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Societies

Investing in our members: The strength of agronomy across every career stage

By Wade Thomason

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I believe that the true strength of the American Society of Agronomy isn't found in a specific discipline, innovation, or program—it's found in our members. Our community includes students just starting out, early-career professionals gaining momentum, mid-career leaders expanding their impact, and seasoned experts whose decades of experience anchor our field. Supporting each of these groups isn't just a checkbox for the Society; it is vital to the future of agronomy.

Every member brings a unique perspective shaped by where they are in their career and the environment they work in. Graduate students and early-career scientists keep us grounded in curiosity, fresh ideas, and the courage to challenge old assumptions. They are often the ones pushing the envelope with emerging technologies and new ways of thinking about complex systems. At the same time, they face real challenges—navigating career pathways, securing funding, and finding their footing in a shifting workforce. As a Society, we are working to offer real-world mentorship, networking, and professional development that they actually need to succeed.

Meanwhile, mid-career professionals do the heavy lifting of turning knowledge into real-world impact. Whether they are in academia, industry, consulting, or government, they act as the bridge between discovery and application. They run the research programs, mentor the next generation, and solve day-to-day challenges in agricultural systems. Supporting them means recognizing their leadership, providing room for continued growth, and keeping them deeply connected to the broader agronomic community.

Across all [career] stages, we are united by a shared commitment to moving agronomy forward in ways that matter.

Equally important are our senior members. Their decades of experience provide an invaluable perspective that shapes the very foundation the rest of us build upon. Beyond their scientific achievements, they serve as the ultimate advisers and advocates for our profession. Ensuring their insights are shared—and their contributions are celebrated—strengthens the entire society.

Across all these stages, we are united by a shared commitment to moving agronomy forward in ways that matter. But the path to making an impact looks different for everyone today. Agronomists aren't just working in traditional roles anymore; they are working at the intersections of data science, policy, sustainability, and global development. This diversity is a massive asset, and it pushes ASA to stay flexible, inclusive, and responsive to what members actually need right now.

Looking ahead, we have to be intentional about investing in our people. That means expanding mentorship programs, fostering communities, supporting interdisciplinary teamwork, and ensuring every member—no matter their sector or career stage—finds real value and a sense of belonging here.

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