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20 years of Extension Agent lead on-farm soybean research in Virginia – What have we learned?

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On-farm research has been a cornerstone of Extension agent work for decades. The Virginia on-farm soybean test plot program was officially established in 1997 to consolidate and publish on-farm research data from agents across Eastern Virginia. The plots are a series of replicated or strip trials established on individual soybean producer farms using their farm equipment and management systems. Over the years, treatments have included variety trials, fertilizer applications, fungicide programs, nematode management, seed treatments, and numerous other management strategies. The program has also included wide scale surveys such as a nematode sampling program and soybean nutrient-tissue testing. Results show that variety selection for specific locations is crucial to obtaining high soybean yields. Nematodes are a more widespread problem than many farmers realize therefore genetic resistance or seed treatments are needed for nematode management. Yield responses to fungicides and additional fertility applications are highly dependent on weather conditions that govern our yield potential.