SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE – DAMON SMITH

Farmer Blog

Damon Smith, professor and extension specialist and director of the Nutrient and Pest Management Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
Soybeans are a critical commodity in the U.S. They also have many disease issues, and I am a problem solver and want to help farmers be productive growing this major cash crop.

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 laboratory and field research program developed the Sporecaster white mold prediction tool. This foundational tool put disease management decisions in the hands of farmers and also laid the groundwork for more disease prediction tools to come.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
Without the support and trust of farmers and the soybean checkoff, my program would not exist. We have worked hard to understand the diseases of soybeans and have used what we learned to inform farmers on how to best fight these problems.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
Choose resistant varieties, rotate crops, and know what the weather is bringing in terms of conducive disease environments (the disease triangle at work!).

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?
We need to increase our work on understanding the epidemiology of more soybean diseases so we can continue to build out new disease prediction tools.

SRIN articles:

Multi-Faceted Plant Pathology Project Reflects Collaborative Intention of NCSRP

Researchers Across the Country Collaborate for Soybean Seedling Disease Management

SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

This website is funded by the soybean checkoff