



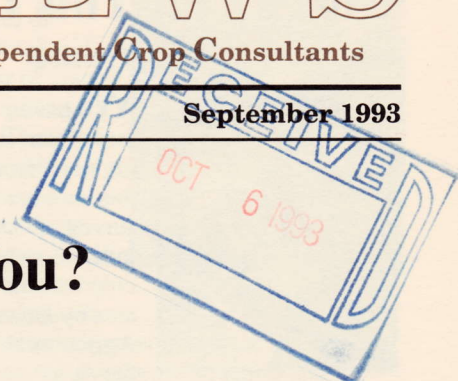
NAICC NEWS

Official publication of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants

Volume 7, Number 9

The Voice of the Professional Crop Consultant

September 1993



The Business

Golf Course Consulting: Is it Fore You?

By Larry J. Stowell

The golf course industry has grown steadily to a record of 354 new courses opening in 1992. Expansion is expected to continue with about 250 new courses opening every year during the 1990s, according to *Golf Course News*. Who will service these new courses?

If you are interested in expanding your business into the golf course consulting market, this article may give some insights. I made the move from agricultural production consulting to golf course consulting about three years ago. The switch was difficult, but the result has been the development of an interesting and sound business with wonderful clients. Golf course consulting may be just the club you need to fill out a segment of your existing business—or it may give you an opportunity for a complete change.

Farm vs. Golf

You will not have to re-learn the basics when you venture into golf course consulting. However, you will have to change the way you approach problems and develop solutions. For example, valuable farm cultivation tools, such as the ripper and disk, are too damaging for use on golf courses. Without these tools, relieving compacted layers and reclaiming high-sodium soils becomes an interesting challenge. The replacements for conventional cultivation equipment include the verti-drain and tine or core aeration machines. These implements poke holes in the soil that aid in reducing compaction and delivery of soil amendments. The inability to disturb the soil surface or to rotate crops are two of the major handicaps you will

encounter when developing golf course management programs.

Tolerance for cosmetic turf damage is low, especially on the greens. This complicates the development of economic pest thresholds that would trigger a pesticide application. In fact,
(Continued on page 3)

The Business

Consulting Demands a Plan, Follow-Up

By Dennis Berglund

Ag consulting is a profession that has many facets. You need to have communications and technical expertise in order to help the grower make effective decisions. But, you also need to have business expertise in order to make your own decisions. Unfortunately, many consultants haven't had much training in business management, which includes accounting, budgets, sales, bill collecting, insurance, etc. I've put together a list of 10 points (not meant to be all-inclusive and in no specific order) that I think can help us in the management end of the business.

• *Try to work with all the acres that a grower farms, rather than just a few fields.*

It not only makes you more efficient with your time, but "ties you in" more closely with that farm. If you assist the grower in managing his whole farm, rather than just a few fields, then you will be one of the last expenses that the grower looks at cutting.

• *Use advanced technology whenever feasible.*

This includes mobile radios, faxes, cellular phones, computers, etc. It also

Two More Friendly Russians



Bob Aschman made this Russian woman smile when he told her the herd of sheep she raised would compare favorably with any he'd seen in America. (See story on page 7).

means that if the technology is not yet cost effective for you, then you should wait on implementing it.

• *Join a consulting group and become certified.*

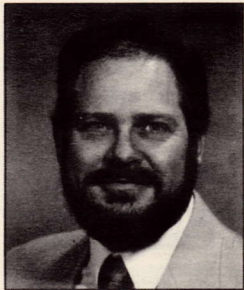
Join the NAICC, or your state's consulting association, or both. The important thing is to join a consulting

(Continued on page 2)

President's Message

Check Out This Consultants' Survey

Bruce Nowlin, NAICC President



We have more interesting news from this summer's survey of independent crop consultants by Doane Agricultural Services

Company of St. Louis. Last month's newsletter carried a story about that survey.

Much thanks goes to *Ag Consultant* magazine, which allowed Doane to use information from its subscription list to develop the survey.

The following table summarizes Doane's estimates of crops and acreages consulted on in the United States.

more than 50% of the acres of each in this country.

Independent consultants work 15.7% of the total U.S. crop acreage.

Some other interesting things to come out of the survey:

- Doane estimated that there are just over 3500 independent consultants working in the United States. We have long wondered how many of us there were, and this is the most solid estimate yet.

- About 75% of those responding offer soil fertility recommendations and IPM or ICM recommendations. Nearly a third offer contract research services.

NAICC is a small, but vocal group. Even though our membership is growing at a steady pace (46 new members since the directory was published in March), it is clear that we

Demands

(Continued from page 1)

group. You'll learn from others and find that others often have the same problems that you have, and may have solved them already.

Also, be aware that certification "sets the standards" in crop consulting. If consultants don't give some guidance in this certification process, then we probably won't be pleased with what it ends up looking like. That's another reason to get involved in NAICC.

