ERIN HODGSON – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



Erin Hodgson, Iowa State University Field Crops Professor and Extension Entomologist

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I started my career learning about an invasive pest, soybean aphid, in Minnesota. I was one of the first people to research this new insect. I realized the importance of pest management for such an important crop. Soybean aphid can cause great economic loss and my research provided applied management tools to protect yield. I wanted to stay involved in soybean research when I came to Iowa State to continue helping farmers and others in agriculture.

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?
From 2000-2005, I was heavily involved in soybean aphid research and Extension efforts. I contributed to several projects that defined the economic threshold, sampling guidelines (Speed Scouting) and efficacy evaluations. I continue to improve Integrated Pest Management (IPM) tactics for this economic pest. In addition, I work with native and invasive pests that attack soybeans, including bean leaf beetle, Japanese beetle, stink bug and spider mites. Most recently, I am learning about a new pest, soybean gall midge, in the Midwest.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
I am able to complete applied research and Extension programs with the support of the soybean checkoff. My laboratory evaluates new chemistries that farmers can use, as well as other cultural and genetic management strategies. I also train several graduate students in applied entomology and provide a foundation for careers in agriculture. I often collaborate with plant pathologists, nematologists and agronomists to develop multi-disciplinary research and extension.

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

1. *Get out in soybeans and scout as often as you can. Insect populations can change dramatically from week to week, and your management options are more effective when made proactively.*
2. *Strongly consider current economics before acting (e.g., market value and control costs), because the profit margin for rescue treatments in soybeans can be thin.*

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?
My lab is focused on developing profitable management recommendations for farmers. We evaluate all types of tactics to form a well-rounded IPM program. I am especially concerned about resistance management developing in a few key insects and want to develop safe and effective alternative strategies.

SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

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