

Soybean History

In 1829, U.S. farmers first grew soybeans. They raised a variety for soy sauce. During the Civil War, soldiers used soybeans as “coffee berries” to brew “coffee” when real coffee was scarce.

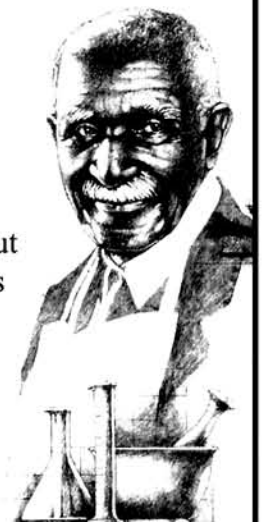


In 1879, soybean crops were harvested at two agricultural experiment stations in New Jersey from seeds obtained in Europe. By 1889, several more agricultural experiment stations in the United States were working with soybeans using seed varieties brought from Japan.

By 1898, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) began introducing new varieties of soybeans from Asia, and research into the bean’s potential began in earnest. By 1907, there were 23 varieties of the plant in the United States, including 15 based upon USDA research.

By the 20th century, many American farmers were growing soybeans as a forage crop for cattle.

In 1904, at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, noted botanist and chemist George Washington Carver began studying the soybean. His discoveries changed the way people thought about the soybean; no longer was it just a forage crop. Now its beans provided valuable protein and oil.

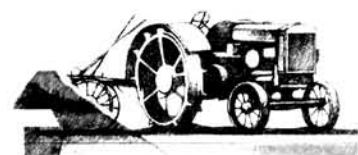


William Morse, director of forage crop investigations at the Arlington Experimental Farm in Virginia, led USDA’s efforts to gain acceptance of the soybean as a potentially major agricultural crop in America. Morse went on to help form the American Soybean Association in 1919, becoming its first president.

In 1920, combines were first used to harvest soybeans, making them as easy to harvest as they were to grow.

1922 In 1922, Staley Co. built the first major U.S. soybean processing plant in Decatur, Ill.

By 1929, U.S. soybean production had grown to 9 million bushels.



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