- *Get a good time management system and learn how to use it.*

Take a seminar on time management, if necessary. If you use your time poorly, you will never be as good as your potential, no matter how hard or long you work. There are several good time management systems and seminars on the market. If you don't know where to start on either, then I'd recommend Day Timer products (215) 395-5884 and Charles Hobbs Time Power seminar (801) 278-5381.

- *Review and adjust prices for each grower at the end of the year.*

Some growers may take more of your time and effort than a comparable grower. Take the time to think over the charges on a grower-by-grower basis, and if you can justify it, make the needed adjustment in your prices.

- *Get comfortable with accounting and financial management.*

This includes bookkeeping (which, by the way, is the only word in the English language to have 3 sets of double letters side by side!) and budgeting.

When you are budgeting, don't forget the small expenses and always budget for a profit!

Do your financial records on computer. Keep track of your working capital and ratios to make sure your financial situation improves each year.

Do a cash flow and get your loan needs approved early so that you don't have to worry about that during the busy season.

- *Make sure that you understand the value of your time and "billable hours."*

If you work 50 hours a week on the average, for 52 weeks, that equals 2600 hours per year. After you subtract for the time to go to meetings, vacation, driving

Estimated U.S. Total Acreage Served by Independent Crop Consultants

	% with this crop	Average number of acres	Total no. of acres consulted	U.S. total acreage 1992	% of U.S. acres consulted
Corn	51.8	9,083	16,522,931	79,325,000	20.8
Soybeans	41.7	5,213	7,626,185	59,330,000	12.9
Wheat	41.3	4,243	6,153,180	72,262,000	8.5
Cotton	22.8	8,818	7,066,956	13,290,400	53.2
Vegetables	19.2	2,603	1,754,978	3,280,000	53.5
Rice	8.3	4,522	1,323,062	3,174,000	41.7
Citrus	**	7,600	**	883,700	NA
Other	56.5	5,906	11,720,329	100,230,600	11.7
All Acreage			52,167,621	331,775,700	15.7

** Sample does not provide sufficient data for national estimates.

Following are some interesting tidbits that I can glean from this table. Study it yourself. There will be some other interesting things to come out of it.

Over half of the consultants do work with corn, consulting on more than 20% of the U.S. corn crop. Out of 80 million corn acres, that is an impressive number.

More impressive are the cotton and vegetable numbers. While only 23% of consultants work with cotton and 19% work with vegetables, they consult on

have much work to do in membership recruitment if we are to truly be the "Voice of the Independent Crop Consultant."

As the season winds down for many of us, let us get more involved with our organization. Communicate with me and with each other. Make sure that your views are known and help us head NAICC in the direction that you want it.

Spread the word.

And DO GOOD WORK!!

time, holidays, lunch, field tours, socializing, training, and paperwork, maybe only one-third of those hours can be used to directly help the grower, which are "billable." That means you only have 867 hours to make your yearly income. If you need \$60,000 of sales per year, then you need to average \$69.20 for each of those billable hours. Figure out your own figures, and respect the value of your time. I know that most of us don't charge by the hour, but our time (along with expertise) is what we are selling to our growers, and this helps put it in perspective.

• *Collect your bills and understand the effect that a write-off has.*

Make sure that you agree on a payment schedule and then stick to it. If you have \$60,000 in total yearly sales and make \$3,000 profit, then you have a 5% profit margin for that year. If you have a \$1,000 write-off, don't look at it as just losing the \$1,000 that you write-off. Look at it as doing the next \$20,000 of sales for nothing. In other words, it will take you the next \$20,000 in sales to make \$1,000 of profit (\$1,000 divided by 5% profit margin).

• *Do a performance discussion with your scouts on a regular basis.*

This can be as informal as you like, but needs to be done.

• *Do a year-end review with each grower at the end of the growing season, when things are fresh in your mind.*

This should be done as a two-way review. If done correctly, it is an easy going exchange between you and your grower.

Here are six simple questions, that I'd suggest:

1. What went well?
2. What went poorly?
3. What did we learn?
4. What areas of improvement would be most helpful?
5. What mutual actions can we take to improve our working relationship?
6. Any other comments or concerns?

(Dennis Berglund of Centrol in Twin Valley, Minn., is secretary of NAICC.)

Golf Course

(Continued from page 1)

the pest itself is sometimes a secondary problem. For example, black cutworms damage turf by making small holes in the green and eating the turf around the opening of the hole. The hole caused by the cutworm can, in many cases, be tolerated by golfers. However, the damage caused by birds trying to obtain these tasty morsels from the cutworm's daytime resting place at the bottom of the hole can make the green bumpy with excavation debris that is not tolerated by golfers. Golf course superintendents frequently treat for black cutworms to prevent bird damage, not necessarily to prevent cutworm damage to the turf.

