SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE – EROS FRANCISCO

Eros Francisco, Extension grain crops specialist, Auburn University Crop, Soil and Environmental Sciences Department

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I grew up in Mato Grosso, Brazil, and watched closely the state become a leader in grain production in the country, while overcoming several agronomic challenges via basic and applied research. So, I decided early to be an agronomist and a field researcher.

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?
I have participated in different research projects from nutrient management to cover crops, but the most relevant was starting an experimental station dedicated to the study of crop rotation for soybean cropping systems that became a reference in the Cerrado region of Brazil with several years of data and great impact definitions for regional farmers.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
I just recently moved in the U.S., but so far, the Alabama Farmers Association, along with many farmers I have already met, have been very supportive of research ideas. We need to work together on this and bring as many as good solutions to their daily challenges as possible.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
The top general recommendations are to be careful with seeding time because it is a crucial moment and mistakes here are expensive to be fixed. Seed quality, seeding speed and seed depth are a solid bridge to high-yielding soybeans. Also, a good nutrient program based on soil needs will help to find the way to good yields.

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 think we still need to develop a better seeding support decision system that can help farmers know when to stop seeding based on soil and weather conditions and that seeks to promote a full germination and emergence process.

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