



NAICC NEWS

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NAICC Certification Board Adopts Plan



NAICC Executive Vice-President Paul Weller (right) and General Counsel Ed Wheeler (left) review certification plan with NAICC President Madeline Mellinger.

NAICC's seven-member Certification Board has adopted a program to certify professional credentials of the nation's independent crop consultants. Final agreement on the plan came on March 27, after nearly six years of research and committee work.

NAICC's certification program will establish uniform criteria and standards for crop consultants and contract researchers. The benchmark qualifiers will be levels of education and practical experience in the field as consultants. No effort will be made to determine or certify levels of competence due to liability considerations.

"This new certification program marks an important milestone in NAICC's service to the nation's independent agricultural consultants," says **Dr. Earle S. Raun**, Nebraska-based consultant and chairman of the NAICC Certification Board. "We are now ready to move forward with a positive and credible effort to assure employers, clientele, and the general public that crop consultants meet acceptable education and experience requirements."

NAICC has also been a leader in establishment of REAP, the Registry of Environmental and Agricultural Professionals. The REAP concept started out as a national registry of professionals that were certified by their respective organizations. Through encouragement from NAICC, the evolving REAP program may provide certi-

cation services to contracting members. No decision has been reached by NAICC's Certification Board as to whether REAP will act as certifying agent under the Board's supervision.

Three major categories of certification are planned under NAICC's adopted guidelines: Crop Consultant, Independent; Crop Consultant, Commercial; and Contract Research. The certification will be personal and not transferable. Each certified individual will receive an annually renewable certification card, and be authorized to use the appropriate title of certification in their professional work.

NAICC's Certification Board will have five voting members and two affiliate members of the association. In addition, the NAICC immediate past-president will serve in a ex-officio capacity. Each sitting Board member will be required to have certification from either NAICC or other certifying organizations. Provisions have been made for an Advisory Committee, consisting mainly of government or REAP officials. ASCS representative **Michael Lisenbiger** participated in the March 27 conference.

The NAICC certification program should be operational by mid-1991, following approval by the NAICC Executive Committee. Individuals can then submit an application for certification to the Board, accompanied by a fee to be established in the near future.

Certified professionals will need to renew their certification annually, with a Board review every three years. At the end of the three-year certification period, individuals will have to submit proof of continued eligibility, along with proof of completion of Continuing Education Units (CEUs). NAICC will work with REAP to administer a continuing education program that will provide "credits" for participation in seminars and educational workshops, published articles in the individual's field of work, and appropriate college courses and scientific endeavors. A total of 18 CEUs will be required over the three-year certification period.

"We'll carefully monitor and supervise this program," Raun promises. "There will be a complaint and review process, an accompanying educational effort, and positive publicity through either NAICC or REAP. This marks the beginning of a new era of professionalism for independent crop consultants and contract researchers."

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Are We Ready?

Madeline Mellinger, NAICC President

Who will provide the vital technical services needed by the nation's agricultural producers? Will it be government? Will it be commercial companies? Will it be independent consultants? Or will it be a combination of the above?

Whether we like it or not, the answers are already being hammered out in the halls of Congress and the USDA as a result of the 1990 Farm Bill. And NAICC members have a major stake in the outcome.

Independent crop consultants have been written into ASCS's SP-53 integrated crop management program. The fertilizer and ag chemical companies have announced formation of an industry committee to "certify" their consultants to make them more palatable to future government programs. They intend to assure that commercial company consultants are included next time around.

At the Agway-College Agronomy Conference held in Syracuse on March 5-7 a panel consisting of **Dr. John Howell**, New England Extension Consortium; **Dr. Tom Hall**, ASA and REAP; **Tom Perlich**, Centrol; and myself as NAICC president; addressed the question, "How are technical services going to be provided to our ag producers during the next ten years?"

I was asked and I, in turn, ask you: "Is the private sector ready to provide service?" Both are complicated questions we must all work together to answer.

So far, the private sector is just beginning to do its job regarding identifying qualified, objective practitioners. We still can't provide enough service to satisfy demand. We need to get to work to make ourselves and our credentials known before others fill this void for us.

In Georgia, consultants are coming forth to deal with technical service and to form an organization. As NAICC President, I was asked to address their first annual meeting. **Dr. Bill Lambert**, the state IPM coordinator instrumental in organizing the GA consultants, is setting a good example of cooperation toward servicing the highest need without petty turf battles. There is plenty of challenging work for all, and much synergism to be gained through joint effort.

Have you read "Part 1414" yet? It's included with the *News*. Can you explain why the private sector was not included as service providers? I can't. NAICC has raised this question for all of us. Maybe we're too late this time and maybe there are still too few of us to impact the system. Be assured we'll keep trying and we will be heard. We need to work together on these issues. Each of us can help by making sure our qualifications as practitioners are unchallengeable; we're technically competent and unbiased. We can help by support-

ing NAICC and by bringing additional qualified members into our group. If each of us would just make a little effort, we could all move forward together.

Every one of us has to be more visible, more audible about the services we offer and the issues and regulations confronting us. And, as a group, indeed AN ALLIANCE, we WILL be seen, heard and INCLUDED as providers of service.

Next time an issue like 1414 is raised, I hope we'll have ready a list of certified, qualified independent practitioners who can get the job done. This time we weren't ready, and we're going to have to make up lost ground as a result.

Pesticide Users Advisory Committee Meets

*The Pesticide Users Advisory Committee (PUAC) to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) met for their semi-annual meeting last month in Washington, D.C. EPA officials in attendance were **Linda Fisher**, Assistant Administrator for Pesticides and Toxic Substances; **Douglas Campt**, Director, Office of Pesticide Programs; **Steve Johnson**, Director, Field Operations Division; **Anne Lindsay**, Director, Registration Division; and **Jan Auerbach**, Chief, Special Review Branch. NAICC was represented by past-president **Earle Raun**, who submits this report.*

The apparent success of the voluntary approach to pyrethroid risk reduction during the past year leads to optimism for the success of similar voluntary restraint. Joint regulator/user/producer discussions are less inflammatory, produce more satisfactory results, and improve opportunities for similar activities.

EPA is experimenting with involving more regional EPA staff in the Section 18 process. Some concern was expressed that this might slow down EPA actions on 18s. EPA is optimistic that using this approach will speed up such actions.

A discussion of food safety issues led to a possible change in terminology when discussing the use of pesticides for "cosmetic purposes." The general public may misinterpret the term to mean that there is no real value to the use of the pesticide except for appearance. Recent EPA research into a number of such uses shows that those "cosmetic uses" really are related to factors such as keeping quality in fruit. Thus, there is a move toward changing the term to "quality-related uses."

Granular pesticide formulations were discussed, and EPA expects to issue a policy or guideline paper this summer in that regard.

EPA is changing its requirements for registration of biologicals. Final requirements may show flexibility not previously experienced in EPA. But registration may be of little importance in restraining the availability of biologicals. The primary restraint may well be the small

profit available. So much so that private industry can't afford to label, produce, and market important biologicals.