Unlike production agriculture, yield is not related to profitability of a golf course. For example, superintendents attempt to maintain turf in a sub-optimal growth stage to prevent excessive production of grass clippings. The ideal golf turf is uniformly green and smooth, slow-growing, resists damage due to wear, recovers rapidly from damage, and can be mowed at 1/8 inch daily. It may seem like a difficult task and at some times during the year it is impossible to grow turf as ideally as superintendents like. Your job will be to provide management strategies that will help the superintendent achieve these ideal goals.

The Market

The golf course market is small compared to production agriculture. There are about 2,000 farms that occupy more than 400,000 acres in my home county of San Diego. In contrast, there are only about 60 golf courses that occupy fewer than 10,000 acres. Moreover, distributor salesmen and manufacturers saturate this market and provide many types of services such as soil analyses and water analyses for free. You will now be asking the superintendent to pay for similar services. Therefore, you must distinguish yourself from the sales people as an independent consultant who can produce more, higher quality information and customized service.

Because there are so few golf courses, you won't be able to work in only one county and still be able to make a living. I currently service a five-county area that has more than 200 golf courses. Your proximity to the courses will dictate the

type of program, level of service and cost of your program.

The key to the golf course consulting market lies in development of a sophisticated management program that utilizes up-to-the-minute information and effective communication systems. I provide each superintendent weekly weather updates, disease and insect alerts when needed, unlimited telephone consultation, emergency on-site visitation for unusual problems, soil, water, and tissue analyses and recommendations and insect and disease diagnoses and control recommendations. The program is a complete technical support package to help the superintendent make difficult turf management decisions.

The Client

Most golf course superintendents are highly trained professionals. In addition to managing turf quality, they are capable personnel and facility managers. Their annual budgets range from \$500,000 to \$1 million. They have a staff ranging from 14 to over 20 workers that frequently includes an assistant superintendent. Most are college graduates. Those without a college education have extensive on-the-job training. Superintendents are usually self-confident, strong individuals, and good communicators as a result of working with greens committees that consist of outspoken doctors, lawyers, and businessmen who play the golf courses. Superintendents are sophisticated clients who expect sophisticated information.

Golf course superintendents are a highly organized and professional group. You should be able to find a golf course superintendent's association in the area where you live. If not, contact the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America in Lawrence, Kansas. This association provides professional support for superintendents including an impressive continuing education and



Larry Stowell

(Continued on page 4)

Golf Course

(Continued from page 3)

certification program. I strongly recommend that you join your local superintendent's association in addition to the national organization if you are going to make the switch to golf course consulting.

The Competition

As mentioned earlier, distributors and manufacturers may be your primary competition. In some parts of the country Cooperative Extension is also providing excellent services to the industry. Although there are other independent consultants working in the golf turf industry, they will be unable to service all the needs of the industry. Depending upon your location, you will encounter various levels of competition from the private and public sectors. Study the competition prior to making advances into the marketplace so that you will not waste your time—and the superintendent's—by proposing the same type of services that the superintendent can obtain elsewhere.

Distributor Interactions

Although distributors can be one of your greatest competitors, they might also

help you penetrate the golf course consulting market. For example, I developed a program in my market in conjunction with a progressive distributor in Southern California. Steve Davis, technical sales representative for Target Specialty Products, helped develop the initial idea and continues to provide valuable support. The program is called Soil Works. It is an IPM-oriented management program for golf courses. Through a triad partnership of distributor, independent consultant, and superintendent, Soil Works ensures that management practices are efficient and environmentally sound.

PACE, my consulting firm, provides agronomic services (soil, water, fertility recommendations, insect and disease diagnoses, and control recommendations). Target provides safety training, regulatory compliance, educational meetings and reference materials. The two businesses are independent and the superintendents who participate may pay PACE and Target separately. There are no product sales associated with the program and there are no financial or business obligations between PACE and Target. Target benefits from the credibility provided by association with Soil Works and PACE. Likewise, PACE benefits from the reputation of Target in addition to the field information provided by Target sales

representatives. The superintendents benefit by having ready access to information and technologies needed to manage their golf courses effectively.

Starting

If you are interested in pursuing golf course consulting, you will need to pick up a few reference books to get you started. Your first purchase should be "Turf Management for Golf Courses" by James Beard. It will summarize the business and sport of golf in addition to providing a comprehensive guide to golf course management. You will also want to subscribe to "USGA Green Section Record" and "Golf Course Management."

To get a feel for the industry, attend a local golf course superintendents association meeting and observe the group. When you feel ready, call a superintendent that you met at one of the meetings and discuss current problems at the course. Set up an appointment and take a look at his or her course to demonstrate how you can assist. You may find, as I did, that golf course consulting provides a unique professional and business opportunity.

(Larry Stowell of PACE Consulting in San Diego is a member of the Executive Board of NAICC).

