



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Debra Keenan
NAICC
2015 President

NAICC Develops Positions on Current Issues

In early March, NAICC Executive Board members, Governmental Affairs Committee members James Todd, Dennis Hattermann, Jim Steffel, and Ray Young, Leadership Program participants Michelle Mitchel and Kara Tyler Julian, and NAICC member Rick Kesler traveled to Washington D.C. for the annual Hill visits and Crawfish Boil on the Hill (CBOH). The trip coincided with NAICC's Spring Board meeting and was very productive all the way around.

I want to give a special thanks to Tim Ford of BASF and Past President Blaine Viator for serving as chefs for the 2015 CBOH. They did a terrific job and have earned the job for life! Thanks also to Dan and Trisha Easton for their help with the pre-CBOH logistics and to Bree Goldschmidt, Hope Jones, Kathy Moser, Ann Steffel, Gloria Strochein (thanks mom!), Austin Stoffel (thanks son!), and of course Ms. Dorothy (Young) for helping register 300+ attendees. The Crawfish Boil on the Hill was a great success despite the harsh weather. I am always amazed by how many people are aware of the event and look forward to attending each year.

Our enhanced Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC), headed by James Todd, worked with the sub committees; GAC-Consultants chaired by Steve Hoffman, and GAC - Researchers chaired by Dennis Hattermann, developed several position papers on behalf of NAICC. Thanks to their hard work, we were very well prepared to discuss issues and goals on Capitol Hill, including:

NAICC Position – EPA's Proposed Bt Corn Rootworm Resistance Management

NAICC supports taking an IPM approach to manage corn rootworm. NAICC's crop consultants recognize the importance of multiple insecticidal modes of action not only for immediate CRW control, but also to protect the long-term utility of Bt CRW traits themselves. Furthermore, NAICC supports the corn grower's decision to use the crop production system that best meets the economic, risk management and



Chefs Tim Ford and Blaine Viator

sustainability objectives of his/her operation. Therefore, NAICC requests that the refuge requirements not be modified in a way that would limit the options available to growers in managing resistance to the Bt traits.

The comment period for the EPA proposed Bt CRW resistance management strategy was extended an additional 30 days. The NAICC comment is posted at <http://naicc.org/2015/04/official-naicc-comments-to-federal-register-notices/>.

NAICC Position-FAA Policy For UAV Use in Ag

NAICC recognizes that the safety of agricultural aviator applicators and the general public are important issues. NAICC would support a policy that allows for safe operation of UAVs by farmers and agronomists without overly burdensome pre-approval requirements for a flight plan. Crop consultants feel that the current process is taking too long to determine the appropriate regulations. Many other countries are already successfully using UAVs in agriculture. NAICC would like to see quicker resolution to the commercial UAVs so that U.S. agriculture is not left behind in this new technology.

NAICC Position-Lack of Timely GLP Audits

NAICC supports alternative methods of increasing the number of audits including urging EPA to conduct more audits (or more frequent audits) and/or enlist EPA contractors to conduct these audits. This includes allowing contract research institutions to pay for such audits.

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NAICC Position-Monarch Butterflies

NAICC members are very concerned with protecting the environment in which they live and work. Pollinators (both honey bees & Monarch butterflies) play a significant role in this environment to ensure that our growers are able to feed the world. NAICC supports increased practical research focused on arthropod pests, pathogens, nutrition, pesticides, and habitat sources for Monarch Butterflies. Additionally, NAICC believes in using reasonable and sound science to find the cause(s) and possible solution to the decline in Monarch Butterfly populations.

NAICC Position-Pollinators

NAICC members are very concerned with protecting the environment in which they live and work. Pollinators play a very significant role in this environment to ensure that our growers are able to feed the world. NAICC supports increased practical research focused on arthropod pests, pathogens, nutrition, pesticides, bee biology, genetics, and breeding. Additionally, NAICC believes in wise stewardship of bee protection and crop protection products.

