

Feature Story



World Record Crop: Soybean Yields Reach New Heights on Dowdy Farm

With harvest officially underway, Randy Dowdy from Brooks County, Georgia, will remember this season for the rest of his life. Dowdy broke the six-year-standing soybean yield world record with his 2016 crop. Checking in at an impressive 171 bushels per acre, Dowdy significantly surpassed the previous soybean yield record of 160, set back in 2010.

“As growers, sometimes we make high yields and sometimes we don’t,” said Dowdy. “This year, everything from weather to management decisions went right to enable a really great season.”

The season began for Dowdy on April 20 when he started planting his soybeans on his Valdosta, Georgia, operation. Following the late-April planting date, Dowdy maximized his head start by proactively managing overall plant stress, nutrient levels and disease pressures throughout the season.

“I have a method that I use; I identify why yield loss might occur and then do something about it,” said Dowdy. “Understanding these yield components and being a steward of the crop makes sure we’re on track to hit our yield goals.”

While Dowdy planted his first high-yielding soybean crop just three years ago, he isn’t new to the milestone yield game. With his 2014 corn crop, he became the first grower to surpass 500 bushels per acre.

“Randy came to me after breaking the corn world record,” said AJ Woodyard, Technical Crop Production Specialist, BASF. “He told me he wanted take his learnings from corn and apply them to soybeans.”

Dowdy partnered with Woodyard, BASF and other agricultural organizations in pursuit of higher soybean yields. Over Dowdy’s three years of growing soybeans, the program that he developed with his advising team was built on familiar principles and growing strategies. Ultimately, the planning, attention to detail and execution paid off.

“We took copious notes and looked at everything we’d done along the way,” Dowdy said. “An understanding of the science behind yield successes has always been the first step.”

Already, Dowdy is thinking about his future seasons. He looks to duplicate his 2016 success to add further credence to his yield achievements. Woodyard has no doubt he’ll replicate it in seasons to come.

“This yield record of 171 bushels per acre is just a start,” said Woodyard. “Randy epitomizes the Grow Smart with BASF approach. With Randy’s passion and willingness to push the limits of crop potential, the expectations he has for his crop will become even greater as he becomes more familiar with soybeans and hones in on his most successful strategies.”

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Congratulations, Randy, on your world-record accomplishment.