Cooperative Members

Conservation Technology Information Center, Henry A. Wallace Institute Join NAICC

Two new groups—**Conservation Technology Information Center**, a division of the National Association of Conservation Districts, and **Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture**, formerly the Institute for Alternative Agriculture—have joined NAICC as cooperative members.

The center's mission is to promote the adoption of environmentally responsible conservation systems that enhance agricultural viability by serving as a technology transfer resource center.

In his letter accepting the offer to join NAICC, Jerome C. Hytry, executive director of the center, said: "I'm looking forward to working with

NAICC as we assist agriculture in becoming more profitable in an environmentally acceptable manner."

The center's latest project, called "Know Your Watershed," aims at finding solutions to local water pollution problems through cooperative and voluntary action. The campaign is intended to motivate landowners, operators, and residents within a watershed to identify their own problems and solutions.

The center plans to conduct six focus group meetings throughout the United States to develop a detailed work plan for implementation through the year 2,000.

The Wallace Institute's purpose is to encourage and facilitate the adoption of low-cost, resource-conserving, and environmentally sound farming methods.

In March the institute formally changed its name to honor the former Secretary of Agriculture's contributions to agriculture. Wallace served under President Franklin Roosevelt.

The programs at the Wallace Institute include a national information clearinghouse, a voice for sustainable agriculture in Washington, and various scientific and educational outreach projects to help advance alternative agriculture. Executive director is Garth Youngberg.

EPA Responds to WPS Complaints

By Mark Kottmeyer

They say you can't fight city hall, but the EPA will sure listen to you. At least that is the experience of a number of Nebraska residents and some NAICC members who have pursued the Worker Protection Standard issue with EPA officials. In fact, the cries from consultants, associations and farmers is helping urge the EPA into reshaping the standards.

Recently a client of our firm in central Nebraska related a series of May events that point favorably toward restructuring some of the EPA's Worker Protection Standards (WPS).

Our client, Gary Goldberg, produces corn and soybeans south of Kearney, Neb., and is politically active. Goldberg serves as first vice president for the American Corn Growers Association and it was through this affiliation that his positive meeting with the EPA took place. The American Corn Growers is a 9,000 member association with affiliates in 24 states.

Through Ron Blackley, the chief of staff for Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy, Goldberg and American Corn Growers lobbyist David Senter were able to meet with a high ranking EPA official, Therese Murtaugh, chief of the Occupational Safety Branch and one of the speakers at the NAICC annual meeting in Memphis in January.

"We wanted to clearly stress that our main obstacle with the WPS is the spraying notification and re-entry period," Goldberg said.

At that May meeting Goldberg told EPA the corn growers were asking for changes in the standards and was the first association to ask for the comment period on the WPS to be reopened. They also talked about re-entry periods, chemical labeling and other parts of the law.

The EPA meeting was positive and productive, Goldberg reported.

"We stressed that safety to workers is important, but the current standards are unworkable and unenforceable," he said. Among the suggestions offered to EPA, he said, included exempting farms or consulting firms with fewer than three employees from the standards and allowing fields to be posted for spraying

in a "range" of five days when the field was scheduled to be sprayed.

There are indicators that other comments, especially from Nebraska crop consultants, are having an important impact on the EPA's proposed standards. Goldberg said **Earle Raun** of Pest Management Co. in Lincoln, Neb., was mentioned as an influential voice in the EPA's current "rethinking" mode. Raun, past president of NAICC, serves on EPA's Pesticide Users Advisory Committee.

Mike Williams of P.M.C., Inc. in Fremont, Neb., also reported success in getting EPA's ear at a "train the trainers" meeting held by EPA in Kansas City this April.

Finally, Goldberg said California irrigators have been helpful in asking for changes in the standards.

It appears nothing will happen with the standards until 1994 at the earliest since EPA will have an additional comment period for farmers, consultants, and others. He added regional hearings are the most likely forum for additional comments.

Crop consultants can do their part by writing EPA with specific examples of how the regulations will affect them. EPA has mentioned to several people that they have not received much input from the farming community.

As NAICC, we have done our part and will continue to work on behalf of our members. But crop consultants can help by urging their clients to write their Congressional delegation—even offer to write a letter on their behalf seeking changes to the standards.

Further, we should encourage our state associations to draft letters urging changes. We have made some great strides, but only continual contact, especially from producers, will provide us with guarantees of standards we can live with.

In short, EPA is eager to accept comments from people most affected by the standards—and apparently is taking heed to what is being said.

(Mark Kottmeyer of Central States Agronomics in Kearney, Neb., is a voting member of NAICC.)

Annual Meeting

Bring Your Hats to Memphis—Your NAICC Hat

Along with food for your head at the annual meeting in Memphis, NAICC is offering something to cover your head. The meeting is January 27-29; the NAICC cap is available now.

Harold Lambert, who has never been photographed wearing a hat, has these caps available right now for a mere \$7.50 or, as a special bargain, two for \$15.