NAICC Position-H2-A And H2-B

NAICC supports the H2-A & H2-B worker exemptions and requests that DHSDOL employees that process H-2A and H2-B Visa's allow and be considered "essential employees" if a DHS shutdown occurs.

NAICC Position-Waters Of The U.S.

The NAICC supports standards intended to protect the quality of surface waters. Expanding the jurisdiction of EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers through redefinition of the term "waters of the United States" is an overreach of statutory authority. Upland surface water and drainage features are more effectively protected by State authority and technical assistance from NRCS.

NAICC Position-WPS

NAICC encourages EPA not to make changes to the exemption currently in place for employees who are under the direct supervision of a certified or licensed crop advisor.

2015 Annual Meeting Materials

Thanks to all NAICC members and partners who ventured out west for the 2015 Annual Meeting in Reno, Nevada! We again enjoyed record attendance, a diverse range of industry and specialty exhibitors and speakers, and the #1 opportunity to network and develop in our profession. Go to <http://naicc.org/meetings/2015-annual-meeting/> for Annual Meeting materials including:

- President's Address
- NAICC Leadership Program
- Emerging Technologies 2015
- Legislative Update
- UAVs in Precision Agriculture
- UAVs in Modern Agriculture
- Improvements Needed in EPA's GLP Inspection Program
- Safe Work Practices for the CRO
- Bee Risk Assessment
- Drivers of Honey Bee Losses
- Higher Tier Effects Studies
- Nectar Pollen Methods & Cautions
- Seed Dust and Honey Bees Research, Mitigation and Stewardship
- Update on the California Department of Pesticide Regulation Neonicotinoid Reevaluation
- Field Study Hazards Risks and Major GLP Compliance
- GLPS and Quality Management Systems
- Protocol and SOP Changes and Audit Checklists
- Protocol Issues and QA Communication

Congratulations to Annual Meeting laptop winners:
Amy Beth Dowdy, Kathy Harris and Brent Wright.
\$1280 was raised through the sale of raffle tickets, with all proceeds going to the Crawfish Boil on the Hill. The laptops were used during the educational session and generously sponsored by Coastal Ag Research, Inc., Covance Labs, and ICMS, Inc.

Please mark your calendars for our
2016 Annual Meeting, January 27-30,
Lake Buena Vista Palace, Orlando, Florida!



Annual Meeting Awards

One of the high points of this year's Annual Meeting was the announcement of our 2015 award winners:



Consultants of The Year

This annual award recognizes the entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and creativity of the crop consultant. It also acknowledges consultants who achieve high standards of environmental responsibility and actions in their communities. NAICC, in conjunction with program sponsor BASF, congratulates:

Jason Fussy has worked for Control Crop Consulting for 17 years. He has a relentless passion for his profession and performs at a very high level. Though busy with his current duties, Jason is always willing to help others on his staff and peers in other organizations like Corn & Soybean Growers Association and NAICC. He is most deserving of this honor.

Mark Kottmeyer of Central State Agronomics is one of the premiere crop consultants in Nebraska and the High Plains. Numerous other consultants have gotten their start with him. He has been active in Nebraska Independent Crop Consultants Association with various positions held. He has been an active, long-term member of NAICC with a stellar reputation. Mark is very much deserving of this award.

Madeline Mellinger of Glades Crop Care, Inc., has been a member of NAICC for over 30 years. She is an important reason that NAICC exists today, having served on the Board of Directors in the early years. In addition to serving as President, Madeline served as Secretary and Treasurer and once personally signed a bank note for a sizeable amount to help resolve a debt from a prior Annual Meeting. She is long overdue to receive this honor and distinction.

Rick Trudel with Control of Twin Valley is a successful consultant in the Red River Valley of the North on the border of Minnesota and North Dakota. He has achieved high levels of revenue and retains nearly 100% of his growers from year to year. Rick is considered a solid team player as well as an individual standout. He is very positive and professional. He has incorporated Precision Ag into his consulting and is a valuable resource for the rest of his company.



