

Checkoff-Funded Tool Helps Show U.S. Soy's Sustainability

Written by United Soybean Board
Wednesday, 11 January 2012 13:00

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Checkoff Supports Improved Fieldprint Calculator to Help Farmers Meet Customers' Needs

ST. LOUIS (January 11, 2012) – U.S. soybean farmers now have an updated tool that can meet the needs of some customers who want proof U.S. soy has been sustainably produced.

That's why the soybean checkoff continues to support the Field to Market alliance and its updated Fieldprint Calculator, a tool U.S. soybean farmers can use to help measure, improve and demonstrate their sustainability performance.

The updated calculator, available on the Internet by clicking [here](#), includes several upgrades from earlier versions. It allows U.S. farmers to analyze individual fields and includes more advanced measurements for soil conservation and soil carbon. Additionally, the tool automatically provides a financial ledger that computes the economic impact of sustainable practices on that farm. It also allows U.S. farmers to set up a secure account to save their information for future use.

Nebraska soybean farmer Mike Thede notes that checkoff-funded research has proven the sustainability performance of U.S. soy production. The checkoff shares that information with U.S. soy buyers to support sales.

"All U.S. farmers are under more and more pressure from our customers, who demand soybeans produced in a sustainable manner," explains Thede, who serves as team lead of the United Soybean Board's Sustainability Initiative. "We need to continue to document our sustainability performance to our end users in order to maintain and expand our markets."

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According to a recent checkoff-funded life-cycle study, U.S. soybean production proves to be very sustainable due to several factors. For instance, a soybean plant sequesters more greenhouse gases than those generated by the equipment used to grow, harvest and process soybeans. Additionally, U.S. soybean production and processing have become more efficient because of higher yields, more conservation tillage and reduced energy use.

The Fieldprint Calculator can be used for free by all U.S. soybean, corn, wheat, cotton and rice farmers. First, it asks farmers to enter information about their operation. If desired, the tool can confidentially save any information entered, in which case that information is accessible only by the farmer who saved it.

The tool analyzes the use of that farm's natural resources and inputs to compute its environmental footprint, or "fieldprint." The results show farmers where there's room for improvement. U.S. farmers can also compare their results with those from other farms in their area, state or the entire country.

As a member of Field to Market, the soybean checkoff supported development of the original calculator in 2009, as well as the recent update. More information about Field to Market and the Fieldprint Calculator is available at www.FieldToMarket.org.

For more information on the USB, visit www.UnitedSoybean.org
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View our YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/user/UnitedSoybeanBoard

USB is made up of 69 farmer-directors who oversee the investments of the soybean checkoff on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers. Checkoff funds are invested in the areas of animal utilization, human utilization, industrial utilization, industry relations, market access and supply. As stipulated in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soybean checkoff.

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