

Industry News

Soy outlook discussed

Illinois soybean farmers, who will be busy planting their crop this month, listened in early February to short- and long-term market prospects at the 5th annual Illinois Soy-Corn Conference held in Decatur.

Noting that USDA had forecast soybean prices for the 1982/83 year to average \$5.50 a bushel, Jim Gill, director of market analysis, Commodities Division of the Illinois Farm Bureau, said he believes "it'll be better than that, probably back to the \$6 level." Gill cited farmers' response to the government payment-in-kind (PIK) program as a key to the market situation. Soybeans are not included in the PIK program.

In its Feb. 4 outlook report, USDA said 1983 soybean plantings could decline by one to three million acres from 1982's 72.2 million acres because low prices may make soybeans less attractive. "This would set the stage for soybean price recovery," the report said, adding, "The extent of the recovery will depend on how successful the acreage-reduction programs are in lowering production and raising prices of crops that compete with soybeans." The report also said there probably would be less double-cropped soybeans this year.

Later in February, the USDA released its survey of farmers' planting intentions. U.S. farmers indicated at the time of the survey that they would plant 68.8 million acres of soybeans, about 5% less than 1982 acreage. Farmers also said they expect to plant fewer acres of corn, wheat and cotton in 1983, according to the report, with cotton acres estimated at 9.28 million acres, down about 19%. Oilseed crop acreage would be 7.2% lower in 1983 than 1982 if farmers follow through on their intentions. Acreage intentions (with 1982 planted acreage in parentheses) were listed as: flaxseed, 1,000,000 (860,000); cotton, 9,281,200 (11,499,000); peanuts, 1,313,000 (1,299,000) and sunflower, 3,860,000 (5,015,000).

Jeff Gain, executive director of the American Soybean Association, listed three key issues to the soybean market—export issues, trade policies and uses. Citing President Reagan's signing of a contract sanctity bill in January as a major victory, Gain said the U.S.A. has to restore its credibility as an exporter. He added, "We're suffering more now from the strength of the dollar than the soybean supply."

Speaking on alternative uses for soybeans, Timothy L. Mounts, chief of the Oilseed Crops Lab at USDA's Northern Regional Research Center, said research needs include improving the flavor and functional properties of soybeans, developing new foods and developing analytical methods for soy protein. Mounts said half the soybean oil currently produced is used for domestic edible consumption, with one-fourth exported and the remaining one-fourth used for industrial purposes.

Mounts said "the time is coming" when an increased amount of fats and oils, versus petroleum, will be used in soaps, paints and varnish, fatty acids and other inedible products. According to Mounts, the current U.S. inedible

market uses approximately 5.8 billion pounds of fats and oils and could grow an additional 1.3 billion to 3 billion pounds by 1990. Nonfood soy oil derivatives, he said, include vinyl esters, for flexible coatings; cyclic fatty acids, for lubricants and coatings; aldehydes and aldehyde esters, for polymers, plastics and additives; organosulfur compounds, for lubricants; and organosilicon compounds, with yet undetermined uses. Other uses being studied include soy blends as an emergency fuel and soy oil carriers for herbicides and pesticides.

NBS project announced

Improved thermophysical property data for supercritical extraction processes and the custody transfer of solvents are being developed through a new research project by the U.S. Commerce Department's National Bureau of Standards (NBS). The primary applications are enhanced oil recovery and potential new supercritical separation processes for the chemical process industry.

Eight industrial firms and the Department of Energy are sponsoring the work, which is being performed at NBS' Boulder, Colorado, laboratories. They include Air Products and Chemicals Inc., ARCO Transportation Co., E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Co. Inc., Monsanto Co., Mobil Research and Development Corp., Phillips Petroleum Co., Shell Development Co. and Standard Oil Co. (SOHIO).

The first meeting of the project's steering committee, comprising sponsor representatives, was held in Boulder in January. The next meeting is slated for May 5. For further information on the project, contact Neil A. Olien, Division 773, National Bureau of Standards, Boulder, CO 80303.

News briefs

CasChem has acquired the Azethane Polyurethane product line from AZS Corporation of Atlanta. These products, which consist of a variety of prepolymers of isocyanates and polyether diols, will be manufactured in CasChem's Bayonne, New Jersey, plant. In another transaction, CasChem has appointed Ambrosia Industrial Chemical as a distributor for its castor oils and castor-based specialty chemicals in Florida.

Erratum

In the January 1983 *JAACS* news article on fats and oils production, the statistics on potential palm oil production were inadvertently omitted from Table I—Potential World Fats and Oils Production, which accompanied the article. The figures for potential palm oil production (in 1,000 metric tons) should have read:

	1978/79	1981/82	1982/83
Palm oil	4,268	6,109	6,476

The totals at the bottom of the column, as originally printed, include the palm oil figures.