



The SOYBEAN JOURNEY

After a farmer harvests his soybeans, they need to be transported to get to the next step in their journey from pod to plate. There are three main ways that soybeans and soybean products are transported: on a barge down the river, on a semi-truck on the highway, and in a tanker or hopper car on a train. Read below about each method and the reasons they are used.



RIVER TRANSPORTATION:

Soybeans can be moved using very little fuel on a barge. Barges can hold a very large cargo. One barge can hold 1,500 tons of cargo. Barges take most of their cargo to Louisiana where there is a port to ship to other countries.



HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION:

The majority of soybeans are transported via semi-trucks. Trucks can take soybeans and soybean products from the fields to grain elevators, processing plants, biodiesel plants, and other manufacturing plants. Trucks are the easiest and quickest way to transport goods. A truck can hold 26 tons of cargo.

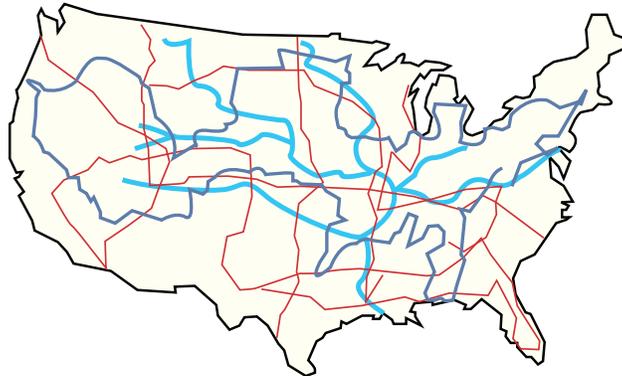


RAILROAD TRANSPORTATION:

Trains can transport soybeans, soy oil, and soy biodiesel. Soy oil and biodiesel can be transported in a tanker car and soybeans in a hopper car. A hopper car can carry up to 224,500 lbs. of soybeans. A tanker car can hold 30,000 gallons of fuel or oil. Trains transport soybeans to river terminals or grain elevators to be delivered to buyers. A train can move one ton of soybeans 202 miles on one gallon.



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There is a soybean cargo load that weighs 8,000 tons that needs to be moved from Rock Island, IL to a port in Louisiana to export to other countries. Using the transportation information sheet, explain which method of transportation you would choose to move this cargo and explain concrete reasons why you chose this method.

There is a soybean cargo weighing 25 tons that needs to be moved from the grain elevator in Rockford, IL to a biodiesel processing plant in Freeport, IL. The processed biodiesel, 15,000 gallons, then needs to be moved from the processing plant to a buyer in Nebraska. Using the transportation information sheet, explain which method, or methods, of transportation you would choose for the different parts of the journey. Use concrete reasoning to explain your choices.