



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Jim Steffel
NAICC
President

Have You Heard the News?

Certainly a familiar phrase, however it has recently taken on a new meaning to those of us in agriculture. Where once it was the exception to have agricultural related stories presented on the national news or in a major newspaper, food and agriculture stories are now common on radio, TV or in the press. The latest popular news item seems to be a pending world food crisis with about every grain crop we produce; however, the problem may not always be one of supply but rather escalating cost exceeding consumer budgets.

I find this sudden widespread interest in agribusiness and the forces that have

brought us to the current state of affairs an interesting indicator of where our industry as agricultural consultants may be headed. True or not, biofuels have become a major reason cited for the shortages and increased cost of food. But those claims disregard the fact that an ever increasing segment of the global population is embracing capitalism and using the new found wealth to improve their diet. I believe the inference to be drawn from recent events in Agriculture is the emerging awareness that our ability to produce food to meet the global demand is limited by the availability of quality arable land. Once that fact is accepted we can work to employ knowledge and technology to increase yield on the available land.

The need to increase yields with the most cost effective inputs points to a bright future for agricultural consulting and NAICC. The products and technologies that corporations are eager to bring into this value added market will need to undergo a lengthy development process, and experienced professionals will be needed to bring these technologies to market. As Independent Agricultural Consultants it certainly behooves us to remain current on the always changing factors affecting the demands on agriculture in order to tailor

our services to meet those demands. The current public awareness of agriculture, its economic value, and the need to increase production in the most cost effective manner offers an opportunity to create a very positive image of agricultural consulting and NAICC.

NAICC has a very active Marketing Committee working hard to upgrade our website and develop outreach materials to promote the Alliance and create a positive image of our profession that will help all members grow their businesses. Many in agriculture already consider the NAICC membership list as a "Who's Who" in Crop Consulting and Contract Research. Thanks to the hard work of our QA members NAICC is also becoming the recognized home for Agricultural Quality Assurance Professionals. The current influence agriculture has on geopolitical and economic events offer an excellent opportunity for us to advance awareness of NAICC and the value of Independent Consultants in Agriculture. It is certainly an exciting time in our profession and I encourage everyone to get involved in one of our many committees or at least contribute your ideas to grow and promote NAICC.

Higher Standards Applauded, Awarded

When it comes to awards, it's hard to know where to start with NAICC members because, frankly, nearly every one of our members should be rewarded for hard work, ethics and leadership.

This year, we have the honor to call out several people who've made a difference in our organization, within our industry, the community they live in and the family behind them.

Please join us in congratulating:

NAICC/BASF Consultant of the Year Award Winners: Shannon L. Gomes, Steven A. Hoffman, and Stanley J. Winslow

These three individuals exemplify the purpose of the NAICC/BASF Consultant of

the Year award: they are outstanding leaders – people who use their time and talent to make a measurable difference.

Shannon Gomes, with Cedar Basin Crop Consulting, Inc., in Waverly, Iowa, has been in the business for 21 years. He provides full consulting services – scouting, hybrid and variety selection, soil testing, application of precision technologies, manure management and expert witness – on 34,750 acres of corn, soybeans and alfalfa.

Also a long-time member of the NAICC, serving as secretary in the past, Shannon is a member of the Iowa Independent Crop Consultants and an ASA-Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS). He earned his Bachelor

of Science degree in soil science from California State Polytechnic University and a Master of Science degree in soil fertility from Iowa State University.

Shannon's organization was the principal developer of a statewide scouting network, linked with the Iowa Soybean Association. He said his goal is to continually think "outside the box" with respect to crop consulting and American agriculture.

Steve Hoffman, a business owner for 13 years and consultant for 21, is with Hoffman Crop Consulting, Inc., in Manitowoc, WI.

His company offers a complete integrated crop management program (soil sampling,



(From left) 2008 NAICC Consultant of the Year Award Winners Shannon Gomes, Steve Hoffman and Stan Winslow.

crop input recommendations, tillage advice, scouting and agronomic recommendations, nutrient management plans, GPS mapping and calibration). A Registered Technical Service Provider, Steve services more than 14,000 acres of corn, alfalfa, soybeans, winter wheat and other crops.

