SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE — TOM CLEMENTE

Farmer Blog

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Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I have studied legumes since graduate work at Oklahoma State University and North Carolina State University, but my exposure to soybeans came during my postdoctoral experience at Monsanto Company (Bayer). My rationale to continue research on soybeans is that it is a major commodity that provides society a high-quality protein and oil supply in a sustainable fashion.

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?
Our research group made significant contributions to development of the dicamba tolerance technology a number of years back, that in 2020 was used on about 50 million acres as an effective weed management tool. More recently, in collaboration with Ed Cahoon's lab at the University of Nebraska, we began actively pursuing the ideotype soybean-based feedstock for the aquaculture industry to displace marine-based ingredients with terrestrial sources.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
My interaction with soybean producers is a continuous education experience. Learning about challenges American producers face in harvesting a plentiful, safe food supply for society in a sustainable fashion gives insight into research targets to prioritize to help them meet this critical mission. I like to tell people the U.S.' ability to produce this plentiful, safe food supply is a vital national security asset that must be protected. Investments such as those from the checkoff and other public sector entities are critical for the long-term stability of our food supply.

Within your area of expertise, what are the top two or three general recommendations you would offer farmers to improve their management practices?
Always look first for the best genetics and seek guidance from your local Extension educator/agent on the latest input practices that will complement top genetics in your area.

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?
The top three are genetics, genetics and genetics. After that, we need investments in infrastructure to allow for production, processing and transport of identity-preserved output traits that hold great potential to capture value and create jobs in rural America.

SRIN articles:

Tools of Biotechnology: Complementing Soybean Breeding Programs Through Adding Novel Genetic Variation into the Germplasm

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