This chapter will describe today’s marketplace for soybean \([Glycine max (L.) Merr.]\) and examine key forces likely to shape the soybean marketplace of tomorrow. The description of today’s marketplace includes global dimensions of production and utilization as well as the patterns that have emerged to lead to today’s setting. Looking to the future, there are many forces that will shape the future evolution of the soybean market. Two of these forces will be considered in detail within this chapter. One force is the future need for protein, in the context of future levels of global population, income, and malnutrition. Another section examines pressures for change in the commodity marketing system. This approach has dominated, and continues to dominate, the soybean sector. However societal desires for more information regarding production and marketing in the food system, in part fueled by concerns about genetic modification of agricultural products, coupled with advances in information technology, combine to make it potentially feasible for alternative market systems to emerge and supplement or supplant the commodity approach. If that change were to occur, it is likely to have ramifications throughout the supply value chain, including the research institutions that traditionally support that chain.

One of the most discussed changes in the soybean marketplace in the 1990s was the introduction and widespread adoption of transgenic soybean in the USA and Argentina. Introduced in the middle of the 1990s, Roundup Ready (Monsanto Co., St. Louis, MO) soybean cultivars increased to more than 71% of soybean production in the USA by 2001 (Monsanto, 2002). Globally, Roundup Ready soybean cultivars accounted for 63% of all transgenic crops grown (Monsanto, 2002). Although producers in general have welcomed these technological innovations, the societal response has been quite negative among some political interest groups. The resulting controversy has intensified the pressure for fundamental change in agri-