Science Societies

Expert plant pathologist, agronomist recognized with Illinois CCA Award

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“I love to learn, so being a Certified Crop Adviser goes right along with that,” says Porter. “I enjoy attending different events, field days, and webinars because there’s always something new to learn.

The CCA Award, the top award from Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Certified Crop Adviser Board, is designed to increase awareness that farmers and their crop advisers strive to make economically and environmentally sound cropping decisions. The award recognizes an individual who is highly innovative and performs superior service for their farmer customers in nutrient management, soil and water management, integrated pest management, and crop production.

Growing up on her family’s farm near Nokomis in Montgomery County, Porter connected what she learned in the classroom to crop diseases her family encountered

in the field. After earning her bachelor's degree, Porter completed a master's degree in plant pathology at the University of Illinois.

Throughout her career, she has served Illinois farmers as a crop consultant, Illinois Soil and Water Conservation District resource conservationist, University of Illinois Ag and Natural Resources educator, University of Illinois Plant Clinic diagnostician, seed sales agronomist, soybean product manager for Syngenta, and outreach agronomist for the Illinois Soybean Association.

Agronomist Karen Corrigan nominated Porter for the CCA Award for her expertise in plant pathology and her effective, timely communication with farmers.

"She (Porter) has been a key source of information on the spread of red crown rot in soybeans in Illinois," Corrigan wrote in her nomination. "She is the go-to for help with identification for other CCAs as well as farmers on crop disease."

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Red crown rot became a major focus of Porter's work after a farmer approached her and other agronomists at a previous Farm Progress Show, seeking additional research

and resources to address the disease.

“I didn’t choose it; it chose me,” Porter says, explaining that she has spent the past several years helping farmers identify red crown rot, connecting researchers with field samples and contributing to education and outreach efforts aimed at improving understanding of the soybean disease.

Porter will be recognized at the Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting in December. As this year’s CCA Award winner, she will also be considered for the 2027 International CCA Award.

—*Source: Illinois Farm Bureau*

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