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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
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NAICC
President

Looming Connections

Every year, my wife contributes one or more hand-woven items to the NAICC Raffle. The fact that these items are hand-made on her loom from a single ball of thread might be interesting, but there is a much deeper meaning behind the woven object than one might realize at face value. In some regards, the loom is a valuable item in our tool chest to bring closure to each workday. Let me explain.

As contract researchers, Trisha and I work side by side in the heat of battle as we work through client protocols each summer. By the end of each day, our heads are swimming with details about crop stages, application rates, sample sizes, pre-harvest intervals, field trial notebooks, etc. We each retire to our own "corners" to find a way to relax and detach from the day's intensity so that we can find a healthful rest during the night.

For me, I find that detachment through the computer... searching the web for news,

weather, markets, email, etc. For Trisha, it is weaving on her loom. She finds the tactile sensation of the threads through her fingers, and the mental exercise of forming patterns in the newly created fabric to be both calming and fulfilling. And, since she gives the items away to friends and family when they are completed, it is satisfying to know that the items will benefit others.

Secretly, I have come to find her weaving to be as calming for me at the end of the day as it is for her. The rhythmic tapping of the heddles as she builds the shed, the steady swoosh of the shuttle as she threads the warp, and the concluding bang of the beater with each stroke to tighten the thread into the fabric fills our home with the soothing sounds of Trisha at the loom.



The warp is the long threads that are stretched from the front to the back of the loom. The weft is made up of the threads that Trisha sends back and forth across the warp threads in order to bind the threads together into a fabric in which all the threads are held together through connection with

each other. When completed, the cloth is held together with nothing other than the interwovenness of the threads. In fact, if a single thread should happen to break in the fabric, the cloth still remains intact through the connectedness of the surrounding fibers.

When NAICC business is on my mind as I watch the loom at work in the evening, I am compelled to draw similarities between the weaving process and the NAICC. The warp, or stretched threads, reminds me of the structure of the NAICC, with its EVP, Executive Board, and the Committees and their Chairs. The cross threads, or weft, remind me of the NAICC membership, as it is their thoughts, ambitions, ideas, and dreams that give "body" and design to the fabric of the NAICC. The end product is the organization of the NAICC, bound together with nothing more than the interwovenness of its members. Yet, the product of that inter-connectedness is the national voice of the independent consulting community. The fabric of the NAICC is strong and representative of the bond that we share with each other.

I am pleased that Trisha's hobby is able to benefit others and to contribute to the NAICC Raffle. But every year as we pack the completed woven items into our luggage to head off the Annual Meeting, a year's worth of work, both in the industry and at the NAICC, washes over me in a rewarding summary of the mutual efforts of our membership. I do so look forward to seeing you all in Atlanta.

Changes in WPS to Affect Consultants as well as Clients

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) recent worker safety assessment report will affect growers and their employees – and the ag professionals who support them.

The report, a summary of findings from EPA's national assessment of its pesticide worker safety field program, gauged the

program's status and identified areas for improvement.

EPA has begun to address areas it would like to improve through a series of issue papers, covering such topics as:

- trainer and RUP dealer competency
- setting minimum age and testing requirements for occupational users

- ensuring competency requirements are consistent with risks
- better defining recertification and related quality assurance processes
- ensuring meaningful hazard communications and training
- establishing training reporting as verification

- protecting children
- updating plan requirements
- developing standard certification categories
- clarifying vague WPS provisions and exceptions
- demonstrating handler competency
- putting regulation in "plain language" and more.

To develop the issue papers, the EPA has instituted bi-weekly conference calls, in which NAICC has been invited to participate so changes can be relayed to clients for implementation.

Once these issues have been addressed, the Agency will attend to other concerns which arose during the assessment, including one directly relevant to the Alliance:

Under the current Worker Protection Standards (WPS) the regulation specifies that crop advisors and aerial applicators have training and PPE requirements, yet

according to EPA, their risk profile is similar to that of certified applicators.

To address this disconnect one proposal under consideration is to take any reference to the crop advisor exemption from under WPS and include them in the certified applicator regulation.

Another is to exempt crop advisors and aerial applicators, certified under the applicator certification regulation, from the worker protection regulation provisions. This option would require all others to comply with the worker protection regulation.

Under either scenario NAICC members would be certified under EPA's applicator certification program rather than being listed in the WPS.

(These changes have been proposed because both crop advisors and aerial applicators have associations – like NAICC – that provide continuing education pro-

grams, thereby reducing the burden on states.)

