GIOVANI PREZA FONTES – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



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Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I grew up in Mato Grosso, Brazil, where agriculture is the key economy driver and soybean is the main crop grown. Mato Grosso is the leading state in soybean production in Brazil. When I decided to become an agronomist, soybean research was necessary for my undergraduate studies. I am still researching soybeans among other crops including corn and wheat.

What research topic have you completed in the past, or are working on now, that could have or has had the most significant impact on soybean production?
The projects we're looking at are ways we can increase the adoption of conservation practices such as cover crops and reduced tillage in Illinois systems. These involve looking at better ways to manage soil, crops and fertilizer. We're also doing a lot of applied research, looking at planting date, maturity group selection, row spacing and other management practices to keep the University of Illinois Extension recommendations up-to-date.

How has the Soy Checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The Illinois Soybean Association has been very supportive of our research. They have a strong commitment to increasing the sustainability of soybean systems in Illinois. We've been working together to find ways to achieve that. The Soy Checkoff money is good to have because some of the applied research we do isn't funded through federal sources. So having the Illinois Soy Checkoff to support this is important.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
With the lower soybean prices and higher input costs we've seen in the past few years, I try

to encourage farmers to reflect on the basics and make sure they are covered.

- *Maintain adequate soil pH and fertility levels*
- *Select high yielding varieties adapted to their region*
- *Plant on time and with adequate seeding rates.*

I usually tell farmers to be a high-profit farmer rather than a high-yielding farmer. These are not always the same.

Within your area of expertise, what do you consider to be critical soybean research needs that can impact the profitability of farmers in the future?
Agriculture is facing a big challenge in terms of sustainability. Consumers are more interested in the way their food is being produced and the environmental outcomes from that. We need to look at the agriculture system and develop best management practices for soybeans to thrive in conservation systems.

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Website: https://ilagronomy.info/

SRIN articles:

Conservation Tillage Protects Soil and Nutrients for Long-Term Productivity

Studying Soybean Yield with Applied Fertilizer After a Cover Crop

SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

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