allows the unique opportunity to see both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans within a 90-minute drive.

One of the main topics of discussion during the visit was the Panama Canal's ongoing challenges due to drought. Since the Panama

Canal is not a sea-level canal and instead utilizes locks, the canal's operation is a function of the available precipitation that fills Gatun Lake: the reservoir that feeds fresh water to the canal locks. According to the Panama Canal Authority, over the past five years, the average water level at Gatun Lake during the month of February is 85.1 ft. The current depth is 80.9 ft. When each ship passes through the canal, approximately 50 million gallons of freshwater exit the lock chamber to eventually join the Atlantic or Pacific Ocean.

Unfortunately, the Panama Canal has had to resort to significant reductions for daily transits. Currently, a maximum of 24 daily transits are permitted, down from the normal 36-40 transits per day. The reduced daily transits are having a particular influence on soybean and other grain shipments that normally utilize the Panama Canal given how such vessels do not pay as high of tolls to transit the canal compared to other, more expensive cargo. Moreover, agricultural exports do not operate with the type of scheduling precision that cruise ships, container vessels, etc. have, which makes it more difficult for agriculture exporters to schedule a Panama Canal transit months in advance in order to reserve one of the limited number of daily slots. Therefore, it was disappointing, but not surprising, for the STC group to see a variety of different types of ocean vessels—container vessels,

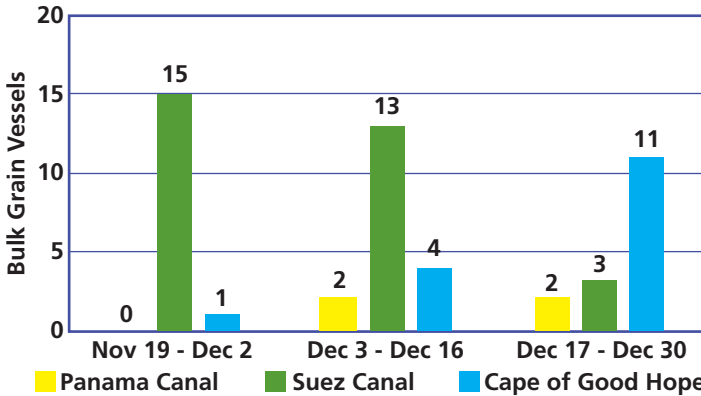
automobile carriers, chemical carriers, etc.—transit the Panama Canal during the tours, but there was not a single dry bulk vessel transporting soybeans or other grains.

Because Panama Canal transit is severely limited for agricultural exports, shippers have resorted to alternatives. Unfortunately, the Suez Canal is not a viable option given the Houthi terrorist attacks in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. As the graphs from the U.S. Department of Agriculture illustrate, there was an initial shift from the Panama Canal to the Suez Canal. As the Houthi terrorist attacks increased in frequency, there was a further shift from the Suez Canal to the longer and more expensive route via the Cape of Good Hope,

around the southern tip of Africa. "For farmers to be effective at educating and promoting a transportation system that allows the industry to be successful, we have to first understand these issues," states Brossart. "There is no substitute for seeing these important parts of our supply chain with our own eyes and meeting face to face with those officials who manage them. It was, therefore, important for the STC board to visit the Panama Canal to better understand how supply chain challenges can have a significant impact on the success of our industry. This understanding better positions the STC to focus on exploring and finding solutions."

To learn more about the STC, visit [soytransportation.org](http://soytransportation.org).

—Story and graphics courtesy of the STC, photo by staff



Bulk grain vessels from U.S. Gulf to East Asia, by route



U.S. Gulf export routes to Japan



North Dakota farmer-leaders experienced a close-up view of the Panama Canal in December. From left to right: Spencer Endrud, Buxton; Jim Thompson, Page; Mike Steenhoek, executive director of the STC; Stephanie Cook, Davenport; and Chris Brossart, Wolford.

# United Soybean Board Announces Lucas Lentsch as CEO

The United Soybean Board (USB) announced that Lucas Lentsch joined the organization as its chief executive officer (CEO) on January 1, 2024. Lentsch served on the Dairy Management, Inc. (DMI) leadership team, which manages the national dairy checkoff. The USB's board of farmer-leaders, representing more than 30 states, ratified the decision at its December 2023 board meeting.

