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Double-Crop Soybean Research Aims to Increase Yields

Planting soybean early following high-moisture wheat harvest is an excellent management practice for increasing yield

HARRISBURG, Pa. (June 11, 2018) – Preliminary findings in a research project partially funded by the Pennsylvania Soybean Board indicate that planting soybean early following high-moisture wheat harvest is an excellent management practice for increasing double-crop soybean yield for growers in the Mid-Atlantic region.

“Other practices help, but are not nearly as important,” says Dr. David Holshouser, Associate Professor and Extension Agronomist at Virginia Tech, who headed the multi-state research project. “Furthermore, early wheat harvest resulted in greater wheat yields and quality. This research provides the strongest and most comprehensive data ever developed in the Mid-Atlantic region that supports early high-moisture wheat harvest.”



Holshouser notes that soybean following winter wheat is the most prevalent double-cropping system in the United States. Nearly half of Mid-Atlantic soybean acres are planted after small grain harvest. “Although the advantages of double-crop wheat-soybean systems are many, the late planting date historically results in 10-30% less yield versus full-season soybean,” says Holshouser. The research project aims at increasing yield and profitability for Mid-Atlantic double-crop soybean by evaluating cropping practices that improve soybean yields following winter wheat.

The research evaluated the effect of early high-moisture wheat harvest on wheat and double-crop soybean yield and quality through coordinated multi-state trials across five Mid-Atlantic states including Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia and North Carolina during 2015 to 2017. According to Holshouser, the research of more than 20 site years is the strongest and most comprehensive data set ever developed in the Mid-Atlantic region that supports early high-moisture wheat harvest.

“The next step is to begin intensive dialog with buyers of wheat and soybean and with dryer manufacturers that will allow higher-moisture wheat harvest,” says Holshouser. “Harvesting wheat at higher moisture (15-20%) can increase wheat yield by reducing test weight loss and increasing quality. Additionally, double-crop soybean yield increases by allowing earlier planting. This practice may increase overall double-crop income. However, we must recognize that drying costs could increase, especially if specialized drying is needed. Future efforts will focus on an economic analysis and beginning a discussion with grain buyers to encourage them to purchase high-moisture wheat without dockage.”

About the Pennsylvania Soybean Board

The [Pennsylvania Soybean Board](#) is a farmer-controlled Board responsible for managing Pennsylvania’s share of funds received from the nationwide Soybean Checkoff program. The funding is available under an assessment program, approved by Congress in 1990, under which soybean farmers contribute 50 cents of every \$100 they receive for their beans at the first point of sale. Funds are used to develop markets, educate consumers, and research new ways to utilize and produce soybeans more efficiently.