Service To NAICC: David Wilde



This annual award honors distinguished service to NAICC and its members. It is given to someone who goes beyond the call of duty because of his/her love for the Alliance. This year we honor David Wilde.

David is a Charter Member of NAICC; he attended the very first Annual Meeting in 1978. Unfortunately, due to a database error, we failed to recognize David last year when we honored our Charter Members. Fortunately, Dan Bradshaw brought this to our attention in a kind and humorous way:

"David attended the same 1978 meeting that I attended in Memphis. Since it would be expensive to fly to Memphis and we were all poor, I rented a van for several of us from Texas to drive to Memphis. David Wilde was one of the Texans making the trip. Others were Reed Green, Fred Miller, Stan Nemec, Larry Emerson, and me."

"A few years later several other members of TACE convinced Texas to change the name of our state group to Texas Association of Agricultural Consultants. At that point, TAAC would consider letting David, Larry and I us join the Texas group as members but first we had to take and pass a test. That was the first and only time a test was required to become a member of our state ag consulting organization. We hold that record still. As you know, we Texans are a by-the-letter-of-the-law bunch!"

State Top Recruiters – Recruited 2 or More New Members

Roger Musick, Oklahoma

Sandy Mackie, North Carolina



Overall Top Recruiters – Recruited 4 New Members

Lee West, California

Eric Flora, California (not pictured)

Lloyd Haderlie, Idaho

Gary Coukell, Canada

Michelle Mitchell, California (not pictured)

NAICC Board Update

Your Executive Board is hard at work on behalf of NAICC. Please be advised of recent Board discussion and decisions:

- A motion was made to increase Sustaining Membership fees to \$3500/year for companies with 100 or more employees and to \$950/year for Sustaining Members with 99 or fewer employees. The board felt this increase was necessary as these membership fees have not increased in over 10 years and the additional money could be used for the NAICC Leadership Program and Crawfish Boil on the Hill.
- NAICC will partner with the Nebraska Independent Crop Consultants Association (NICCA) to sponsor a Focus on Precision meeting, tentatively February 23-24, 2016 in Omaha, NE.
- Although the Peppermill has offered the same contract as 2012 and 2015 for 2018, there is a substantial part of the membership that would like to go somewhere else. The Board has instructed EVP Allison Jones to investigate Albuquerque, NM, Tucson, AZ and San Diego, CA for potential sites for the 2018 Annual Meeting. Currently, NAICC has a bid from the Albuquerque Convention Center, two hotels in Tucson and the Town and Country Hotel in San Diego.

NAICC Speaks on Member's Behalf

By Allison Jones, EVP

Each year the NAICC Executive Board, members of the Governmental Affairs Committee and the Leadership Program participants travel to DC to represent NAICC's 700+ members from all membership categories. We do this by calling on key Congressmen and Senators, policy-makers at USDA, EPA and this year at the FAA. We also met with NAICC Cooperative Members and other commodity groups based in DC. This makes for a full week as we combine our Spring Executive Board meeting and the Crawfish Boil on the Hill into one trip. Your Executive Board works hard to represent you in Washington.

As outlined in the President's Column, NAICC representatives shared with policy-makers the NAICC's positions/concerns on several key issues that were identified by the Governmental Affairs Committee. There was a good amount of information shared among the 25 meetings we attended.

