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USDA Bioproduct Funding Paves Way for Soy Oil Rubber to Hit the Road!

Low-cost, longer-lasting soy oil option one of three pilot proposals selected

Washington, D.C. Dec. 21, 2022. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has announced projects that will be funded through its National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Bioproduct Pilot Program, and the news is good not only for the soy industry, but also rural areas where road repair can be costly and all too short term. USDA's \$9.5 million investment in sustainable U.S. bioproduct manufacturing will fund research and development of value-added products from agricultural commodities, including soy.

The innovative soy project, run by Soylei Innovations of Ames, Iowa, transforms high oleic soybean oil into thermoplastic rubber for pavements, and has had the [support of ASA](#) and its farmer leaders.

Daryl Cates, American Soybean Association president and a soy grower, commented on the merits of the project and ASA's involvement, saying, "This soy bioproduct has layers of potential, including extending how long road repairs for existing surfaces can last and providing a less costly paving solution nationwide—something even more important in rural communities where tax revenues for road paving and maintenance budgets are scant. We are very proud to have supported both development of the Bioproduct Pilot Program and this soy asphalt project, specifically."

The NIFA Bioproduct Pilot Program is a two-year program that was authorized and funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. ASA worked with Senator Mike Rounds (SD) and South Dakota Soy to encourage its inclusion in the legislation.

ASA has supported soy asphalt innovations including this project and others being led in Iowa, and similarly, asphalt projects in additional soy states. Many of the projects, like those selected for the Bioproduct Pilot Program, maximize a two-prong, company/university partnership approach to innovation: Iowa State University, through the backing of the United Soybean Board and Iowa Soy, contributed heavily to the Soylei project. Soy-based asphalts have been piloted for some time on Iowa's highways, and this program provides Soylei and Iowa State additional resources to further scale up development of soy-based asphalts.

The Soylei project speaks to the core mission of the [Bioproduct Pilot Program](#), which was designed to spur economic activity in the nation's rural areas while lowering commercialization risks associated with bringing biobased products to market. According to USDA's release, "The program's exploration into bioproducts accelerates USDA's efforts to develop circular bioeconomies, where agricultural resources are harvested, consumed, and regenerated in a sustainable manner." The program aligns with the administration's efforts to promote biotechnology and biomanufacturing.

More on [Soylei Innovations](#) and the other awardees' projects can be found [here](#).

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The American Soybean Association (ASA) represents U.S. soybean farmers on domestic and international policy issues important to the soybean industry. ASA has 26 affiliated state associations representing 30 soybean-producing states and more than 500,000 soybean farmers. More information at soygrowers.com.

For more information contact:

Wendy Brannen, wbrannen@soy.org

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