

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board Elects New Officers**

*ASPB to be chaired by John Freeman of Desha County*



*Caption: (Left to Right) John Freeman of Desha County, ASPB chairman; Doug Hartz of Arkansas County, ASPB vice chairman; and Joe Thrash of Perry County, ASPB secretary-treasurer.*

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** (August 16, 2022) – The [Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board](#) (ASPB) elected new officers to lead the organization during a recent board meeting. Elected to chair the nine-member board is [John Freeman](#) of Desha County. [Doug Hartz](#) of Arkansas County was elected vice chair, with [Joe Thrash](#) of Perry County elected secretary-treasurer. The three farmer-leaders will serve in their respective roles through the board’s 2024 fiscal year. [Donald Morton Jr.](#) of Prairie County, completed his term as board chairman in July and will serve a two-year term as immediate past chair.

“As chairman, my goal is to ensure the checkoff and its investments remain close to producers’ interests,” Freeman said. “The members of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board are dedicated to advancing the soybean industry in Arkansas, and it is a job we don’t take lightly.”

**Freeman** grew up in Dumas where he first began farming with his father. After earning an ag business degree from the University of Arkansas, Freeman returned to the family farm eager to plant his first soybean crop. Since serving as an ASPB member, he has seen firsthand how checkoff-funded research benefits him and other producers. Freeman seeks to continue the board’s investment in meaningful research during his tenure as chairman.

As ASPB vice chairman, **Doug Hartz** of Stuttgart assists in leading the board’s administration of the checkoff. Hartz is a living part of the Arkansas soybean industry’s history. [Hartz’s grandfather](#) introduced soybeans to Arkansas, planting the state’s first recorded crop in 1925. Today, Hartz carries on his family’s legacy.



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**Joe Thrash** of Conway is a third-generation farmer. As secretary-treasurer of the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board, Thrash works to ensure checkoff dollars are appropriated to new technology and research. In addition to his role with ASPB, Thrash is also an active member of the Arkansas Soybean Association and Arkansas Farm Bureau.

The soybean checkoff is a congressionally mandated assessment on soybeans, the proceeds of which are used to fund soybean research and promotion efforts. To learn more about the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board and its officers, visit [TheMiracleBean.com](http://TheMiracleBean.com).

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**About the Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board**

The Arkansas Soybean Promotion Board is led by nine volunteer farmer-leaders nominated by various producer organizations in Arkansas and appointed by the Governor. Soybeans are Arkansas's top row crop with approximately 3 million acres planted each year, generating an annual economic impact of \$2 billion. Arkansas is consistently ranked among the top ten soybean producing states nationally, exporting 50% of its crop. ASPB invests more than \$2.2 million in research each year as part of its commitment to the continued sustainability of the Arkansas soybean industry. Learn more by visiting [www.themiraclebean.com](http://www.themiraclebean.com).