

Douglas County Ag in the Classroom learns about soybeans for Earth Day

Douglas County Ag in the Classroom focused on soybeans and earth day for April. More soybeans are grown in the United States than in any other country. The top soybean-producing states are Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, and Indiana.

Illinois raises 427 million bushels of soybeans per year. Decatur, Illinois is known as "Soy City" because they process so many soybeans at ADM. The complete soybean is used at their facility. The hull becomes additives and livestock feed. The beans are flattened into flakes and oil is extracted. This oil is separated into lec-

ithin to use in baked goods. Flakes are also processed into flour and this high protein flour improves the shelf life of baked goods.

Every day is Earth Day on the Farm! Farmers' livelihoods depend on their ability to use the land. It is in their best interest to protect the land and water which they

rely on. Farmers use reduced tillage to help the soil stay in place. They use careful applications of fertilizer. Farmers plant grass along fields to protect streams and rivers. These are called buffer strips and they collect soil and fertilizer, so it does not leave the field.

This month in Ag in the

Classroom younger students made "Sprout Houses" to germinate seeds. The bags were hung in a window, or someplace warm, and the seeds would sprout in a few days. This is an excellent way for students to observe germination. Other classes practiced seed dissection or had activities based on the

water cycle. The soybean fields in Douglas County are helping to feed people around the world. Douglas County Ag in the Classroom is supported by Douglas County Farm Bureau, Douglas County Ag Center, and Illinois Ag in the Classroom.

LyondellBasell Tuscola Plant announced donation of over \$57,365 to United Way to advance local communities during COVID pandemic

The LyondellBasell Tuscola Plant today announced a donation of \$57,365 to the United Way of United Way chapters of Central Illinois, Champaign County, Coles County and Decatur and Mid Illinois.

"The work United Way does in our communities is far-reaching and makes a lasting impact to those who are facing unprecedented needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Aaron McKee, site manager. "Once again, I am humbled by the generosity of our employees who give not only their time but also their financial resources. They truly exemplify Advancing Good in our communities."

Annually, the company runs a campaign across the United States to raise funds in support of United Way's efforts to serve those most in need. LyondellBasell matches money raised by employees on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In 2020, LyondellBasell distributed a total of more than \$1.5 million to 35 individual United Way chapters across the country.

The company's global citizenship program, Ad-



LyondellBasell (NYSE: LYB) is one of the largest plastics, chemicals and refining companies in the world. Driven by its employees around the globe, LyondellBasell produces materials and products that are key to advancing solutions to modern challenges like enhancing food safety through lightweight and flexible packaging, protecting the purity of water supplies through stronger and more versatile pipes, improving the safety, comfort and fuel efficiency of many of the cars and trucks on the road, and ensuring the safe and effective functionality in electronics and appliances. LyondellBasell sells products into more than 100 countries and is the world's largest producer of polypropylene compounds and the largest licensor of polyolefin technologies. In 2021, LyondellBasell was named to Fortune Magazine's list of the "World's Most Admired Companies" for the fourth consecutive year. More information about LyondellBasell can be found at www.lyondellbasell.com.

Advancing Good, focuses on three key areas: Advancing Our Communities, Advancing Our Planet, and Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce.

About LyondellBasell's Tuscola Plant
The Tuscola plant em-

ployes around 100 people and occupies nearly 900 acres. The site produces ethyl alcohol, diethyl ether and specialty polymers. Ethyl alcohol, or ethanol, is used in many health care and personal product applications

such as hair spray, capsule manufacturing, hand sanitizer, and pharmaceutical cleaning. Diethyl ether finds applications as a laboratory reagent solution, usage in chemical synthesis, as an ammunition drier, and start-

er fluid. The specialty polymers produced here include microfine powders used as additives in personal care products, lubricants, binding agents, water filtration systems, and moisture barriers.

