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USB Joins CFI Coalition for Responsible Gene Editing in Agriculture

GLADSTONE, Mo. – Thursday, September 22, 2021 – The United Soybean Board (USB) has joined the leadership of the [Coalition for Responsible Gene Editing in Agriculture](#), a group of leaders in food, agriculture and science collaborating around the vision of global acceptance and support for gene editing. The coalition is facilitated by [The Center for Food Integrity \(CFI\)](#).

USB is an organizations whose 78 volunteer farmer-directors work on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers to invest checkoff funds in programs and partnerships that drive soybean innovation and increase markets for U.S. soy.

“It’s an exciting time for soybean farmers, with advancements in gene editing to improve crops and help solve pressing challenges in farming and food production. That includes helping farmers keep pace with the growing demand for healthier, more abundant and affordable food, while using less water, land and other resources,” said Mace Thornton, USB vice president of communications and marketing, and CFI board member. “We look forward to working collaboratively with the broader food system and technology developers to earn trust in gene editing as a solution for issues we face in food production and environmental stewardship.”

Andy Scott, a soybean farmer and breeder in Hidalgo County, Texas, and USB director, will serve on the Coalition Framework Oversight Committee, responsible for administration and verification processes related to the Coalition’s Responsible Use Framework.

Emily Dustman, USB director of science education, will serve on the Coalition Operations Committee, which leads stakeholder engagement, communication and Coalition administration.

“The success of gene editing hinges on public support. USB is an important contributor, representing the integral role of farmers as coalition members engage in public dialogue about the shared benefits and responsible use of gene editing,” said Charlie Arnot, chief executive officer of CFI. “For more than a decade, we’ve partnered with USB on many initiatives. USB’s active role in the coalition is a natural next step as we work to earn trust in a technology that is vital to agriculture.”

Other members of the coalition include American Seed Trade Association, BASF, Biotechnology Innovation Organization, Corteva Agriscience, Costco, Genus, National Pork Board, Tropic Biosciences and Pivot Bio. Advisors to the coalition represent the Center for Science in the Public Interest, FMI – The Food Industry Association, The Nature Conservancy and United States Department of Agriculture.

The mission of the coalition, which was established in 2016, is to cultivate support for gene editing in agriculture through the development and adoption of trust-worthy guidelines for the responsible use of gene editing, effective stakeholder outreach and engagement, and broad-based involvement and collaboration of those engaged in gene editing.

After a nearly two-year development process and robust stakeholder feedback process, the coalition has developed a Responsible Use Framework, a set of commitments and recommended best practices that demonstrate an organization’s commitment to using gene editing responsibly. The framework includes independent third-party verification of conformance with the framework. The framework is now being shared with interested stakeholders to solicit support and continue the process for implementation.

In addition, the coalition has created a soy-specific communication guide, [Gene Editing & Soy: Engage in the Conversation](#), to encourage an informed dialogue on gene editing in food and agriculture. It includes five specific approaches to trust-earning engagement.

To develop the guide, the coalition collaborated with universities, associations and others who have conducted research on consumer understanding and attitudes about gene editing. Common threads from this research, along with previous learnings about biotechnology acceptance, provide the foundation for the communication recommendations.

Materials and information about the coalition are available at <https://geneediting.foodintegrity.org/>. To learn more about USB visit unitedsoybean.org.

The Center for Food Integrity is a not-for-profit organization that helps today's food system earn consumer trust. Our members and project partners are committed to providing accurate information and working together to address important issues in food and agriculture. The Center does not lobby or advocate for individual companies or brands. For more information, visit www.foodintegrity.org.