While EPA has not yet developed requirements for crop advisor certification, the Agency is looking to NAICC to provide continuing education for certification and is hoping to work through existing programs.

EPA has also asked that NAICC participate in developing its requirements through conference calls and face-to-face meetings.

NAICC has invited a representative from EPA to provide consultants and researchers an update on the WPS changes at the 2007 Annual Meeting. We urge any interested parties – members and non members alike – to take advantage of this presentation, as it comes at an ideal time to provide comments to EPA. (The Agency plans to publish changes in the Federal Register in August, 2007.)

AG PRO EXPO – Largest Professional Exhibit of its Kind – to Showcase More Technologies, Practices than Ever Before

The upcoming 2007 AG PRO EXPO, February 14-16 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, is no ordinary tradeshow. It is a combined ag industry tradeshow event – the first of its kind – projected to host more than 100 exhibitors.

No where else will you find a tradeshow held in conjunction with the Annual Meetings of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) and the American Society of Agricultural Consultants (ASAC). Together these groups represent more than 3,000 agricultural professionals!

The AG PRO EXPO will feature more technologies and practices than any other show of its kind. And with expanded hours (open all day Thursday and Friday) and double the number of exhibitors from previous tradeshows hosted by NAICC and ASFMRA, the value to attendees and vendors alike will be unsurpassed.

To further enhance show traffic, all continental breakfasts, refreshment breaks and receptions will be held in the exhibit hall.

Those getting a first glimpse at the Expo will be attendees at the Meeting's Opening Reception, Wednesday, February 14, with special guest Orion Samuelson presiding over the inaugural ribbon-cutting ceremony. Door prize drawings will be held during the reception to spur attendance.

If you know of a company that would benefit by reaching professionals who influence crop decisions on millions of acres of

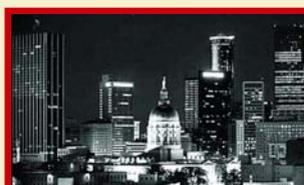
farm and ranch land across the nation, please urge them to contact NAICC headquarters for more Expo information. It promises to be the single best opportunity they'll have in 2007 to make their products and services known to the nation's most esteemed consultants and researchers.

A BONUS FOR EXHIBITORS:

By combining the tradeshows, you no longer have to attend two meetings at different times of the year in different cities to reach all three memberships! With the meetings held concurrently, companies and their representatives save time, travel and hotel expenses.

MEETING DETAILS

The theme for the '07 simultaneous Annual Meetings is "Agricultural Professional Sharing Common Ground." Attendees to the event in Atlanta will be able to participate in program sessions offered by ANY of the three organizations, greatly expanding the number of choices for speakers and topics. Over the course of the three days members will have the opportunity to share information and experiences with other ag professionals from all parts of the country.



SAVE THE DATE
AG PRO EXPO and
the Annual Meetings
of NAICC and ASFMRA

February 14-17, 2007 • Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, GA

And to maximize the networking, information-sharing and enjoyment for all during the meeting, several special activities incorporating all three groups are planned:

- Thursday's Luncheon with Keynote Speaker Orion Samuelson of WGN Radio
- Wednesday's Ag Tour
- Thursday's Emerging Ag Innovations Session
- Thursday's Interactive Spouse Breakfast and Tour

(To address specific organizational needs, each group will coordinate certain activities independently, including Awards Luncheons and Installation Banquets, Business and Board Meetings, Committee Meetings and Networking Dinners with raffles and auctions.)

For members, exhibitors and visitors, 2007 promises something special as the nation's top Agricultural Professionals come together, "...Sharing Common Ground." **Make plans to be part of it in Atlanta, February 14-17, 2007!**

(Registration materials to be mailed in early October.)

News From Across the BIG Pond

The following is a letter from our good friend and NAICC Honorary Member Allen Scobie. Allen is a Past President of the Association of Independent Crop Consultants in the UK. Allen recently started a new venture Bridgend Partners and advises arable

farmers on all aspects of crop production for combinable crops including variety selection, production methods and potential markets (wheat, barley and oil seed rape). Allen can be reached at scobie@sol.co.uk.