For those who want to wear their caps to the annual meeting in Memphis, Lambert can be reached through P.O. Box 947, Hwy 418 in Innis, LA 70747. Those with more patience than money can obtain them at the annual meeting.

Win Award for Excellence



Dr. Louise Henry, center, and her husband Dr. Herbert Henry at right, accept the Valent USA Corp.'s Cooperator Excellence Award for 1992 from Chuck Moran, quality assurance specialist for Valent. The Henrys of Agri-Scientific, Inc. in Hawkinsville, Ga., won the award for their excellence in the science of field studies and their concern for Good Laboratory Practices.

Annual Meeting

A Good Newsletter Can Build a Consultant's Business

By Bill Barksdale

There's no question about it—communications is one of the ag consultant's greatest responsibilities. In an effort to be more successful communicators, some NAICC members now produce their own newsletters.

But more consultants probably could be taking advantage of this opportunity. Why should you consider doing a newsletter? How do you proceed? What are the pitfalls and mistakes to avoid?

These and other considerations will be covered in a two-hour newsletter session at the annual meeting in Memphis from 7 to 9 a.m. Jan. 29. Some of the topics include: reasons you should consider doing a newsletter; who to mail it to; types of articles to include; how to write newsletter articles; giving your newsletter eye-appeal; mistakes to avoid; production and mailing.

Too busy to be bothered with a news-

letter? Think again. Are you too busy to communicate with your clients? This could be one of the most significant things you tackle in the coming year.

Newsletters to clients are like letters from a friend. They ought to have meaty local information in them, be written in an informal style (you know, where prepositions come at the end of sentences and everybody is known by their last name instead of Mr., Mrs., Ms., or Dr.) contain a pep talk (usually in the form of an editor's column) to encourage clients when things look tough, to persuade them to try something new, to move them to action. Good newsletters also pass along the local gossip—births, deaths, graduations, marriages, who's running for public office, who joined NAICC or the state association—among clients. Be sure to mention names in the newsletter since everybody likes to read about themselves.

And remember that your newsletter can be an effective tool for rallying farmers around causes that affect them. At the very least your newsletter should keep clients informed about local issues and local opportunities to speak or act on state or federal issues.

Who's going to do all the extra work connected with a newsletter? You don't have to do it. You can hire a talented college student to write up your articles. Ask at colleges or newspaper offices for the names of freelance writers—you just provide the information. You can buy a computer program for production purposes that does just about everything for you but put the newsletter in the post office mail slot.

Joining me for the newsletter portion of the NAICC annual meeting will be **Roger Carter** of Agricultural Management Services Inc. in Clayton, La., who does an excellent newsletter. To help with the production, I'm asking all consultants who produce a newsletter to send me a copy or two by Dec. 1. My address is P.O. Box 17726, Memphis, TN 38187.

(Bill Barksdale of Barksdale Agri-Communications in Memphis is an agriculture journalist and photographer. He is a commercial member of NAICC).

Annual Meeting

Ethics You Live If You Are an Independent Crop Consultant

By Thomas A. Ruehr

A professional conforms to the standards of the profession, but what should they be? Private or professional ethics tries to answer this question. If what you are about to do feels strange, you worry about it or it feels wrong, then it probably is not appropriate to take the proposed action.

It is probably best not to make a whole list of rules. We have too many regulations in our lives already. Our individual sense of right and wrong is usually the best guide regarding moral and ethical issues.

The major ethical dilemma associated with professional consulting is the perception of a conflict of interest. If you are consulting and wear a cap, use a pen or pencil, have a notebook or briefcase with an industry logo other than NAICC, this could easily be interpreted by your client as advocating the products or services provided by that company. Should you even accept such free gifts? Should you allow an industry representative to treat you to lunch, a beer, or a free trip to a conference to learn about new products?

The recent ethics guidelines for all federal employees suggest that all gifts should have a total value of less than \$50 per year. However, the acceptance of that first gift is a compromising action which makes it that much harder to say no to the next offer, no matter how innocent the offer may be. Remember that we must

avoid even the hint, smell, or suggestion of having a possible conflict of interest.

Many times being independent may place you in an awkward position. Others may kid you or use peer pressure to suggest that you should not be so prudish or straight-laced. Those who taunt and jeer you want to have a good time, but they know that you are doing the right thing and they feel uncomfortable. Being an individual and being independent is what sets you aside from all other agricultural consultants.

Your professionalism does not stop at 5 p.m., nor is it limited only to the office. These values which you profess, affirm, and live are recognized and appreciated by all of your clients and the people in your community, state, and nation.

Professionalism includes your skills and knowledge along with a sharing of your calling, vocation, and life's work, and service with all people. Should we as independent professional crop consultants be, act, or do anything less than any other type of professionals?

(Thomas Ruehr is one of the speakers at the NAICC annual meeting in Memphis this January. He helped design the first course in agricultural ethics and is a pioneer in that field. He is a professor in the soil sciences department at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo.)

