

Developing in Northeast Nebraska

By Luka Milosevic (Grad student at Haskell Ag Lab, UNL)

The expanding world population and its resultant needs for food are one of the main concerns of today's science. Dynamic nature of different agricultural pests (e.g. weeds, insects, pathogens) has been a serious threat to crop production globally. Agricultural research and extension centers play a crucial role in understanding those changes among pests and how pests can be controlled. A typical example is Haskell Agricultural Lab in Concord, Nebraska.

My interest in agriculture developed because I was raised in a farming family on the far south of Serbia. I have had a special passion for plant protection since early stages of my life, so I directed my education towards pesticides major. I am interested in understanding pesticide chemistry, the way they work, their effectiveness, resistance, and all the occurrences that follow their application. I was lucky enough to get the chance to work with a worldwide known professor and researcher, Dr. Stevan Knezevic, a weed science team leader in Haskell Agricultural Lab and a University of Nebraska – Lincoln professor. Knowing that Dr. Knezevic is the best in the business, I seized the opportunity without any hesitation. I am currently a visiting scholar at Haskell Agricultural Lab – Concord of the University of Nebraska, through the investigation of Dr. Stevan Knezevic. Alongside with the rest of the crew, we are conducting a variety of trials which are referring to herbicide drift, critical period for weed removal, effectiveness of different ways for weeds control and other problems that occur among farmers all across Nebraska, and the whole US. I am particularly more devoted to a study on impacts of herbicide (e.g. dicamba) drifts on sensitive soybean varieties. The adoption of dicamba for weed control is increasing as it provides alternative mode of action for the control of roundup-ready resistant weeds. Dicamba based herbicides are very volatile. Thus, the herbicide drifts to nearby sensitive crops. The Nebraska State Department of Agriculture received over 90 complains on dicamba drift in 2017 alone. Our researches provide very important information and programs on how avoid prevent dicamba drift onto sensitive crops. In addition, our studies provide important information on crop protection, and most efficient ways and timings for herbicide application. Following these instructions and programs is crucial for getting the best out of crops.

My working experience at Haskell Ag Lab has boosted my understanding and confidence in crop protection. Haskell Ag Lab is an important institution which allows young researchers and scientist to develop themselves while conducting applied research to solve farmers problems. Knowing that our research can result in important discoveries which will make crop production easier and more efficient, brings me joy, fulfillment and motivation. Hopefully, my six months visit will have a great impact both on crop cultivation practice and improvement, as well as my personal professional and academic progress.

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