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PLUG INTO A RESEARCH NETWORK

It's nearing harvest time. Driving across the field fuels many questions: Could I have gotten more yield? Did that product really work? Would that new technology have helped?

You're not alone. Everyone else is asking the same thing. If you really want to know, consider plugging yourself into an on-farm research network. Participating has many advantages – not only to you but to all involved. Here are just a few.

Advantages to the grower and adviser:

- Creates informed investment decisions
- Sorts out practices and products that are necessary for increased production
- Provides answers specific to your farm
- Informs improvements to localized recommendations

Advantages to the researcher:

- Expands the scope of the research, providing a greater context in which to interpret findings
- Provides greater statistical power to comparisons when data are combined over locations and years
- Tests whether effects observed in more controlled settings, like growth chambers, greenhouses, or small field plots, are large enough to be detected under noisier field conditions where more factors are left uncontrolled

Advantages to agricultural retailers and manufacturers:

- Demonstrates to customers your dedication to provide them with the best products and information possible
- Informs your product purchases and/or product developments
- Increases customer loyalty and trust

Advantages to all:

- Forms relationships that are mutually beneficial
- Forms a community of individuals committed to finding objective answers using a scientific approach
- Creates a progressive group that is the first to discover what works and what doesn't in production settings
- Makes good use of limited resources through "in-kind" contributions by each participant, such as expertise, equipment, products, and labor
- Provides everyone an opportunity to have a say in what is measured and what practices and products are tested
- Creates greater chances that needed management changes will be adopted

On-farm research networks are on the rise because they offer so many advantages. Consider joining one and being part of a very progressive community dedicated to finding what works and what doesn't.

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