Research Profile – Bryan Hanson

Name: Bryan Hanson
Position: Research Agronomist
Location: Langdon Research Extension Center, Langdon, ND

Brief background about yourself:
My career as a research agronomist at the Langdon Research Extension Center (LREC) began in September 1983. Prior to that, I was a graduate student at Oklahoma State University where I received an M.S. in agronomy working on winter wheat production. I received a B.S. in agronomy at NDSU. I was raised on a small grain and livestock farm in Barnes County, ND, where my interest in watching crops grow and develop began.

Tell us about the goals of your research program?
The goal of my research program is to evaluate small grain, row, oil and alternative crop cultivars for adaptation to the soil and environmental conditions of northeastern North Dakota. In addition, I study crop and pest management strategies that improve efficiency and profitability of crop production in our region.

More specifically, what is the primary focus of your current research?
The primary focus of my research is the evaluation of crop cultivars to determine the best combination of yield, disease and insect tolerance along with improved seed quality.

What are your long term objectives?
My long term objective is to provide the producers of this region with unbiased information for cultivars selection and also to provide production management strategies that can be used on their farm.

How do you feel it will impact the region, nationally, globally?
For agriculture to remain a viable industry, producers must have access to appropriate crops, cultivars, plant protection and management techniques to meet current and future economic and environmental challenges. It is my hope that the research generated here at the Langdon Research Extension Center will contribute to solving these challenges.
When finished, what will your work mean? What will it mean to the state of ND?
Cultivar evaluations are ongoing, as genetic changes and improvements need to be tested extensively to determine their adaptation to our region. By the same token, crop inputs and management strategies are continually changing as well. So, in a sense, this research will never be finished. The goal is provide producers with timely information to make informed decisions in their farming operation.

What excites you about this project?
It has been very rewarding watching the growth and development of the canola industry over the years. When I first started my career, we tested rapeseed lines and newly developed ‘canola’ lines from Canada. Farmer interest in the crop started to grow in the 90’s and there was a lot to learn. The LREC conducted research on cultivar evaluation, herbicide tolerant technologies, seeding dates and rates, row spacing, planting depth, harvesting techniques, fungicide studies for disease control of sclerotinia and blackleg, and cultural and insecticide studies for the control of flea beetles among others. It was exciting to be a part of this research. Canola has now become a major economic crop for many producers as we see that hundreds of thousands of acres are grown here in the northern areas of our region. Canola continues to be an important focus of our research.

What is the greatest reward after the completion of a project?
The greatest reward is the satisfaction received from hearing that producers and the agriculture industry are using the research information that we have generated, and how important the LREC is to our region.

Do you have any graduate/undergraduates helping with this project?
Each summer we have undergraduates from a variety of majors that assist with summer plot maintenance and data collection. Over the years some of these students have gone on to graduate school in agriculture to further their education. A number of graduate students from NDSU have conducted part of their research at the LREC over the years.

What is your advice for students who want to go into your field of study?
The field of agronomy has countless opportunities to choose from. Find the area that is your passion and learn all you can. It is rewarding to help producers succeed in their business.
What are some of your hobbies/activities you like to do when you are not spending time on your research project?
My wife, Diane, and I enjoy camping, church activities, and traveling when we can. I also like participating in local theatre. We enjoy spending time with our two grown children; our daughter Emily and her husband Jordan who live in Fargo, and Michael who is attending school at NDSU.

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