

At the U.S. Geological Survey

## Map Makers Make Soy Ink Their Choice

*Why do the map printers at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) prefer and use soy ink?*

- *Because it is mandated by the Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994?*
- *Because they find soy ink safer for employees to handle?*
- *Because it is easier to dispose of environmentally?*

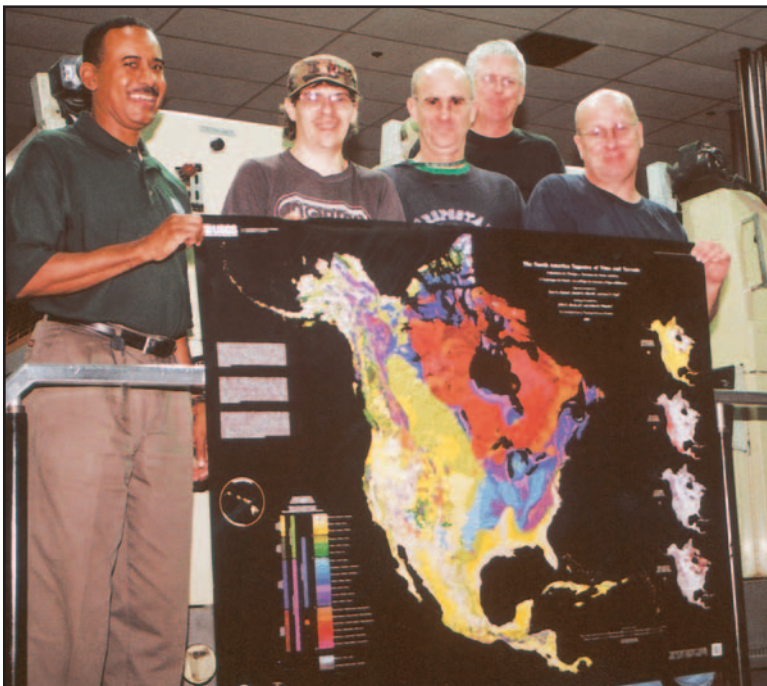
Each of the above is an important benefit of soy ink, according to Terry Kiser, retired Chief of Quality Control at the USGS print shop in Reston, Virginia, who instituted the use of soy ink before 1994. However, the real reason is, “It does a superior job of printing...Think about the kind of maps USGS produces. Many are very detailed showing contour lines, rivers, roads and other topographic features in different colors. The maps must be printed sharply and the colors must be easily distinguishable,” he explains.

“Soy inks possess excellent ‘tack stability’ on the printing press rollers. This is essential in maintaining full and even ink color strength when printing the very fine lines of many USGS map products,” he says.

“The soy ink was much easier for our pressmen to control, resulting in less material waste and press downtime,” Kiser says. “It is a far more efficient ink for that kind of printing because it lasts longer, allowing us to print more with less down time because of fewer wash-ups.”