"Lucas Lentsch is the right leader, at the right time, to continue the meaningful work of the soy checkoff and fulfill our vision of delivering sustainable soy solutions to every life, every day," said Meagan Kaiser, outgoing chair of the United Soybean Board and the CEO Selection Committee chair. "He is a true thought leader and collaborator with a wealth of checkoff program knowledge, deep agricultural roots and comprehensive experience across the farm-to-food value chain."

After growing up on his family's farm in South Dakota, promoting agriculture and serv-

ing farmers remained Lentsch's true north. As an executive vice president at DMI, Lentsch liaised between national and local checkoff organizations. He previously served as the CEO at Midwest Dairy, which consists of a 10-state region. Lentsch was the South Dakota secretary of agriculture from 2013 to 2016 and is a proud Veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, having served as a commanding officer with the Army National Guard. Lentsch received a Master of Business Administration from the University of Minnesota's Carlson School of Management and a Bachelor of Science in agriculture from South Dakota State University.

Lentsch, alongside USB board members, staff and partners, remarked, "American agriculture has never been stronger, with soy playing a vital and proven role across sectors: be it in animal agriculture, food supply chains or advancing energy independence through biofuels. The soy checkoff is the farmer's essential voice in the marketplace. It will be a privilege to serve America's

soybean farmers and continue driving value through sustainable soy solutions."

The USB board members and staff outlined their CEO criteria, emphasizing leadership, strategic acumen, adept staff and program management, and a strong connection to agriculture and soy. During interviews with the Search and Selection Committees—comprised of farmer-leaders—Lentsch surpassed these expectations. The executive search firm of Kincannon & Reed facilitated the selection process.

Lentsch is the proud father of four grown children and has relocated to the United Soybean Board's headquarters in Chesterfield, Missouri.

## About the United Soybean Board

The United Soybean Board's 77 volunteer farmer-leaders work on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers to achieve maximum value for the soy-checkoff investments. These volunteers create value by investing in research, education and promotion with the vision to deliver sustainable

soy solutions to every life, every day across the three priority areas of Infrastructure & Connectivity, Health & Nutrition, and Innovation & Technology. As stipulated in the federal Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for the USB and the soy checkoff. For more information about the United Soybean Board, visit [unitedsoybean.org](http://unitedsoybean.org).

—Story and photo courtesy of the USB



Lucas Lentsch serves as the United Soybean Board's new CEO.

—continued from page 23

Ikley has reached out to other key audiences, including certified applicators, who viewed his videos as part of their continuing education and recertification requirements. His team also exhibited at the North Dakota Stockmen's Association's annual conference and presented at the North Dakota Weed Control Association's annual meeting. Ikley created a PowerPoint presentation for agents to use with their noxious weed management trainings.

In addition, the Pigweed Awareness Campaign includes sugges-

tions about what can be done to reduce the field infestations.

"Proper identification of Palmer amaranth is a first step, which is a point we are reinforcing," Ikley comments. "Then taking steps to reduce spreading it, including simple hand-pulling, if you have just a few weeds in the field. Also, test your animal feed sources. If the feed looks suspicious, there are ways to get these feed sources tested. Finally, if you know you had a contaminated feed source, manure management is important to avoid spreading it on crop fields."

Ikley and his team are also conducting yield-loss trials and work-

ing through the economics of controlling pigweed infestations. He hopes to continue the campaign this coming fall and winter to keep the pigweed-awareness conversation going.

For more information on identification, biology and control of Palmer amaranth and Waterhemp in North Dakota, scan the QR code.

To watch Ikley's video series with updated Palmer amaranth information and manage-



ment practices for North Dakota farmers, scan the QR code.

—Story courtesy of Soybean Research Information Network, photos courtesy of Joe Ikley

*Soybean Research and Information Network (SRIN) is soybean farmers' source for information regarding soybean diseases, pests, diagnostic tools and more. Read curated summaries and highlights of the latest research. Learn more about SRIN by visiting [soybeanresearchinfo.com](http://soybeanresearchinfo.com).*





# *Soy Many* Culinary Opportunities

**C**ulinary students from North Dakota State College of Science (NDSCS) attended the North Dakota Soybean Council's (NDSC) Food

and Farm Tour on October 3-4, 2023, and the Culinary Seminar on October 5, 2023.

Students visited NDSC Treasurer Jim Thompson's farm as he harvested soybeans near Page,

North Dakota, and some students were fortunate enough to ride in the combine.

