



# NAICCC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

Volume 13, Number 9

The Voice of the Professional Crop Consultant

December 1999

## State Association Stumbling Blocks Addressed

Organizations face stumbling blocks, whether they are in gaining funding, growing membership or narrowing down which issues to address. The Alliance of Association Leaders recently met in Fort Collins, CO to address the issues and other problems facing state associations nationwide. **Vantage Point Network** sponsored over 30 crop and research consultants from 18 states to participate in the 3rd Annual Meeting of the state and national leadership.

The leaders were split into five small groups to identify and prioritize issues. They then brainstormed ideas to help address these issues. Following are many of the problems the groups addressed, along with possible solutions.

### Lack of Membership

One group suggested increasing pride and recognition in the profession as a way to help address the low member numbers. Another suggestion they

brought forth was improving the value of state associations and communicating it. Targeting potential members and creating a recruitment plan were suggested.

To implement these plans, it was suggested that mailings be extended beyond membership and that NAICCC articles appear in state newsletters. Press releases about awards and certification should be sent out, and a national media contact list be developed and used to encourage publications to provide more coverage pertinent to association members and activities. Placement of state and national website URLs was recommended at the end of all articles. Also, the group encouraged NAICCC to include state association newsletters on the national website.

### Lack of Time to be Involved with the Association

To address this problem, suggestions included the employment of paid administration, the continuity of com-

mittee work from month to month and year to year rather than continually recreating committees and more narrow organizational focus to better use time. For example, associations should prioritize goals, and create a list of long term goals. Follow through is essential.

In addition, action points included hiring part time help for special projects or working with other groups such as the **American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers** or University Extension. There was even discussion about several state associations going in together to hire a regional administrator. Creating multi-year officer positions and policy and issue notebooks were also suggested, as was NAICCC sponsorship of a state leadership skills development seminar.

### Benefits to Members are Unclear

This problem was addressed with suggestions to identify membership benefits by developing member and non-mem-

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Allison Jones Executive Vice President  
Brenda Weber Managing Editor

1055 Petersburg Cove / Collierville, TN 38017  
Phone: (901) 861-0511 / Fax: (901) 861-0512  
E-mail: JonesNAICCC@aol.com  
www.naiccc.org

Roger Carter President

Route 1, Box 45 / Clayton, LA 71326  
Phone: (318) 389-4411 / Fax: (318) 389-4855  
E-mail: AMSRoger@aol.com

## Annual Meeting Tradeshow Gets Boost!

Participation and enthusiasm for NAICCC's Annual Meeting continues to grow and the NAICCC tradeshow, beginning January 20, 2000 will be a highlight again this year. Not only is the Exhibit Hall larger, but a new and improved Poster Session will also take place in the hall.

The event will kick off with a continental breakfast on Thursday morning and you won't want to miss that evening's Exhibit Hall Extravaganza, when exhibitors will showcase the items they've donated for the raffle. Continental breakfast and coffee/snack breaks will all be held in the Exhibit Hall.

The new and improved NAICCC Poster Session is a must for all attendees. Designed by the Allied Industry Committee, the NAICCC Poster Session will showcase 20 posters depicting the new technolo-

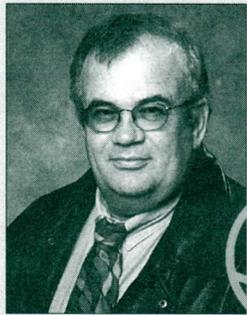
gies that will be highlighted in the Emerging Technology Session on Thursday, January 20. There will be ample room to view posters and talk to company representatives.

NAICCC appreciates the following companies for their exhibition support at the 2000 Annual Meeting:

- ABC Laboratories
- Abbott Laboratories
- Ag Quest, Inc.
- AGVISE Laboratories
- American Agricultural Services
- American Cyanamid
- American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers
- Astrix Software Technology, Inc.
- Atlantic Agri Tech
- BASF
- Bayer, Inc.
- Centre Analytical Labs
- Coastal Environment Systems

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## Networking with Friends



BY  
ROGER CARTER,  
NAICC  
PRESIDENT



**M**any NAICC members have listed “networking” as one of the reasons they’re members. Personally, it is the main reason I joined NAICC. There are other financially and psychologically rewarding reasons, including representation in Washington, group discounts, the Annual Meeting, etc. – but networking with friends with similarities in business is the most rewarding for me.