Hello everyone,

I know that this summer we are all experiencing has been very dry. In mainland Europe we have experienced temperatures much higher than average and Scotland has been no exception. No one has air conditioning in their houses in Scotland as the temperatures normally don't exceed 70 degrees. (It has been known for my wife to switch on the central heating some summer evenings!) This summer the day temperatures have exceeded 80 degrees for weeks on end. Our wheat barley and Canola crops have enjoyed the warmth but the potato crops have suffered from lack of rain and irrigation systems have been running 24/7. The harvest has started and the cereal crop yields look good and very little fuel will be required to dry the crop below 15% moisture. (Some years we cut wheat at moisture contents in excess of 20% and the drying costs can be expensive.)

After much agonizing and soul searching I resigned my post as a director of Scottish Agronomy Ltd. after 16 years. It is hard to leave something you helped to build but I now know that I have done the right thing. If you don't open your eyes in the morning and say to yourself, "hey I can't wait to get started" it is time you thought about a change of direction. Some of my clients were a bit surprised that I decided to "cut loose" when they thought I might have been thinking about taking it easy! I told them all "there is life in the old dog yet". I have maintained all my farmer clients and I will service them from my own consultancy company. I have also agreed to a contract of 40 hrs. a month to a renewable energy solutions company called Helius Energy. Renewable Energy is an exciting prospect in all its guises. Wind Power, Wave Power, Solar, Biomass and Biofuels all have a place in ensuring that future world generations have heat, power and transport as fossil fuel reserves start to decline. It will also ensure that we can reduce the emissions of green house gases which are clearly a contributory factor of global warming.

The IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change) have demonstrated that CO2 emissions remained static for hundreds of years until industrial revolution the late 1800's when they began to accelerate at an alarming pace. Many governments around the world have now decided that something must be done to halt the increase in Green House gas emissions. The National Snow and Ice Data Centre in Colorado predict that, at the present pace of warming, there may be no Polar Ice by 2060! We all need to play our part in reducing the burning of fossil fuels and to strive for ways of replacing them with cleaner alternatives. The issue of global warming and climate change is beginning to dominate news stories on a daily basis in newspapers and television here in Europe. Transport is a major contributor to CO2 emissions but Biodiesel made from vegetable oil and Bioethanol as a gasoline replacement made from Corn or Sugar Cane produce 30% of the CO2 emissions of Fossil Fuels and can be used in conventional vehicles as a blend. 85% inclusion of Bioethanol is possible with a few engine modifications. Agriculture can now produce the raw materials to produce renewable transport fuels and has a key role to play. I believe that World agriculture is entering a renaissance and farmers will be the new energy suppliers. Germany is the largest supplier of biodiesel in the world and the USA with over 100 plants producing bioethanol (as a gasoline substitute) from maize alcohol will overtake Brazil as the largest renewable fuel producer in the world. This is a great story for agriculture. Farmers can now produce crops to make renewable energy and at the same time these crops are taking in CO2 and giving out oxygen for humans to breathe.

We should, however, ask ourselves the question; if there is an agricultural revival, where is the young blood? And where are all the budding young Agronomists? NAICC and AICC will have a role in ensuring that the next generation of Crop Consultants have the skills to bridge the gap between crop production and renewable energy. I am sure they will, and I am sure that courses like University of Florida's Dr. of Plant Medicine programme will have a role to play. There is a chance for farmers and crop consultants to grasp this opportunity of a new and fast developing market. I only hope that oil companies are not allowed to do to the renewable energy industry what food magnates did to the food business!

Best wishes from across the pond and I look forward to seeing y'all in Atlanta in 2007.

Regards

Allen

COMMITTEE CORNER

2006 NAICC Membership Recruitment, Retention & Rules Committee Update

As the next Annual Meeting approaches, the MRR&R Committee is busy working to make the 2007 Boot Camp an unforgettable experience for new NAICC members and first time meeting attendees.

Plans are to have as many of this year's new members participate in the orientation at the Atlanta meeting as possible. Boot Camp will be held during breakfast on Thursday morning, February 15.

We've already heard from several recent members who are eager to help out and we applaud them — and encourage others to step up too. This is the best way to get involved!

NAICC is also reaching out to members who haven't renewed their membership and those who've attended the Annual Meeting but haven't yet decided to join the Alliance. The MRR&R and Membership Services Committees, along with the NAICC Executive Board, are using the Ambassador Program Committee to make personal calls to these folks to encourage their participation.

And of course there are still consultants and researchers, as well as others in the agricultural community, who have not yet experienced NAICC for themselves. Our joint meeting with ASFMRA will be a wonderful opportunity for those who have never attended to get a taste of what the Alliance offers!