At the end of the Culinary Seminar, a soy recipe contest was announced. Entries were submit-

ted in three categories: appetizer, entrée and dessert. The top three winners for each category were given scholarship funds to help with tuition.

The culmination of the recipe contest took place on February 20, 2024, at NDSCS. NDSC Director Dallas Loff of Wahpeton visited NDSCS during the recipe contest to sample the entries.

"The dishes were excellent," says Loff. "This contest encouraged students to cook and use something that might be outside of their comfort zone. The culinary skills learned will stay with them for a lifetime. These budding chefs are learning how to use soy early, which is a good investment for NDSC."

For most of the students, cooking with soy and soy-based products was a new experience. "I see a willingness to incorporate soy into their everyday cooking," states NDSCS Associate Professor and Executive Chef Benjamin Whitmore. "It gets them to try new things, which is why they are here."

The recipe contest allowed students to take the information and experience they gained in October and to create delicious recipes.

"I think soy-based foods are starting to trend. They are becoming more available, and it is a healthy alternative," asserts Alexis Harstad, an NDSCS culinary student.

"The students need to know where their food comes from," explains Whitmore. "So many of them do not know where their food is grown and processed. The



Appetizer winners with NDSC Director Dallas Loff, right, was on hand February 20 to congratulate all entry winners.





Food and Farm Tour gave them a sense of how that happens.”

“These students are the future of the culinary world. It is so important that they understand agriculture and how plant-based foods such as soy fit into menu applications,” states Linda Funk, executive director of The Soyfoods Council.

April is National Soyfoods Month. Soy protein is a high-quality, plant-based protein. Soy ingredients are low in saturated fat and are cholesterol free. To learn more about adding soy to everyday meals, please visit [TheSoyfoodsCouncil.com](http://TheSoyfoodsCouncil.com) and [SoyConnection.com](http://SoyConnection.com).

—Story and photos by staff

## Winners of the 2024 NDSCS Soy Recipe Contest

### Appetizers

- **1st place:** Vegan Napa Cabbage Rolls — Alexis Harstad
- **2nd place:** Grilled Glazed Tofu Skewers — Abigail Schaefer
- **3rd place:** Feefi Quesadilla with Chipotle Mayo Sauce — Jayden French

### Entrée

- **1st place:** Pork Bowl over Coconut Lime Rice with Apple, Chayote and Edamame Slaw — Sean Maddock
- **2nd place:** Carne Asada Style Soy Tacos — Cosette Quillin
- **3rd place:** Rice Paper Sushi Rolls with Tofu Teriyaki and Veggies — Alexis Harstad

### Dessert

- **1st place:** Swirled Caramel Tofu Cheesecake — Alexis Harstad
- **2nd place:** Cannoli — Gabriella Birchem
- **3rd place:** Gluten-Free Soy Dessert Crepes — Kiden Evenson

For more information and the full recipes, scan the QR code.



Entrée winners with NDSCS Executive Chef Benjamin Whitmore, left, and Loff, right.



Dessert Winners with NDSC Director Dallas Loff of Richland County.



# HELPING YOU DELIVER ON DEMAND

*Whether it's improving soybean meal to outperform the competition or promoting the sustainability of U.S. soy, the soy checkoff has been working behind the scenes to help farmers satisfy their customers' needs. We're looking inside the bean, beyond the bushel and around the world to keep preference for U.S. soy strong. And for U.S. soybean farmers like you, the impact is invaluable.*

*See more ways the soy checkoff is maximizing profit opportunities for farmers at [unitedsoybean.org](http://unitedsoybean.org)*





# Soy Policy PRIORITIES

**F**armers may not spend a lot of time pondering agricultural policy, but what happens in Bismarck and Washington, DC, can have a profound influence on North Dakota growers.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) advocates for soybean farmers across the country, including working with 26 affiliated state soybean associations which represent 30 soybean-producing states and more than 500,000 U.S. soybean farmers. ASA Executive Director of Government Affairs Christy Seyfert outlined the organization's priorities at the 2024 Northern Corn and Soybean Expo.

## Farm Bill

Not surprisingly, getting a new five-year farm bill crafted is among the ASA's top priorities. The organization, and many other farm groups, have labored for several years to get a new bill passed. With a one-year extension to the 2018 Farm Bill passed late in 2023, advocacy efforts have

stretched into 2024.