Recently, Lise’ and I had the opportunity to “network” with Bill and Marcene Cox of Las Cruces, N.M. Prior to the October board meeting in Albuquerque, Julie and Al Averitt, Barbara and Grady Coburn, Phil Cochran and Lise’ and I flew into El Paso, Texas, to meet with Bill and Marcene and visit the area for several days.

We visited several farms and talked with Bill’s clients, discussing how they’ve evolved over the years from being primarily cotton, alfalfa, corn and wheat farmers to growing pepper, onion, lettuce, and cabbage. Cotton, alfalfa, corn, and wheat are still planted, but peppers and onions demand the most attention. Pecans are also still a very big crop, but they are raised quite differently from the way they are raised in the Mid-South and Southeast.

We also witnessed two varied irrigation systems, one where the water source was the Rio Grande River, the other an under-

ground source. Farmers using the underground water adapted a system of using underground drip to conserve the precious water. Since little was wasted they were able to farm many more acres on the same amount of water.

Farmers had also evolved into “middlemen” by developing their own drying, processing and packaging plants to increase the profitability from peppers and onions. One farmer was selling onion seed and had built his own system to separate onion seed from everything else. Ingenuity, productivity, and a willingness to change all contributed to Bill’s clients’ success.

They didn’t do this without Bill, but with him. He was there to counsel, critique, argue, agree – and always for a fee. His expertise was valuable.

What did we, the visitors, learn from networking with Bill and his clients? That change will be an eminent factor for each of us. That success can come with change. And that we are all – our clients and us – in this situation together. We can survive.

I had a similar experience a year ago when, after speaking at the North Carolina Agricultural Consultants Association, I spent some time with Martha and Billy McLawhorn in their area of North Carolina before returning home. It was unlike anything I had anticipated. Billy introduced me to several of his clients and we toured several of the farms where Billy consults. I noticed how these farmers refused to make a step without consulting Billy. I know that did much for his confidence level as a consultant.

North Carolina has returned to being considered one of the top cotton-producing states since the boll weevil was eradicated. It caused much change in their agronomic practices and has afforded those farmers a “real” rotation with tobacco. Of course, they will have much rebuilding to do after the hurricanes this year, but what I saw in the spirit of those folks makes me believe they’ll come back stronger than ever. The consultants of

North Carolina will play a major role in the return to profitability.

While attending a company-sponsored trip last year in Florida, Grady Coburn, Reynold Minsky, Randy Machovac, James Clower and I visited the Glades Crop Care Research Facility. Madeline Mellinger gave us the grand tour while husband, Charlie, was at one of the many meetings that the couple attends, representing not only their company but also agricultural consultants and/or contract researchers. It was interesting to see the differences between their research farm and others. We all learned from the experience.

These three experiences have taught me that I need to do more “networking” via personal visits to other consultants’ or researchers’ niches. Even though we think we are offering each of our clients the best possible service or data package available, there are always ways to improve. And we can gather new ideas by visiting with other NAICC members on their home turf. Besides being treated to some of the best hospitality available, we can learn more about ourselves by viewing others.

This “networking” does not need to stop here. If you have never visited a major agricultural industry research facility or headquarters, then you should. Over the years I’ve had the opportunity to visit the facilities of Monsanto, DuPont, Cyanamid, Griffin, Zeneca, FMC, John Deere and perhaps a few that are no longer around. I wish that all my farmer clients could see what has to go into the development and maintenance of a product. Via “networking” I have the ability to transfer what I have seen to the producer.

Consulting is changing so rapidly that one group cannot keep pace with all of the changes effectively. “Networking” affords all of us the opportunity to better stay in this technology race, whether it is computers or biotechnology. So take the opportunity to visit other NAICC members. Get your money’s worth. I’m sure you will find it as rewarding as I have. ■

## Stumbling Blocks Addressed

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ber surveys designed to evaluate benefits and needs. These benefits and needs would then be evaluated and members and non-members would be educated about the benefits offered.

Also suggested were creation of a way to “certify” credentials, encouragement of provisional membership and making people aware of changes made based on feedback.

## Communication Within the Organization

Suggestions to address this issue included more thorough use of the newsletter and e-tools (including the website and e-mail), the hiring of an executive secretary and a more well defined chain of command. More personal contact between members and between members and non-members was also suggested.

Other suggestions included quarterly

meetings or even small local groups getting together as well as contacting and mentoring new, potential and existing members. Development of state association websites with direct links to and from the NAICC site was voiced as an excellent way to improve communications. Also, along the lines of electronic communication, it was suggested that a master consultant e-mail list be devel-

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## Annual Meeting Tradeshow Gets Boost!

