



DR. BOB HARVESON

PLANT PATHOLOGIST

PROFILE

Bob Harveson was hired in July 1999 as extension plant pathology specialist stationed at the Scottsbluff-based Panhandle Research and Extension Center, replacing Eric Kerr after his retirement in 1998. He arrived in Nebraska after completing the Ph.D. at the University of Florida where he worked on Fusarium wilt diseases of tomatoes and watermelons and the characterization of several mycoparasites and their potential as antagonists and biological control agents for the fungal pathogens of these diseases.

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Bob's appointment currently is 50% research and 50% extension with programming responsibility for specialty crops and a research emphasis on sugar beet root rots, bacterial diseases of dry-edible beans, and sunflower diseases.

He has extensively employed field disease surveys and disease diagnostics to establish needs for research and extension programming. The diagnostic lab at Scottsbluff has processed more than 27,000 total (plant and soil) samples since 2000 for disease identification. An early accomplishment was identifying the individual pathogens involved in a multiple root disease complex in sugar beets, and is now focusing on integrated methods of management for this complex including biological, cultural, chemical, and predictive.

Harveson has also studied the re-emergence of bacterial wilt of dry beans and its etiology for more than 15 years, as well as conduction of some of the first research projects utilizing new copper-alternative chemicals for bacterial disease management in dry beans. He has collaborated with the University of Nebraska's bean breeder, Carlos Urrea, to develop locally-adapted dry bean and chickpea cultivars with better disease resistance to both bacterial and fungal pathogens.

In collaboration with Sam Markell (North Dakota State University) and Febina Mathew (South Dakota State University), mirrored research trials from 3 geographically diverse sites and environments have identified optimal time periods for efficient usage of fungicides in the management of rust and Phomopsis stem canker of sunflowers within the Great Plains, as well as quantifying damage to sunflowers due to Rhizopus head rot.