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PA Soybean Farmers Support Checkoff-Funded Research Projects

HARRISBURG, PA (March 25, 2014) – Research projects designed to provide reliable crop production data to soybean growers, to support Pennsylvania’s animal agriculture industry, and to increase markets for soybeans have been awarded checkoff grants totaling \$171,296 by the Pennsylvania Soybean Board.

The all-farmer board, which administers the national soybean checkoff program in the commonwealth, approved a number of research projects focusing on crop management practices that will directly impact the state’s soybean producers. Additionally, the board approved grant requests for research benefiting animal agriculture, the largest domestic user of soy meal and the largest sector of Pennsylvania’s agricultural industry, as well research and education initiatives designed to expand uses for soy products.

Funding grants were approved for the following projects:

\$3,650 to Penn State to determine the profitability of using cover crops in soybean cropping systems. The objective is to determine the long-term benefits and cost effectiveness of consistently using cover crops in a primarily corn and soybean rotation. Crop yields will be tracked each year and compared with fields with a cover crop to those without to do a cost/benefit analysis.

\$36,852 to Penn State for a sentinel plot program in Pennsylvania soybean fields. The program will be run in collaboration with Penn State Extension to provide soybean growers with statewide assessment of insects and diseases active in soybean fields. Twenty soybean fields will be scouted weekly for insect pest and disease population.

\$49,794 to Penn State for continuation of the Pa. On-Farm Soybean Research Network. In the coming year, this on-farm product testing network, which was initiated in 2009, will focus on seed treatments, bio stimulants, fungicides and insecticides. Additionally, dedicated soybean production meetings will be held at various locations throughout the state, and research results will be disseminated through crop meetings and online resources.

\$7,000 to Penn State to manage the annual soybean variety trials at Penn State's research farms in Lancaster and Centre Counties. Commercial varieties and experimental cultivars will be evaluated. The continuing search for higher yielding varieties, quality traits, the onset of new diseases and insects, and the new focus on value-added traits in the future is essential to soybean producers in Pennsylvania. The potential of alternative soybean lines, including high oleic beans, Liberty Link and non-GMO varieties, will also be tested. 2014 marks the 23rd consecutive year for the trials, which are designed to evaluate soybean varieties for their performance under Pennsylvania conditions.

\$9,800 to Penn State for the Northern PA Soybean Dairy Feeding and Soybean Production Focus communication group. Research will be conducted into overcoming yield constraints in Northern Pennsylvania soils, and field production information and educational outreach will be extended to growers.

\$6,641 to the Pennsylvania Center for Beef Excellence (CBE). Through partnerships with Penn State University and T.A. Seeds, Inc., the planting and harvest methods for soybeans that can be grown in the moderate temperatures and soils of northeast Pennsylvania will be documented to expand the soybean acres planted, increasing soybean production and expanding soybean markets. Researchers will monitor the soybean production systems of two 20 acre tracts located in Pike and Lackawanna Counties. Using the information obtained in the research project, CBE will facilitate on-farm field day events at both locations to promote the results of the research.

\$26,759 to Penn State to explore the varietal difference in soybean fatty acid and amino acid composition to enhance the feeding value of Pennsylvania soybeans to lactating dairy cows. The research will address the effect of soybean fatty acid profile on milk fatty acid composition in dairy cows, and will explore the opportunity to use varietal differences in soybean amino acid profile to increase the feeding value of soybean meal for animal production.

\$30,800 to the University of Pennsylvania's New Bolton School of Veterinary Medicine for research to optimize controlled disease exposure in loose housed swine in anticipation of the next animal welfare challenge.

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.

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