The next meeting of the Pesticide Users Advisory Committee will be held next fall in the Stoneville, Mississippi area.

Case Studies

Thrips Palmi Found in Southern Florida

Thrips palmi, a potentially devastating pest of vegetable, ornamental, cotton and fruit crops, was discovered in the Homestead area of Dade County, Florida on December 20, 1990 by NAICC member **Galen Frantz**, Glades Crop Care, Inc. The detection of this insect is the first report of the presence of *Thrips palmi* in the continental U.S.

Frantz' identification was confirmed by **Dr. Harold Denmark**, chief entomologist with the Florida Division of Plant Industry (DPI). A few days later the DPI began sampling fields throughout the county and state to determine the extent of the infestation.

On February 1, 1991 extension entomologist **Dr. Phil Stansly** issued a pest alert to the Florida Extension Service and growers asking them to be on the lookout for any unusual plant damage, and to send samples of unusual damage to the nearest IFAS insect diagnostic laboratory.

Since then, articles have appeared in *Pesticide and Toxic Chemical News* and *The Palm Beach Post* and, most recently, the March issue of *Agrichemical Age* detailing the work of Glades Crop Care in the discovery of the pest.

Thrips palmi originated in southeast Asia and is a major problem in Japan, the Phillipines, etc. It was discovered in Hawaii in 1984, although experts say it had been in the state for two years. The long period of time between the arrival and its proper identification rendered a successful eradication effort virtually impossible.

Glades Crop Care made the first discovery of *Thrips palmi* in the western hemisphere in December, 1986 in Puerto Rico, where they have been consulting for vegetables since 1985.

The early detection of the pest in Florida comes as the result of a *thrips* collection program started in the Spring of 1986 by Glades Crop Care. To date, over 200 collections have been made and 5,000-plus *thrips* have been examined in the program. Because of the early detection, there is hope that the current infestation will remain limited, and that it can be contained.

Currently, the infestation is limited to Dade County, Florida. However, many vegetable and ornamental crops are infested. The pest multiplies quite rapidly and effective insecticides are few to none. A number of snap

bean fields have already been disked.

The state has appointed a working task force comprised of USDA, DPI, University of Florida, and private industry representatives. Charlie Mellinger represents the private sector. Glades Crop Care has invested many hours of staff time over the past five years gaining knowledge about *Thrips palmi* and monitoring the *thrips* species in Florida. Hopefully, that work and continued cooperation with Extension and the Division of Plant Industry will help turn the tables on *Thrips palmi*.

Case Study

Ethical Dilemma

NAICC has maintained a formal code of ethics since 1984. This is sent to all new members, and adherence to the principles is expected. Periodically, the Ethics Committee will provide a case study to exercise our awareness and handling of ethical dilemmas. Such case study follows:

Mr. R has a field of mint that, in June, shows many spots of poor vigor, and he pays your firm to sample and diagnose the reasons. The report indicates the scattered patches are affected with verticillium wilt and high root lesion nematodes. Both conditions render the field unsuitable for vegetative propagation by the standard technique of root digging and replanting.

Later, in September, a neighbor, Mr. E has you sample a field for fertility, nematodes and disease presence. You report that the field is clean of nematodes and, not having a mint history, is also free of verticillium disease threat. You advise him to check the quality of his mint root source of health before planting. He does not make further contact with you. However, a couple of weeks later you are speaking with him and bring up the question of where he plans to get his roots from, and about testing them for disease or nematode presence. He says, "That should not be necessary, as I am getting them from Mr. R, and he says the source field yielded well and they look like good quality roots."

Question: How do you respond?

Let's turn the dilemma a little differently.

Suppose Mr. E agrees and asks you to go ahead and test the roots of the field in question, so as to advise him of their quality before purchase. How should you respond?

The primary guiding principles rest upon client confidentiality to the first party, Mr. R, and the need to not let his information be disclosed in an unauthorized manner. Secondly, the consultant needs to avoid entering into a second activity where he can now foresee a conflict of interest, and potential for economic injury to one party or the other. Another difficult question is what right or responsibility does the consultant have to counsel Mr. R about the representation he is making of his roots and the suitability for sale?

COMMITTEE NEWS

Education Committee Plans Future Programs

A four-year program of NAICC member self-improvement was begun last fall. The first in the series was a single seminar on hiring and motivating people. The second in the series addressed the topic of effective sales techniques. This program was held on two separate dates at two separate locations, one in Bloomington, Illinois, and the other in Omaha, Nebraska. According to **David Harms**, Education Committee chairman, two more series of seminars are being planned and, hopefully, there will be sufficient interest to hold each series at several locations throughout the U.S.

The committee is also building a library of information from which NAICC members may draw for their personal reference. Each seminar will have written material that will be added to the library.

These seminars offer an excellent opportunity for members to exchange ideas for success. Each seminar is planned with a highly structured lecture session and a less structured panel format to allow for the presentation of differing viewpoints.

Our seminars have been held with financial help from DuPont, and organizational planning assistance from *Agri Finance Magazine*. The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers has also helped with the seminars, giving us an excellent opportunity to interact with farm managers and potential clients.

CPCR Book Available Through Group Purchase

The Crop Protection Chemical Reference (CPCR) book is being made available to NAICC members at a cost of \$42.00 each, a savings of over 50 percent off the regular \$105.00 price, according to Group Purchase Committee chairman **Dick Weston**. To order your copy(s), return the enclosed NAICC News reply card with your name and address to NAICC headquarters. Be sure to write "CPCR Book Order" on the card and include the number of copies needed.

ABC Form Enclosed

The Alliance Builder Campaign continues to be a successful tool for the recruitment of new NAICC members. An ABC form is enclosed with this issue of NAICC News for you to fill out and send in with a list of prospective members. NAICC will follow up on all names and keep track of who sent them in. Forms will be accepted through June 15, 1991. Recruit three new members by the annual meeting this November and you will receive complimentary registration to the meeting.

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MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

That's NAICC past-president **Dr. Earle S. Raun** on the cover of the March issue of *Ag Consultant Magazine*. His cover story, entitled "Evolution of a Crop Practitioner's Black Bag," explores the changes crop consulting has undergone in his 17 years in the profession. Raun, NAICC's Certification Board chairman, wraps up the article saying, "The current move for certification as crop consultants, and continuing education requirements, will improve the professionalism of today's practitioners. And the results of research, biotech or otherwise, will be added to the practitioner's black bag."

NAICC president **Madeline Mellinger** is featured in an article on Integrated Crop Management (ICM) in the March issue of *Agrichemical Age*. Mellinger gives the independent consultants' viewpoint on the role of independent consultants in implementing the federal ICM program stressing cooperation between the public and private sector, "...we can all work together and get these enormous jobs done," she says.

