Science Societies

Rodney Miller Named 2023 International CCA of the Year

By Denice Rackley

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Rod Miller, International CCA of the Year, enjoys his time in the field with his growers in central Indiana maximizing production of corn, soybeans, and wheat.

“I was born with a passion for agriculture,” says Rodney Miller, the 2023 International CCA of the Year. The award, which recognizes a CCA who has shown exceptional leadership in the field of agronomy and who helps farmers succeed by sharing with

them the latest science and innovations, was presented to Miller at the 2023 Commodity Classic in March in Orlando, FL.

Miller's agriculture roots run deep in Rossville, IN. Choosing to serve producers in and around the community where he grew up, Miller takes a long-term approach to his crop advisory role, focusing on helping his neighbors succeed and assisting them in being great stewards of their land.

Growing up on his family's grain farm, the acres of soybeans and corn served as his classroom where fundamental lessons were uncovered. During the long summer days in the field, Miller would begin to understand that life is dependent on soil, and coaxing production from each acre required effort. He assisted his father by running equipment, crop scouting, and facilitating the cropping plan for each growing season. Miller was active in 4H and FFA, where working as part of a team and his experiences converged, forming a clearer picture of his future.

A Heart for Agriculture

Knowing agriculture held his heart, Miller pursued an Agronomic Science degree at Purdue University. After college, he began working for an independent fertilizer company, Morning Star Fertilizer. For nine years, he focused on fertilizer application and sales, and then began working for Crop Fertility Specialists (CFS), sharing his agronomic knowledge.

Miller works with around 50 producers to develop unique field-by-field plans that address nutrient management, seed choice and placement, and the utilization of herbicides and pesticides for crop protection. Taking a scientific approach to agronomy, an in-depth look at individual producers' goals and succession plan with an added layer of environmental sustainability enables Miller to assist growers in meeting

both short- and long-term goals.

Robert Wyatt, the owner of CFS, placed emphasis on his employees being extremely knowledgeable and keeping abreast of the latest agricultural research that would benefit their customers. “Bob put a lot of value and emphasis on employees being CCAs. He felt that encouraging his employees to become CCAs contributed to the success of those producers we served and the company,” Miller says. Wyatt was so convinced the CCA program held immense value that he helped establish the program in Indiana.

In 1998, with nine years of field experience, Miller became a CCA. “The CCA program does an excellent job at offering opportunities for professional development while encouraging participants to remain aware of and utilize the latest advancements in agronomic research, education, and technology,” Miller notes.

Upon Wyatt’s retirement, KOVA brought CFS into its family of businesses serving ag clients in the surrounding states providing ag finance, crop insurance, wholesale and retail chemicals, and agronomic expertise. KOVA’s professional philosophy emphasizes expertise and service, which is right up Miller’s alley.

“Rod is detail oriented,” explains KOVA manager Kevin Wyatt. “In production agriculture, paying attention to the little things adds up.”

Serving as a Leader



Rod Miller and his family are all part of the team at Crop Fertility Specialists in Rossville, IN. From l to r: Keegan, Rod, Sharla, and Nathan.

"As CCAs, we want to be the first person customers come to for agronomic advice," Miller says. He has been the KOVA location leader in Rossville since 2014. Committed to serving as a leader, Miller is active in his community and within the Indiana CCA program. He also serves on several boards within the greater agriculture industry of the state. He is active in the Agribusiness Council of Indiana, which represents the ag retail, feed and grain, and seed industries. Miller participated in the council's Emerging Leadership Program and served as chairman of the board from 2012–2013. As chairman, he pushed for Indiana to adopt the 4R nutrient stewardship.

"Seeing the growing problems in Ohio with nutrient overload leading to algae blooms in the lakes and the restrictions and regulations that followed, I wanted Indiana to be proactive," he says.

He was key in initiating and developing the certification program that encourages retailers and service providers to adopt proven practices that align with the 4Rs—right source, right rate, right time, and right place. Miller, an ardent supporter of environmental conservation, led Rossville CFS in a successful 4R pilot program. "Because farmers look to CCAs and ag retailers for agronomic advice, we felt it was the right thing to do to lead the way in establishing the 4R program, linking the CCA program and 4R certification."

Meeting Needs Today and Planning for Tomorrow

Looking beyond today is paramount for Miller. "I put together proactive and integrated nutrient management plans, individual prescriptions for crop protection, and assist

customers in selecting the ideal seed with the right traits suited to their location and goals that will be good for today and tomorrow."

Miller's advisory work goes well beyond sales, believing the long-term success of his producers is paramount. "It all comes down to building relationships," he says.

These relationships are also critical in building up the next generation of ag professionals. Miller offers job-shadowing opportunities to local high school and college students, giving them hands-on experiences with fertilizer, seed, agronomic applications, troubleshooting, and customer service that open their eyes to the vast opportunities in agronomy. When mentoring young ag professionals, he suggests, "Don't focus totally on short-term progress or results. Some things need to be adjusted quickly, but taking the long-term approach to recommendations and stewardship is ultimately the best for customers."

Society Support

Miller sees the American Society of Agronomy (ASA) as the go-to source for timely agronomic information. "I look to the Society to provide education and research information that can be applied on farms I serve."

"CCA training is exceptionally well rounded. The program promotes and develops management partners to serve ag producers and businesses today and into the future by offering professional support, development, networking, and the educational opportunities needed to stay current in our ever-changing industry," Miller says. "The industry insights and educational articles, particularly the nutrient stewardship and efficiency information, provided by the Society publications give me practical information to share with growers."

“Winning the Indiana CCA of the Year Award last year and the ICCA [of the Year] Award this year is extremely humbling. The CCA program is full of amazing people! It is an honor to represent them in promoting the CCA program through this recognition.”

The greatest reward for Miller, even more so than the humbling accolade of ICCA of the Year, is the trust placed in him by his ag neighbors and the relationships he has built. “I hope I'm seen as a trusted partner invested in their success,” he says.

Quickly attributing his achievements to ASA, the CCA program, and the producers he assists, Miller says, “The American Society of Agronomy and CCA program affords you opportunities to develop agronomic expertise and earn credentials that speak to your continually expanding expertise. I owe much of my success and the ICCA of the Year Award to the incredible producers who are open to thinking outside the box and trusting my recommendations.”

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