



Pennsylvania Soybean Board

2023 Pennsylvania Soybean Yield Contest Winners Announced

Lancaster County farmer takes top honors.

HARRISBURG, PA (December 7, 2023)

–Lancaster County farmer Eric Charles was the commonwealth’s top producer in this year’s Pennsylvania Soybean Yield competition, sponsored annually by the Pennsylvania Soybean Board. His winning yield topped more than 30 other entrants at 101.00 bu./acre.



Regional winners

The Pennsylvania Soybean Yield contest recognizes not only the state-wide grand champion, but also the top growers in each of five production regions of Pennsylvania, based on maturity maps:

1st Place State Overall & South-Central Region – Eric Charles (Lancaster County); 101.00 bu./acre

1st Place Central Region – Ian Stamy (Cumberland County); 84.71 bu./acre

1st Place Southeastern Region – Brad Kiefer (Northampton County); 93.73 bu./acre

1st Place Western Region – Thomas Hoovler (Mercer County); 74.74 bu./acre

1st Place Northern Region – John Tebbs (Lycoming County); 78.98 bu./acre

Growing conditions

The smoke streaming into Pennsylvania from Canadian wildfires this summer didn’t just affect air quality, said Penn State Extension Senior Educator Andrew Frankenfield, who coordinates the contest with fellow Senior Extension Educator Del Voight. It also impacted field crops.

"The smoke from the wildfires was a big concern early in the summer," said Frankenfield. "It reduced solar radiation and caused concerns for crop growth and development. Fortunately, the worst of the smoke occurred in early June when crops were smaller and were also experiencing drought conditions which helped alleviate some stress by reducing leaf surface temperatures and transpiration off the plants."

The average yield in the 2023 contest was 76.54 bu./acre. Charles was the only grower to surpass the 100 bu./acre level this year, but there were three farmers who produced over 90 bu./acre, and eight whose beans yielded over 80 bu./acre.

More than half of the contest entries were planted by April 26, not just in the south-central region, but throughout the state due to a dry month that ended with soaking rain. Most areas experienced an extended dry period from May to mid-June. More frequent rains returned from mid-June into July, with August turning dry for many areas. September precipitation was average.

"Generally, there was good harvest weather," Frankenfield continued, "October weather was drier than normal which allowed for good harvest conditions."

Top grower

Eric Charles, the statewide and South-Central Region winner, planted Pioneer P34A65PR variety after rylage with a no-till drill on 7.5" rows on May 4. He used a 2-pass herbicide program and applied a fungicide and an insecticide. His crop received only .20" of rain from planting until the middle of June. From mid-June to July, he received about 9" of rain, but only 2" in August. In September, more frequent rain returned totaling about 5.25" for the month. Charles harvested his crop on October 11 and followed-up after harvest planting wheat as a cover crop.

As the top state winner, Eric Charles will receive an educational trip for two to the Commodity Classic, the annual joint convention of the American Soybean Association, National Corn Growers Association, National Association of Wheat Growers, and the National Grain Sorghum Producers. The regional winners will also receive an educational trip to the Commodity Classic.

The contest was introduced by the Pennsylvania Soybean Board to showcase crop management practices of some of the top soybean producers in the state. A summary of the crop production practices from the 2023 contest entrants is available from Penn State Extension educators and at pasoybean.org.

About Pennsylvania Soybean Board

The [Pennsylvania Soybean Board](https://pasoybean.org) is a farmer-controlled Board responsible for managing Pennsylvania's share of funds received from the nationwide Soybean Checkoff program. The funding is available under an assessment program, approved by Congress in 1990, under which soybean farmers contribute 50 cents of every \$100 they receive for their beans at the first point of sale. Funds are used to develop markets, educate consumers, and research new ways to utilize and produce soybeans more efficiently. For more information, visit pasoybean.org.

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