The April/May issue of *Dealer Progress Magazine* asks the question: "Where Does Agronomic Expertise Belong?" And NAICC member **David Harms** helps answer it by offering advice for dealers on how to work with independent crop consultants. Harms is quoted as saying, "We work closely with many of the dealers in our area. We can be the dealer's legs, arms, and eyes and go to the field and make recommendations for the farmer to take to the dealer for products." Harms indicates that the relationship between dealers and independent consultants can be mutually beneficial, but cautions, "We have to stay at arms length. We have to stay unbiased. They sell the material. We're the doctor. They're the pharmacist." NAICC past-president **Dan Bradshaw** adds, "Communication between independents and dealers is important. There's a great benefit to sharing experiences and referrals both ways."

In the "Consultant's Corner" in the March issue of *Cotton Farming Magazine* is NAICC member **John Klepper**. The immediate past-president of the Texas Association of Agricultural Consultants (TAAC) discusses twice-a-week scouting for pests in Texas' cotton fields and lays to rest any misinformation that West Texas is a low input, low output, low quality area for cotton farming. Klepper also mentions his affiliations with NAICC and TAAC, saying, "These organizations give consultants support and assistance as we strive for greater professionalism. They also give us direction and guidance in an ever-changing and dynamic industry." He goes on to say, "I believe that as the complexity of agriculture continues to increase, growers will more and more often ask their consultants if they are members of their state and national professional associations."

CONTRACT RESEARCH

GLP for Product Registration

What it Means, and What it Doesn't

Dr. Jerry King, Quality Control and Assurance Officer
Lyle Peterson, Contract Officer
A & L Mid West Laboratories

A & L Mid West Laboratories has recently been through an investigation and audit by the Environmental Protection Agency. To their knowledge, they were the first soils laboratory to undergo such an investigation. In order to clarify misconceptions regarding GLP, they have submitted the following article of interest to contract researchers.

Most laboratories go to considerable effort to follow what they consider to be good laboratory practices. These include proper standardization, check samples, instrument calibrations, and blanks. However, when Good Laboratory Practices is capitalized, the term takes on a new meaning. Ironically, a good laboratory can follow good laboratory practices and still not be following Good Laboratory Practices.

An immense amount of research must be done in support of application for registration of new herbicide and insecticide products, and because of the potentially wide-ranging effects of a successful product, all such research must be properly designed and conducted. Part of the proper conduct of this research is the control and documentation of any laboratory work involved. To insure the proper conduct of laboratory work and veracity of data generated, federal (40CFR160) was enacted in 1989 to specify Good Laboratory Practices (GLP).

This set of GLP includes essentially every area of laboratory work involved with a new product study, including care and feeding of laboratory animals. A major emphasis is on the recording, verifications and storage of data. Because a study may take years and the product may be used for years after approval, it must be possible to locate, trace and verify study data at any time during all these years.

The law itself is fairly long and somewhat ambiguous, so quite a lot of the people who must work under its constraints have never read it in its entirety. This has given rise to a great deal of misunderstanding between laboratories and the clientele. In the field of soil-applied herbicide research one of the universal requirements is a basic soil characterization consisting of several parameters which are routinely analyzed in many soil laboratories. It has become common for sponsoring companies to subcontract this work to independent laboratories with instructions to "do GLP analysis" or to perform the list of analyses "under GLP standards."

Misunderstandings begin with the assumption that the soil characterization itself is a part of the GLP. This is not the case. Analysis for texture, particle size, etc., is part of another regulation. The second mistaken assumption is that a soil sample can be submitted to any laboratory for "GLP analysis." In order to do any laboratory work under GLP standards, a laboratory must know the name, address, and phone number of the study director and must have a copy of the study protocol. A third mistaken assumption is that samples can be submitted in a routine manner. Under GLP, all samples must be handled under proper chain of custody procedures.

GLP prescribes specific measures a laboratory must take in recording of data, handling of samples and storage of documents, and these measures do not fit into the normal flow of routine operations of most laboratories. Consequently, GLP work demands some premium in terms of time and cost. It also requires coordination between the laboratory and the sponsor of the study.

The Environmental Protection Agency is aware of these problems and is working with study sponsors and laboratories to alleviate them. Until more information is widely available, the most important thing to know is that all samples and information concerning a product licensing study be channeled through the study director. Any deviation from this practice risks invalidating at least part of the study.

EPA SOPs Available

At the Contract Researchers' Meeting in Denver in January, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) discussed their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for determining auditing and inspection of field trials. These SOPs were obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by NAICC member **Steve Wagner**, Agri-Business Consultants, Okemos, Michigan, and are available from NAICC headquarters.

SOPs Available are:

SOP No.	Title	Pages
GLP-C-01	Conducting a Field Site GLP Compliance Inspection	27
GLP-C-02	Determining Compliance of Audited Studies with GLP Standards Requirements	32
GLP-DA-04	Auditing Residue and Environmental Fate Studies (Field Portions)	8
GLP-S-05	Glossary of GLP Terms	12

To obtain a copy of any or all of the above SOPs, return the enclosed NAICC News reply card with name of company, full address, and the SOP Number(s) you are requesting to NAICC Headquarters.

STATE NEWS

TAAC Announces Scholarship Fund

The Texas Association of Agricultural Consultants (TAAC) at its annual meeting this year voted to take another important step in its commitment to agricultural education. NAICC member **Dan Bradshaw** reports that at this year's conference in Austin, TAAC members voted to contribute ten percent of the yearly net income of the organization into a scholarship fund for agricultural universities in the state.

This action follows the pattern that allowed TAAC in the mid to late 1980s to establish the **Patricia M. Nemec** scholarship fund at Texas A&M University and TAAC's Scholarship Fund at Texas Tech University. Both of these endowed funds, with initial amounts of five thousand dollars each, are designated to provide scholarships for junior, senior, or graduate students in entomology or soil and crop sciences that are interested in agricultural consulting as a profession.

This action will allow the organization to maintain its commitment to education with additional funds in the existing scholarship programs or at other deserving agricultural universities.

Illinois Crop Consultants Meet

The Professional Crop Consultants of Illinois (PCCI) met on March 5 at the University of Illinois in conjunction with the Seventeenth Annual Illinois Crop Protection Workshop, according to NAICC and PCCI member **Bill Craig**. The workshop trains crop consultants and other agriculturists in Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

The PCCI meeting featured a discussion with University of Illinois specialists concerning IPM tactics for managing soybeans where soybean cyst nematodes are reducing yields. Another topic was the 1990 European Corn Borer epidemic in Illinois. Effective control of this pest while minimizing the effect on the environment was the heart of the discussion.

Wiley Scott, Water Quality Coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service (SCS) spoke to the group about USDAs SP-53 pilot program. Monitoring the pesticide and nutrient inputs of the cooperating farmers will be handled by an agency of USDA.

Dr. Earle Raun, a crop consultant in Nebraska and past-president of NAICC talked to the Illinois group about professional certification. He reviewed the efforts of NAICC to promote high ethical standards of the profession by establishing a certification process on a national scale.

