Written by United Soybean Board Tuesday, 25 June 2013 12:50

ST. LOUIS (June 25, 2013) – International food companies are looking to purchase soybeans that are grown with respect for the land and its people. To provide those reassurances and keep those markets open, the U.S. soy family has developed its U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol. This protocol identifies the regulations, processes and management practices the U.S. soy industry uses to ensure international customers of U.S. farmers' sustainable soybean production. U.S. Sustainability Protocol Considers All Factors The U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol is a certified aggregate approach to the sustainability performance of U.S. soybean production. It outlines the industry's expectations of sound environmental objectives, social responsibility, promoting economic growth and continuous improvement in technology and cultural practices. This protocol is audited by third parties, which demonstrates the industry's commitment to sustainability, and backed by farmer-led U.S. soy organizations including the United Soybean Board (USB), American Soybean Association (ASA) and U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC).

"In the past, consumers and farmers have not always agreed on what it means to be sustainable," says Richard Fordyce, Missouri soybean farmer and chair of the USB Freedom to Operate Action Team. "Our farmer-led soybean organizations intend to show that U.S. soybean farmers have always been, and continue to be, committed to doing everything possible to ensure our soybeans are produced in a sustainable manner. By introducing the U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol, we're showing farmer dedication to sustaining the natural resources and rural communities that are so important to everyone, and we're backing it up with third-party measurement and verification so our customers have confidence in U.S. soybeans."

The U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol represents the nation's 279,110 soybean farms. It is an opportunity for the soybean industry to show international customers who are currently reviewing their sustainability requirements for suppliers that U.S. farmers are already meeting high standards for sustainable soy production.

Organizations Seek to Educate Farmers and Customers

To ensure all soybean farmers understand the protocol, there will be educational materials made available later this summer on the USB website (www.unitedsoybean.org

). Farmers and others will be able to learn about the protocol and its importance, as well as the key components of sustainability: environmental and social consciousness, promotion of industry growth, and the embracing of best practices. They will also be able to learn about the measurement and verification for sustainability that are already in place.

The U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol also will be the focus of several initiatives to educate international customers on the U.S. soy industry's sustainability performance and verification process.

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Farmer Support Encouraged/Needed

"For our future as individual farmers and as an industry, the U.S. soy family is demonstrating that we understand the expectations of our customers and assuring them our product is sustainable according to their definitions," says Fordyce. "I encourage everyone in our industry to learn more about the Sustainability Assurance Protocol. Visit the USB website for more information about how our sustainable actions today can protect and advance our international markets tomorrow."

The 69 farmers who serve on the USB board of directors oversee the investments of the soy checkoff to maximize profit opportunities for all U.S. soybean farmers. These volunteers invest and leverage checkoff funds to increase the value of U.S. soy meal and oil, to ensure U.S. soybean farmers and their customers have the freedom and infrastructure to operate, and to meet the needs of U.S. soy's customers. As stipulated in the federal Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soy checkoff.

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