Consulting in Russia

Helping Out a Neighbor Who May Become a Good Customer

By Robert E. Ascheman

Does a trip to Russia, when there is still a foot of snow on the ground in April, sound like a good idea to you? In my case, it was an opportunity too good to pass up. In March and April of 1993 I was a member of a four man consulting team on an assignment in Nizhny-Novgorod, formerly Gorki. The sponsor, International Finance Corporation (with World Bank support), has an ongoing contract with American consulting firms to assist in the privatization of several industries in Russia. Our team worked with six state and collective farms to develop ideas for the privatization of agriculture in an area 250 miles east of Moscow. Note that the latitude of this grain-dairy-potato region is well north of Winnipeg, Canada, and closer to the Arctic Circle than to the U.S.-Canada border.

Observations

- The people by and large are friendly, mostly well educated and many are interested in privatization.
- The language barrier is difficult because the alphabet is different from the English alphabet. However, travel and communication of personal needs are not too troublesome because along the way you find students and young people who want to practice their English. Also, professional translators and interpreters are generally available for modest fees.
- Inflation and the rapidly changing dollar/ruble exchange rates make long term or even medium term financial decisions risky and difficult.
- The principal crop and livestock enterprises in the area of Nizhny-Novgorod are dairy, beef, small grains, potatoes, beets, and forage crops. The poor quality of feed and seed stocks, animal breeding stock, low nutrition, and sanitation standards and poor management were apparent and mostly below any U.S. standards.
- The status of agriculture in Russia compared to the United States appears to be a mix of elements from the 1940s, 1960s and 1980s. This observation takes into consideration equipment, scope of operations, productivity, use of inputs, sanitation, and operator and

managerial skills.

- The centrally-organized, top-down, management-by-decree methods of the former government system has caused unbelievable problems in agriculture. Some typical examples of avoiding a problem by decree were these directives sent to my hosts : pH 6 is neutral, therefore, there should be no lime applications to soils with test levels even somewhat below pH 6; alfalfa (lucerne) will not survive in their area despite good snow cover (of course not at these pH levels); and wild oats are not a problem at latitudes north of Nizhny-Novgorod (yet wild oats were present in the seed oats).

The reasons for government decrees like those are bizarre. Rock phosphate is the principle source of phosphorus, which is more available at acid pH's. Likewise, white potatoes such as those grown in the area I visited are less subject to scab at low pH. Simazine on corn carries over in this relatively dry climate. Therefore, corn for silage is continuous corn and on these farms most of the manure is applied here rather than on other crops. The frustrating aspect of these examples is that most agronomists and farm managers rarely question the top-down direction of what to do and when. A government-run soil testing service and a government administered fertilizer and pesticide supply and application system are uniform throughout the district and allow little room for private initiative to use resources efficiently.

- As a matter of fact, "efficiency" is almost a foreign concept. Rarely do workers or managers on the collective or state farms do anything to upset the apple cart. A few more innovative individuals who want to start their own farms (often they are farm managers or agronomists) are starting to challenge these old practices. They have reason to be wary of venturing out on their own, however, since the fertilizer, seed and other input items are usually controlled by the state and collective farms.

- Russian agriculture will have a difficult time in feeding its own people and eventually becoming a world class agricultural producer. Russia is not



On the Russian Front.

NAICC member Bob Ascheman, at right, inspects a grain drill with a collective farm manager during Ascheman's trip to the former Soviet Union.

now, and in the foreseeable future will not be, a serious competitor to the United States.

Conclusions

I can draw four conclusions from my observations of Russian agriculture:

1. Russians will need to make further massive changes in their government, transportation, banking, and educational systems before private enterprises can overcome the lethargy of the former centrally-managed communist system.

2. There is a clear-cut need for an Agricultural Extension Service or something equivalent, to introduce new practices into agriculture.

3. If privatization continues as anticipated, Russian and the other members of the Confederation of Independent States will gradually become good customers for American specialty agricultural equipment and know-how. Japanese and European manufacturers, because of their geographical location, have a head start and are already making substantial marketing efforts in the ag supply area. Inflation, credit, servicing equipment and training could be major obstacles.

4. Over the next five or 10 years there should be abundant consulting opportunities for American specialists

(Continued on page 8)

Helping a Neighbor

(Continued from page 7)

and generalists with extensive experience.

Advice to Consultants

If the idea of short-term foreign assignment appeals to you, consider doing the following:

- Get a passport;
- Develop a specialty but don't neglect the overall study and understanding of agriculture, world events, economics, business, environment—and especially, people.
- Be active and visible in professional organizations, give of your time and talents. Volunteer without expecting a reward.
- Let your interests be known to international consulting firms, government and charitable organizations.
- Make arrangements for someone to cover your domestic consulting.