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Concord Environmental Equipment  
Crop Data Management Systems  
(CDMS)  
Crop Decisions Magazine  
Delta & Pine Land Seed Company  
EarthScan Network, Inc.  
Envirotest Labs  
Farm Press, PRIMEDIA  
Farmers Software Association  
FMC Corporation  
Gempler's Inc.  
Gylling Data Management

Hydro Agri North America, Inc.  
ICM - Kalium  
ICMS, Inc.  
LABServices  
Monsanto Company  
Mycogen Seeds, Inc.  
Novartis Agri Business  
Plant Sciences, Inc.  
Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc.  
Prairie Farm Club, Inc.  
Progressive Farmer  
PTRL East, Inc.  
Rhone-Poulenc Ag Company  
Servi-Tech Laboratories

Society of Quality Assurance  
Spectrum Technologies  
SST Development Group, Inc.  
Stoneville Pedigreed Seed Company  
U.S. Borax, Inc.  
Valent USA Corporation  
VantagePoint Network  
Veris Technology  
XSAg.com  
Zeneca Ag Products

If you are interested in exhibiting, please contact NAICC headquarters. Space is still available, but going fast! ■

## Food for Thought

### Industry Cutbacks - Advantages Versus Disadvantages

The following article was submitted by **Denise Wright**, GLP Coordinator, R&D Research Farm.

No doubt all of us involved in contract research and consulting have been affected by industry cutbacks this year. There have been many fine, dedicated, hardworking individuals who have lost their jobs (careers) due to company cutbacks, mergers, etc. We know that some are apparently due to the downward trend in agriculture as a whole, while others can be attributed to the progression of technology (e.g., telemarketing).

While we in the contract research/consulting professions are saddened greatly to see many longtime friends and colleagues move on, we are optimistic that new faces and relationships will blossom in the coming years. But, for the time at hand, are we at an advantage or disadvantage in relation to industry cutbacks? I believe we are going to benefit, for the most part, from the current situation. I have spoken to a number of

past and present industry representatives who believe there will be a drastic need for contract researchers and consultants to carry the load that many industry reps carried in the past. There will simply not be enough industry folks on hand to consult one-on-one with farmer and/or dealer clients. There will certainly not be near as many efficacy or GLP residue studies being conducted in-house, since there will be far fewer people to get the job done, plus it is far less expensive to contract these out (e.g., virtually no overhead for sponsor company). Our disadvantage, of course, will be the loss of some very good people we've grown to depend on in business, as well as camaraderie.

So, what does all of this mean? Well, we as contract researchers and consultants must stay abreast of the latest technologies and regulations and let industry know we are capable and willing to take on whatever is put before us (make sure that you are

capable). A very important piece of advice in making your business a success is accredited to the late Dr. Dick Jensen, who I quote: "Make your client's job easier, and make him/her look good in the process, and you will be a success." I think this can really be applied today when there are fewer and fewer clients out there, be they farmer or industry clients. If we as contract researchers and consultants strive to be the most professional individuals we can be, industry will know that they can depend on us to carry on. And who knows? Many of those dedicated people who lost jobs due to industry cutbacks may wind up working for/with successful contract researchers and/or consultants.

Agriculture, like NAICC, is a big family, which to survive, must compliment each individual's skills. This is the time for all of us to pull together and make the best of a "bad situation." ■

## Electronic Notebooks – A Field Technician's Perspective

*Kathy Richards, California Agricultural Research, Inc. (Owner, Dr. Michael Beevers, NAICC Member), wrote the following article.*

Nineteen ninety-nine has been an unusual year. Very similar to the beginning of GLP, a new era in research is on the horizon. The electronic notebook. As it is with most new technology, there is good and there is, in our perception, (not the creator of the electronic notebook) bad. Talk to a QA about the auditing aspect and that is another story. The idea behind the electronic notebook is excellent. A sin-

gle notebook that is compatible with every other notebook used by industry.

The majority of what I write about are my own personal experiences with the electronic notebook. That too has been good and bad. The first experience came on a day when four applications for four different crops had been scheduled. First, let me say that when you use the electronic notebooks for the first time, it would be advisable to only do one application on one crop at a time.

Nonetheless, we did prevail. Let me say that this was after the heat got to the notebook and shut it down. Thank God for paper.

