Key Activities and Major Accomplishments

Addressing the Trans Fat Issue 1993-2009

Since 1994, the United Soybean Board has played and continues to play a significant role in advancing the understanding of the science around trans fats; ensuring responsible and accurate communication of the science to the food industry, health professionals and consumers; and funding important agricultural production studies to identify soybean solutions for the future.

Through its partnerships throughout the soybean value chain – from the farm to the table – USB has helped ensure a safer, healthier food supply.

1. Starting in **1994**, USB was a **significant contributor to studies defining trans fats' effect on health** – the University of Massachusetts – Lowell hamster study and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) human clinical study performed by Joseph Judd, et al. These studies, particularly the Judd study, proved to be defining research on the effects of trans fats and risk for heart disease. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) delayed issuance of a proposed rule for nutrition labeling until results of these studies were completed.

2. Also starting in **1994**, USB was a **founding member of the Trans Fat Coalition**, an industry coalition that worked collaboratively and strategically to share and invest in new science, coordinate and communicate public messages that were consistent with the science, and provide timely information into government agencies. This coalition first grouped in April 1994 and continued through 2006. Outcomes of this collaboration included providing comments to the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committees and the FDA, conducting face-to-face meetings with USDA and FDA to share information and understand data gaps, and ensuring consistent messaging on trans fats throughout the food industry.

3. As early as **1995**, **USB funded agricultural research to map the soybean genome, and utilize advanced breeding techniques as well as biotechnology to alter the fatty acid profile of the soybean to produce oil that would require less/no hydrogenation**. As a result, low-linolenic soybeans are on the market, and low-linolenic/mid-oleic oil is being tested by food companies and others. Researchers have also learned more about the genetic control of fatty acids and identified genetic markers, making it easier for breeders to select for these traits.

4. In **1998, USB coordinated a meeting with the soybean value chain to identify desirable traits for the future.** This effort defined a research strategy as well as the Better Bean Initiative and, ultimately, QUALISOY™. The resulting platform helps the soybean industry communicate the future pipeline of traits and accelerate new soybean varieties to market as they become available.

5. In **2002**, **USB helped fund**, through the Trans Fat Coalition, **an in-depth consumer study looking at various scenarios for food labeling that were proposed by the FDA**. Results of this study were shared broadly, particularly with FDA, and were helpful in diminishing interest in a footnote warning about trans fats. These results helped improve understanding of how consumers would interpret new information on the Nutrition Facts panel.

6. **QUALISOY**, a soybean industry collaborative platform, was **officially launched in 2004 through USB's leadership. The goal of this initiative is to increase global competitiveness of U.S. soybeans through the development and marketing of value-added traits that meet marketplace needs.** QUALISOY helped ensure the commercial success of a low-linolenic variety in 2006 that helped U.S. soybean growers regain some lost market share due to earlier displacement by competitive oils that require little or no hydrogenation.

7. **In 2005, USB facilitated the development of a Stearic Acid Steering Committee and Coalition** to serve as a forum to advance scientific understanding of stearic acid and health in order to pave the way for the introduction of interesterified soy oil and a high-stearic soybean. Representatives on the Coalition represent a broad spectrum of interests including chocolate manufacturers, beef and dairy farmers, food manufacturers and soybean interests. USB funded a literature review of the science surrounding stearic acid intake and various markers for heart disease and other health outcomes.

8. **In 2009, low-linolenic and mid-oleic soybean oil are commercially available, and high-oleic is emerging from the pipeline soon.** Low-saturate, high-stearic and increased omega-3 soybean oils are on the horizon. These soybean innovations not only offer trans fat solutions but provide a wider array of benefits for product functionality and consumer health.

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