(Robert Ascheman of Ascheman Associates Consulting in Des Moines, Iowa, is a voting member of NAICC. He is planning to go into semi-retirement soon and wants to sell part of his 13-year-old consulting/contract research business.)

State Associations

Iowa Goes to Trade Show

The Iowa Independent Crop Consultants Association will participate in Expo 2000, a trade show sponsored by the Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioners, at the Iowa State Center in Ames Nov. 29-30.

More than 40 people attended the third annual meeting of the association in March. Officers of the state association include: Jay D. Johnson of Waterloo, president; Dan Easton of Bagley, secretary; Michael Ahlers of Ames, treasurer; Shannon Gomes of Waverly, director; and Brad Buchanan of Cedar Rapids, director.

New Members

Commercial

Dekalb Plant Genetics

Contact: Elvin Hasselman, M.S.
(Ag Education)
2301 Glenwood Drive
Des Moines, IA 50321
Office: (515) 243-0951
Fax: (501) 243-0951

Cooperative

Conservation Technology Information Center

Contact: Jerome C. Hytry (Executive Director)
1220 Potter Drive, Room 170
West Lafayette, IN 47906-1383
Office: (317) 494-9555
Fax: (317) 494-5969

Student

Paul Baker

Kingsman Apts.
2420 S. 6th Street
Kingsville, TX 78363

Sustaining

Helena Chemical Company

Contact: Jim Arnold
6075 Poplar Ave., Suite 550
Memphis, TN 38119

Voting

Tom R. Grayum, B.S. (Range Science and Soil Science)

Grayum Agri-Consulting Service
P.O. Box 416
Anguilla, MS 38721-0416
Office: (601) 751-1355
Home: (601) 873-4207
Crops: Cotton, rice, corn, soybeans, sorghum, vegetables.
Services: Entomology, weed and herbicide consulting, soil sampling, plant mapping, petiole analysis.

Virgil A. King, III, M.A. (Entomology, Plant Pathology, Weed Science)

King's Ag Consulting, Inc.
Rt. 2, Box 402
Lexington, MS 39095
Office: (601) 834-4186
Home: (601) 834-4186
Crops: Cotton, soybeans, corn, milo.
Services: Entomology, plant pathology, weed science.

Grant D. Pearson, B.S. (Agronomy)

Crop Guard, Inc.
P.O. Box 6, 340 River Road
Glenville, MN 56036
Office: (507) 448-3439
Home: (507) 373-1028
Fax: (507) 448-2907
Crops: Corn, soybeans, alfalfa.
Services: Agronomic and fertilizer recommendations based on complete soil and plant analysis, IPM.

Rayburn K. (Kent) Price, M.Ag. (Animal Science)

Agricultural Resource Consultants, Inc.
P.O. Box 356
Okeechobee, FL 34973-0356
Office: (813) 763-2081
Home: (813) 763-2081
Crops: Corn, sorghum, perennial grasses.
Services: Soil testing, fertilizer analysis, fertility and pest management, environmental reports and permits.

Calendar of Events

October 19-21—**Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition**—Spence Field, Moultrie, Ga. The South's largest farm show is expected to attract 200,000 visitors and 817 exhibitors. Sponsors include the University of Georgia, Alabama Baldwin Agricultural College and *Progressive Farmer*. Contact the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition, Rural Development Center, P.O. Box 28, Tifton, GA 31793.

October 24-26—**Science and Sustainability: Reshaping Agricultural Research and Education**—Red Lion Hotel, Bellevue, Wa. The workshops and programs will focus on ways to solve critical production, environmental and social problems associated with sustainable agriculture. Sponsors include Washington State University, Western Region USDA Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. Contact Norma Fuentes-Scott, conference coordinator, 305 Hubert Hall, Washington State University, Pullman, WA 99164-6230 or call (509) 335-2921.

November 7-12—**American Society of Agronomy**—Cincinnati Convention Center, Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact the society at 677 South Segoe Road, Madison, WI 53711 or (608) 273-8080.

January 27-29—**"Professionalism in Agriculture"** NAICC Annual Meeting—Peabody Hotel, Memphis, Tenn. Contact NAICC headquarters at (901) 683-9466.

Meeting Topics

Topics to be addressed by introductory speakers include:

Need for practitioners—With the increasing complexity of agricultural production and protection, environmental concerns and management demands on farmers, there is an increasing demand for practitioners to assist or provide service in these areas. Much as veterinarians provide technical expertise and service in animal production agriculture, a similar profession is developing in crop production agriculture. A new degree program, the Doctor of Plant Health (D.Pl.H.), has been discussed for many years to help provide the formal multidisciplinary education needed by these professionals. Several universities are in the process of developing such programs. Other less advanced levels of education are also needed for paraprofessionals and technicians.

