

# Bob Dylan and the Soybean Leader Pipeline

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**K**eeping the leadership pipeline full is a strategic challenge for every aspect of life, whether it is on the farm, local school or church board or the ISA board. ISA is always looking for new skilled and committed young leaders to step up and grab the reins, as seasoned and experienced leaders fulfill their terms of service.

I recently read an article titled, *Lyrical Wisdom: Leadership Lessons from Bob Dylan*. While Dylan's name certainly is not synonymous with farming success, inspiration is found between the lines of his songs. One of the lyrics quoted was, "You better start swimming or sink like a stone, cause the times they are a-changing."

Times and circumstances faced by Illinois soybean farmers are changing. Worldwide demand for protein is growing, along with competition for meeting demand. Midwest soybean farmers used to be first in line to feed a hungry world. Now we are one of many. Illinois also used to enjoy a robust livestock industry. That is no longer the case. Yet animal agriculture remains the top consumer of soybean meal, and soybean meal makes up about 61 percent of the price farmers receive for their crop.

While ISA needs local soybean producers who are creative and analytical to serve, there are other ways to get involved. Attend a farm show, respond to calls for grassroots action, stand up for animal agriculture in your community, support ISA's efforts to increase weight limits on local roads and bridges, and become an ISA member.

Another one of Dylan's lyrics quoted in the article was, "I believe in you, even though I be outnumbered." As a leader, it is often necessary to put your reputation on the line to stand up for what you believe. Some of the greatest advancements in history were moved forward by new leaders making a leap in faith believing they could make a difference.

Are you ready to take a leap? We encourage – no, challenge – you to get involved. ♦

## Leadership Tips to Count On

No one insight unlocks the door to effective leadership. But there are ways to remove a padlock:

- 1 Lead by example.** If you want others to follow your lead, demonstrate the ability to follow.
- 2 Become a better listener.** Practice active listening. When others know you will hear them out before you speak, they are more likely to listen to what you say when you do speak.
- 3 Give credit where credit is due.** Nothing goes further in building a rapport than recognizing someone's accomplishments on a timely basis.
- 4 Focus on the big picture.** Don't choose the "Ready, Fire, Aim" pattern of leadership. By keeping attuned to the main goal, rather than day-to-day tactics, your aim will improve.
- 5 Think like a newly minted immigrant.** When our forefathers arrived, they saw the business world with fresh eyes and look what happened. If you adopt this mindset, you may identify opportunities others have overlooked.

## Soybean Price Components

