BO ZHANG – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog

Bo Zhang, soybean breeding assistant professor, Virginia Tech School of Plant and Environmental Sciences

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
Soybean is the major plant-based protein source for feed and food in the world. I am passionate about improving soybean seed quality through plant breeding to better serve the world.

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 research focuses on development of soybean cultivars and germplasm with enhanced quality traits for feed and food uses. Food-grade cultivars for tofu, soy milk and natto for international markets have the most significant, economic impact on Mid-Atlantic soybean production.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The soybean checkoff provides my program the necessary funding to conduct scientific studies to resolve stakeholder issues and concerns, which is beneficial to the U.S. soybean industry.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
1. Establish a network with public sectors in soybean research and attend field days as much as possible to learn research findings.
2. Open your mind to try new, improved cultivars, particularly with value-added traits.

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 have seen in the last decade how technologies benefit the soy breeding process and products. Application of smart farming technology in soybean breeding will help increase the efficiency and accuracy of phenotypic selection and develop elite cultivars with less input and time.

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SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

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