



# Lonestar Soybeans

**W**elcome to the 10th edition of the *Lonestar Soybeans* newsletter! Your Texas soybean checkoff has created this newsletter to keep you informed about what's happening at the state and national levels. Covering the latest issues in the soybean industry, *Lonestar Soybeans* represents just one more way your checkoff works for you.

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## Beware of Charcoal Rot in Hot, Dry Conditions

Charcoal rot is primarily known as a disease that affects Southern states because it thrives in hot, dry conditions. While some soybean farmers have not experienced problems with this disease yet, all should take note as drought-ridden summers become more prevalent.

Doug Jardine, Ph.D., a Kansas State University extension specialist, describes the symptoms to look for in a recent Plant Management Network "Focus on Soybean" webcast. The soy checkoff sponsors these webcasts through a partnership with the network, and all U.S. soybean farmers have access to the full presentation for free until June 30. Visit [www.UnitedSoybean.org](http://www.UnitedSoybean.org) and click on the Focus on Soybean box in the upper-right-hand corner to view the webcast.

According to Jardine, infection initially occurs in the spring, usually within the first three to four weeks after planting. Although charcoal rot is favored by hot, dry weather, the wetter the soil is in spring, the greater the chance for infection. The disease remains dormant during the soybean plant's vegetative stages, but heat and drought stress during the pod-fill and pod-development stages make way for the development of the disease.

Symptoms will first occur in the driest areas of a field, such as those areas that have compacted or sandy soils, are on terrace

tops or are next to tree lines. Symptoms can occasionally be seen in wet spots if other root-attacking organisms, such as phytophthora, pythium or soybean cyst nematode, are infecting the plant. Due to the damage those organisms have on the root system, the plant may become stressed, causing the charcoal rot fungus to take over.

When scouting fields for charcoal rot, look for the following symptoms:

- Wilting and yellowing of the plants. In initial stages, plants will wilt during the day but recover at night when the temperatures get lower. Over time, the length of time the plant wilts will extend until the plant can no longer recover. Eventually, plants die but leaves remain attached.
- Internal brown or black streaking of the taproot.
- Small dark structures, known as sclerotia, on the stem at the soil line.
- Shrunken or shriveled seeds.



Photo Source: Plant Health Progress - Effect of Diseases on Soybean Yields in the United States and Ontario (1999 to 2002)

## Meat and Poultry Exports Topple Previous Records

It's another record year for U.S. meat and poultry exports. Thanks to growing foreign markets and support from the soy checkoff, the most recent figures show those exports broke the previous volume and value records.

Feeding livestock, poultry and other animals soy in the United States and shipping out value-added products like meat and eggs represent a dual opportunity for U.S. soybean farmers. They increase the demand for soy while also supporting U.S. soy's No. 1 customer, the animal ag sector.

"Exporting meat is a big issue for U.S. soybean farmers," says

John Butler, a farmer-leader from Dyersburg, Tenn. "If we can feed animals soybeans here and sell them abroad, we're creating a value-added product. Adding that value here has a tremendous positive impact on not only the U.S. soy industry but also on the national economy as well."

Because of its importance to the strength of the U.S. soy industry, the checkoff has made supporting animal agriculture a top priority. The checkoff works with organizations like the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) and USA Poultry and Egg Export Council to promote the consumption of U.S. meat abroad. For example, the checkoff

recently worked with USMEF to help increase consumption of pork back ribs in Japan.

Last year, poultry exports hit 4.1 metric tons, valued at \$5.5 billion. According to the most recent



statistics, broilers, egg-laying hens and turkeys consume roughly 14.1 million metric tons of soy meal annually, or meal from 657.9 million bushels of soybeans.

Pork exports also set new volume and value records. The United States shipped 2.3 million metric tons, valued at \$6.3 billion, to foreign markets, including Japan and Mexico. U.S. hogs consume 7.8 million metric tons of U.S. soy meal usage each year, according to the most recent statistics. That's the meal from 363 million bushels of soybeans.

Though beef exports dipped slightly in volume, the total value increased 2 percent to reach a record \$5.51 billion. Each year, beef cattle consume about 1.7 million metric tons of soy meal, or the meal from 80.6 million bushels of soybeans.

"The slight drop in the volume of beef exports could be because beef is just more expensive this year," Butler says.

Industry experts anticipate meat and poultry exports will remain strong through 2013.



## Five Things to Remember About the Quality of Your Soy Meal

Meal constitutes more than two-thirds of every soybean, nearly all of which gets used by animal ag. However, U.S. soy has lost animal-feed market share to alternative feed sources, such as dried distillers grains with solubles (DDGS). The low price of DDGS makes it an attractive option for farmers, even though the protein level is lower than soybeans.

Soybean farmers can improve the quality of their soy meal to meet animal farmers' needs. To help, here are five things to keep in mind.

1. **2012 Quality Results** – The most recent checkoff-funded U.S. Soybean Quality Survey found oil levels rose to 18.5 percent, but protein fell a half-point to 34.3 percent. University of Minnesota soybean researcher Seth Naeve, Ph.D., conducts the study and

presents the results to purchasers in Asia. Naeve says buyers want to know what U.S. farmers are doing to improve quality long-term.

2. **Your No. 1 Customer** – Soy meal is an efficient protein source for animal feed, particularly poultry and swine. Perdue's Randy Mitchell recently called properly processed soy meal the "gold standard" for poultry diets. Mitchell points to U.S. soy meal's ability to cost-effectively deliver most critical amino acids.

3. **Weather** – According to Naeve, a drought's impact on quality can be dramatic, but it can also be unpredictable. "We don't fully understand what the effect on quality is going to be," he says. "Last year, the drought affected different regions differently, so

we weren't exactly sure how quality would play out."

4. **Variety Selection** – In a wet year or a dry year, the most effective tool farmers have to improve protein levels is variety selection. "In general, the highest-protein varieties tend to be higher-protein in most environments," Naeve says.

5. **Value-Based Pricing** – The United Soybean Board (USB) believes farmers should be rewarded for improving quality, so USB created the Value Task Force to figure out how. The goal of the Value Task Force is to create a driver to select high-quality soybean varieties, so farmers will see the financial effects of increasing the protein and oil levels in their soybeans.

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