NAICC members **David Harms**, **Gary Elliott**, **Bob Ascheman**, **Jay D. Johnson**, and **Bill Tarter, Jr.** were in attendance at the meeting.

Wisconsin Ag Consultants Hold 4th Annual Meeting

The Wisconsin Association of Professional Ag Consultants held their 4th Annual Meeting in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, on March 8. Thirty members attended the meeting which emphasized "Total Farm Management," a system that integrates farm financial and business considerations with the concerns and recommendations of the agricultural consultant.

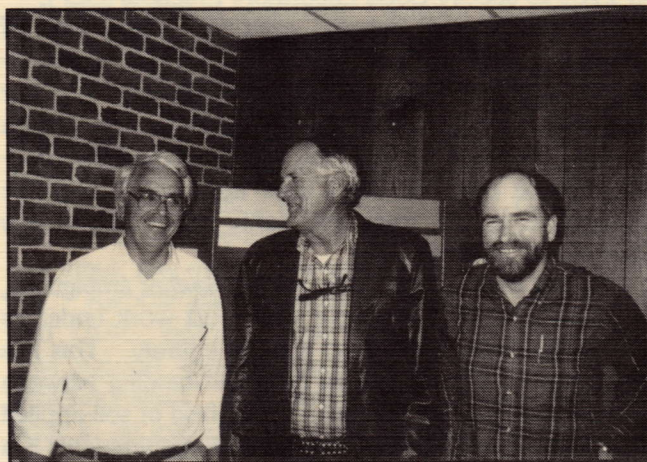
Duane Hutton of Agra Advising Services, demonstrated how their farm management cooperative structures their fees, provides service, and integrates financial and crop management considerations. Mr. Hutton emphasized the importance of tax planning in making key capital purchases for improved farm management.

Rolly Jorgenson of Lakeside Farm Management Associates, explained the importance of consultants knowing the financial status of their clients. He urged that ag consultants ask each client to provide accounting records and tax returns so they can better understand their needs.

Don Waldvogel of Land Enterprise Management, discussed factors involved in appraisal of farmland. He talked about the jam that farmers got themselves into in the 1970's when they borrowed based on land value, leaving many farms over-leveraged when land values crashed.

Terry Smith, Director, Center for Dairy Profitability, UW-Madison, discussed many ways to assess how well a farm is doing, and emphasized that total production per cow was not the best. Such considerations as costs per cow and cost per unit of production were suggested as better guides to a farmer's competitive advantage.

The speakers participated in a panel discussion on farm financial management. All agreed on the need for greater emphasis on farm financial management in the agricultural consulting profession.



The Georgia Association of Professional Crop Consultants held their first annual meeting on March 18-19 in Tifton, Georgia. Standing in front of the NAICC display are the newly elected 1991-92 officers (from left to right): Dr. Alton Walker, Vice-President; Dr. Howard Small, President; and Danny Bennett, Secretary-Treasurer.

USDA Deputy Secretary Parnell Resigns

Californian **Jack Parnell** resigned his position as USDA's Number Two official, just five days after **President Bush** presided over the swearing in of **Edward Madigan** as the 24th U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Parnell had been one of the contenders for the top USDA position.

Parnell was a high profile California farmer, auctioneer, and farm editor, who served as California's Director of Agriculture before coming to USDA in April, 1989. He assumed his position on the heels of the Alar media fiasco, and was named "Food Safety Czar" by then-Secretary **Clayton Yeutter**. He never seemed comfortable in the position, according to some USDA watchers, and his leaving was no surprise to most Washington insiders.

"Now the time has come to return to the private sector to pursue many opportunities and interests that have been on hold," he told the President in his March 18 letter of resignation. He will join the California law firm of Kahn, Soares & Conway, splitting his time between the firm's Sacramento and Washington offices. The prestigious law firm has harbored such recent Republican USDA ex-officials as **Patrick Boyle**, former administrator of Agricultural Marketing Service, and **Kirk Miller**, former administrator of the Federal Grain Inspection Service.

Since powerful California ag interests traditionally "demand" either the Deputy Secretary or Assistant Secretary of Marketing and Inspection Services positions, speculation now moves to Parnell's replacement. A player in the equation is California Assemblyman and farmer, **Bob Jones**, a favorite of Republican Governor **Pete Wilson**. Jones may move to either USDA position. He may even move to USDA Assistant Secretary **Jo Ann Smith's** desk, as the Floridian moves up to become USDA's first female Deputy Secretary. Time will tell.

USDA Says Farmers Will Plant Fewer Crop Acres

USDA's pencil-pushers say that U.S. farmers will plant 253 million acres this year, down from 257.6 million acres in 1990. The reduction is coming about as a result of the 1990 Farm Bill's greater planting flexibility and farmers' guesstimates about other farmers' planting intentions.

The spring planting intentions translate to a ten percent decrease in food grain planted acreage, to 73.5 million acres of wheat, rye, and rice. Feed grain acreage would be up two percent, to 105 million acres of corn, grain sorghum, barley, and oats. Oilseed acreage would also be up about two percent, to 75.7 million acres for

soybeans, peanuts, cotton, sunflowers, and flaxseed.

USDA admits that planting intentions this early in the season are tentative at best. They are merely farmers' "best guess" of what they intend to plant later, especially since farm program signups are still open. One major consideration is always what other farmers are planning to do. If early intentions are up considerably, many veteran farmers will shift to other crops.

With more than a month to go for signup, farmers are weighing their options. Markets remain in flux, with uncertainties in the EEP program and GATT negotiations. Few veteran economists will stake their reputations on 1991 crop plans at this point. What is a good bet is that more federal programs will provide the opportunity to work with independent crop consultants in the future. NAICC is committed to that end.

NAICC Files Comments On ASCS IFM Proposal

NAICC wants no closed doors to independent crop consultants when federal farm management programs are written. So when ASCS moved ahead last month to implement the Integrated Farm Management program under the 1990 Farm Bill, NAICC immediately filed comments requesting a clarification in the proposed regulations.

"We are concerned that the implementing regulations appear to rule out a role, and indeed seem to negate the possibility for private consultants to work with their grower-clients in developing, refining, and applying the plans that a producer is required to develop in order to participate in (the) program," NAICC executive vice-president **Paul Weller** wrote in NAICC's filing. "We have carefully reviewed the authorizing language, and see no language prohibiting producers from utilizing the services of private consultants in developing such plans," he pointed out.

NAICC proposed revisions in several sections of ASCS' proposed regulations. The regulations covered a wide variety of price support, payment, and production adjustment programs for such crops as feed grains, wheat, cotton, and rice. NAICC's main thrust lies in Sec. 1414.3 of the "Administration" portion of the proposed regulations. This provides that USDA's Soil Conservation and Extension Service would provide technical assistance to producers to plan and implement such integrated farm management practices as crop rotation, erosion control, water management, and resource conservation. Since these are areas of professional expertise of NAICC members, the filing requests full granting of private consultant eligibility.

