

Soybean Referendum Procedure

- Act requires the Secretary of Agriculture provide soybean producers the opportunity to petition for a referendum every five years.
- Soybean producers eligible to participate in the request for referendum are defined as any producer who paid an assessment on the sale of soybeans during a specified period – typically, the preceding calendar year – and who owned or shared in the ownership and the risk of loss of such soybeans during this period of time.
- Eligible individuals who do not want a referendum need not take any action.
- Producers can obtain a referendum request form either in person, by mail or by fax, from a specified period (typically one month), from their county Farm Service Agency offices or online.
- Individual producers and other producer entities can request a referendum at the county FSA office that maintains and processes the producer's administrative farm records. A producer not participating in FSA programs may request a referendum at the county FSA office serving the area where the producer owns or rents land.
- Referendum forms returned by mail must be postmarked by the last day of the referendum request period, and received in the county FSA office by a specified date following the final day of the request period.
- Requests for Referendum forms returned in person or by fax must be received in the county FSA office by the final date of the referendum request period.
- Producers are required to attach documentation such as a sales receipt to the referendum request form showing that the producer, corporation or other entity paid assessments on soybeans during the eligibility period (typically the calendar year preceding the request for referendum date).
- FSA determines a producer's eligibility and notifies producers who are ineligible to participate in the request for referendum process.
- If USDA determines that at least 10 percent of the nation's soybean producers have requested a referendum, a referendum will then be held within one year from that determination.
- No more than one-fifth of the producers who support having a referendum can be from any one state.
- Federal law requires that soybean checkoff dollars must be used to conduct the request for referendum process, and, if desired, a referendum.