SOYBEAN RESEARCH PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR PROFILE – WESLEY EVERMAN

Farmer Blog

Wesley Everman, Assistant Professor and Extension Weed Scientist Specialist, Iowa State University

Why did you decide to pursue a career that includes soybean research?
I have always been driven to find viable answers to keep growers thriving on the farm. They have a lot of real challenges, and I want to do what I can to ease those I can help with.

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 think the many studies I have done looking at overall systems have been very impactful. For example, after characterizing types of resistance in Palmer amaranth in North Carolina, my team made a heat map of where specific populations of resistance could be found to help growers make decisions about control options. Weed resistance matters most when they know it is close. I've also worked on systems to use imaging to detect Palmer amaranth and other weeds, as well as sensors to identify weed resistance.

How has the soybean checkoff enhanced your ability to find answers to production problems for farmers?
The Soy Checkoff has been really great. It keeps me focused on what growers really want. I always suggest multiple research proposals so I can adapt and change my research program to farmers' current needs. Emerging issues in the field need to be addressed quickly, and checkoff dollars can be granted within the season to address those challenges, helping farmers get answers as quickly 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?

- *With any system change, start small. There is not a single weed management*

recommendation that fits every acre of every farm. Try things that look promising, and then expand what works. For example, with cover crops, farmers should figure out how to do it on their farm in a small area, rather than expecting one method to be the solution for every acre.

- *The socio-economic impact of weed management is underappreciated, especially by the general public. As farmers see the impacts, they need to address them to take pressures off specific chemistries and practices.*
- *Artificial intelligence has many benefits, and if farmers are smart about using it, they can be more productive. We are entering a new era of what we are able to do, and farmers can take advantage of that.*

Within your area of expertise, what do you consider to be critical soybean research needs that can impact the profitability of famers in the future?
I believe we need to be researching application technology and how new platforms will impact quality of application and efficacy. With technologies like aerial mapping, selective sprays and more, there are lots of pieces to consider. Research will help us figure out what tools can become the most valuable, and which are just cool toys.

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