

SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE — JONATHAN CROFT



Farmer Blog



Jonathon Croft, Agronomic Crops Extension Agent, Clemson University, Orangeburg, Dorchester and Berkeley Counties

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

Growing up, my father and I had a small truck crop farm. That lead me into agriculture. I also grew up near the Clemson University Edisto Research and Education Center and worked there in high school, along with farming. That is where I figured out that I wanted to be involved in the research and education side of 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?

I have been involved with research projects focused on root-knot nematode and foliar disease control in soybeans. Working with university and Extension specialists to conduct on-farm research and demonstration plots has allowed me to show growers how to improve their bottom line when producing soybeans in the coastal plain of South Carolina.

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

The soybean checkoff has allowed me access to funds to conduct projects that might not have happened otherwise. I make sure growers know checkoff dollars are used to fund programs.

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

In the coastal plain of South Carolina, most soybeans are grown without irrigation. Management to mitigate factors that could contribute to moisture stress is key. Farmers should 1) pick a high yield potential variety with a nematode resistance package appropriate for their farm; 2) use tillage that conserves soil moisture, especially when planting double-

crop soybeans behind small grains in June; 3) start with a clean, weed-free field and apply timely post-emergent herbicides.

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?

As the U.S. and world population continue to grow, being able to produce more from less arable land is going to be important. Research to continue developing high yielding varieties and high yielding varieties that use fewer inputs is going to be important.



This website is funded by the soybean checkoff



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