

# SECURE OPTIMAL YIELD 2008 GROWING SEASON REPORT

An elite group of soybean growers across the country is working to test the bounds of soybean yields in the Secure Optimal Yield (SOY) program trials this summer. SOY is a grower education effort launched last year in the 2007 crop season through the cooperation of the American Soybean Association (ASA) and BASF. Soybean farmers in 25 states are taking part in the program this year.

Each participant agreed to reserve at least 20 acres for a field trial comparing two herbicide programs in Roundup Ready® soybeans. Control acres were treated with a single pass of glyphosate. Test acres are to receive an application of a BASF residual herbicide, such as Prowl® H2O, Scepter® or Extreme®, in addition to the usual glyphosate regimen. In addition, the test acres are to be given an application of Headline® fungicide for Plant Health, while the control acres received no plant health benefits or protection against fungal diseases.

This article focuses on what SOY participants have seen in their field trials so far this year utilizing the prescribed residual herbicide and fungicide applications. Grower participants are maintaining records on the trials, and yield results will be measured after harvest.

"The program is looking at ways to increase soybean yields and get the most out of every acre of U.S. soybeans," said ASA President John Hoffman, a soybean producer from Waterloo, Iowa. "With the preliminary feedback now in, growers are already reporting some advantages that should help boost their yields at harvest this fall."

## Grower Comments

Soybean producers are constantly on the lookout for new ways to achieve maximum efficiency and productivity. The SOY program is designed to promote crop management practices that provide dependable season-long weed control and Plant Health.

ASA member Clint Liesman of Mason City, Iowa farms 3,200 acres including 1,200 acres of soybeans. For the SOY program, Liesman applied Prowl residual herbicide to battle the giant ragweed, waterhemp and cocklebur that typically compete for nutrients and moisture in his soybeans.

"Prowl started working very early on to eliminate the weed pressure," Liesman said. "I just noticed we

had them under control right away. The residual lasted longer and we were able to go out and spray later."

During the germination period, the window of opportunity for weed competition is critical, and by using a residual herbicide, growers are able to eliminate that competition right from the start.

Regarding Plant Health, Liesman said, "I've noticed a considerable difference in the strips sprayed with Headline. My plants are healthier with more pods. I would highly recommend this program."

ASA member Robert Lay in La Belle, Missouri, farms 121 acres, including 72 acres of soybeans. He used Extreme herbicide to knock out the ragweed and marestail in his soybeans.

Over the years, many soybean farmers have come to depend entirely on glyphosate. That may be sufficient in some cases as long as the glyphosate application is timely. But if weather or something else delays application, growers can lose control over weeds.

"This was a bizarre year," Lay said. "It was so wet and it seemed like we couldn't do anything timely. The residual held off the weeds a bit longer and there were fewer weeds to control."

The SOY field trials program allows growers to see how the combination of residual weed control and Plant Health can boost soybean yields and get a greater return out of every acre of land.

The main goal of the Headline fungicide application is to improve



More than 400 growers signed up for the 2008 ASA-BASF SOY program. Growers are reporting improved weed control, greater flexibility and healthier plants.

**A Special Growers' Guide from the American Soybean Association, October 2008**

## ASA-BASF Partner at Farm Progress Show

The American Soybean Association (ASA) teamed up with BASF Corporation and the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) at this year's Farm Progress Show in Boone, Iowa.

ASA President John Hoffman and Vice President Rob Joslin, who is also the chairman of ASA's Membership & Corporate Relations Committee, were on hand to speak about the SOY program and soybean policy with producers who stopped by the ASA/ISA exhibits.

"ASA appreciates the opportunity to partner with BASF Corporation and the Iowa Soybean Association at the Farm Progress Show," Joslin said. "Working together, we provided a learning experience for everyone who visited the soybean tent area, and most importantly, we showed our members that we really do appreciate their membership."

Each day, volunteers from the ASA and ISA hosted members from across Iowa and neighboring states at "Club Soy," the VIP experience at the Farm Progress Show, where members received complimentary lunch and beverages in an air-conditioned tent sponsored by BASF. More than 1,000 visitors stopped by the ASA/ISA tent and 39 new members signed up during the three days of the show.



BASF representatives volunteered to serve lunch to ASA members and their guests at "Club Soy" during the Farm Progress Show. (ZimmComm New Media photo)

Plant Health and control whatever diseases are out there. There are things happening in the field that may be pulling yield down, and an application of Headline will address many of those issues.

"We put Headline on all our beans, and it's done a good job protecting them," Lay said. When asked about his participation in the 2008 SOY program Lay said, "It's been a good experience. It's our first year participating."

"My SOY field trial acres look outstanding from Headline," said ASA member Rusty Harris from Henderson, Tennessee. "I don't see any signs of stress or disease pressure."

Harris, who farms 700 acres including 350 acres of soybeans, reports that he is anticipating yields this year averaging 50 to 55 bu/A, which is an increase from 30 to 35 bu/A over the last two years.