In addition to requesting the inclusion of private crop consultants, NAICC's filing requested that USDA move to assure that such private consultants and their clients not be penalized in any future 1990 Farm Bill regulations. A final ruling will be made soon.

NEW MEMBERS

VOTING:

Karl L. Mester, B.S. (Agriculture)

TerraKare

R.R. #3, Box 187

Bloomington, IL 61704

Office: 309/828-3592 Home: 309/827-5595

Began Business: 1974

Services: Soil sampling, permanent soil sampling map, complete soil analysis, fertilizer recommendations, complete manure analysis, herbicide residue analysis, tillage recommendations, herbicide recommendations, corn variety suggestions, soybean variety suggestions, insecticide suggestions, integrated pest management.

Crops: Corn, soybeans, wheat, oats, alfalfa, sports and ornamental turf.

PROVISIONAL:

Todd A. DeKryger, B.S. (Horticulture)

West Michigan I.P.M., Inc.

2582 Brookdale

Holland, MI 49424-9210

Office: 616/786-9337 Home: 616/786-9337

Began Business: 1988

SUSTAINING:

Mobay Chemical Corporation

Contact: Wade Cook

P.O. Box 4913 Hawthorn Road

Kansas City, MO 64120

Office: 816/242-2307 Home: 913/764-0168

FAX: 816/242-2738

MARKETING MART

The Circle of Food Safety

A new video is available from the National Agricultural Chemicals Association. "The Circle of Food Safety" answers often-asked questions such as "How do we know if farmers are using crop chemicals safely?" and "If pesticides are harmful, why do we use them?"

Copies of the 16-minute VHS video are available for presentation to civic club luncheons, community association meetings, etc., for \$10.00 each from: Communications Department, NACA, 1155-15th Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

National Pesticide Survey

Results of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Survey of Pesticides in Drinking Water Wells (NPS) are now available. You can order copies of the

Survey's 500-page Phase I Report at a cost of \$35.00 per copy plus \$3.00 for handling by requesting The National Pesticide Survey: Phase I Report, PB91-125765 in writing to (enclose check or money order):

National Technical Information Service

5285 Port Royal Road

Springfield, Virginia 22161

USDA Publications

The 1990 Yearbook of Agriculture, Americans in Agriculture: Portraits of Diversity, is available by sending a \$10 check payable to Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, or by calling 202/783-3238.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has released the "Strategic Plan for Dealing with Fruit Flies." APHIS is seeking suggestions and recommendations to strengthen and refine the strategic plan. More information is available from **Robert Spaide**, Chairman, APHIS Fruit Fly Work Group, Federal Building, Room 814, Hyattsville, MD 20782.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 9-11 - Cover Crops For Clean Water Conference - West Tennessee Experiment Station, Jackson, Tennessee. Two and a half days of general sessions on how cover crops can benefit water quality and the environment. Registration materials from Soil and Water Conservation Society at: 515/289-2331.

June 20 - Crop Consultants and Agronomic Advisors' Crop Diagnostic Field Day - West Lafayette Indiana. This one day event is hosted by the Indiana Association of Crop Consultants. For more information contact **John Obermeyer** at: 317/494-4563.

June 30 - July 2 - American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers Summer Meeting - Lexington, Kentucky. Touring agricultural facilities in the Blue Grass area. For more information contact **Debbie West** at: 303/758-3513.

August 22-27 - International Symposium on Soil Testing and Plant Analysis in the Global Community - The Hotel Royal Plaza, Orlando, Florida. For additional information, contact COUNCIL headquarters, P.O. Box 2007, Athens, GA 30612-0007, or call: 404/546-0425.

November 8-10 - American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers 1991 Annual Meeting - Hyatt Regency Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona. Contact: **Nancy Morgan** at: 303/785-3513.

November 10-13 - NAICC Annual Meeting - Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. Contact **Paul Weller** at: 202/785-6711.

HAVE YOU RECEIVED
YOUR COPY OF
"Water Quality Education
& Technical Assistance Plan"?

This joint USDA Extension Service/ASCS/SCS booklet is being sent to NAICC members, as part of our increased Washington effort to involve independent crop consultants in government programs. If your copy has not yet arrived, please use the reply card in this newsletter to alert NAICC headquarters. We'll send you a copy by return mail.

Along with the booklet, you should have also received a list of 45 specific, state-by-state named water quality projects with county designations. This listing will inform you of any new projects being implemented in your area.

NAICC is working closely with Extension officials to assure an effective and mutually beneficial relationship. Toward that end, Extension officials asked that NAICC query its members as to their experiences with Extension personnel in the field. A NAICC "Action Alert" asked for NAICC member input. These comments are now being assembled into a final report to be presented in the near future.

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, PLEASE CONVEY THEM TO NAICC HEADQUARTERS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! You may use the enclosed reply card, if you choose.



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE • OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Department of Entomology • 501 Life Science West • (405) 744-5531
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

DATE: March 27, 1991

TO: National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants

FROM: Gerrit W. Cuperus, IPM Coordinator

SUBJECT: Important Dates and Meetings Upcoming

There will be a program dealing with crop management issues and the new farm bill. Please try to publicize with your agents and others that would be interested.

May 8 Integrated Crop Management and the Farm Bill related programs. This program will deal with the ASCS and SCS programs that will be in existence and especially the ASCS Integrated Crop Management. Additionally, it will give an overview of implications. This is scheduled for 1-3:00 pm with a target audience of: **extension professionals, SCS, and ASCS personnel, consultants, crop management associations and others directly involved.** We will give background of ICM with footage shot in:

- (1) Pennsylvania State University on the crop management associations.
- (2) University of Minnesota on the Crop Pest Management efforts and consultants.
- (3) Montana and winter wheat management/record keeping.
- (4) Oklahoma State University - on what it means to the County Extension Office.

Part of this program will deal with Integrated Crop Management and what the ASCS/ES/SCS ICM efforts are in the future. We will have Tim Denley USDA-ASCS, Francis Thicke USDA-ES, Gordon Johnson, Extension Soils, and myself or another IPM person available for questions and feedback to the audience.

Satellite Coordinants: 1:00-3:00 pm C.S.T.
WESTSTAR IV
Channel 23



National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants

ALLIANCE BUILDING CAMPAIGN FORM

Please complete and return by June 15, 1991 to:

NAICC Headquarters
 ATTN: ABC/Membership
 1629 K Street, N.W., Suite 1100
 Washington, DC 20006
 FAX: 202/331-4212

Your Name _____

Firm _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PROSPECT	ACTION TO BE TAKEN
Name _____ Firm _____ Address _____ City, State Zip _____ Phone _____ Type Consulting _____	<input type="checkbox"/> I will contact prospect. <input type="checkbox"/> I request Executive V.P. and Membership Committee to follow up and send application and promotional materials. <input type="checkbox"/> I have already contacted and they are applying.
Name _____ Firm _____ Address _____ City, State Zip _____ Phone _____ Type Consulting _____	<input type="checkbox"/> I will contact prospect. <input type="checkbox"/> I request Executive V.P. and Membership Committee to follow up and send application and promotional materials. <input type="checkbox"/> I have already contacted and they are applying.
Name _____ Firm _____ Address _____ City, State Zip _____ Phone _____ Type Consulting _____	<input type="checkbox"/> I will contact prospect. <input type="checkbox"/> I request Executive V.P. and Membership Committee to follow up and send application and promotional materials. <input type="checkbox"/> I have already contacted and they are applying.

commodities or commodity certificates, the producer shall refund the amount of the overpayment either by returning commodity certificates in an amount equal to the overpayment or by making cash payments to CCC.

