



## Soy LEEDs the Way to More Green Products



Today everyone wants to promote themselves as being "green" or environmentally friendly. But it is hard for consumers to keep track of products that are actually more environmentally friendly and products with hollow claims. That is where the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification comes into play.

The United Soybean Board (USB) and the soybean checkoff have sponsored many products that have in turn become important components of LEED-certified buildings, including products from Green Products, LLC, Biobased Systems and New Century Coatings.

LEED certification is administered by the U.S. Green Building Council and is based on criteria that include water preservation and efficiency, conservation of materials and resources, recycling, indoor environmental quality and sustainable site planning.

The program is a voluntary, consensus-based national standard for developing high-performance, sustainable buildings. LEED uses a standard benchmark of measurement for assessing building performance and meeting sustainability goals.

LEED is a self-assessing system designed for rating new and existing commercial, institutional and high-rise residential buildings. It evaluates environmental performance from a "whole building" perspective over a building's life cycle, providing a definitive standard for what constitutes a green building.

The program recognizes achievements and promotes expertise in green building through a comprehensive system offering project certification, professional accreditation, training and practical resources.

The assessment focuses exclusively on an individual building structure and not a specific product. The purpose of the program is to evaluate the whole building from an environmental performance perspective over the building's life cycle to determine if the building is a "green" building. Under the program a building is evaluated based on six primary categories including:

- Sustainable site
- Water efficiency
- Energy and atmosphere
- Materials and resources
- Indoor environmental quality
- Innovation and design process.

Points or credit are awarded for the various line items in each of the above categories, and buildings are deemed LEED buildings if they earn a certain number of points. There are different ratings systems for the following:

- New Commercial Construction and Major Renovation projects
- Guidelines for Multiple Buildings and On-Campus Building Projects
- Existing Building Operations and Maintenance
- Commercial Interiors projects
- Core and Shell development projects
- Homes
- Neighborhood Development
- Schools

Certification under the LEED program has four levels. Certification requires 26-32 points, Silver Certification requires 33-38 points, Gold Certification requires 39-51 points and Platinum Certification requires 52-69 points.

"Programs like LEED encourage the entire construction industry to look at environmentally-friendly options, like soy products," says Todd Allen, United Soybean Board New Uses Committee chair and soybean farmer from West Memphis, Ark. "The soybean checkoff is proud to work with a number of companies in the construction industry on programs like LEED to become environmentally friendly."

Many soy products, such as soy-based roof coatings, caulking and foam insulation, have been important parts of LEED-certified buildings. To find out more about the many construction uses for soy-based products, visit [www.unitedsoybean.org/newuses](http://www.unitedsoybean.org/newuses).

USB is made up of 64 farmer-directors who oversee the investments of the soybean checkoff on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers. Checkoff funds are invested in the areas of animal utilization, human utilization, industrial utilization, industry relations, market access and supply. As stipulated in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for USB and the soybean checkoff.