If you are interested in being an NAICC Ambassador, you are encouraged to contact Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com or Denise Wright at glpblues@bellsouth.net.

NAICC Welcomes More New Members!

NAICC is please to announce **Stu Mertz, Jr., Ph.D.**, as a new member. Stu is President and Owner of Peak Quality Consulting, Inc., in Cary, N.C. As such he supplies contract quality assurance services for GLP, EPA, FDA and OECD studies.

Stu will be a familiar face to many NAICC members as he worked for agricultural chemical companies for 30 years (his employers included Monsanto, FMC, American Cyanamid and BASF.) He has 10 years of GLP Quality Assurance experience

(New Members continued)

and maintains RQAP-GLP certification.

Stu joined NAICC and attended our Annual Meeting in Tucson to keep in contact with contract researchers, to meet new people and to continue the learning process through NAICC meeting presentations. He is also a member of SQA and

President-Elect of the North Carolina Chapter.

NAICC also proudly announces Richard Greenland as a new member of the Alliance. Richard is a Project Leader with Stewart Agricultural Research Services, Inc., which provides contract research and project management services.

Richard holds both Master of Science

and Doctorate degrees from Oklahoma State University. He is a member of the Weed Science Society of America, the American Society of Agronomy, the Soil Science Society of America and the American Society for Horticultural Science. Richard said his primary purpose for joining NAICC is the networking opportunity the membership provides.

The Motion is Carried

Adapted by Gary Coukell, NAICC, from Agriculture Business Review, Royal Bank of Canada.

Chairman. While the title sounds important, the job itself is even more so.

Consider the hundreds of agricultural organizations across North America, including NAICC. Without a board of directors and committees, these groups would have no policy, strategy, structure or direction. Without a good chairman, action-oriented organizations and committees might quickly become debating societies.

For an inside view on the role and responsibilities of a chairman, ask an agricultural leader who's wielded many a gavel over the years: Gordon Stephenson, Calgary-based General Manager of the Canadian Hereford Association and a past or present chairman of many prominent organizations.

"Early on in my career, I attended lots of meetings where nothing seemed to get done", says Stephenson. "People were getting totally off-topic from the agenda, and I found that very unproductive and frustrating.

Seeking structure and process as a chairman himself, Stephenson embraced the ancient formulas for parliamentary decision-making: motion, seconded, all in favor, carried or not carried. This is not formality for its own sake. When it comes to providing structure for discussion and decision making, Stephenson feels this style is flat-out better at getting things done. He notes that many of the best meeting chairmen/ chairwomen learned their craft through 4-H,

which stressed the fundamentals of these procedures.

Stephenson shares some other rules of order which could apply to virtually any agricultural gathering where there's business to be done:

1. Have a written agenda. State the purpose of the meeting and the items to be discussed, and share it with all attendees several days in advance. This gives people an opportunity to prepare their viewpoints, which makes discussion more efficient.
2. Outline the rules of the road. At the start of the meeting, take a few minutes to share the procedure to be followed. Stephenson always attempts to get everyone who speaks to address the chair. This prevents people talking back and forth to each other and can help to manage conflict by making the discussion less personal.
3. Keep it moving. If one item on a ten-item agenda takes half of the allotted meeting time, people are going to lose interest and become frustrated. "The main part that I work hard at is to keep the meeting focused on the topics," says Stephenson. "You have to be a bit assertive in terms of gauging where the discussion is going and how long it's taking. You need to recognize when a discussion has stopped progressing". When that happens, Stephenson recommends asking for a motion. If there's no motion, propose

that the issue be tabled for future discussion.

4. How fair is fair? Stephenson doesn't think that it is the chairman's responsibility to make sure that everyone provides their opinion in equal measure. While some people love to talk, others will have a quieter style of participation. "But if I'm chairing a meeting and it is being dominated by a few people, I will ask those who haven't been heard from to provide their comments on the issue. That's part of being a responsible chairman", states Stephenson. As to the chairman's participation, Stephenson says, "If you have information that will benefit the group, absolutely you should share that. But it's also important to make sure the chairman doesn't do all the talking."
5. Record the meeting, and the actions. While it's not necessary to have a word-for-word transcript, someone should be designated to record the motions, who made them, seconded them, and the result of the motion. In addition, action items, complete with names and timelines, should also be captured. When the meeting is finished, Stephenson wants the minutes and actions items circulated within five working days. "If you've done a good job of setting up and running the meeting, and you're asking for appropriate input," Stephenson says, "you'll have the support of most people."



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