Meet Steve Cromley: the new ICCA vice-chair

By Susan Fisk
Public & Science Communications Director
sfisk@sciencesocieties.org

Growing up in Carrolton, MO, Steve Cromley always knew he wanted to work in agriculture. “I grew up on a row crop farm and always enjoyed science in school. Choosing to pursue a degree in agronomy was an excellent way to merge my interest in science and desire to help farmers be successful.” Cromley has spent the last 15 years building his career as a CCA. He earned both bachelor’s and masters’ degrees in agronomy, first at Missouri State and then grad school at the University of Missouri.

Cromley started his career in Kansas, where he first earned his CCA designation. He is also certified in Missouri, where he currently works. He recently took a job with Ingredion, a leading global ingredients solutions provider specializing in starches, nature-based sweeteners, and nutrition, and works directly with farmers who grow corn specifically for processing.

As incoming ICCA vice-chair, Cromley’s goal is to “build upon the relationships our leadership has cultivated over the years. We need to keep our reputation as being the ‘go-to’ organization for applied agronomy. We have more than 13,000 Certified Crop Advisers in our organization. There are a lot of individuals who are experts in their field and have experience implementing practices on the farm. We are developing a system to improve communication between our professionals and other organizations working to promote agriculture. We need to continue providing the best and most up-to-date recommendations to our customers, but I also believe we have a responsibility to share the farmers’ story to others such as researchers, government agencies, and special interest groups.”

Embracing new technology

Cromley is comfortable using social media to do his part in achieving these communication objectives. “We used twitter a lot in my previous job with MFA Incorporated. It was a way to get the word out quickly to our CCAs and customers. We would tweet links to timely Ag articles or pictures from the field. If disease or insect pressure is starting to build we can take a picture with our phone and tweet it out while still standing in the field. It doesn’t get timelier than that.” His Twitter handle is @muzeaeman, and he welcomes followers.

He’s also using his cellphone a lot more. “There are a lot of apps out there that are useful. I also double check myself in field, google something, or use the web to look up an insect or disease.” The technology also makes it easier than ever for him to stay up to date on the latest research. He approximates that he spends three to four hours per week reviewing the literature, university newsletters, and, of course, Crops & Soils magazine.

Over the past decade, Cromley has seen rapid growth in the use of technology in the field. “Precision ag has grown leaps and bounds. From grid soil sampling and yield mapping...