Within the overall farm bill, there are several specific areas on which the ASA is focused.

"We strongly support improvements to the Title One farm safety net," Seyfert says. "We have seen and experienced a number of challenges to the soybean safety net in the life of the current farm bill. The China trade war exposed gaps in the soybean farm safety net. We saw COVID-19 and the havoc that it wreaked on the entire supply chain and market prices as well. When you think about those events and some others occurring under just this current farm bill, it makes a lot of sense for us to shore up the Title One farm safety net. Let's prepare for the future, make the farm safety net more responsive, more predictable, more reliable."

Seyfert states that the ASA is very supportive of protecting crop insurance, calling it the number one risk-management tool that farmers use.

Also within the farm bill are investments for vital trade

programs. With uncertainty in global markets, Seyfert describes how funding for the Foreign Market Development program and Market Access Program is critically important.

"Given the volatility that we've seen and the challenges with our largest current trade market for soy, we want to continue to see investments in trade promotion programs like the Market Access Program and the Foreign Market Development program because those trade promotion resources can help us expand and diversify our trading market opportunities all around the globe," Seyfert explains.

With growth in areas such as renewable diesel and sustainable aviation fuels, Seyfert asserts that the ASA is watching for opportunities to include pathways for agricultural feedstocks to move into renewable fuel channels through the farm bill and beyond.

## Crop-Protection Tools

Farmers need tools to control pests such as weeds and insects. Ensuring that farmers have access

to the necessary tools is also an ASA priority, and it's become an increasingly important role. Soybean farmers were involved with the fight to get chlorpyrifos back as a tool for controlling insects. In February, an Arizona judge vacated the registration for dicamba products in post-emerge applications for soybeans.

"We hear regularly that farmers are very concerned about access to crop-protection products, so we spend a lot of time on our team working to ensure that farmers have access to those tools," Seyfert says. "We're working with the Environmental Protection Agency; we're working with folks on Capitol Hill. Farmers have got to be able to control weeds and pests, and other challenges that impact crop yields and their production every year."

## Protecting the Checkoff

While checkoff funds cannot be used for lobbying or advocacy, Seyfert describes how the ASA works to defend the soy checkoff because of the value it provides to farmers and the soy industry.

"We are protecting the ability of farmers to invest in the soy checkoff, so they can maintain important research and development opportunities," Seyfert states. "This is farmer led and farmer funded. We want to make sure that the checkoff is viable and continues to help us unlock markets for farmers."

Seyfert contends that the overall farm economy is always top of mind for farmers, as is accessing markets at home and abroad, and supporting improvements to the nation's transportation and infrastructure systems.

More information about the ASA's priorities can be found at [soygrowers.com](http://soygrowers.com).



—Story and photo  
by Daniel Lemke



# North Dakota Soybean Growers Association

## 2024 Annual Meeting

**W**rapped into the schedule of events at the Northern Corn and Soybean Expo was the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association's (NDSGA) February 6, 2024, annual meeting. As a member-driven entity, the NDSGA holds an annual meeting to keep members informed about organizational activities.

The 2024 annual meeting included a review of minutes and financial audit results, both of which were approved unanimously.

NDSGA board members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two terms. Spencer Endrud of Buxton will term off the board at the end of June. Stephanie Cook of Davenport was elected to fill the role for NDSGA District 3, which includes Cass, Griggs, Steele and Traill Counties.

Kasey Bitz of Lamoure has served two years as the NDSGA president. His second three-year term will conclude at the end of June. Bitz represents District 2, which includes Adams, Bowman, Emmons, Grant, Hettinger, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Sioux and Slope Counties. No nominees emerged at the annual meeting, so NDSGA board members and staff will work to identify potential candidates who could be elected at a later date.

For just the second time in the organization's history, the American Soybean Association's (ASA) president is from North Dakota. Kulm farmer Josh Gackle provided

an update on the ASA's activities.

Gackle described how the organization was disappointed that a new five-year farm bill has not been passed. The ASA and others have worked for several years to get a new bill crafted. Extending the 2018 Farm Bill for one more year to allow additional time to write a new bill was a reasonable alternative, but growers want a five-year bill to provide certainty. Areas such as crop insurance and other farm safety-net programs remain key issues that the ASA wants protected with any new measures. Gackle remains hopeful that a new farm bill can be crafted this year.

