

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Iowa Soybean Research Center

January 2026 Newsletter

Vol. 28

ISRC Celebrates Founding Director, Welcomes Co-Directors

The ISRC held a leadership reception on December 12, 2025, to thank founding ISRC Director Greg Tylka for his years of service in leading the center and to officially welcome new ISRC Co-Directors Mark Licht and Steve Whitham.

While Tylka is stepping away from the role of center director, he will continue to be an ISRC faculty research affiliate. He is excited for the opportunity to focus more on his first love, soybean cyst nematode (SCN) research as



Front row, from left, ISRC's Jill Cornelis, Steve Whitham, Greg Tylka, IAC farmer representative Morey Hill and ISRC's Steve May. Back row, ISRC's Kara Berg, Ag Ingenuity's Allen Chen, ISRC's Mark Licht, ISA's Joe McClure and Inari's Gene Kassmeyer.

Morrill Professor of Plant Pathology, Entomology and Microbiology at Iowa State. Tylka helped found the center in 2014 at the direction of leadership from the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) and Iowa State University to partner with industry and Iowa's soybean farmers to leverage support and coordination of soybean research and educational activities at Iowa State. In its 11 years of existence, the center has provided more than \$3 million in soybean research funding and has funded more than 26 projects, many of which have gone on to secure federal funding or additional funding from the ISA, USB, NCSRP and other commodity organizations. Under Tylka's leadership, the ISRC has earned a reputation for connecting and facilitating collaborations among researchers at ISU, ISA, industry and other universities. Iowa's center has been an example for other universities in setting up their own soybean research centers. Tylka has positioned the center well for continued success.

The center's new Co-Directors plan to take a very similar approach and leadership style to that of Tylka. [Mark Licht](#), agronomy, a row and cover crop specialist with ISU Extension responsibilities and [Steve Whitham](#), plant pathology, entomology and microbiology, an expert in molecular plant pathology and virology (think CRISPR/Cas gene editing), offer their complementary expertise and shared vision for the future of the center.

"Greg's leadership to build the ISRC with support from the ISA and the Industry Advisory Council is now a model for others to aspire to. I'm grateful to take the reins with Steve to continue expanding the mission of the ISRC," said Licht.

"I'm looking forward to working with Mark, Jill and Kara to build upon the strong foundation that Greg established in partnership with the ISA and the Industry Advisory Council to support research that addresses emerging and critical issues faced by Iowa soybean farmers," said Whitham.

The ISRC staff, Research Administrator Jill Cornelis and Communications Specialist Kara Berg would like to give a special shoutout to Greg and let him know this is not goodbye, but rather, see you soon - albeit in a different capacity. They wrote, "We thank you for everything, Greg! You are truly special and we'll miss working with you on a daily basis but we know you have left us and the center in good hands and have set the center up for a strong future. We are looking forward to working with Mark and Steve, two excellent, forward-thinking researchers. Also, thank you to everyone who helped us in giving Greg a great send-off and in providing a proper introduction and welcome to the new ISRC co-directors."



Above left, ISRC's Greg Tylka and Jill Cornelis visit with ISRC Farmer Representative Morey Hill and his wife Rhonda. Above right, from left, Mary Beth Golemo, Karen Tylka, Greg Tylka, CALS Associate Dean for Research and Discovery Danny Singh and ISU's Director of Bands Mike Golemo share a laugh.

David Cook Named President of Iowa State University



New ISU President David Cook being introduced at a press conference. *Photo provided by Iowa State*

On November 11, 2025, North Dakota State University President and Iowa State University alum David Cook was named Iowa State University's 17th president by Iowa's Board of Regents. He succeeds President Wendy Wintersteen and will officially start on March 1, 2026.

Cook, an Ames native, earned his bachelor's degree in political science and speech communication from Iowa State in 1992. He earned master's and doctoral degrees, both in organizational communication, from the University of Kansas where he spent most of his professional career in a variety of leadership roles before his selection as President of North Dakota State University in 2022. More details can be found on the [ISU News Service website](#).

ISU President Reflects on Legacy of Serving Iowa Agriculture

ISU President Wendy Wintersteen retired on January 2nd after more than 46 years working at Iowa State University. In an interview with Bethany Baratta of the Iowa Soybean Association, Wintersteen talked about the importance of ISU's partnership with ISA, her plans for retirement and her parting words to Iowa farmers.