§ 1413.155 Appeals.

(a) A producer, an assignee of a cash payment, or a holder of a community certificate issued in accordance with § 1413.154 may obtain reconsideration and review of any determination made under this part in accordance with the appeal regulations found at part 780 of this title.

(b) With respect to farm program payment yields, determinations made before December 23, 1985 are not appealable.

§ 1413.156 Performance based upon advice or action of county or State Committee.

The provisions of part 791 of this title with respect to performance based upon action or advice of any authorized representative of the Secretary shall be applicable to this part.

§ 1413.157 Paperwork Reduction Act assigned numbers.

The information collection requirements contained in these regulations (7 CFR part 1413) will be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for approval under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35.

2. A part 1414 is added to read as follows:

PART 1414—INTEGRATED FARM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM OPTION

Sec.

- 1414.1 General description of the program.
- 1414.2 Applicability.
- 1414.3 Administration.
- 1414.4 Definitions.
- 1414.5 Eligibility.
- 1414.6 Acreage enrollment.
- 1414.7 Contracts.
- 1414.8 Integrated farm management plan.
- 1414.9 Displacement of tenants or lessees.
- 1414.10 Bases and yields.
- 1414.11 Payments.
- 1414.12 Resource-conserving crops on ACR.
- 1414.13 Resource-conserving crops on payment acres.
- 1414.14 Payment acreage limitation.
- 1414.15 Compliance with part 12 of this title, highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.
- 1414.16 Successors-in-interest.
- 1414.17 Reconstitution of farms.
- 1414.18 Misrepresentation and scheme of device.
- 1414.19 Offsets and assignments.
- 1414.20 Appeals.
- 1414.21 Performance bases upon advice or action of county or State Committee.
- 1414.22 Paperwork Reduction Act assigned numbers.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 5822.

§ 1414.1 General description of the program.

(a) The regulations in this part set forth the terms and conditions for the Integrated Farm Management Program Option (IFM), authorized by Title XIV of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990. The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized, in conjunction with the annual acreage reduction program, to establish a voluntary program under which producers may enroll all crop acreage bases on a farm in IFM to assist them in improving and conserving the soil and water of their farms by converting such land to resource-conserving crop rotations in accordance with an approved integrated farm management plan.

(b) The objective of IFM is to assist producers of agricultural commodities in adopting integrated, multiyear, site-specific farm management plans by reducing farm program barriers to resources stewardship practices and systems.

§ 1414.2 Applicability.

The provisions of § 1414.1 of this chapter shall be applicable to this part.

§ 1414.3 Administration.

(a) The provisions of § 1413.2 of this chapter shall be applicable to this part except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) The Soil Conservation Service shall provide technical assistance to the producer for planning and implementing the resource-conserving crop rotation, erosion control, water management, and water quality components of the plan, and shall provide such other technical assistance in the implementation of the IFM as determined necessary.

(c) The Extension Service (ES) shall coordinate the related information and education program concerning implementation of the IFM.

§ 1414.4 Definitions.

The terms defined in part 1413 of this chapter and part 719 of this title shall be applicable to this part except as otherwise provided in this section.

Alternative crops means experimental and industrial crops grown in arid and semiarid regions that conserve soil and water, as determined by ASCS and made available in county ASCS offices.

Conservation plan means the document containing the decisions of producers with respect to the location, land use, tillage systems and conservation treatment measures and schedule of implementation. The conservation plan also includes plans which have been established on highly

erodible cropland in order to control erosion on such land.

ES means the Extension Service, an agency of the United States Department of Agriculture which is generally responsible for coordinating the information and educational programs of the Department.

Farming operations and practices includes the integration of crops and crop-plant variety selection, rotation practices, tillage systems, soil conserving and soil building practices, nutrient management strategies, biological control and integrated pest management strategies, livestock production and management systems, animal waste management systems, water and energy conservation measures, and health and safety considerations.

Grass means perennial grasses commonly used for haying or grazing.

Highly erodible land means land that has an erodibility index of 8 or more.

Integrated farm management plan (plan), means a comprehensive, multiyear, site-specific plan that meets the requirements of § 1414.7.

Legume means forage legumes (such as alfalfa or clover) or any legume grown for use as forage or green manure, but not including any bean crop from which the seeds are harvested.

Resource conserving crop means legumes, legume-grass mixtures, legume-small grain mixtures, legume-grass-small grain mixtures, and alternative crops.

Resource-conserving crop rotation means a crop rotation that includes at least one resource-conserving crop and that reduces erosion, maintains or improves soil fertility and tilth, interrupts pest cycles, or conserves water.

SCS means the Soil Conservation Service, an agency within the United States Department of Agriculture which is generally responsible for providing technical assistance in matters of soil and water conservation and for administering certain conservation programs of the Department.

Small grain shall not include malting barley or wheat, except for wheat interplanted with other small grain crops for nonhuman consumption.

Traditionally underplanted acreage means the difference between the producer's crop acreage base and the total of the acreage planted to the program crop, approved as prevented planted, and the part of the crop acreage base subject to an acreage limitation program or Acreage Conservation Reserve, except:

(1) In no case shall such acreage be less than zero, or

(2) In the case of a producer utilizing the 0/92 or 50/92 provisions set forth in § 1413.50 of this chapter, the term "traditionally underplanted acreage" means 8 percent of the producer's permitted acreage for such year.

§ 1414.5 Eligibility.

To be eligible to participate in the IFM, a producer must:

- (a) Prepare for approval, a plan;
- (b) Actively apply the terms and conditions of the plan;
- (c) Devote to a resource-conserving crop, on the average through the life of the contract, not less than 20 percent of all crop acreage bases on a farm enrolled under such program;
- (d) Comply with the terms and conditions of any annual acreage limitation program in effect for all crop acreage bases on a farm contracted in the integrated farm management program option;
- (e) Keep such records as ASCS may require; and
- (f) Submit a report of acreage in accordance with Part 718 of this title that list all crops and land uses which are subject to the contract for all cropland on the farm for the crop year.

§ 1414.6 Acreage enrollment.