Defending crop protection products, including herbicides and pesticides, is another priority issue for the ASA, according to Gackle. Funding for market development programs that help to support the growth of soybean markets around the world is also a key issue.

The ASA's full platform of resolutions for the coming year will be debated and finalized at the 2024 Commodity Classic in Houston.

Retiring NDSGA directors Bitz and Endrud were recognized by the NDSGA for their dedicated service. Each director received a plaque in recognition of his time on the NDSGA board.

Valley City farmer Monte Peterson, who has served the soybean industry as a member of the North Dakota Soybean Council, the NDSGA and the ASA, was also recognized for his service.

—Story and photo  
by Daniel Lemke



Valley City farmer Monte Peterson (right) was recognized by NDSGA President Kasey Bitz for his years of service to the soybean industry.



Spencer Endrud has termed off the NDSGA and was recognized by Bitz for his contributions.



NDSGA Vice President Chris McDonald congratulates Bitz, who will term off the NDSGA board later this year.



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# Getting to Know the NDSC County Representative



**Aaron Friesz**  
New Leipzig, North Dakota

## Tell us about your farm.

I farm and ranch in New Leipzig. We raise corn, soybeans and spring wheat. My wife and I have registered Hereford cattle, and my brother and I run commercial cattle.

## What do you like best about farming?

The thing I like best about farming is that it is different every year.

## Did you always know that farming was something you wanted to do?

Yes, I always knew that farming was something I wanted to do.

## Why did you get involved with the North Dakota Soybean Council (NDSC) as a county representative?

I was voted in by some of the producers in my area. I also sell soybean seed, and so I was looking to learn new information for growers in our area that NDSC could provide because we are new to soybeans; we're all still learning.

## Why are soybeans part of your crop mix?

Soybeans are part of my crop mix because of the inputs; they're the cheapest crop to plant and grow. We've done well with yields. Overall, they work well in rotation, and more and more people are looking to start growing soybeans.

## If you could change something about the current operating climate for North Dakota farmers, what would it be?

I would change the distance farmers in the western part of the state have to haul commodities and the lack of competition.

## What has changed most about farming since you've been involved?

Marketing grain has changed the most. It's gotten more and more complicated as the years have progressed. The grain price is so variable day by day.

## What changes do you expect to see on your farm in the next 5 to 10 years?

We may apply more in-crop fertilizers at different crop stages based on crop nutrition needs, relative to applying all fertilizer at once before seeding as a one

pass system. Also, we may plant less spring wheat in the future than we currently planned for this growing season. Newer technologies are becoming available to farmers, but in our area, farmers are slow to adopt these technologies until they are sure of the benefits.

## What do you like to do outside farming?

I like to hunt, and I like to spend time with my wife and kids.

## If you could go anywhere, where would it be?

I would visit Russia.

## What's the one piece of farm equipment or technology you wouldn't want to be without?

I wouldn't want to be without GPS because of the time and input savings it provides.

—Story and photo by staff

*Aaron is one of the North Dakota Soybean Council's county representatives. To learn more about serving on the North Dakota Soybean Council as a county representative or board member, scan the QR code.*



## Bean Briefs

### Brazil's Dicamba Availability Resolved

In February, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that farmers can accept "existing stocks" of previously registered pesticide products containing dicamba. The decision came following an Arizona district court's decision that vacated the registration of three dicamba

herbicides. Existing stocks are products considered to be items which are currently in the United States that were packaged, labeled and released for shipment prior to the February 6 date.

The EPA's existing stocks order allows for the sale, distribution and use of existing stocks of the previously registered dicamba products that are currently in

the U.S. and that were packaged, labeled and released for shipment prior to February 6, which was the effective date for the District of Arizona's vacatur of dicamba registrations.

Under the order, farmers can use the existing stocks that are consistent with the cutoff dates from the previous registration, which is June 30 in North Dakota.

The cutoff for sales and distribution of existing stocks under the order ends one month ahead of the use cutoff, so May 31 in North Dakota.

On February 6, a federal district court in Arizona ruled that the EPA made a procedural error when issuing 2020 dicamba

—Story continued on page 34



**Rep. Paul Thomas**  
Chair of the House Agriculture Committee  
Velva, North Dakota

## Tell us about your background.

I am a fourth-generation farmer. My oldest son has returned to farm with us, so he's the start of the fifth generation. I graduated from North Dakota State University with an economics degree. I lived and worked in the Bismarck area after graduation, and that's where I met my wife, Karen. When my father decided to retire from his small, diversified operation, we had the opportunity to take over her parents' farm as well. We continued to

work in our careers and farm for a while, but decided that was too much. We've been farming full time since 2004. We are a very diversified farm, and we strive to improve soil health and leave the farm in better shape than we found it.