Wintersteen cited the Iowa Soybean Research Center as an example of the partnership between the organizations. "I can think of many examples where Iowa Soybean Association and Iowa State University have really worked together to serve Iowa's farmers. One example is the Iowa Soybean Research Center. Funded

in part by the Iowa Soybean Association and housed at Iowa State University 11 years ago, the center has provided \$3.3 million to researchers here at ISU. It's a great mechanism to identify and fund critical issues," said Wintersteen. The full interview is available on [ISA's website](#).



ISU President Wendy Wintersteen. *Photo by Joclyn Kuboushek, Iowa Soybean Association*

ISRC Affiliates Provide Latest Research, Insights at ICM Conference



ISU agricultural economist Chad Hart (on stage) opens day two of the ICM Conference to a crowd of 475 attendees.

ISU Extension and Outreach hosted the 36th Integrated Crop Management Conference at the Meadows Event Center in Altoona, IA on December 10 and 11, 2025. Close to 500 farmers, exhibitors, agronomists and researchers attended the conference, of which the ISRC is a supporting sponsor.

The following ISRC faculty research affiliates offered their expertise on a wide variety of topics during the two-day conference, presenting their latest research findings and offering the most up-to-date crop management recommendations.

Agricultural economists Chad Hart and Rabail Chandio provided an ag market outlook and the changing landscape of farmland ownership, respectively. Weed scientist Wes Everman participated in a panel discussion on the Endangered Species Act and provided useful advice in a separate presentation on navigating weather, weeds, and regulations to optimize weed management. ISRC Co-Director Mark Licht, agronomy, explored the impacts of relay intercropping in Iowa and in another session provided a review of the 2025 crop year with Sotirios Archontoulis, agronomy, covering “the good, the bad and the ugly.” Nitrogen specialist Richard Roth, agronomy, presented on sulfur in corn and soybean and provided advice on nitrogen testing. Antonio Mallarino, professor emeritus, agronomy, covered phosphorus and potassium management and strategies to minimize dissolved phosphorus losses in no-till.



ISU Assistant Professor and Extension Economist Rabail Chandio shares her insight on the state of farmland evaluations.

Daren Mueller, plant pathology, entomology and microbiology, discussed the resurgence of sudden death syndrome during the 2025 growing season and Alison Robertson, plant pathology, entomology and microbiology, spoke about the historic levels of southern rust on corn across the state.

Additionally, invited speaker Laura Lindsey, from the Center for Soybean Research at The Ohio State University, presented on: “Corn vs. Soybean – Which Crop Should have Planting Priority in the Spring?”



Above left, ISU weed specialist Wes Everman discusses weed management. Above right, ISRC Co-Director Mark Licht shares what he observed during the 2025 growing season.

ISRC Directors End Year with Speaking Engagements

The end of 2025 was a busy time for speaking engagements for the ISRC directors. ISRC Co-director Steve Whitham, who is also Co-director of the Bioengineering Center at ISU, provided an overview on CRISPR and its impact on the future of crop yields at the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Annual Meeting on November 25 at the FFA Enrichment Center in Ankeny. ISRC affiliate and economist Chad Hart provided an economic outlook at the same meeting.

On December 3, ISRC Director Greg Tylka and Co-director Mark Licht presented their research at the University of Minnesota Extension Crop Pest Management Short Course in Minneapolis, MN.

Tylka provided the latest tips and tools for managing SCN, while Licht provided information on tailoring cover crops to agronomic goals.

On Dec. 9, Licht presented at the University of Missouri Crop Management Conference providing insights on short stature corn hybrids in Columbia, MO. And, as mentioned in the previous article, Licht also presented at ISU's Integrated Crop Management Conference in Altoona, IA on December 10 and 11, 2025.



ISRC Co-director Mark Licht speaks at ISU's ICM Conference.

United Soybean Board Funds 2026 ISU Research Projects

The United Soybean Board approved \$3.5 million in research funding to support 13 projects involving ISU researchers for fiscal year 2026. Following are the projects that involve ISRC faculty affiliates serving as PI (principal investigator) or co-PI.

Thomas Baum, plant pathology, entomology and microbiology (PPEM), will serve as co-PI on a project titled "Single Cell to Understand the Interactions Between SCN and Soybean, a Step Toward Sustainable Resistance" led by Khalid Meksem, Southern Illinois University.

