

Careers in Weed Science

Drake Copeland: Technical Service Manager with FMC Corporation

Primary duties

Educate and support sales force.
Provide technical support for FMC customers.
Conduct research internally and with university cooperators.

What do you love about your job?

I enjoy working with and supporting research at the university level, with private researchers as well as conducting internal trial work. My favorite part is analyzing data from our research, training our sales force, and educating our customers to ultimately create more opportunities for success within their operation.

Imparting wisdom

As a student, I wish I would have been better at filtering what is important and what is not. We are all guilty of it, but sometimes we get “tunnel-vision” within our own project or research objectives and lose sight of the whole picture. Yes, we are all passionate about weed science, herbicide physiology, etc. In addition to that knowledge, while getting your degrees, learn to be a generalist in agriculture. This will help you be more successful down the road.

Use your network that you have developed during your time in graduate school. These contacts will help you along the road and will be life-long friends or co-workers. When you are hired, have a “can-do” attitude, and learn from your colleagues every day. Especially the ones that have been in our industry longer or since you were in diapers! Lastly, When I started with FMC, Dr. Ken Smith, former weed scientist at the University of Arkansas, told me “You’ve gotten your degrees, now it is time to get your education.” With that being said, continue to be a student in your profession and continue challenge yourself by spending time outside your comfort zone.

You can connect with Drake on LinkedIn if you are interested to learn more.



Education

B.S. University of Tennessee at Martin
Agriculture Business
M.S. Mississippi State University
Cotton Agronomy/Entomology
Ph.D. University of Tennessee
Weed Science

Involvement in Professional Societies

SWSS- GSO VP & President
NCWSS- Section Chair - Agronomic Crops

How did you begin working in Weed Science?

All my mentors were weed scientists. Naturally following their path to success led me to a weed science concentration.

What is exciting about the future of weed science?

Along with the continued evolution of weedy biotypes, new chemistries and technologies continually being developed to manage them. It is exciting to be a part of that process and ultimately help the end user, farmers.

Other interests?

Anything with my wife and two daughters and enjoying the outdoors when time allows.