Agency Visits

Our research members met with Francisca Liem, Branch Chief of the EPA Office of Compliance to discuss the lack of first time EPA audits at new research facilities. A few years ago a study was rejected by a regulatory agency in Europe because the contracted laboratory had never been audited by EPA. An



Ray Young and Debra Keenan help Tim Ford prepare crawfish etouffée

international agreement between the US and approximately 35 other countries (OECD) provides for the mutual acceptance of data (MAD) generated within any of the member countries by any other member country in support of a submitted product registration request. Because the CRO involved in the rejected study mentioned above had never been audited the study was rejected and the registration delayed while the study was repeated. Since that event, many sponsors have been reluctant to place critical studies with facilities that have not been audited. Those tend to be newer CROs or established facilities where ownership has been recently transferred. However even established CROs who have not been audited for an extended period can also be considered ineligible for study placement by Sponsors. Liem and EPA Attorney Helene Ambrosina explained that FIFRA only allows EPA to inspect a testing facility after data generated by that facility has been submitted to the agency to support a registration, resulting in a catch 22 for many NAICC members. At this point, EPA is willing to do an inspection of a facility upon request from another regulatory authority such as an OECD member country, however, there appears to be no viable mechanism to inspect a facility that does not have a study already submitted to the agency by a Sponsor company. NAICC continues to work with the CropLife GLP working group made of up 7 NAICC members and industry representatives to find a solution to this problem.



Michelle Mitchel, Kara Tyler-Julian, Gary Coukell, Allison Jones and Sandy Mackie met with Congressman Des Jarlais of TN (center)and Richard Wilkins, Ag LA.

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Consultant members and staff met with Kevin Keaney, Branch Chief of the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs-Field & External Affairs-Certification & Worker Protection Branch to discuss the final rule being drafted on the Worker Protection Standard. We reiterated our request for EPA not to make any changes to the current standard as it pertains to certified or licensed crop advisors or their employees under their direct supervision. Keaney was not at liberty to tell us what was being written into the final draft, but did say that due to the thousands of comments received, the Agency was making changes to their initial positions in some areas. The rule is being reviewed by USDA and the Office of Management and Budget who will give their input to EPA on the final language. We are in contact with USDA officials on this issue.

A very welcome opportunity was our meeting with Ron Carleton, EPA's Agricultural Counselor to Administrator Gina McCarthy. Carleton, who worked for over thirty years in the US Congress, just recently returned to DC after serving as Deputy Commissioner to the Colorado Department of Agriculture. An experienced ag professional, Carleton was appreciative of the role of independent crop and research consultants. We were able to give him an overview of our position statements as well as update him on the issue we discussed with other EPA officials, including Waters of the US, lack of research facility audits, WPS, resistance management and labeling issues.

Members also met with Sheryl Kunickis, Director of the USDA Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP) and Jill Schroeder, Agronomist and Weed Scientist with OPMP to discuss Bt corn rootworm resistance and the monarch butterflies, pollinators, and weeds and herbicides matters.

In two separate meetings, NAICC representatives met with EPA personal to discuss label mandated use and resistance management for GMO/Bt crops. Alan Reynolds, Biotechnology Team Leader-OPP Microbial Pesticides Branch leads this department that is responsible for writing rules on resistant management. We discussed the proposed rule and shared our comments and concerns with him. We felt our ideas were well received. Skee Jones, Branch Chief, OPP-Biological Analysis Branch also met with our group and was receptive of the resistance management strategies NAICC presented.

Gary Coukell, James Todd and I met with Jim Williams at the Department of Transportation's FAA-Unmanned Aircraft Integration Office. Here we discussed the proposed rule which would require unmanned aircraft pilots to obtain special pilot certificates, fly only during the day and limit flying speed to 100 miles per hour at an altitude of up to 500 feet above ground level. Mr. Williams encouraged us to formally submit our comments.

Congressional Visits

Kara Tyler-Julian, along with Gary Coukell, Sandy Mackie, Michelle Mitchell and I met with Richard Wilkins, Legislative Assistant for Congressman DesJarlais of TN. Being new to the House Ag Committee, it was a great opportunity to update Wilkins and later the Congressman on NAICC and our positions on certain issues. It was exciting to hear from Wilkins that one of our issues, the delay in approving the 2015 Homeland Security appropriation bill was passed by the House of Representatives earlier that day. Our concern centered on the fact that the DHS employees that process H-2A farm worker visas as well as H-2B unskilled worker visas for processors would be furloughed if the bill was not passed. If there are no DHS employees to process H-2A farm workers applications, many of the growers NAICC members work with would not get their primary H-2A workers during the



Congressman Rick Allen from Georgia and his wife Robin have attended the NAICC CBOH for several years at the personal invitation of Dennis Hattermann.

peak agricultural H-2A application period from February-May.