## How did you become interested in public service?

I was hired by the North Dakota Grain Growers to work with commodity groups on association management. Eventually, I created my own company with

a partner called Progressive Consulting, where we worked with a number of North Dakota commodity groups. I really enjoyed that experience being around some of the most innovative and progressive farmers in the industry. It taught me a lot about successful operations and the need for good policy as we try to grow our agriculture industry and our individual farm's profitability. Interaction with the legislature really opened my eyes to the need to be involved.

I was involved with several commodity groups, and my wife and I were involved with our district Republican party. When our youngest son graduated from high school, and the representative from our district decided not to run, we decided it was the right time for me to make that leap and serve the citizens of District 6.

## What is most important to you about serving in the legislature?

A foundation for me has always been, number one, we're on this earth for a short period of time. We've been entrusted with many gifts and talents and treasures, and we are called to use those to the best of our abilities to serve others. So, I try and approach everything from that foundational standpoint. Because of my experience and my interests, I gravitate most of my energies towards rural community issues and then also the agriculture industry within them.

I tend to look at policies and factors that reflect what I'm hearing from young people that are either living or wanting to move back to their rural communities. Profitability in agriculture is not the top thing that I hear from a lot of people. It's more often about community attributes.

## What gives you optimism for the future?

I think we really need to focus on the two main sectors in our economy, and that's energy and agriculture. I think we really need to look at growing the main industries and then spinoffs that are directly related to those industries. Examples that I see in North Dakota that are natural fits include growing animal agriculture. We also have a very successful cropping industry in this state. Through a lot of work and effort by many, we're starting to see an increase in value-added processing of those grains rather than just exporting them, which is certainly very beneficial in terms of jobs, economic activity and better basis for the farmers.

## What is most rewarding about your service?

Probably the longest-lasting and most-rewarding part of service is the acquaintances you meet, the friendships you form, those relationships you build. Second is coming home and being able to have conversations with people in my district. Being able to give the background on why something was done, why a decision was made and whether I was in support of it or not. Just being able to explain to people why it happened when it happened, and the responses I get, really help me feel more fulfilled in my service.

—Story and photo  
by Daniel Lemke

An advertisement for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association. It features a background image of a soybean field at sunset. Overlaid on the image is the text "Together our industry thrives" in a large, white, serif font. Below this, in a smaller white font, is the text: "Add your voice to the hundreds of fellow producers. Together we bolster agriculture in our state and influence policy decisions. Make a personal commitment to the health of the soybean industry by joining the NDSGA today." At the bottom left is the logo for the North Dakota Soybean Growers Association, which includes the text "North Dakota Soybean Growers Association" and a stylized green soybean plant. At the bottom right is a QR code. At the very bottom, in a green box, is the text "To join us, visit ndsoygrowers.com".

**Editor's note:** This NDSGA article is part of a series of legislative profiles to help readers learn more about the people elected to represent North Dakota growers in Bismarck.



— *Story continued from page 32*

registrations for over-the-top use on dicamba-tolerant soybeans and cotton. Because the EPA did not offer a public notice and comment period before issuing the registrations, the court ruled that the agency was in violation of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and vacated 2020 registrations for XtendiMax, Engenia and Tavium.

FIFRA gives the EPA the authority to issue existing stock orders for products that are cancelled, which is now a major priority for the soybean industry. The American Soybean Association (ASA) is seeking a long-term solution for the issue.

### Herbicide Strategy Delayed

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) draft Herbicide Strategy received a three-month deadline extension for finalization. The EPA requested an extension to the previous May 30, 2024, finalization deadline from the court overseeing the settlement directing the finalization. The court agreed to extend the deadline to August 30, 2024, which gives the EPA several additional months to implement the Endangered Species Act-related proposal.

The American Soybean Association (ASA) welcomed the announcement because U.S. soybean farmers have been concerned with the effect that the proposal would have without significant revisions. The Herbicide Strategy would require growers to implement costly runoff conservation practices on their operations and to adopt large downwind spray buffers in order to reduce runoff and spray-drift risks to endangered species. The proposal would require billions of dollars for farmers across the country to implement, and the strategy could prevent some farmers from using certain herbicides.