With 2008 soybean prices averaging more than \$10.00 per bushel, Harris should be looking at incremental revenue of about \$200.00 per acre as a result of his improved soybean management program.

"I have learned so much and am very happy to be a part of this program," Harris said.

### Technical Comments

"Maximizing plant health, minimizing weed competition and protecting soy-

beans from disease and insects are on the minds of every grower," said Nicholas Fassler, BASF Technical Market Manager. "Participants in the SOY program have the advantage of testing how a well-managed crop protection program can boost yield on their crops with the support of their BASF advisor."



An early post residual herbicide takes out weeds and grasses right up front, which for many growers, provides a wider application window for glyphosate and may possibly make a second treatment unnecessary. (BASF photo)

Crop protection products are an important part of the equation toward protecting soybeans from environmental stress, disease and yield-robbing weed competition.

"Glyphosate resistance is a growing concern; however, the use of residual herbicide will reduce weed competition and widen the post-emergence window for glyphosate in season," Fassler said. "Small weeds can rob yield by up to 10 percent without a comprehensive weed management system."

With increased disease pressure created by this year's record rainfall, protecting soybean crops from yield-robbing foliar disease and stress should be top-of-mind for growers. Headline fungicide delivers superior protection from disease and environmental stress while consistently providing growers with a four to eight bushel per acre yield advantage in soybeans.

"Protecting yields with a season-long crop protection program is vital towards optimizing plant health during the soybean's entire life cycle," Fassler said. "A burndown program with a residual herbicide and a post application of glyphosate followed by an application of Headline fungicide at R2-R3 is a total crop protection system powered by innovative chemistry designed to help growers get the most out of every acre."

Watch for follow-up coverage on the 2008 SOY program in the January edition of the ASA Today newsletter as more grower participants are asked to share their thoughts on the program and how it affected yield and quality compared to program check plots.

# CULLERS HOSTS FIELD DAY

ASA member Kip Cullers put Southwest Missouri on the map with back-to-back world soybean yield championships. This summer, he provided thousands of growers a first-hand look at how yields that were previously thought impossible are within reach for any grower who uses leading technologies and careful management of their fields.

"Ever since I broke the world record for soybean yields in 2006, I've had a steady stream of requests to visit the farm," said Cullers, who co-owns K&K Farms near Purdy. "But this is the first time we've opened it up to so many growers, all interested in how to increase their yields."

Cullers, who manages more than 5,000 acres of soybeans and corn, believes there's a simple formula any grower should follow to get the most out of their acres: plant the right genetics and be proactive about protecting the crop throughout the season from weeds, diseases and insects.

While not as well known as his world record, Cullers achieved a 74 bu/A average soybean yield across his farm last year, almost double the Missouri state average.

"That's no accident," said Markus Heldt, Group Vice-President, BASF. "Kip understands that it takes season-long vigilance in protecting his crops and he applies that to routinely double the kind of yields seen by other farms in his area. We're very pleased that he chooses the BASF portfolio of crop protection innovations to help him manage his fields and get the most out of every acre, including, but not limited to, his record-breaking fields."

Leading BASF crop protection technologies were on display during the field tour, including the flagship product, Headline fungicide. Controlling diseases, Headline has delivered a consistent 4 to 8 bu/A yield advantage in soybeans in thousands of field trials over the past few years.

"Of course, Kip achieved much more than the average," said Dennis Belcher, Ph.D., BASF Technical Services Representative based in Missouri. "That's significant at a time when demand for grain is at an-all time high, particularly after flooding in many areas of the Midwest earlier this season."

The respect is mutual as Cullers has come to count on Belcher for advice over the years.

"Dennis is one of the people I trust to give me sound agronomic advice," said Cullers. "I know when I have a question, he's just a phone call away. Dennis is very responsive and will come out to look at a field on short notice."

Cullers acknowledges that he's also faced weather challenges this season and is convinced Headline will make the difference.

"The weather increased disease pressure everywhere and added a lot of stress to the crops," said Cullers. "To me, applying Headline was more important this year than ever. The last thing my soybeans or corn needed was to have to handle diseases, too. It's where you really see the importance of Plant Health."

For more information about the BASF portfolio of crop protection products, visit [www.agproducts.basf.com](http://www.agproducts.basf.com).



*Kip Cullers visited "Club Soy" at the Farm Progress Show and brought along samples of his 2008 crop soybeans. (ASA photo by Bob Callanan)*

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fungicide

**RESPECT**

**Extreme**  
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# The right tool, the right fit.

## BASF solutions help build your yield.

BASF has a complete portfolio of trusted solutions to help you get the most out of every acre — including **Extreme**<sup>®</sup>, **Prowl**<sup>®</sup> H<sub>2</sub>O, **Pursuit**<sup>®</sup> Plus and **Scepter**<sup>®</sup> herbicides. Plus powerful disease protection with the plant health benefits of **Headline**<sup>®</sup> fungicide, and the insect control of **Respect**<sup>®</sup> insecticide. BASF helps your soybeans reach their full potential.

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