In addition to his active role in the NAICC, he serves as Board Member for both the WAPAC and the Manitowoc County Forage Council. Steve is ASA and ARCPACS Certified and is a member of the Midwest Forage Association and the U.W. Ag Alumni.

Among Steve's many ag related projects is a new tillage system called Zone Ridge, which is intended to improve corn yield on poorly drained soils. He's also spent several years writing nutrient management plans and is working on becoming a Certified Conservation Planner to enhance both environmental stewardship and productivity for his clients.

Steve graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in soil and crop science from the University of Wisconsin, Platteville.

Stanley Winslow, an independent crop consultant who's been in business for 17 years, is with Tidewater Agronomics, Inc., in Belvidere, NC. His company performs full-service agronomy and pest management work on all row and many vegetable crops. He's also heavily involved in contract research (efficacy). Stan consults on approximately 70,000 acres in North Carolina, 30,000 in Virginia.

A long-time member and leader within the NAICC, Stan is active in the North Carolina Ag Consultants Association. He said his company "serves nearly every client we started with in 1991, plus many more." He also noted that Tidewater Ag strives to

serve customers when and how they need to be served, accommodating special requests as much as possible.

SERVICE TO NAICC AWARD WINNER DARYL WYATT



Daryl Wyatt (left) receives Service to NAICC Award from President Jim Steffel.

This award, developed to honor distinguished service to NAICC and its members, is given to someone who goes beyond the call of duty to help NAICC – someone who does it with a giving heart because of his or her love for the Alliance.

Daryl Wyatt, a research consultant with The Carringers, Inc., in Louisburg, KS, exemplifies these criteria.

In his current role as project manager, Daryl serves as a liaison with sponsors and between the study director and principal investigator. He monitors field and analytical phases of studies, writes reports, reviews and amends protocols, assures GLP compliance, etc.

Prior to his work with The Carringers, Daryl was employed in various roles with

Bayer CropScience, including Scientist II, Scientist II/Senior Research Chemist/Senior Associate Scientist and Senior Research Scientist.

He also served as Senior Research Biologist at Aventis CropScience Research Center (AgrEvo Research Center) in Pikeville, NC, and as Research Scientist for American Agricultural Services, Inc., in Lucama, NC.

In addition to the NAICC, Daryl is a member of the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and the Southern Weed Science Society (SWSS). He has led or served on NAICC's Allied Industry Committee since 2000, received the NAICC Top Recruiter Award in both 2004 and 2005, was re-elected to a second term on the Executive Board of Directors and served from 2003 to 2006.

Daryl is a member of the Astrix Software FieldNotes Steering Committee and the Auburn University Agronomy Club. His honors include membership in the Gamma Sigma Delta honor society, various placements in national and regional soil judging and weed science paper contests.

He was awarded the 1988 Dr. A. L. Smith scholarship for outstanding M.S. graduate student in the Agronomy and Soils Department. Daryl has attended numerous critical industry meetings and training workshops throughout his career, enabling him to expand and share his wealth of knowledge and leadership skills.

Daryl earned both his Bachelor of Science in agriculture and Master in Weed Science from Auburn University. While there he served as a Full-time Graduate Research Assistant.

Raised on a family farm in Alabama, Daryl was exposed to agriculture – the production of beef cattle, soybean, wheat, corn, grain sorghum and hay crops – early in life.

RAY YOUNG, WHOM WE HONOR THROUGH "THE RAY YOUNG LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE"

Strong leadership, essential to all organizations, is exemplified in NAICC leaders like **Ray Young**, who has been instrumental in leading NAICC, raising our visibility, unbiased credibility and more.

Ray is being honored for his service – and his leadership in all aspects of life – through a new leadership development program generously sponsored by AMVAC. The organization has provided \$12,500 in seed money over five years to identify and develop instrumental leaders like Ray.