During the proposal's public comment period, the ASA and 225 other groups submitted a letter to the EPA, raising significant concerns with the proposal.

The ASA also circulated a petition to growers, applicators and other agricultural stakeholders around the country, which obtained nearly 1,500 signatures calling for the proposal's withdrawal.

With the three-month extension, the ASA plans to continue working closely with the EPA, other regulators and stakeholder groups to address the remaining challenges with the proposal and to ensure it is workable for U.S. agriculture while helping the agency to meet its Endangered Species Act legal obligations.

### USDA Releases 2022 Census of Agriculture Data

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National Agricultural Statistics Service announced the results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, highlighting more than six million data points about America's farms, ranches and the people who operate them.

Ag census data provide valuable insights about demographics, economics, land use and activities on U.S. farms and ranches. Some highlights include

- There were 1.9 million farms and ranches (down 7% from 2017), with an average size of 463 acres (up 5%), on 880 million acres of farmland (down 2%). That amount is 39% of all U.S. land.
- Family owned and operated farms accounted for 95% of all U.S. farms and operated 84% of land in farms.
- U.S. farms and ranches produced \$543 billion in agricultural products, up from \$389 billion in 2017. With farm-production expenses of \$424 billion, U.S. farms had a net cash income of \$152 billion. The average farm income rose to \$79,790. A total of 43% of the farms had positive net-cash farm income in 2022.
- The number of producers under age 35 was 296,480, comprising 9% of all farmers. The 221,233 farms with young producers making decisions was larger

than average in both acres and sales.

- In 2022, the 1.2 million women accounted for 36% of all producers; 58% of all farms had at least one female decision maker.

### ASA Urges Swift, Bipartisan Passage of Farm Bill

The American Soybean Association (ASA) and other members of the Ag CEO Council sent a letter urging the Senate and House leadership to prioritize swift passage of a bipartisan farm bill this year.

With windows of opportunity narrowing for Congress to consider a farm bill before the 2024 elections, the groups detailed the importance of quick action.

"A global pandemic, record-high inflation, rising supply costs and global supply chain disruptions have all increased the uncertainty for farmers and ranchers who weather market conditions to run their businesses," the Ag CEO Council stated in the letter. "Every citizen in the country is reliant on agriculture's success, so it is with great urgency that we ask you to protect and enhance the farm safety net."

The groups also underscored the need for a modernized bill that would increase baseline funding for farm programs and expand risk-management tools such as crop insurance. The groups also urged Congress to maintain a unified bill that includes both nutrition and farm programs.

### USDA Releases Pesticide Data Summary

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its Pesticide Data Program report, finding that over 99% of all the sampled foods had residues well below the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) safety standards, if residues were present at all. The study focused on 2022 tests that were conducted on 10,665 samples from 23 commodities, including fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, dairy, nuts and grains.

The findings were consistent

with previous years and reiterated how safe U.S. fruits and vegetables are, in addition to underscoring the farmers' commitment to compliance with pesticide use laws and regulations to protect farmworkers, the environment and consumers.

### ASA Urges Passage of Ag Tariff Bill

The American Soybean Association (ASA) and other groups urged leaders of the House and Senate finance committees to swiftly pass a Miscellaneous Tariff Bill (MTB). This bill, which expired in Dec. 2020, temporarily reduces or eliminates tariffs on products that are unavailable in the U.S.

The groups emphasized that the lack of a renewal is harming manufacturers of all domestic industries; significantly raising costs; affecting products and jobs; and, especially, harming small- and medium-sized businesses because they pay more for product inputs.

In the letter, the groups stated, "A renewed MTB would mean lower input prices and decreased price pressures for U.S. farmers, ranchers and consumers. For example, within the U.S. agriculture supply chain, for agricultural chemical companies, the MTB reduces import duties on intermediate inputs that are not available or not available in sufficient quantities domestically, which helps reduce domestic production costs of the final product."

The groups also highlighted how the MTB can save agricultural chemical companies a range of \$2 million to \$89 million per year when enacted, savings that now turn into costs which can have a ripple effect on farmers, businesses and consumers.

Choosing not to renew the MTB will lead to economic and supply chain challenges for U.S. agriculture—from business to farmers and consumers—the groups concluded in the letter.

—*Story by Daniel Lemke*



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