

SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE – DREW GHOLSON



Farmer Blog

Drew Gholson, Assistant Professor, Agronomy – Irrigation, Mississippi State University

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?

I have an interdisciplinary background with water and soils, and my area of concentration has always been water management and conservation. I came to Mississippi State University to focus on water use efficiency and reducing irrigation demand on the regional aquifer. Soybeans cover the most acres in Mississippi, so working on soybean irrigation will make the biggest impact on our area's water use efficiency.

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 efforts to evaluate and promote tools that improve water use efficiency help farmers increase profitability and improve ease of making irrigation decisions. For example, my work with soil moisture sensors focuses on helping farmers use these tools to save time, money and water.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?

Support from the soy checkoff has been instrumental in my work. I couldn't do what I am doing without that funding to support both irrigation tool evaluation and adoption.

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

Farmers that rely on irrigation should look for ways to increase water application efficiency for uniform watering. For example, they can improve irrigation timing with the use of moisture sensors.

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?

Farmers have access to an abundance of data, including yield data and more. Future research should look at ways we can use all that information to simplify and improve the accuracy of decision making for irrigation, such as fine-tuning the timing for irrigation termination. This type of research will help us continue to improve water use efficiency while maintaining crops and profitability.

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