A member who "defines the word leadership in all he does," Ray was selected because of his exemplary leadership in his



Paul Vaculin honors Ray Young with the distinguished Ray Young Leadership Program.

church, community, state and nation.

Ray, a past president of the Alliance, has also served as a member of the Farm Credit Services Insurance Services board and is working to provide crop input in support of agricultural issues.

He is very active on Capitol Hill and has established a good working relationship with the EPA. Ray has worked to position himself and the NAICC as unbiased sources for input on pesticide regulations.

NAICC's Board of Directors, along with EVP Allison Jones, are evaluating several ideas for how best to move the new Ray Young leadership development initiative forward.

OUR TOP RECRUITER AWARDS! WE HONOR THOSE WHO'VE RECRUITED TWO OR MORE NEW MEMBERS FROM THEIR STATE:

- Stan Winslow**
- James Steffel**
- Wendy Shoffner**
- Dennis Hattermann, Ph.D.**
- Dan Easton**

TOP OVERALL RECRUITER – TOM ARMSTRONG – GETS THE “BIG” PLAQUE!
For the second year in a row, Tom Armstrong of Monsanto Company received



Tom Armstrong is NAICC's 2008 Top Recruiter for second year in a row.

top honors as the NAICC Overall Top Recruiter. Armstrong, who has been an Additional Sustaining Member from Monsanto since 2000, recruited five new members for 2008! We salute Tom not only for his recruiting efforts, but for his service and dedication to NAICC through Annual Meeting speaking engagements, pre-convention workshops and multiple years of service on the Annual Meeting program committee.

We also need to applaud the NAICC New Member Campaign which is generously sponsored by **Bayer CropScience** is critical to NAICC's growth and vitality. As noted by **Denise Wright**, 2007 chair of the Membership Recruitment, Retention and Rules Committee, "Bayer has long been a strong supporter of our efforts at furthering the crop and researcher consulting profession. We are extremely grateful for their leadership role and generosity in sponsoring our recruitment campaign. Efforts like these help ensure the future growth of our profession nationwide."

Kudos to all award winners – we appreciate your hard work and wish you a successful growing season!

News from the FEAE

By Don Jameson, Foundation President

NAICC members can take real pride in the work of their Executive Board and Executive Vice President Jones, who recently met in Washington, DC for a two-day board meeting and a day of visits to policy makers "on the Hill."

While the cherry trees were blooming, a first-time event took place: concurrent NAICC and FEAE board meetings. (For our newer readers, the FEAE is NAICC's Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education.)

As the NAICC recently celebrated its 30th year, the FEAE has existed since 1991 and is going into its 17th year.

Your foundation has been ramping up over the last four years, starting in 2004 with the contracting of Dr. Ken Bader to help with public relations in developing and promoting the Doctor of PlantMedicine/Health degree with universities in the Midwest. Secondly, in December of 2007 we contracted Linda Kraft to serve as part-time Executive Director.

This April the FEAE board met in Washington, D.C., to develop its 18-month plan – or road map – with several objectives in mind. Our five primary objectives are as follows:

1. Developing awareness of the value and contribution the foundation can render to NAICC members, the NAICC leadership and the foundation donor base.
2. Planning for robust fundraising among our partnership groups of industry, other foundation members and legacy donors.
3. Developing continued goals of financially supporting our historical education activities of funding convention speakers and programs such as the Precision Agriculture workshops, which NAICC has developed.
4. Continuing to encourage and support the interaction with select universities to develop and promote the D.P.M. degree. We further encourage our members to avail themselves to these students as summer interns and potential employees.

(I personally am now hiring my second D.P.M. intern this summer.)

5. Improving our technique of communication to NAICC members, other Ag science professionals and our current and potential donor base. This will be done via an improved website, newsletters and brochures.

We are currently promoting the Richard L. Jensen, Ph.D. Memorial Scholarship (updated with simplified application criteria). NAICC members: please direct your food, fiber, fuel and feed science students to www.NAICC.org/FEAE for more information on this valuable scholarship!

