JOE IKLEY – SOYBEAN RESEARCH PROFILE

Farmer Blog



Joe Ikley, North Dakota State University Extension Weed Specialist

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I did a summer internship as an undergraduate student at the University of Maryland, my home state, and ended up working with the extension weed specialist there. He was the weed scientist for major agronomic crops, and soybeans are an important crop in Maryland. It took just that one summer to make me realize I wanted to work in weed control. I've worked in weed science and soybeans throughout my career. It's a continuing challenge and it's enjoyable to try to find solutions.

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?
Some of the most significant topics have been regional and national collaborations that I've been a part of — groups of scientists working at multiple sites with a unified goal. One of those projects was about cover crops and weed suppression with soybeans, and another one I worked on was with weed seeds using controlled devices, such as the seed terminator that grinds up weed seeds before they exit the combine, and how these can be integrated for overall weed control.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The soybean checkoff funding is always good for helping us conduct the research from a financial standpoint. It also allows us to have students involved. I like to help train graduate and undergraduate students so they may have the same kind of passion I have for weed control. The checkoff has helped us conduct the research and help train the next generation of weed specialists.

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

you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
One of the top recommendations for me is continuing to integrate different strategies for weed control in soybeans. Because we have herbicide resistance, which seems to be increasing, we are looking at other things that can be integrated into an operation — whether that is cover crops or weed seed destruction methods. We need to think beyond using herbicides solely to achieve weed control outcomes.

The other recommendation is timeliness of making herbicide applications. Knowing about the different herbicides is a foundation to build upon. With the weeds we are currently dealing with, farmers need to apply herbicide when the weeds are small to get the best control.

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?
We need to continue to evaluate integrated tactics for weed control that can be easily integrated or worked into a farming operation. These need to be methods that can be easily added to a farmer's current operation such as the weed seed destruction devices. If it is easier to integrate, it's more likely these practices will be adopted.

SRIN articles:

Soybeans Maintain Performance Across Diverse Herbicide Management Strategies

The Pigweed Awareness Campaign: Spreading the Word to Reduce the Spread

SOYBEAN RESEARCH & INFORMATION NETWORK

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