



September 10, 2012

To: PA Soybean Board

From: Joel M. Hunter, Educator – PSCE (Crawford)

Subject: **PSB Project #ER2011-106** – West Region Agronomy Crops Conference – **Final Report**

The PSB's (Pennsylvania Soybean Board) generous statewide support of the 2012 CMEG Programs has been very helpful and greatly appreciated in Western PA where Extension Crop Management staff and programs have been limited. However, with the support of the PSB project, a successful 2012 Western PA No-till Conference held on January 31, 2012 at the Radisson in West Middlesex, PA had 100 in attendance. The program brochure was mass mailed to 5317 addresses across Western Pennsylvania and included sponsorship information. In addition, printed programs for the conference gratefully acknowledged PSB statewide support. Our outstanding speaker line-up included Penn State specialists Dr. Greg Roth, Dr. Rick Day, and Charlie White as well as featured soil health speaker Jim Hoorman, OSU Extension and his two insightful presentations. Dr. Greg Roth's presentation included some slides/comments about the PA Soybean Board support. Evaluation completion rates were about 50 percent of those in attendance. Of those responding, evaluations indicated that 30.6 percent of their farms were 201-500 acres, 28.6 percent were 51-200 acres, 14.3 percent were 5001-1000, and 14.3 percent replied "not applicable" while 6.1 percent were over 1000 acres and 6.1 percent were less than 50 acres. When asked how they learned from the conference, 49 percent responded considerable, 49 percent responded moderate, and 2 percent responded minimal. As far as intentions, 48.9 percent indicating planned implementation on Dr. Roth's presentation, 74 percent planned implementation on Jim Hoorman's presentations, 85.7 percent planned implementation on Charlie White's presentation, and 74.3 percent planned to implement on Dr. Day's presentation. The evaluations obviously indicate high rates of acceptance and planned adoption of practices/information presented at this conference. Two additional Crop Conferences were conducted in the old SW Region. The Fayette Crop Conference held February 24 with 16 participants and the Butler Crop Conference held February 15 with 30 participants. Although attendance at these two conferences was modest, we are currently understaffed in that locale, and were gratified to be able to offer these two conference opportunities with the confidence of financial support from the PA Soybean Board. All participants received a complimentary copy of the Corn & Soybean Field Guide 2012 Edition. "Surplus" copies were used/distributed at other meetings in the region. Many producers have commented that they very much appreciate the "pocket guides" and are impressed with the extensive information and many excellent color images they contain.

In addition, sixty-nine pesticide update meetings were conducted across Western PA this winter season with over 1500 in attendance where I recognized and expressed gratitude for the statewide support of the 2012 CMEG programs by the

Pennsylvania Soybean Board. Fifty-seven of those update meetings were presented in a “webinar” format as the “Western PA 2+2 Series – Agronomic Pesticide Updates” and had participation in 17 counties with 913 in attendance. The “2+2 Series” was offered over three dates with both afternoon (1:00-3:00) and evening (7:00-9:00) sessions each day for a total of six webinar meeting opportunities. At each of these meetings, specific soybean management was included in the category portion of the presentations and covered weed, disease and insect management. Evaluations from these programs indicated attendees appreciated the up-to-date and helpful soybean management information presented. Although it was not part of our statewide programs, Penn State Extension Entomologist Dr. John Tooker spoke at our Regional Ag/Dairy Day about slugs and other insect pests and made specific reference to the generous support of the PSB in financial support of the Penn State Extension Crop Management Programs to the 200 plus in attendance. Also, some of the PSB funds were used to purchase three varieties of early maturing soybean varieties (groups 1.3, 1.7, 2.1) and plant five acre demonstration plots of each at the Crawford County Farm. We hope to demonstrate acceptable yield levels of early maturity soybeans allowing adequate time/season remaining after soybean harvest for successful/substantial cover crop plantings. Demonstration of acceptable yield performance and earlier harvest dates enabling timely/successful cover crop establishment following soybean harvest should hopefully convince producers to consider such practices for more environmentally and economically sustainable production. Visual differences in maturity are readily apparent from the road as the beans mature. Related outreach at a field day planned for October 3rd will give attendees a chance to see these plots for themselves. Finally, two colleagues and I helped (as usual) with machinery demonstrations at Ag Progress Days speaking to thousands of attendees over the three days, where the generous support of our programs by the PSB was mentioned on several occasions.

Again, the statewide support of the 2011-2012 CMEG programs is both very helpful and much appreciated, specifically here in 17 counties of Western PA where extension crop management staff and programs have been limited. (However, I am happy to report two new extension agronomy hires in western PA’s Tioga and Armstrong Counties). Having your generous support this year has certainly assisted in our efforts to continue to provide exceptional educational opportunities even as we undergo significant reorganization and transition through the current times of challenging public funding/staffing constraints. The generous support from the PSB funds helped us with outreach to thousands on up-to-date soybean management information this year in Western PA alone. Thank you most sincerely for your generous and continued support of our educational programs statewide, and particularly here in Western Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

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