CARRIE ORTEL – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



Carrie Ortel, Assistant Professor and Extension Soybean Agronomist, Virginia Tech

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I love applied, practical research. I enjoy interacting with growers and conducting research that provides meaningful information to help them. And, soybeans are my favorite crop, because they are grown almost everywhere, and they are resilient, interesting plants. It's a great fit for me to be working in my home state, focused on conducting and sharing practical research on my favorite crop with farmers.

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?
A project on in-season potassium management, which was the focus of my doctorate research has the most potential to impact soybean production as the research continues. The research encompasses how potassium interacts with drought stress, tissue sampling protocol, calibrating in-season potash applications based on tissue tests, and the profitability of in-season potassium management.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The soy checkoff is fantastic to work with, and extremely helpful. For example, it funded my doctoral research, allowing me to follow my curiosity to improve soybean management. Now, the soy checkoff is allowing me to integrate that work into Virginia soybean production. The soy checkoff also supported a needs assessment that directs research investment to focus on planting recommendations, nutrient management, cover crops and soil health, weed control and variety selection. In addition to funding research, the checkoff also helps researchers like me connect with farmers.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations

you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?

- *Variety selection is the most important decision soybean farmers make. They should choose high-yielding, stable varieties for strong yield potential.*
- *Farmers should take soil samples and adjust fertility programs based on the results to ensure the crop will start strong.*

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?
Soybean research should grow to be as technologically advanced as farmers. They have an incredible amount of technology at their fingertips, and the research they rely on should account for that. Research is needed to help us all understand field variability and how to maximize the value of input investments in each field.

SRIN articles:

Finding and Feeding Hidden Hunger for Potassium

SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

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