Outcome based education—The training for D.Pl.H. level practitioners must prepare them to look at broad issues and undefined problems in an informed, critical matter. They must first have the science based education from the relevant disciplines—agronomy, entomology, soil science, horticulture, weed science, plant pathology, nematology, plant physiology, ag economics and engineering, etc. But at the same time they must be instilled with other values and skills important for dealing with situations as part of a system. Problems must be approached with the farmers foremost in mind. Practitioners at all levels must understand basic principles sufficiently to ask the right questions and to be able to be both informed and flexible in order to deal with problems in a site- and situation-specific matter. They must be prepared to be both capable and motivated to continue to learn. Finally, they should develop a dedication to serve agriculture and society and a world view broader than their self-interests.

Resources and roles—Resources from many different origins are needed to put together education programs meeting these goals. A panel will discuss the contributions that can be made using varying and sometimes underutilized methods in the education process.

New Pathways in Agricultural Education

Registration Information

- No charge for persons registered for the ASA Annual Meeting.
- There will be a \$25.00 charge for persons not registered for the annual meeting. Payment can be made at the door.
- To receive further information for the "New Pathways in Agricultural Education" symposium, please contact:

Julie Vroman
American Society of Agronomy
677 South Segoe Road
Madison, WI 53711
608/273-8080
FAX: 608/273-2021

New Pathways in Agricultural Education

*Meeting and Workshop to Design
Education Systems for Training
Agricultural Practitioners*

10-11 November 1993

Convention Center, 3rd Floor
Terrace Rooms 300-301

Cincinnati, OH

Participating Societies:

American Society of Agronomy
American Society for Horticultural Science
American Phytopathological Society
Agricultural Systems Working Group
Entomological Society of America
Registry of Environmental and
Agricultural Professionals Institute
National Alliance of Independent
Crop Consultants

Introduction

Changes in the educational system in agriculture have been discussed numerous times in the past. It is now widely recognized that the university structure, being increasingly discipline oriented, has not sufficiently addressed the multidisciplinary nature of agriculture. Unfortunately, this gap in existing university education is being acknowledged at the same time critical public support for agriculture and education is declining due to a host of financial crises in government. Because of increasing environmental concerns, economic considerations, and the general complexity of agricultural production management, the need for this broad based training for practitioners is greater than ever.

But much of the earlier discussion of the redirection of education has been by the discipline trained educators themselves. The multidisciplinary practitioners—the very ones who could and should have the most insight into this process—have not had the opportunity to participate in these discussions in a significant manner. Practitioners from several different organizations—National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, Registry of Environmental and Agricultural Professionals, Agronomic Practitioners Division American Society of Agronomy, and others—are working with educators from many groups and disciplines to address these needs.

Objectives

A symposium on 10 Nov. 1993, will center on educational programs relevant to practitioners. The meeting will provide an opportunity for concerned educators, researchers, practitioners, administrators and representatives of the public to come together to discuss common issues concerning science based multidisciplinary agricultural education. Where we have been, where we are now and where we are going will be covered as an introduction to allow all participants to approach the subject on a more even

footing. A panel of speakers format will discuss education needs from the point of view of practitioners. A panel discussion on constraints and obstacles will hopefully stimulate thought from other perspectives about ways to overcome some of these problems.

On Thursday, 11 Nov., a workshop will be held with smaller groups bringing together diverse but complementary talents in problem solving.

These various groups, professions and disciplines will be meeting in a collegial setting to discuss and, hopefully, resolve some of these issues. The workshop will allow the sharing of ideas about what a curriculum should look like, as well as how to overcome some of the human, financial and political constraints that have prevented change in the past. After the meeting, a proceedings will be produced that can be widely shared.

New Pathways in Agricultural Education Schedule—Convention Center, Terrace Rooms 300-301

Wednesday, 10 November 1993

1:00 pm	Warm-Up	Explanation of Symposium Setting	Terry Moore Donald Vietor
1:10	Welcome	Building Bridges to Meet Education Needs	Dennis Keeney
1:20	Introduction	Are Land Grant Colleges Prepared to Meet the Education Challenges of the 21st Century?	H.O. Kunkel
1:50		Education for Agricultural Practitioners—Time for Change	V.B. Cardwell
2:10		Systems Generalists or Specialists for Production Agriculture?	D.M. Vietor
2:30	Recess		
2:45	Discussion I	What We Need to Know to do Our Jobs Consultant . . . Industry . . . Extension . . . SCS . . .	Mark A. Otto Robert H. Beck Vivan M. Jennings James Newman
3:45	Discussion II	What We Can Do to Meet the Need Participating societies . . . ASHS, ESA, APS, AgEcon . . .	Gary Heichel
4:45	Perspective	How I Would Design the "Perfect" Education System	Dan Bradshaw
5:15	Social Hour	(Cash Bar)	
6:15	Adjourn		

Thursday, 11 November 1993

8:30– 10:30 am	Workshop	Putting It All Together	Don Vietor
-------------------	----------	-------------------------	------------