Nathan Goldschmidt and Lisa Wheelock-Roney teamed up to call on John Assini, Agriculture Legislative Correspondent with Senator Baldwin of WI and Meris Petek, Agriculture Legislative Assistant, or Ag LA with Senator Johnson also of WI. Later they met with Justin Sok, Senior Legislative Assistant for Congressman Jason Smith MO. Nathan reports, "We encouraged everyone we met with to come to the Crawfish Boil and were pleased to see several of them the following night at the CBOH. During our meetings, we had the opportunity to tell them about our other meetings at USDA and EPA we had attended that day, but mainly focused our discussion on WPS, WOTUS, and the pollinator issues. We felt that our time spent was productive."

Ray Young and others called on Dr. Ralph Abraham, a freshman Congressman from LA. Ray reported that Dr. Abraham is anxious to help and lead in Agricultural issues. Dr. Abraham was also our sponsor for the Crawfish Boil on the Hill in the Longworth Office Building.



Bryan Berroughs (right) met with Congressman Pat Roberts (R-KS)

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NAAA Andrew Moore visited with NAICC and FMC representatives.

Association Visits

The NAAA was on the list of non-profits in Washington to visit. Rick Kesler, Michelle Mitchell, Sandy Mackie and Michael Seyfert with FMC met with Andrew Moore of the NAAA. Our discussion centered on the use of UAVs in agricultural. Since UAVs will be flying in the same air space that their aerial applicators use, we were all in agreement that safety is paramount. NAAA proposes that a workable solution might be to equip the UAVs with strobe lights and a send/receive signal device that would warn pilots that a UAV is in the area. NAICC is currently working on the official comments to submit to FAA on UAVs. These will be posted on the NAICC website once submitted to FAA.

Sandy Mackie felt that the meeting with US Rice was very productive. She commented, "We spent time getting to know each other's leadership and goals of each of the organizations. We seem to have numerous common goals and shared interests, and discussed Cooperative Membership between our organizations."

Barbara Glenn, Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture met with the GAC and Leadership members on Wednesday for lunch. Barbara worked with NAICC when she was with CropLife just last year. Conversations centered on areas where the two organizations can work together and in addition to Cooperative Membership, Barbara offered to make introductions for NAICC members with their state department of agriculture Commissioner, Secretary or Director. NAICC will be working with our newly formed State Affiliate Relations Committee to make these introductions.



Dennis Hattermann poses with Congressman Buddy Carter (R-GA).

Hecht Represents NAICC on Capitol Hill

NAICC Director John Hecht represented NAICC on Capitol Hill on a panel discussion entitled "Agricultural Applications of Unmanned Aircraft Systems". The session was sponsored by The Congressional Unmanned Systems Caucus and headed by Congressman Joe Heck, M.D. (R-NV) and Congressman Daniel Lipinski (D-IL). Members of the Association of Unmanned Vehicle Systems International (AUVSI) moderated the session.

Joining Hecht on the panel were Patrick Delaney, American Soybean Association; R.J. Karney, American Farm Bureau; Clint Raine, National Corn Growers Association and John Dillard, National Association of Wheat Growers. Panelist highlighted the benefits of unmanned systems to the agriculture industry and helped Senators, Representatives and staff to better understand the commercial opportunities for these technologies. There were 60 government officials, Congressional staff, farmers, developers, and press present.