About LyondellBasell

IFB District 12 Director's April 2021 ag update

By Larry W. Dallas

Planting started early this April in Douglas County. Several people hit the field the day after Easter. The temperatures were warm and the soil conditions good. It seemed like a great chance to get started. The recent wet springs are fresh in farmer's minds. Good weather will be taken advantage of.

We planted corn first, then some soybeans later in the month. Others followed a recent trend and concentrated on getting their soybeans planted. Only a few years ago agronomists were experimenting with planting soybeans at the same time as corn, or even ahead of corn planting. At least in this area early planting of soybeans is now widely accepted.

The soybean plant is light-sensitive. They start to flower around the longest days of the year in late June and start to mature when days get short in September. The theory is that early beans will flower longer and set more pods for a bigger yield. Plot work and farmer experience show that this will work.

Soybeans are proving to be more cold-tolerant than originally thought too. Any seed put onto the soil will begin to draw in water in preparation to germinate. If a corn seed draws in a bunch of cold water, it can damage or kill the seed. Some agronomists advised that we stop planting soybeans 24 hours ahead of the cold weather and snow the third week of April, so they are not immune to the cold-water uptake problem. Corn can be frozen off and still grow back if the growing point is still in the ground. When an emerged soybean freezes off, it is done.

Traditionally soybeans were planted almost as an afterthought when corn planting was completed. They were a rotational crop that put nitrogen into the soil and broke up the disease cycle of corn after corn. The soybeans were supposed to use the nutrients leftover

from the corn crop the year before. Now we use pricey seed treatments to protect the seed and often fertilize specifically for the soybean crop.

The soybean seed we planted 30 years ago was often a public variety developed by a university and usually saved by the farmer from the harvest of the crop the previous year. Most of us plant newly purchased seed each year now. The patent protection for the traited seed we use forbids the planting of the saved seed. Our non-genetically modified soybean contracts specify new seeds each year.

We still have the small wagons we saved seed in back then. It was a little bit of a tradition to fill them each fall with a variety of soybean that had yielded well, then pull them out in late winter to have the beans cleaned to condition them for planting. Some friends from Tolono had a seed cleaner they pulled from farm-to-farm cleaning soybeans, oats, and wheat. I filled the planter with buckets then, instead of the motorized seed tender we now use. Now soybean seed comes in boxes with rough-

ly 40 acres of seed in them.

Nationwide planting is just getting started. The southern states that ordinarily have a lot of acres planted by now have seen heavy rain that kept them out of the field. Southern farmers need to plant well ahead of our ideal time so that the corn can pollinate before the hottest weather. The upper Midwest is cold and dry. One market advisor said that in the Dakotas some farmers are seeing if they can take prevent plant. It is so dry they see no reason to even try planting. Even with normal rain the rest of the year, they do not think they can grow a crop.

That same market advisor also spoke about the variety of crops that are planted in the Dakotas up into southern Canada. We grow mostly corn and soybeans in Illinois. These fit our climate and soil types well. The less humid upper Midwest historically grew a lot of spring wheat. They also grow dry beans, pulse crops like lentils and canola. These are short-season crops that prefer drier conditions than we have. Plant breeders have developed short-season corn and soy-

bean varieties that produce well in northern regions, so that area has a lot of choices.

The US Department of Agriculture came out with its prospective planting report on March 31. The acres for corn and soybeans came out well below the trade guesses, which expected that acres would go up substantially because of the higher prices. The report gave prices a nice boost. The world demand and stocks report in early April kept prices moving up. The stocks of grain around the world are at diminished levels and the projected planted acres are not enough to bring them back to levels the traders feel comfortable with. After dissatisfaction with government reports the last two years, farmers have some numbers they like right now.

That dissatisfaction prompted Illinois Farm Bureau to put together a working group to discuss the credibility of the National Agricultural Statistics Service numbers. Ten farmers met with representatives from the USDA, universities, and market analysis firms trying to find out why

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