

Before the Environmental Resources and Energy Committee, Pennsylvania Senate

Hearing on Waste to Fuels

Testimony of Gary Cordier, Senior Vice President of Grain and Oilseed, Perdue AgriBusiness

Thank you, Chairman Yaw, Chairwoman Comitta, and the honorable members of the Senate Environmental Resources and Energy Committee for allowing Perdue AgriBusiness to provide testimony on this important topic. My name is Gary Cordier and I serve in the role of Senior Vice President of Grain and Oilseed for Perdue AgriBusiness. Our company is headquartered in Salisbury Maryland. My personal residence is in North Cornwall Township in Lebanon County.

Perdue AgriBusiness, part of Perdue Farms, partners with farmers, local communities, and customers worldwide to grow, process, sell, and transport agriculture products. Our company operates multiple soybean crushing plants across the country including a facility in Bainbridge, PA. We know that soybean products are essential protein feedstocks for animal agriculture, but our crush and refining ALSO process produces a number of co-products that are used for many non-food applications, including methyl esters (biodiesel and renewable diesel), lubricants, personal care products, and cosmetics.

Perdue AgriBusiness started crushing soybeans in Bainbridge in November of 2017, and since then we have purchased and processed close to 125 million bushels of beans. That means we've worked with 1,850 farmers in the surrounding areas, and we are very proud of that. Partnering with these farmers means they no longer have to ship their crop out of state for processing, and now they save on transportation costs AND environmental impact.

We have also set a new standard for environmentally conscious agriculture processing. Our company partners with the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority (LCSWMA) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and maximize energy efficiency. This innovative collaboration has allowed the Bainbridge plant to significantly shrink its environmental footprint, making it one of the greenest facilities of its kind.

The state-of-the-art facility has revolutionized soybean processing, eliminating the need for fossil fuels and wastewater generation. Instead, Perdue harnesses the let-down-steam for LCSWMA's waste-to-energy process to power its operations, a move that has saved an impressive 33,700 metric tons of CO2 equivalent in the last six years alone – equivalent to preventing the burning of 35.9 million pounds of coal. Completing the circle, Perdue sends used process water back to LCSWMA, which treats and reuses it as a part of their zero-discharge program. Perdue sent 22.35 million gallons of used process water back to LCSWMA in 2023, which otherwise would have been treated and potentially discharged to the Susquehanna River.

Moreover, Perdue's Bainbridge plant has streamlined the supply chain for Pennsylvania farmers, offering them a convenient local solution for processing soybeans. Previously, farmers had to contend with transportation costs and out-of-state processing facilities, eating into their margins. With Perdue's facility in their backyard, farmers now have a one-stop shop, fostering local economic growth and supporting the state's agricultural community. Working out of our plant in Bainbridge, Perdue has collaborated with thousands of farmers across Pennsylvania, processing millions of bushels of soybeans annually. This has driven 1.5 BILLION DOLLARS in farmer revenue since we opened our doors at Bainbridge.

Our collaboration does not end with the farmer. The soybeans crushed at our facility are fully utilized for crude oil, refined soybean oil, or co-products. Specifically for crude oil applications, the product from our Bainbridge plant is often transported less than 30 miles away to World Energy Harrisburg LLC where the raw oil is processed to become a biodiesel. The biodiesel is transported to local distribution terminals or petroleum storage facilities, Fuel retailers then sell this locally produced product to the final consumer which is used in motor vehicle engines and home heating systems across the Commonwealth. This closed-loop supply chain creates a dynamic where a soybean grown in Pennsylvania will be consumed to meet the energy needs of Pennsylvania consumers.

Perdue's commitment to this important sector of the fuel supply chain is not just unique to the Pennsylvania market. Our feedstocks produced in other locations across the country contribute to biodiesel supply as well as the emerging renewable diesel demand for low-carbon drop-in fuel solutions.

I want to again thank the Committee Leadership and members for holding this hearing today and I look forward to future discussion. I am happy to take any questions.