For suggestions or questions regarding the FEAE and our programs, please contact me, Linda Kraft or any director listed on page nine of your 2008 NAICC directory. And thank you for your support!

NAICC Among Select Group Sought to Attend USDA Summit for IPM Pest Information Platform for Education and Extension

NAICC recently attended a critical meeting regarding lapse of funding for what are considered "mature" IPM-PIPE components.

The meeting, known as the USDA Summit for IPM Pest Information Platform for Education and Extension (IPM-PIPE), was held in Washington, D.C. It was attended by approximately 40 key government and industry leaders, including Secretary of Agriculture Ed Shafer and Undersecretary Gale Buchanan, Host of the Summit. Blaine Viator, Ph.D. of Plattenville, LA represented NAICC at this meeting.

Representatives from USDA, APHIS, CSREES, EPA and industry met to address the issue that PIPE is in danger of lapsing in 2009 if funding is not identified to maintain its core infrastructure. Current resources – the Risk Management Agency (RMA) Agricultural Risk Protection Act (ARPA) funds – can not be used to maintain fully developed IPM-PIPE components, such as the soybean rust IPM-PIPE, which is now considered mature.

This component only has operations

funds through the 2008 field season. The 2009 President's Budget requests \$2.27 million specifically to maintain the SBR IPM-PIPE and the core IT infrastructure of the IPM-PIPE.

Several key points were discussed during the meeting:

- Funding for this request is not the more negatively viewed "earmark" but a Line Item in the President's Budget Appropriations.
- The request is for additional funding of the IPM-PIPE program rather than a new item, which is a larger barrier to overcome within the budgeting process.
- The RMA can legally only fund new, developing projects, not projects that are considered "fully mature." This raised questions as to how to define a developing project versus one that is fully mature.
- Lobbying by industry may be essential to help ensure funding for this line item, and there is concern that this issue may not get passed until early 2009 (following

the presidential election), leaving IPM-PIPE with little or no funding for some time.

- Mentions were made of the millions of gallons of pesticide that potentially would not be applied due to the IPM-PIPE program, potentially inciting EPA interest in cost sharing. USDA, CSREES and APHIS said they would look into this opportunity further.
- NAICC made the suggestion that USDA consider communicating about the broader benefits PIPE could deliver (tracking human disease epidemics, bioterrorism, etc.). Naturally more funding would be required for such an effort.

NAICC will continue to be involved in this critical issue and the Executive Board will consider options for supporting the funding efforts and for offering support for this program to the Ag Appropriations Committee.

To learn more about the meeting and IPM-PIPE, visit <http://www.ipmpipe.org> or contact Blaine Viator at blaineviator@gmail.com.

Servi-Tech and AgRenaissance Software Form a Strategic Partnership

In an effort to bring improved computer software, laboratory and crop consulting agronomy services to their customers and others in agriculture, **AgRenaissance Software, LLC** has entered into a strategic partnership with Servi-Tech.

AgRenaissance Software is a software developer of tools specifically designed for the agricultural community, while Servi-Tech is one of the largest crop consulting firms in the nation.

The partnership between the two organizations evolved after three years of utilization and testing of FieldRecon™ by Servi-Tech agronomists. (FieldRecon™ is a software recordkeeping product developed by AgRenaissance for use by agronomists, growers and others involved with agriculture.)

David Krueger, President of AgRenaissance Software, said the partnership affirms the

effectiveness of FieldRecon™ to improve and add value to agricultural production. "This partnership provides opportunities for AgRenaissance to not only work with Servi-Tech to enhance FieldRecon™ with improved field data collection and reporting functions, but also to collaborate on other software projects that will benefit the agricultural community," he noted.

Mitch Counce, General Manager for Servi-Tech, added, "As farming becomes more complicated and technologically advanced, the ability to track and recall critical information for the decision-making process will become even more important. Our agronomists, who use FieldRecon™, indicate it is extremely user-friendly and very easy to learn. FieldRecon™ software makes it very easy to keep, recall, sort, share and utilize any specific stored information

associated with crop production and field history."