Madan Bhattacharyya, agronomy, will serve as PI on a project titled "Introgression of Drought and Flood Tolerance Genes into Four Elite Soybean Cultivars Through Backcrossing."

Mike Castellano, agronomy, will serve as PI on a project titled "Reducing Nitrous Oxide Emissions from Soybean Through Early Planting, Cover Cropping, Investigating Residue Removal."

Leonor Leandro, PPEM, will serve as PI on a project titled "Biology and Management of Soybean Stem Diseases." She will also serve as co-PI on a project titled "Seedling Pathogens in Soybean: Disease Management and Farmer Education" led by Febina Mathew, North Dakota State University.

Daren Mueller, PPEM, will serve as PI on projects titled "Updating Soybean Foliar Disease Portfolio" and "Crop Protection Network and Better Together: Delivering Soybean Research Results to Farmers Through National Partnerships." He will also serve as co-PI on projects titled "Breeding and Screening Soybean for Resistance to Mature Seed Damage" led by Tessie Wilkerson, Mississippi State University and "Science for



Success: Agronomists Collaboratively Delivering Soybean Best Management Practices” led by Rachel Vann, University of Illinois.

Danny Singh, agronomy, will serve as co-PI on projects titled “Discovering and Deploying Genetic Solutions Across Maturity Groups for Durable Resistance to Multiple Nematodes” led by Zenglu Li, University of Georgia and “Yield Limitations of Soybean Varieties Under Drought: Identifying and Overcoming Weaknesses by Team Drought Via Breeding, Genomics, Phenomics and Physiology” led by Caio Vieira, University of Arkansas.

Additionally, two projects focused on soybean in animal diets will be led by **David Rosero**, animal science. The projects are titled “Impact of Feeding Soyhulls During Gestation and Lactation on the Reproductive Performance and Survivability of Sows” and “Elevating Soybean Meal Inclusion in Nursery Diets Through the Use of Enzymes.”

Get to Know IAC Rep: Brett Miller, Syngenta



Above at right, Syngenta’s Brett Miller participates in a small group discussion with fellow industry representatives at an ISRC IAC meeting.

Brett Miller is the regional head of crop protection field development for [Syngenta](#) Crop Protection where he leads a team of 12 field scientists and staff in North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois in developing new and innovative solutions for crop protection. Miller’s team is working on solutions for weed, insect and plant disease management, as well as biologicals and biostimulants, from discovery through commercialization on all crops but predominantly corn, soybean and wheat.

Syngenta, an international agriculture company, has employees in over 90 countries helping to improve global food

security by enabling millions of farmers to make better use of available resources.

Miller has worked for Syngenta and their legacy companies for more than 25 years, serving in a variety of commercial and technical roles. He started as a field research scientist in Nebraska, Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota and then became the global herbicide technical manager at the company’s headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. He has also served as herbicide tolerant trait manager and as technical development lead.

As Syngenta’s representative on the ISRC’s Industry Advisory Council, Miller said, “Being part of the ISRC Industry Advisory Council and supporting this organization is a personal and professional honor. I value the opportunity to regularly hear from Iowa State researchers and graduate students and to discuss and consult on their research. The interaction with other industry leaders on the IAC is great as well. Research funded by the ISRC at Iowa State will bring solutions to problems faced by Iowa and American crop producers now and into the future.”

Miller earned his BS in Crop and Weed Science and his MS in Weed Science from North Dakota State University. In addition to his responsibilities with Syngenta, Miller also owns the farm that belonged to his grandparents in western North Dakota.

ISRC Researcher Spotlight: Katherine Dentzman

ISRC faculty research affiliate Katherine Dentzman, is a rural sociologist and assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. Her research program studies the human side of sustainable agricultural systems by investigating how farmers' demographics and social and cultural factors influence their perspectives on crop management practices.

Her work has aided in better understanding the human dimension of farming from herbicide resistance issues to the pathways and barriers of success in agriculture faced by women farmers.

Dentzman's ability to understand, process and summarize information as discussions take place in real time is remarkable. In 2023, the ISRC enlisted Dentzman and her research team to facilitate and collect information during a soybean production research think tank to help identify research needs, challenges and gaps. In 2024, Dentzman also facilitated workshops and small group discussions during the Coordinated Soybean Centers Group meeting.