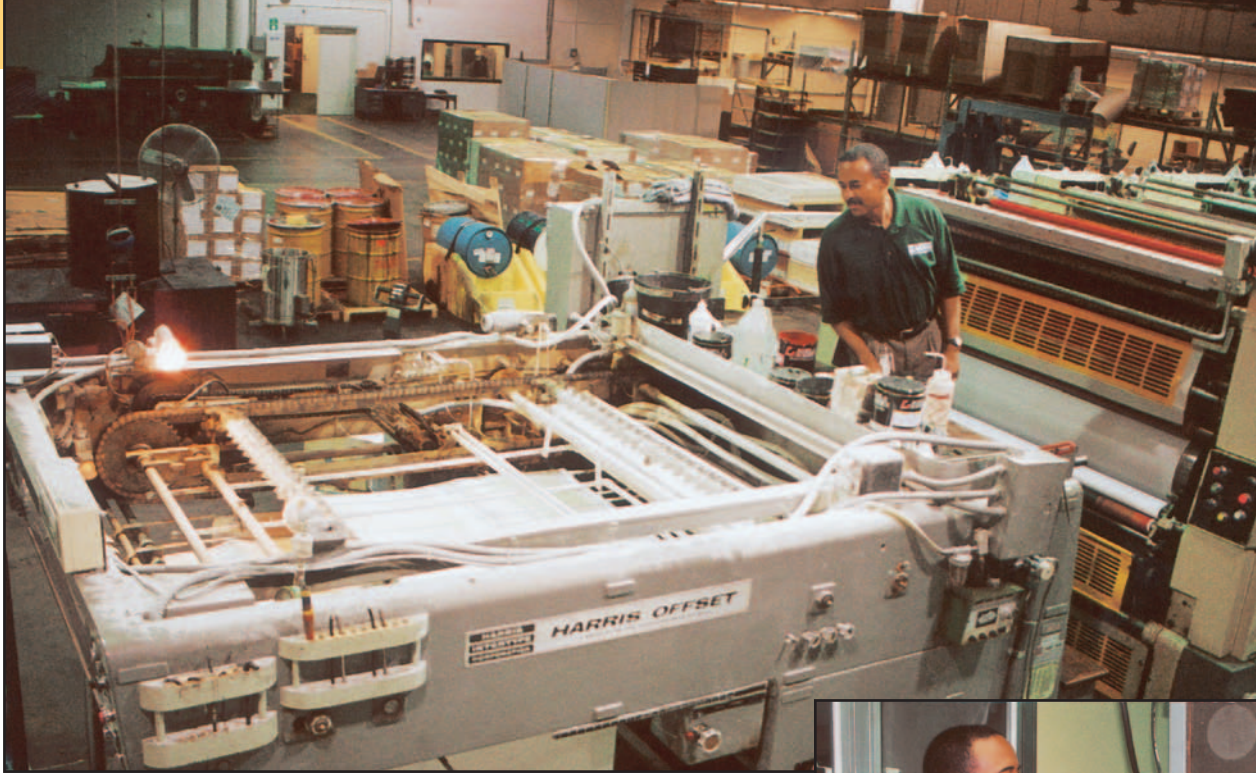
**Soy inks possess excellent ‘tack stability’ on the printing press rollers. This is essential in maintaining full and even ink color strength when printing the very fine lines of many USGS map products.**



**Printing staff at the U.S. Geological Survey prefer soy ink for many reasons, but their primary incentive is that it provides superior performance even on tough jobs like this map on a black background.**

Current Press Room Foreman Clarence Hill agrees on the technical aspect of soy ink. Being the day-to-day person in charge, Hill also appreciates the disposability, environmental and personal safety aspects of the product.

“We have all sorts of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations and standards to deal with,” he says. “Soy ink just makes it easier for us to comply. For example, the soy ink is so much safer and convenient to dispose of than petroleum-based inks. The same is true for cleaning the press. The cleaning solvents for soy ink are far less toxic and easier to use than those for oil-based inks.”



The U.S. Geological Survey found that soy ink makes printing jobs more efficient because it lasts longer and reduces down time because of fewer wash-ups.

“So ‘yes’, soy ink makes us compliant with the Vegetable Printing Act as well as EPA and OSHA regulations. It’s also technically superior and more efficient, but the bottom line is that we produce a better map,” summarizes Mike Tobin, head of printing at USGS.

Users of soy ink are encouraged to show their commitment to the environment through use of soy ink by use of the SoySeal Trademark. There is no charge for its use. Guides for use of the seal are available at [www.soyink.com](http://www.soyink.com) or by contacting the National Soy Ink Information Center, 4554 114th Street, Urbandale, IA 50322. phone 515-251-8638



Press Room Foreman Clarence Hill likes the high-quality performance of soy ink, but being the day-to-day person in charge, also appreciates the disposability, environmental and personal safety aspects of the product.

The United Soybean Board (USB), state soybean organizations and others continue to fund research to develop improvements in and new applications for soy ink.

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If you have questions about the use of soy ink at the U.S. Geological Survey, contact Mike Tobin at 703-648-5150 or at [mtobin@usgs.gov](mailto:mtobin@usgs.gov). To learn more about the many biobased products made from soybeans like the soy ink used by the U.S. Geological Survey, go to the Biobased Products Catalog at [www.unitedsoybean.org/newuses](http://www.unitedsoybean.org/newuses) and/or National Soy Ink Information Center at [www.soyink.com](http://www.soyink.com).

America’s farms are just beginning to tap their potential as a source for natural, renewable biobased products that offer benefits to worker health, the environment, America’s economy and energy security. Because of the potential for biobased products to create new markets for soybeans, U.S. soybean farmers have invested more than \$50 million to research, test and promote biobased products. Much of this work was done through the United Soybean Board (USB), which is composed of 62 U.S. soybean farmers appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to invest soybean checkoff funds.