- (a) To the extent practicable, the total acreage enrolled in the program shall be no more than 3,000,000 acres of cropland during the years 1991 through 1995.
- (b) Because of the limitation in paragraph (a) of this section, States will be given an allocation of acreage and National criteria will be used to rank applicants for enrollment in the program. Criteria will include the following:
 - (1) Acreage of highly erodible land in the proposed contract;
 - (2) Acreage of proposed resource-conserving crops in the proposed contract;
 - (3) Acreage of cropland in the proposed plan;
 - (4) Years in the proposed contract;
 - (5) Educational and demonstration value of the proposed contract; and
 - (6) Date of contract application.

§ 1414.7 Contracts.

- (a) A producer shall enter into a contract with CCC for a period of not less than 3 years nor more than 5 years, which may be renewed upon mutual agreement between CCC and the producer.
- (b) Eligible producers may offer to enter into a contract with CCC by executing a contract and submitting it to the county ASCS office where the records for the farm are maintained not later than a date specified in the

announcement of the annual acreage reduction program.

(c) The contract shall provide that producers on the farm must agree to devote to a resource-conserving crop, on the average through the life of the contract, not less than 20 percent of all crop acreage bases on a farm enrolled under such program.

(d) The contract shall provide that producers on the farm shall comply with the terms and conditions of any annual acreage reduction program in effect for all crop acreage bases on a farm contracted in IFM.

(e) The contract shall contain such other provisions as CCC determines appropriate to carry out the program established by this part.

(f) The contract shall provide for payment of liquidated damages and termination in the event that the operator or any other producers on the farm fail to comply with their obligations under the contract.

§ 1414.8 Integrated farm management plan.

(a) In implementing the provisions of this part, ASCS shall:

- (i) Provide the producer and SCS:
 - (i) Crop acreage base information; and
 - (ii) The minimum required resource-conserving crop acreage.
- (2) Provide the producer:
 - (i) The annual acreage reduction program options relative to program planning decisions; and
 - (ii) Assistance in evaluating acreage reduction program options in conjunction with plan.
- (3) Provide SCS a copy of the producer's report of acreage.
- (4) Provide SCS a copy of the farm's acreage reduction program contract and IFM contract approved by COC.

(b) In implementing the provisions of this part, ES shall:

- (1) Provide assistance to the producer, as requested, in developing integrated pest management guidelines if they are part of the plan.
- (2) Provide assistance to the producer, as requested, in collecting and analyzing soil tests and in developing nutrient management guidelines if they are part of the plan.
- (3) Provide assistance to the producer, as requested, with farm management record keeping.
- (4) Provide advice, for maximizing the utilization of IFM to their farm operation.

(c) In implementing the provisions of this part, SCS shall:

- (1) Develop the plan with the assistance of the producer.
- (2) Assemble the various components of the plan.

(3) Provide technical assistance to the producer for planning and implementing the conservation plan, erosion control, water management, and water quality components of the plan.

(4) Spot check the plans to assure that the elements contained in the plan have been implemented and meet technical standards.

(5) Assist the producer in revising the plan to address changes in farm operations.

(d) The plan will contain elements that address:

- (1) The specific acreage and crop acreage bases enrolled.
- (2) Acreage and location of the resource-conserving crop for each year of the contract.
- (3) Scheduling practices for the implementation, improvement, and maintenance of the resource-conserving crop rotation.
- (4) A description of the farming operations and practices to be implemented and the impact of those practices on:

- (i) Maintenance or enhancement of the overall productivity and profitability of the farm.
- (ii) Erosion, soil fertility, and soil physical properties.
- (iii) Water supplies.
- (iv) Federal, state, and local requirements designed to protect soil, wetlands, wildlife habitat, groundwater, and surface water.
- (5) The coordination of all soil and water resource plans applicable to the enrolled acreage.
- (6) Other provisions as determined by the Deputy Administrator.

§ 1414.9 Displacement of tenants or lessees.

(a) Contracts and plans that will result in the involuntary displacement of farm tenants or lessees by landowners through the removal of substantial portions of the farm from production of a commodity shall not be approved.

(b) In the case of any tenant or lessee who has rented or leased the farm (with or without a written option for annual renewal or periodic renewals) for a period of two or more of the immediately preceding years, the refusal by a landlord, without reasonable cause other than simply for the purpose of enrollment in the program, to renew such rental or lease shall be considered as an involuntary displacement in the absence of a written consent to such nonrenewal by the tenant or lessee.

§ 1414.10 Bases and yields.

Crop acreage bases or farm program payment yields shall not be reduced as

a result of the planting of a resource-conserving crop as part of a resource-conserving crop rotation implemented under the IFM.

§ 1414.11 Payments.

Farm program payments of participants in this program shall not be reduced as a result of the planting a resource-conserving crop as part of a resource-conserving crop rotation on payment acres.

§ 1414.12 Resource-conserving crops on ACR.

(a) Acreage devoted to resource-conserving crops as a part of a resource-conserving crop rotation under this program may also be designated as ACR for the purpose of fulfilling any provisions under any acreage limitation program.

(b) ACR acreage devoted to perennial cover on which cost-share assistance for the establishment of the perennial cover has been provided, shall not be credited towards the producer's resource-conserving crop requirement under a contract.

(c) Acreage designated as ACR may be hayed and grazed, except during the 5-month period in each State during which haying and grazing of ACR is not allowed under § 1413.64 of this chapter.

(d) Barley, oats, or wheat as part of a resource-conserving crop, or any other resource-conserving crop on ACR may be harvested in kernel form.

§ 1414.13 Resource-conserving crops on payment acres.

Program payments with respect to acreage enrolled in the program shall not be paid to a producer if such producer hays or grazes such acreage (excluding acreage designated as ACR):

(a) During the 5-month period in which haying and grazing of conserving use acres is not allowed under the provisions of § 1413.64 of this chapter; or,

(b) If the crop planted on such acreage includes a small grain, before the producer harvests the small grain crop in kernel form.

§ 1414.14 Payment acreage limitation.

(a) Producers enrolled in a resource-conserving crop rotation shall not be eligible to receive payment under such program on acreage equal to the average number of traditionally underplanted acres for the three years prior to enrolling in this program.

(b) For purposes of determining three years prior to enrolling in the program for "all in, all out rotation bases," the three previous crop years with crop acreage bases greater than zero shall be used.

§ 1414.15 Compliance with part 12, of the title, highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions.

The regulations set forth in part 12 of this title are applicable to this part.

§ 1414.16 Successors-in-interest.

(a) The established successor-in-interest provisions of § 1413.151 of this chapter are applicable to this part, except as otherwise provided in this section.

(b) Successors not wanting to continue participation in IFM may terminate the IFM contract, without liquidated damages, after the current year.

§ 1414.17 Reconstitution of farms.

The reconstitution regulations set forth in part 719 of this title are applicable to this part.

§ 1414.18 Misrepresentation and scheme of device.

The misrepresentation and scheme and device regulations set forth in § 1413.152 of this chapter are applicable to this part.

§ 1414.19 Offsets and assignments.