Katherine Dentzman

"Working with the ISRC has been such a privilege and a pleasure; I've especially enjoyed the value placed on bringing together lots of different disciplines and stakeholders to brainstorm ways Iowa soybeans can be more sustainable and resilient. The openness to integrating the social sciences is really appreciated, as are the great network connections and resources the center provides. I look forward to continuing to collaborate with the ISRC and affiliates on issues important to Iowa soybean production," said Dentzman.

In 2025, at the Rural Sociological Society's Annual Conference, Dentzman was presented with the Best Paper Award for her article "[A Fair Comparison: Women's and Men's Farms at Seven Scales in the United States](#)," which she authored with Paul Lewin from the University of Idaho. The article used 2017 Census of Agriculture data which revealed gendered strategies when comparing men and women farmers on equal footing.



Before joining the faculty at Iowa State in 2021, Dentzman was a Social Science Program Specialist with the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture. She earned her BA double majoring in Environmental Science and Sociology at Central Michigan University and both her MA and PhD in Sociology with a specialization in Ecological Food and Farming Systems at Michigan State University. After graduation she held multiple USDA-funded postdoctoral research associate positions at both Washington State University and the University of Idaho.

Dentzman, center, standing, helps facilitate discussion during a Coordinated Soybean Centers Group meeting.

ISA Highlights Dr. Tylka's SCN Research



Greg Tylka stands in a soybean field. *Photo by Joclyn Kuboushek, Iowa Soybean Association*

Founding ISRC Director, Greg Tylka, was interviewed last fall by the Iowa Soybean Association for a State of Soy episode. The video titled, “The man that battles the \$1.5 billion pest problem,” can be viewed via [ISA's website](#).

Tylka is also featured in the January 2026 issue of the ISA's [Iowa Soybean Review](#).

Crop Advantage Series Meetings Being Held in January



Crop Advantage meetings are being held at multiple locations across Iowa in January. The gatherings provide a solid foundation of current, research-based crop production information to help make smart, informed decisions in the farming operation. Continuing education credits and private pesticide applicator instruction will be offered. For more information, visit the [Crop Advantage Series website](#).

CropsTV Season 6 Now Available



It's not too late to subscribe to view Season 6 of CropsTV. Episodes, which are available on-demand now through April 15, 2026. Programming contains topics selected to best fit an online learning environment with supplemental materials and links to resources. Instructors are ISU faculty, staff, extension specialists and guest presenters from around the Midwest. Continuing education credits are available.

For a list of topics and to subscribe, visit the [CropsTV website](#).

Mosher Receives Marvin Pomerantz Award



In October 2025, ISRC faculty research affiliate Gretchen Mosher, agricultural and biosystems engineering, received the Marvin A. Pomerantz Award for Faculty Enrichment for 2025-2026. The award supports faculty deemed outstanding in their position responsibilities, which may encompass teaching, research, service, professional practice, and/or outreach and extension.

Archontoulis Named CSSA Fellow, Highly Cited Researcher



ISRC faculty research affiliate Sotirios Archontoulis, agronomy, was named a 2025 Fellow by the Crop Science Society of America. He was honored at the society's annual meeting in November 2025, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Also, Archontoulis was recently recognized as one of three ISU faculty members named to the Clarivate Highly Cited Researchers 2025 list, a global recognition honoring scholars whose work ranks in the top one percent most cited in their fields over the past decade. Clarivate is a British American analytics company that provides data, insights, and workflow solutions to the academic, life sciences, and intellectual property (IP) sectors.

Whitham Marks 25 Years at Iowa State



December 1, 2025, marked ISRC Co-Director and Professor of Plant Pathology, Entomology and Microbiology Steve Whitham's 25th year at ISU! Congratulations! He will be honored as a 25 Year Club Member at a reception on April 14.

Upcoming Events

January 6-April 15, 2026: [CropsTV - Season 6](#)

January 6-29, 2026: [Crop Advantage Series](#)

February 25-27, 2026: [Commodity Classic](#), San Antonio, TX

Each Wednesday at Noon: [Iowa Learning Farms Webinars](#)

Keep up with what's new at the ISRC on [LinkedIn](#) and [X](#).



Special thanks to the Dr. Keith and Virginia Smith Family for providing funding to make this newsletter possible.



Ag Ingenuity



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