AgRenaissance was founded in 2000 and is dedicated to making agronomy and farming easier and more profitable by developing software tools specifically designed for the agricultural community. For more information about the company and its products, visit www.AgRenaissance.com.

Organized in 1975 by three farmer-owned cooperatives, Servi-Tech is now one of the largest crop consulting firms in the nation, with over 70 full-time agronomists. Visit www.servi-techinc.com to learn more about Servi-Tech.

For more information about the new partnership between Servi-Tech and AgRenaissance Software, LLC, contact David W. Krueger at 919.518.8030 or david@AgRenaissance.com.

2008 EOC Session and 2009 Perspective

By Phil Cochran, CPCC-I

The Educational Outreach Committee (EOC) completed another successful session at our Seattle meeting. With 28 paid registrants and 5 GIS software representatives we were set to tackle an intense day

and of information transfer and discussion. Under the able leadership of EOC Chair **James Todd**, we talked about variable rate (VR) irrigation and VR pesticides the first day. The second day started out with an

open discussion of VR fertilizers including nitrogen. Tuesday afternoon was devoted entirely to the GIS software vendors having one-on-one demonstration sessions with the attendees – everyone was extremely

happy with this session. There was also much discussion about soil sampling methodology at the Seattle meeting. As with everything else, there are many ways soils can be extracted in respect to sample size, zone sampling, grid sampling, point samples and composite samples. I have come to the conclusion that there is no legitimate soil sampling method that NAICC members do not utilize. Many of us have changed

from grids to zones, zones to grids and everywhere in between. The bottom line is we are all doing whatever we feel is necessary within our own geographical areas and businesses to accommodate the best interests of our clients. The conversations we have are fascinating to say the least, but what we do individually does not necessarily work for our colleagues in other areas. Perhaps we could dedicate a session to sam-

pling methodology in the next meeting.

The last two Precision Ag Workshops (PAW) have been tied to the Annual Meeting for logistical reasons. However, in 2009 the PAW will be a two day regional meeting in the Minneapolis area February 12 & 13, in conjunction with the Minnesota Independent Crop Consultants Association (MNICCA).

We are deep in the planning stage at this time, but the intent is to have open registration so all consultants from surrounding states and Canada will attend. The programming will center on production ag and using GIS to enhance our client's profitability. If this regional program is successful, the EOC and the Executive Board have indicated an interest in continuing to have regional sessions annually.

As most of you know, the EOC's PAW was designed from the beginning to be self supporting financially. No funds have been taken from the general fund for these meetings – they have been paid for by the attendees and the sponsoring vendors. As with all NAICC meetings, a registration discount will be given at the Minnesota regional meeting for NAICC and state organization members. Please watch the *NAICC News* and website for further information on the regional workshop in Minneapolis.

Crop and Research Consulting – Never a Dull Moment



**It's a bird! It's a plane! No!
It's a helicopter chasing birds out of
the corn field!**

Photo courtesy of James Todd

OOPS!

Thank you, John Hecht, for submitting the badger photo featured in last month's NAICC News. We regret that we did not give John credit for the image, and send him our thanks for enriching our readers' experience.

NAICC New Member Profiles

This month we welcome two new members to the NAICC family!

Del Koch is the Principle Scientist for ABC Laboratories in Columbia, MO. ABC Laboratories provides study management and residue analysis services for the EPA, as well as required crop and soil residue studies. Del sees NAICC as an excellent forum to discuss how to offset lower labor costs from overseas providers by streamlining processes.

The second new member spotlight goes out to **Dennis Laughton** of Dennis Laughton Consulting, located in Canada. Dennis provides services on canola, mustard, barley, peas, wheat and forage crops. Dennis indicated that he sees the future of our services changing in the next 10 years as it will involve much more emphasis on greater detail, higher technology use and greater regulatory responsibilities.

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