JOHN WALLACE – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



John Wallace, Associate Professor of Weed Sciences, College of Agricultural Sciences, Penn State University

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
My path to soybean research is unique. I started working in turfgrass, and then I spent a decade working on invasive weeds in the western U.S. Now, in my current position, I focus on weed ecology in the Northeastern U.S., and that includes working on weed pressure in soybeans.

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?
My work developing best management practices for incorporating cover crops into soybean and grains productions systems to reduce weed pressure has the most potential to help soybean farmers. I'm studying the agronomics of planting green into cover crops and the integration of cover crops and herbicides so that they work together to more consistently control tough weeds like burcucumber, horseweed, Palmer amaranth and waterhemp.

How has the Soy Checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The Soy Checkoff is really valuable to my research. The Pennsylvania Soybean Board provides great support for my program and for research across our team.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?

- *Having the right product in the tank is important, but spraying weeds on time is the key to success, though that is easier said than done.*
- *Looking at the bigger picture, farmers need diverse tactics for weed control. I*

encourage proactively integrating other strategies like cover crops and crop rotation into systems to improve weed control over the long term.

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?
I think we need more long-term research. The value would be in identifying combinations of strategies that produce long-term success. Diverse strategies increase resilience to weather and other factors that you can't measure in a single year. Long-term research will help quantify tradeoffs of management practices that can help slow the spread of resistant weeds.

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