ALAN LESLIE – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



Alan Leslie, Central Maryland Research and Education Center Director, University of Maryland

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
In graduate school, I started studying natural systems embedded in agriculture. From that experience, I learned that science in farming is fascinating. Agriculture allows for more interesting experiments and collecting lots of data. That drew me to a career in agricultural research, and soybeans are a key part of that system in Maryland.

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?
I worked locally in southern Maryland with Ben Beale to fine-tune herbicide recommendations to control Palmer amaranth, one of the most difficult weeds our farmers need to manage.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The soy checkoff supports a wide variety of research, and I can go to reports from other projects to look up results and learn what research has been or is being done. I've used information from seeding rate and stink bug trials. I've looked up control recommendations for sporadic pests. The soy checkoff supports local, applied research, and keeping records of that is really valuable. Plus, it helps fund students working with me on research projects.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
Farmers should rely on integrated pest management practices for more judicious application of the great technologies available in chemicals. Using them carefully helps preserve that technology for future seasons. With changing climate patterns, more pests will likely become

problems, and farmers need to have as many effective tools available as possible.

Within your area of expertise, what do you consider to be critical soybean research needs that can impact the profitability of famers in the future?
I believe we need more research on adaptations of systems to climate change. Opportunities to enhance production will occur with longer growing seasons, but other inherent problems will arise, as well. Adaptation research will help farmers be ready and resilient in the face of climate challenges.

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