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**Erick Larson**

## **Corn Verification Program Announcement**

Corn is becoming a more integral component of Mississippi's agricultural production systems. During the last few years, corn has become the second most popular Mississippi row crop based upon planted acreage and value. Although corn productivity has increased more than any other Mississippi row crop during the past twenty years, I believe we can substantially improve our production systems. Thus, the Mississippi State University Extension Service has established a Corn Verification Program supported by the Mississippi Corn Promotion Board using your checkoff funds designed to improve Mississippi corn production systems. I coordinate this program and modeled it similar to the Mississippi State University Extension Service's Soybean Management by Application of Research and Technology (SMART) Program, which has helped improve soybean production systems tremendously.

The premise of the Corn Verification Program is to grant us an opportunity to assume management responsibility of one of your fields with the goal of increasing corn profitability in your production system. We seek to accomplish this goal by implementing practices and technology capable of reducing production limitations and risk when warranted. We also try to enhance timing and/or execution of important inputs, so the crop may respond much better to those variables. Development and involvement in this program will also help identify key limitations, so the Mississippi State University Extension Service and Experiment Station can better direct efforts to develop innovations for our specific problems. By implementing these strategies in grower fields, this program will hopefully demonstrate value associated with innovative and/or best-management practices and their incorporation in well-executed management systems to ultimately improve corn profitability and sustainability for all Mississippi farms. By doing so, Mississippi's entire agricultural industry, including suppliers, retailers, crop consultants, and consumers will benefit.

If you choose to participate, the program will be performed on a limited acreage of your farm in order to compare its performance relative to your base system and ease the burden associated with putting plans into practice. We will evaluate your production system and develop strategies capable of accomplishing those goals, specifically suited for your farm. All management variables, including hybrid selection/seeding variables, weed control, soil fertility, pest management, cropping/tillage systems, burndown herbicide/seedbed preparation, etc... will be evaluated. The verification program also includes intensive in-season crop inspection, to improve management timing and identify limitations, so measures can be quickly employed to improve crop condition when warranted.

If you are interested in participating in the Corn Verification Program or have any questions, please reply or contact Dr. Erick Larson at 662-418-7802. Thank you very much for your support.