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Marlin E. Rice

Iowa State University, merice@iastate.edu

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Abstract

Palle Pedersen was recently hired as an extension and research agronomist in the Department of Agronomy at Iowa State University. Kelly Mescher, Communications Specialist with the Iowa Soybean Association, wrote an outstanding introduction about Palle. It is included in our newsletter as a way of introducing our readers to him.

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INTEGRATED CROP MANAGEMENT

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Palle Pedersen has been immersed in agriculture since he was able to walk. So he fit right in when he was hired as the new soybean extension agronomist at ISU. Born into a farming family near Koge, Denmark, Pedersen grew up planting crops and doing fieldwork. By the age of 15, he was helping out on one of the largest farms in Denmark - 2,800 acres.

Pedersen says his three major goals as the soybean extension agronomist are to 1) raise yield capacity and 2) solve the unknown interactions between pathogens, insects, and yield. 3) He also will be doing extensive research across the state to get a better understanding of environmental differences, because Iowa is so diverse.



The first few months will be spent doing background research, Pedersen says, talking to people and finding out the major problems soybean producers face here in Iowa. He will work with the departments of plant pathology, agricultural and biosystems engineering, entomology, and agronomy to determine his answers.

His time will be split between extension work and research. Pedersen's extension work includes educating growers, crop agents, and crop consultants across the state, and research will include examining soybean limitations in the corn and soybean rotation, and developing alternative production systems. He would like to help producers "get a handle on all production costs so we are more sustainable. It's also very important to find a niche market (specialty beans) as a way for farmers to increase economic stability."

"I'm looking forward to working at Iowa State for many reasons," Pedersen says. "It's the ag school in the United States. It will be a pleasure to work with some of the best researchers in the nation. I will have a lot of good collaboration at Iowa State University and around Iowa. The Iowa Soybean Promotion Board (ISPB) and Association are also very active, which is a plus."

Although soybean producers face problems, there are many positive aspects of farming, Pedersen says. "Low grain prices and competition are tough, but being able to produce high-quality products and spend so much time outside are the benefits. Not many have that

opportunity. They should be proud of what they're doing."

The ISPB has provided encouragement and support to Iowa State University in filling this position. Jim Legvold, ISPB director on the production technology committee and producer from Vincent, Iowa, sat in on a presentation Pedersen gave during the interview process. "He just blew us away," Legvold says. "His ability to comprehend the needs of the Iowa soybean farmers and the immense knowledge he had acquired in just a short amount of time was incredible. Palle brings some unique assets--his education and his Danish origin."

Pedersen's educational background includes a bachelor's degree and masters degree in ag science at the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in Copenhagen, Denmark; a masters degree in ag economics at Wye College, University of London, England; and a doctorate degree in agronomy at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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