Hecht reports that the discussion centered on opportunities for UAV's in agriculture—using them for collection of different types of data, helping both farmers and consultants do a better job

of monitoring the crop in season. Discussions also covered the problems and questions that both sides are dealing with at this time. These include:

- a) FAA not releasing the guidelines for use of UAVs, yet companies and users are ready to go
- b) Line of sight use of the aircraft may not be good enough to cover large fields at the proposed 400 foot ceiling of flight paths.
- c) Aerial applicators have concerns about use and safety of UAVs when they are in the air applying products.
- d) Cost of technology depends on the value and efficiency that the UAVs bring to the user. It will depend on each grower, farm, or consultant.

The session comes on the heels of the FFAs proposed rule for integrating Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) or "Unmanned Aerial Vehicles" (UAVs), into the National Airspace System (NAS). Comments on the proposed rule, "Certification of Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems," 80 Fed. Reg. 9544, are due by April 24, 2015. NAICC has submitted their comments and encourages members to submit their personal comments as well.



Happenings on the Hill

FY 2016 Budget

The U.S. House of Representatives adopted a budget for 2016 on March 25 by a vote of 228 to 199. This budget was passed by the House Budget Committee during the week of March 16. The final budget version, adopted by the House, includes instructions for reconciliation by the House Ag Committee to find reductions that total \$1 billion over a ten year period in mandatory programs. One provision in the budget calls for legislation that would reinforce the requirement for regulatory impact analysis when regulations proposed by the executive branch agencies (stated in HR 185 and approved by the House) and requires agencies proposing new rules to conduct additional analysis, list and evaluate alternatives and choose least cost alternatives that meet statutory guidelines. The legislation would require agencies to factor in problems the rule would address and the risks/benefits when submitting new rules. In addition, a mandatory cost-benefit analysis would be required after three years to ensure that the regulations are performing as originally intended (substantial opposition is expected from EPA and other groups).

USDA Mandated Check-Off Programs

Some organic growers are resisting participation in the USDA mandated check-off program for organic grown foods. USDA check-off program guidelines have been established for livestock/crop growers and the organic growers are expected to participate and follow the rules in the same manner as beef, pork, soybeans, etc.

Farm Bill

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has projected cost increases in at least two new programs: revenue protection and price loss protection. Lower corn prices and several other commodity crop price declines triggered the increased cost estimates. Current estimated crop insurance is projected to stay within budget. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, are estimated to increase by \$13 billion+ over 10 years. The number of SNAP participants is expected to decline. Conservation program expenditures are expected to be within budget (no increase in new budget for conservation programs). Overall, it is predicted House and Senate Budget Committees will request major cuts.

Labor Issues

The Ag Workforce Coalition, along with several farm organizations, have indicated a bill approved by the House Judiciary Committee could generate a negative effect on farming operations in the U.S., providing it continues to move forward. The bill, titled "Legal Workforce Act", specifies that employers are mandated to use the E-Verify system within three years. (The internet based system known as E-Verify is provided via the Department of Homeland Security and processes documentation provided by the worker and clarifies the eligibility of the worker to legally work in the U.S.). The agricultural group's position is that E-Verify

should be implemented after or in tandem with established rules that address concerns about available worker supply and challenges facing the agricultural industry. In addition, farm groups have stated they can support E-Verify, providing work authorization is provided for current workers and a new guest worker program administered by the USDA is given consideration. Several farm groups are requesting a program that provides for a year-round workforce and seasonal workforce with added flexibility that would provide options for employers as well as workers.

Labor officials are calling for additional worker protection rules for foreign workers in order to prevent exploitation by employers. The GAO issued a report following studies done with workers, federal officials and advocacy groups. Issues cited include insufficient explanation of job duties/requirements, incorrect wage information, false information regarding working conditions and excessive fees charged to employees. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recommends published guidelines that would list job descriptions, a list of recruiters and a data bank containing a list of offenders.

Biotechnology

The House of Representatives has conducting a hearing on mandatory biotechnology labeling laws. Witnesses testified before the committee that mandatory biotechnology labeling laws would inflict harm on the ag industry as well as consumers. House Ag Committee chair Conway stated any restrictions would prohibit adequate food/fiber production and demands would not be met.

