

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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## EU-28

**Post:** Brussels USEU

### **EU Recognizes U.S. Soybean Industry Sustainability Scheme**

**Report Categories:**

Biofuels

Oilseeds and Products

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**Report Highlights:**

In January 2019, the European Commission recognized the U.S. soy industry's scheme certifying U.S. soybeans compliance with sustainability criteria laid out in EU biofuels legislation. With this recognition, U.S. soybeans can now be used for biofuel production in the EU and count towards EU renewable energy targets.

## **General Information:**

On January 29, 2019, the European Commission [announced](#) the recognition of a voluntary scheme developed by the U.S. soy industry demonstrating compliance with the sustainability criteria of the EU's Renewable Energy Directive (RED) for 2010-2020.

The EU requires that biofuel meet certain criteria to receive tax incentives and/or count toward mandatory national renewable targets for transport fuels. The criteria include greenhouse gas savings, exclusion for land with high biodiversity value and high carbon stock, and measures to temper indirect land-use change due to these biofuel incentives. Legislation requires that all biofuel used in the EU, whether produced in the EU or a third country, demonstrably meet this criteria through compliance certification. Using a voluntary scheme is [one of the ways](#) for biofuels to be certified. There are over a dozen certification schemes recognized by the EU.

## **U.S. Soybeans Sustainability Recognized**

The EU published the [Commission Implementing Decision 2019/142](#) recognizing U.S. Soybean Sustainability Assurance Protocol (SSAP-RED) program in the Official Journal on January 30, 2019. The Decision will enter into force on February 19, 2019 and shall apply until June 30, 2021. SSAP-RED addresses the specific requirements of the RED regulation, including restrictions on land conversion with commitments on auditing, compliance and reporting. The European Commission [noted](#) that the recognition of the scheme can be extended beyond 2021 “if the scheme puts in place the changes regarding the sustainability criteria in line with the requirements of the revised Renewable Energy Directive” (RED II), for the period 2021-2030.

The EU is already a large importer of U.S. soy for food and feed with a value of USD 2.5 billion for marketing year 2017/2018. [1] With this decision, EU soy crushers can now also use oil from U.S. soybeans to produce biodiesel that will count towards mandatory national renewable transport fuel targets under the EU's Directive.

U.S. soy industry has long touted sustainability measures its farmers have been practicing for years. U.S. soy farmers use of best management practices and the latest technology [helped](#) reduce greenhouse gas production by 42 percent per ton and soil erosion by 66 percent since 1980. Jim Sutter, CEO of U.S. Soybean Export Council [said](#) that approval of the SSAP-RED by the EU is recognition of the sustainability of soybean production in the United States and will further enhance marketing opportunities for U.S. soybeans in the EU. Sutter said, “Recognition of the SSAP-RED by the European Commission is an important milestone in documenting the overall sustainability of U.S. soy on the European and global markets.”

## **More information:**

- [European Commission Press Release](#)
- [USSEC Press Release](#)

[1] Data from Global Trade Atlas

