

# Soybean Yield Challenge Provides Learning Opportunities

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**T**he Illinois Soybean Association (ISA), in cooperation with state universities, community colleges, local FFA chapters and the agriculture industry, is sponsoring the 2010 Yield Challenge. The challenge is simple: Soybean producers and industry sponsors should

form teams of five to ten growers each. Each team will cooperatively plan and work together to produce the highest team average soybean yield possible in their crop reporting district.

The groups sponsoring the Yield Challenge hope to accomplish four closely related goals.

The first goal is to discover and fine-tune the management practices necessary to maximize soybean yield. Yield plots in other states have already shown that very high soybean yields are possible, but those yields have not been duplicated at other locations thus far. By establishing large numbers of high-yield plots under intensive management throughout the state, it may be possible to identify those management inputs that have the greatest potential to significantly increase average soybean yields when applied by most growers.

The second goal is to encourage all producers to utilize effective new management strategies that help increase both yield and profitability. The ISA provides the state's agricultural uni-

versities with soybean check-off dollars to fund numerous soybean production and utilization research trials. Immediate implementation of the research results currently in hand would potentially increase average soybean yields throughout the state.

The third goal is to provide large amounts of data that can be evaluated by researchers and the soybean industry to better understand the management components that affect yield. University research is often limited by availability of plot space, manpower and research funding. One of the requirements for entry in the 2010 Yield Challenge is that participants keep detailed records of the management inputs utilized on their farms, and that these records be provided to university researchers for compilation and statistical analysis.

The ultimate goal is to promote to all Illinois soybean growers those practices proven to be both profitable and sustainable. Yield Challenge teams are encouraged to be creative and innovative as they develop their management strategies, so that new knowledge is gained. However, it makes no sense to promote large-scale implementation of management practices that are either economically or environmentally unsound.

For more information on the ISA 2010 Yield Challenge or to sign up a team, visit the 2010 Yield Challenge website at [www.soyyieldchallenge.com](http://www.soyyieldchallenge.com). Δ

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