The offset and assignment regulations set forth in parts 1403 and 1404 of this chapter are applicable to this part.

§ 1414.20 Appeals.

The appeal regulations set forth in part 780 of this title are applicable to this part.

§ 1414.21 Performance based upon advice or action of county or State Committee.

The provisions of part 791 of this title with respect to performance based upon action or advice of any authorized representative of the Secretary shall be applicable to this part.

§ 1414.22 Paperwork Reduction Act assigned numbers.

The information collection requirements contained in this part have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under the provisions of 44 U.S.C. Chapter 35 and an OMB control number will be assigned.

Signed at Washington, DC on February 19, 1991.

John A. Stevenson,

Acting Administrator, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service and Acting Executive Vice-President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 91-4323 Filed 2-21-91; 9:31 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-05-M



National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants

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March 13, 1991

Director
Cotton, Grain and Rice
Price Support Division
Agriculture Stabilization
and Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 2415
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the members of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), a national professional organization representing nearly 300 independent crop consultants across the nation. The members of NAICC as individuals, and NAICC as an organization, appreciate the opportunity to offer the enclosed comments to the Proposed Rule, "Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act; Implementation", Fed. Reg. Vol 56, No. 38, published February 26, 1991.

NAICC commends the Department for moving ahead with the Integrated Farm Management (IFM) Program, one of the important, innovative features of the 1990 Farm Bill. We are concerned however, that the implementing regulations in the proposed rule appear to rule out a role for private crop consultants in developing the plans farmers must submit in order to participate in the IFM program. Furthermore, precedents set in the proposed rule could have far-reaching consequences relative to the role of private consultants in developing the many different sorts of resource conservation and environmental quality plans called for in the 1990 Farm Bill. We are concerned that these precedents could ultimately discourage, if not prohibit, farmers from seeking the assistance of private consultants.

We have carefully reviewed the authorizing language in the 1990 Farm Bill, and see no language prohibiting producers from utilizing the services of private consultants in developing such plans. Nor can we think of any reason why producers who are currently working with a private consultant and have a comparable--indeed often far more detailed and ambitious--plan in place, should be required to

develop a second plan through the auspices of the local office of the Soil Conservation Service. Such a requirement to develop a second plan would waste both public and private resources in a time when we need to become more, not less efficient.

We believe that our members and their grower-clients have been gaining important expertise and insights over the last decade regarding the essential components of such integrated-systems based farm management plans. We hope that local SCS and ES personnel will, on behalf of farmers and the goals we all share, take full advantage of the knowledge of private consultants in all facets of program design, administration, and on-farm implementation. I can assure you, our membership is willing, indeed eager to do everything possible to make this program a great success in meeting its many important goals.

I also think it important to note that, at several points in the 1990 Farm Bill, the authorizing language directs the Secretary to implement this and other programs in a manner which does not undermine the efforts of local agribusinesses and other agricultural professionals in the delivery of inputs or services to farmers. We believe the proposed rule is deficient in not addressing explicitly, and indeed encouraging, an active role for private consultants. If not changed, we fear that the proposed rule could undermine the viability of many private consultants' businesses. This clearly is not the legislation's intent, and is arguably prohibited by language to address the interests of agribusinesses and other professionals.

Accordingly, we wish to suggest the following changes be adopted in the final rule:

Comment I: Section 1414.3 should be amended by adding the following new subsection:

(c) A producer may utilize the services of a qualified independent crop consultant in developing the plan called for under this section. Such a plan must meet all applicable criteria specified in this section, and must be submitted to SCS for review and approval in accordance with procedures and instructions that will be explained in an informational bulletin provided by local ASCS offices. If the plan is found deficient by SCS in some respect SCS shall provide a written explanation of the deficiencies to the producer, and provide the producer 30 days to resubmit a revised plan responsive to the deficiencies identified.

Justification: The Integrated Farm Management (IFM) program emphasizes among its key goals protecting water quality, sustaining soil fertility, and expanding reliance on

Integrated Pest Management (IPM). As experts in the design and installation of soil erosion control structures, tillage, and residue-related practices, conservation specialists and engineers in SCS field offices are not trained nor qualified to provide the technical and field-specific assistance required to provide growers up to date, science-based guidance in nutrient management, pest management, and the design of water quality protection systems--all essential elements of an Integrated Farm Management plan as called for in the proposed rule.

Likewise, local Extension Service agents, who will be responsible for providing farmers educational information needed to develop the plans, will not, in many instances, be able to provide the farm and field-specific assistance required in developing, for example, an effective nutrient management plan in the context of a diverse, multi-year rotation. Nor is it realistic to expect Extension personnel, who are already stretched thin in most regions by many new program responsibilities, to have the time or resources to conduct routinely, and on a timely basis the often highly specialized field, soil, and crop monitoring required to develop an effective Integrated Farm Management plan.

Such a plan should ideally take into account crop rotations, weather patterns and conditions, recent experience with pest populations, including assessment of the emergence of pesticide resistant pest biotypes, as well as other field-specific natural resource constraints and potential pesticides-related production, water quality, or worker safety problems.

The Extension Service, SCS personnel, and academic experts all will be called upon to help producers meet the complex highly field specific challenges integral to meeting the intent of Congress in establishing the IFM program. Their efforts will be essential, but so will the contributions of private consultants and other agricultural science and technology experts in the private sector.

Moreover, farmers who have invested private resources in developing comprehensive, resource-conserving IFM plans, and who have steadily refined those plans over several years of science-based field observations, both on their own and with the assistance of private consultants, should not be penalized now by having to, in effect, re-create plans under the auspices of the SCS. The basic test and criteria should be effective and fully in compliance with the standards established under the IFM program.

Comment II: Section 1414.8 should be amended to clarify that the producer may develop a plan jointly with a private

consultant, and submit such a plan to SCS for review and approval. ASCS should be required to develop and offer farmers instruction on how to develop IMP plans in consultation with a private consultant, for submission to SCS. The instruction should include a description of the required elements of the plan, the standards and criteria by which the acceptability of the plan will be judged, and information on the timing and process for plan submission, review and approval.

We ask that these changes be made in the final regulation. We also wish to express our hope that, as proposed rules are developed to implement other new programs and provisions in the 1990 Farm Bill, the Department will assure that independent private consultants are not inadvertently penalized. We also hope that our grower clients will not be discouraged from working with private consultants, an outcome some of our members have already encountered as a result of recent new water quality and pest management programs underway in parts of the country.

We have two basic requests. First, we ask that farm program rules be structured so that they do not undermine existing consultant-client relationships. Second, we ask that new programs be implemented so that they do not offer producers on-farm technical services supported wholly or in part by public funds, in direct competition with private consultants. We would support such programs if producers who wish to use a qualified private consultant can do so on the same terms, and at the same real cost, as other producers in the area.

We look forward to your response to our recommendations, and thank you very much for considering them.

Sincerely,

Paul Weller
Executive Vice-President

PSW/kb