FDA

Bi-partisan legislation was introduced that will establish national science-based labeling standards for food containing GMOs. The proposal would ensure that the FDA remains the final authority on labeling and safety standards. The need for a "national" standard is being driven by a growing number of individual state standards being established that would create roadblocks to interstate commerce and cause an increase in food prices as well as confuse consumers. The "Safe and Accurate Food Labeling Act" will ensure decisions are science based and standards are consistent at retail outlets in all states.

USDA

USDA has proposed a rule to limit farm payments to non-farmers. The ruling, if passed, would limit farm payments to individuals who may be designated as farm managers but are not actively engaged in farm management. Congress granted authority to USDA to address the situation for joint ventures and general partnerships. Family farms would be exempted from the new rules. The proposed rules would require non-family joint ventures and general partnerships to document that their managers make significant contributions to the operation (500 hours of qualified management work per year or at least 25 percent of the necessary management time needed to ensure the success of the farming operation).

Waters of The U.S. Rule

On March 25, 2015, the Senate passed in a 59-40 vote, a rule that would clarify the WOTUS rule doesn't apply to puddles, irrigation ditches and waste water systems. This vote came after the Senate voted 99-0 that the rule permits exemptions for farmers/ranchers/forestry. The amendment was offered to assure farmers/ranchers the CWA would protect water quality and uphold existing exemptions.

NAICC Leadership Program Takes Tyler-Julian All Over Mid-South

By Kara Tyler-Julian, Glades Crop Care, Inc., and a 2014-15 participant of the NAICC Leadership Program

I arrived in Alexandria, Louisiana, bleary-eyed and exhausted, five hours later than originally planned after delayed flights, missed connections and many hours spent exploring the Atlanta airport. Grady Coburn and his lovely wife Barbara were kind enough to stay up late and deliver me from the airport to my hotel. I was pleasantly surprised by how warm and amiable they were from the first moment we met, and their kindness and welcoming nature became a repeating pattern during my time in Louisiana.

The next morning, I was whisked away to Cheneyville to tour Grady's facilities and meet his team. I was greeted with a warm welcome by Denise and the hard-working employees of Pest Management Enterprise. They allowed me to watch a sugar cane spray trial with an impressively cumbersome backpack sprayer. They then harvested soybeans for another trial using something quite foreign to me: a mechanical harvester. While they efficiently conducted their many daily tasks, Grady and his team patiently answered my myriad of questions about their business and their industry. Later, after a very satisfying lunch, Grady took me on a private tour of a cotton gin (another foreign contraption to me). The visit to the cotton gin was a wonderful end to my enlightening day with Grady and his staff, and I gained a new appreciation for cotton balls. After the cotton gin, Grady left me in the care of the renowned Blaine Viator who would later surprise me with a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

Wednesday morning's site visit began as I had expected: driving through cane fields, asking every question I could think of, hopping out of the truck to look at sugar cane borers, meeting a couple growers. Then came the surprise – a helicopter ride! This was my first time riding in a helicopter and it did not disappoint. I spent half of the ride thinking "I'm gonna die, I'm sure I'm gonna die" and the other half of the ride thinking "Wheeee!" Our pilot Jerry showed me firsthand how ripener is applied to cane, flew past sugar mills and cane harvesters and miles and miles of cane fields. Later, Blaine treated me to a tour of a sugar mill. I am still impressed by the trucks full of raw sugar and the number of steps and machines required to take sugar from a cane in the field to a mountain of raw sugar in a storage barn.



