

New Research Shows Americans Want to Know More About Biobased Products

Public Looks to the Federal Government for Leadership

(August 2007) – The United Soybean Board (USB) today released the findings of a landmark public opinion study that shows while American consumers' knowledge of biobased products is weak, their interest is strong. The nationwide research conducted by NuStats for USB also found that the public looks to the federal government to educate consumers, promote biobased products through education and funding as well as lead by example as a purchaser of these products.

A wide range of biobased products, such as cleaning supplies, BioCel™ carpet backing, lubricants, and foam insulation, are currently available. Soybean oil and other renewable agricultural materials serve as an ingredient in these products and reduce the petroleum content in them. Three-fourths (75%) of the 1,370 people surveyed in late May reported being unfamiliar with biobased products. However, eight out of ten (81%) of those surveyed with modest knowledge already expressed interest in learning more about them. Overall, 63% of those surveyed were interested in biobased products or in learning more.

“This research affirms that Americans see the value of biobased products, which can be made from America’s own soybeans to offer energy security, environmental, worker health and other benefits,” said United Soybean Board Domestic Marketing Committee Chair Chuck Myers, a soybean farmer from Lyons, Nebraska. “The study clearly shows that consumer education and product promotion make an enormous difference in whether people will buy biobased products. Through their checkoff, soybean growers have helped research and bring many of these products to market as well as helped educate federal employees about them.”

The 2002 Farm Bill calls for the federal government to purchase biobased products. On July 27, the House of Representatives approved 2007 Farm Bill legislation, which seeks to enhance federal procurement of biobased products. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Tom Harkin (D-IA) is also working on biobased language for a Senate Farm Bill Energy Title.

Participants in the survey said they look to the federal government to educate consumers, promote biobased through education and funding, and lead by example as a purchaser of these products. Excluding those not certain of their level of support (ranging from 32% to 44%):

- 88% support the federal government’s involvement in educating consumers about the availability and attributes of biobased products

- 88% support U.S. Congress' increase of funding to the Agriculture Department to support promotion, education and research of biobased products
- 89% support the federal government becoming a prominent and visible purchaser of biobased products
- 88% support the federal government doing more to support biobased products so the general public can buy them
- 86% support the U.S. Congress passing a tax credit legislation for manufacturers to switch to biobased products as replacement for petroleum
- 91% support state and local government purchase of biobased products.

An executive summary of the research is available at www.soybiobased.org In addition, USB has produced a catalog of currently available soy biobased products as well as profiles of success in federal biobased products use, which are available on the USB website at www.soybiobased.org.

The USB is composed of 64 U.S. soybean farmers appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture to invest soybean checkoff funds. The soybean checkoff is a farmer-supported marketing and research fund collected on each bushel of U.S. soybeans sold. USB invests these funds on behalf of the 680,000 U.S. soybean farmers in activities specifically designed to increase the global utilization of U.S. soybeans and to reduce production costs. Checkoff-funded investment areas include human and animal health and nutrition, research and development of new uses, and research to improve soybean composition and production efficiencies.