

A & D Agronomy Staff adds Agronomist

Meet Ron Dodds

Agronomy & Innovation

Ron Dodds grew up on a farm in Western Pennsylvania where they produced grain, hay and registered Charolais breeding stock. Ron has been listed as an International CCA since 1994. He earned his B.S. in Agronomy at Penn State while working in the soil chemistry research lab. He has worked for many ag businesses in the East and the West and has been an Extension Agronomist for both SDSU and PSU. Ron has experience in agronomy, sales and sales management, research, management, corn breeding, hybrid commercialization, soybean variety selection and seed production. Ron has worked with a wide array of crops beyond corn and soybeans. Some of those crops include alfalfa, wheat, triticale, canola, flax, sorghum, Sudan grass, millet, tomatoes, potatoes, grasses, edible beans, peas, pumpkins and other cucurbits, carrots, spinach, and apples. He is one of the earliest pioneers in using dairy and beef nutrition software programs for predictive corn silage hybrid selection.

Sales Program Development

Ron was a DSM for Garst Brand Syngenta Seeds covering Eastern Ohio. During his tenure there he designed the Seed Advisor Program. Once Garst was fully absorbed into Syngenta the Seed Advisor Program was incorporated into Golden Harvest. The basic premise of the program is that farm revenue should not be required to sustain the Advisership in the long run.

Educator:

In 2009, when Ron was appointed to the position of Agronomy Educator for Brown and surrounding counties in South Dakota, the region was experiencing flooding on a massive scale. That is when he launched a “Subsurface Drainage” program, in conjunction with Dr. Chris Hay, which educated farmers about drainage design, drainage law and managed drainage including remote power for pumped drainage discharges. He was also heavily involved in Pesticide Safety, Farm Safety as well as 4-H rocketry, shooting sports, presentations, and photography. He also served as one of two state judges for 4-H First Aid Kits due to his previous experience as a volunteer firefighter.

While working for Penn State Extension he launched the Agricultural Security Program and designed and launched Educational Programming for Farmland Preservation Easements which facilitate the sale of development rights to NGOs, like the Farmland Preservation Trust, for the protection of Farmland in areas where urbanization and suburban development are likely. These two programs rapidly spread across Pennsylvania, and which has been implemented in many other at-risk areas across the nation.

Also, while with Penn State Extension, Ron revitalized the 4-H Government Intern Program which was quickly adopted across the Commonwealth and has since been used by various Extension and 4-H specialists across the nation.

No Buzz – No Fruit!

In 1987, Monroe County Pennsylvania was experiencing a devastating infestation of Gypsy Moths. Shortly after the DNR Bureau of Forestry had completed spraying for Gypsy Moths a large regional produce farm called the PSU Extension Office to report that none of their cucurbits, representing about 25% of their gross revenue, were pollinating. Ron discovered that the feral bees who had been living in a nearby oak forest were not present. He arranged for a local apiary to bring bees to the farm for an extended stay. A few weeks later Gould's Produce requested another visit from Ron. While there, they showed Ron the amazing results that the bees had accomplished in a very short time. After returning from the fields, Ron discovered that his poor little Isuzu P'up (pickup) was loaded down with all sorts of gourds, pie and Jack-O'-Lantern pumpkins, zucchini, and cucumbers. Not knowing what to do with his bounty, he gave some of it to his wife's co-workers at the ASCS (FSA) office, to his co-workers and to the employees and residents of the county home.

Seed Treatment

More recently, Ron also became a Certified Syngenta Seed Care Specialist and Trainer while employed by Nutrien. In addition to his routine responsibilities as a Crop Consultant/Agronomist, he identified several issues with the location's KSI automated seed treatment system and, as a result, ended up training KSI and Syngenta Seed Care engineers and executives about the issues, associated work arounds, and recommended several mechanical and digital solutions, most of which have been either retrofitted into older systems or incorporated into newer systems.

Family

Ron and his wife, Robin, have two daughters and four grandchildren. Ron enjoys woodworking, gardening as well as wildlife and landscape photography, hiking, bicycling, and touring. He believes that a stranger is just a friend that he hasn't met yet. His life's goal is to always make the lives he touches better than they were when he first met them.