My Louisiana trip culminated with dinner in a beautiful restaurant with Blaine and his wonderful family in Thibodaux. It was a delightful way to end a marvelous trip. I departed on Thursday morning to return to my home in Lehigh Acres, Florida, enriched and highly satisfied with my experiences. Coming into the program and preparing for the trip to Louisiana, I didn't know what to expect. I imagined I would network, ask a few questions and get a few answers, maybe watch some crops being harvested. My expectations were far exceeded. The wonderful people that I interacted with in Louisiana made me feel welcome everywhere I went. I learned more in two days than most people learn in two years. I had brilliant experiences I will never forget. I saw a completely different side of agriculture from what I am accustomed to in the southwest Florida vegetable industry and encountered vibrant accents and foods I will surely never find anywhere else. Most importantly, I met hardworking, passionate, devoted people in the industry who I hope to continue to interact with as often as possible. My only regret is that I had so little time to spend with them. Given the chance, I would happily do it all again! I treasure my experience in the Leadership program and I encourage future leaders to take part in this valuable program. Thank you to NAICC, my employers, and my hosts for making my participation in this amazing program such a great success!

Richard L. Jensen, Ph.D. Memorial 2015 Scholarship Winner

Congratulations to John Bergkamp, 2015 recipient of the Richard L. Jensen, Ph.D. Memorial Scholarship. Valedictorian of his high school graduating class, John is currently a junior at Kansas State University (KSU) studying Agronomy. He holds a 3.85 GPA and anticipates graduating in May 2016.

In addition to working hard inside the classroom, John has served as KSU Wheat State Agronomy Club Parking Chair for the last two years. In this role, John organizes and operates an 800+ car parking lot for home football games, manages 45-50 undergraduate student volunteers, and connects with club alumni to coordinate large events.

John's work experience includes AgriGold Hybrids Sales Intern, Research Assistant to Dr. Kraig Roozeboom at Kansas State, Strunk harvesting machine operator, and Strunk's Bergkamp Farms general farm hand. He is active in his community, serving in Habitat for Humanity, Habitat for Humanity Re-Store, St. Isidore's Catholic Student Center, St. Joseph Catholic School, and United Way.

Of his future career plans, John says, "I plan to work in the agriculture industry and am leaning towards sales. I will be interning for AgriGold Hybrids again this summer and will be able to make a better decision following the internship. However, I want to eventually take over my family's farm. At this point our farm is not in a position to support two families, which is why I plan to work off the farm at first. My passion is in farming, I enjoy the challenges and rewards that farming presents. I couldn't imagine a life with it not in the picture. I believe a sales position with the ability to interact and guide growers to make informed decisions would correlate well with my passion for production agriculture. Also, at some point I would like to serve as board member for my local coop or Farm Bureau. I enjoy taking on responsibilities and being a leader. I feel that I could make a difference on my community if I step up and volunteer my time and resources when an opportunity presents itself."

Congratulations, John!

Welcome, New Members!

Dan Haubrick, Central Crop Consulting

Dan is an Agronomic Consultant with Central Crop Consulting. He specializes in corn, soybeans, edibles, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa. Dan holds a B.S. in Agronomy/Plant Science from San Diego State University. He joined NAICC for the networking and educational opportunities.

Corey Rosenboom, North Iowa First, Inc.

Corey Rosenboom is President of North Iowa FIRST, Inc. His company provides yield trials, and efficacy of seed treatments and fertility products. Corey earned his B.A. in Plant Science from Dordt College and his M.S. in Plant Genetics and Agronomy from Kansas State University. He is involved with the Iowa Farm Bureau and Farmers Independent Research of Seed Technologies (FIRST organization). Corey joined NAICC to learn more about private field testing opportunities.

Steven Dvorak, Ducks Unlimited

Steven is Manager of Conservation Programs-Agronomy with Ducks Unlimited, Inc. He holds a B.S. degree and currently works in sales and service roles in seeds, inoculants, micronutrients and PGR's. Steven joined NAICC as an Associate Member for the networking opportunities with researchers and consultants, as well as ARM training.

Jessica Cuba, Monsanto

Jessica is Regulatory Sciences Functional Compliance Lead with Monsanto. She holds a B.S. in Biological Sciences from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Jessica is also a member of the American Society for Quality. She joined NAICC for the networking opportunities.



National Alliance
of Independent
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