

2026 MCIA Annual Meeting—Speakers



Sergio Cabello Leiva, PhD

Director of Research, Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council
507-719-7645 scabelloleiva@agmgmtsolutions.com

Sergio Cabello-Leiva is an agronomist and soil scientist, serving as Director of Research for the Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council. He holds a PhD in Plant Sciences from North Dakota State University and previously worked as a Principal Investigator at the NDSU Carrington Research Extension Center. He has extensive experience in seed production, applied field research, breeding evaluation, agronomy, soil health, and precision agriculture. He leads multi-location research programs and works closely with farmers, universities, and industry partners to translate research into practical, market-driven solutions.



Michael Merriman

Seed and Biotechnology Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
612-508-8270 • Michael.Merriman@state.mn.us

Michael Merriman serves as Minnesota's Seed Control Official and supervises the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Seed Regulatory Program. In this role, he ensures compliance with the Minnesota Seed Law and Federal Seed Act. He leads a team of five district inspectors and two administrative staff dedicated to conducting inspections, enforcing regulations, and promoting consumer protection and fair trade in the seed industry.

Michael holds a master of science in biology from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and a bachelor of science in biology from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. With extensive experience in seed program management, noxious weed regulation, plant pest surveys, and biotechnology oversight, Michael brings a strong background of regulatory work and plant sciences to Minnesota's seed stakeholders.