But we would not be deterred. On our next adventure, things went a bit smoother. The only problem that reared its ugly head was that calibration procedures were quite a bit different than we were procedurally used to. After several phone calls to technical support, at our expense, I might add, we resorted to paper and transcribing the information into the computer as close to real time as possible. It is amazing to me how it can become a congressional debate over whether the time for mixing the test material is the start or the end time –

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# Students Encouraged to Participate in Annual Meeting

Encouraging student interest in the crop consulting and contract research industries is a key element of NAICC's mission each year. Because the NAICC meeting serves as a good opportunity for students to learn more about the profession and to meet potential future colleagues, NAICC is again making a special effort to involve students.

At the annual meeting, a student session will take place January 21 at the Doubletree Lloyd Center Hotel in Portland, Ore. titled "All You'll Ever Need to Know About NAICC and the Consulting and Research Professions," the program will allow students to net-

work with other students and practitioners of crop consulting, contract research and the ag industry in general.

Students will gain insight on how to direct their careers, and they will be afforded the opportunity to hear leaders nationwide speak on topics from precision ag to emerging technologies. In addition, students will participate in the entertainment portions of the meeting. The theme of the student session was developed as part of the annual meeting theme: "Growing Roles for the New Millennium." The educational sessions during the meeting, which students can participate in, will help professionals

and students meet the challenges of an ever-changing agriculture industry. One panel discussion that may be of particular interest to students will focus on the growing roles and relationships of consultants and university extension.

NAICC has contacted ag school deans and department chairpersons to invite students. If you or someone you know would like further information about student opportunities or scholarships for the NAICC annual meeting, please contact Allison Jones, NAICC headquarters, 1055 Petersburg Cove, Collierville, TN 38107, phone: (901) 861-0511, fax: (901) 861-0512. ■

## New Millennium Membership Campaign

**Bayer, Inc.**, believes so strongly in the value of NAICC and the organization's Annual Meeting that the company is sponsoring 2000 Annual Meeting registration and meals for new members.

Worth \$285, the NAICC New Millennium Membership Campaign will cover two continental breakfasts, the new members' reception, the awards luncheon (where new members will also be recognized), all cocktail receptions and the Friday evening banquet, in addition to full meeting registration.

A Top Recruiter Awards Program, also sponsored by Bayer, Inc., will provide current members an opportunity to be recognized for their efforts in recruiting new members as part of the New Millennium Membership Campaign. An overall top recruiter will be named, awarded a plaque, and given one complimentary Annual Meeting registration for the 2001 Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla., compliments of Bayer, Inc. Top recruiters from each state who recruit two or more new members will also be announced and presented with a

plaque. Plaque presentations will be made during the Awards Luncheon. State associations are encouraged to enter into a friendly competition to recruit the most members from their state.

Contact Allison Jones, NAICC headquarters to learn how you can be part of NAICC and the Annual Meeting, January 19-22 in Portland, Ore. Write to her at 1055 Petersburg Cove, Collierville, TN 38107, call (901) 861-0511 or fax (901) 861-0512.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

In the NAICC's recent survey, respondents claimed the two most valuable assets gained through membership in NAICC were networking opportunities and the Annual Meeting. You can take advantage of both when you attend NAICC's millennium Annual Meeting.

Because NAICC has recognized the value of colleagues coming together to share old and new experiences, specific networking lunches have been arranged during the meeting. Consultants from across the nation can share ideas and trends and help solve problems.

If you have a topic or new idea and want to hear what others have to say

about it, we can help you orchestrate a Networking Lunch. Two hours have been set aside for this purpose on Friday, January 21. If you're interested, simply complete the following form and fax it to Allison Jones at NAICC headquarters fax (901) 861-0512. You can also call or email the information – phone: (901) 861-0511, email [JonesNAICC@aol.com](mailto:JonesNAICC@aol.com).

Updates on topics and coordinators' names will appear in this newsletter

and on the NAICC homepage under "Miscellaneous Discussions." If you do not wish to lead a lunch, but see a topic listed in the newsletter or on the website, contact Allison to be added to that particular list.

Topic participants and meeting sites will be posted at the registration desk at the Annual Meeting. Others can sign up upon arrival. A restaurant list will be included in your registration packet. ■

### Networking Lunch Sign-up Form

Name:	_____
Company:	_____
Phone:	_____ Fax: _____
Topic:	_____



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES

The **Nebraska Independent Crop Consultant Association (NICCA)** conducted its Annual Meeting and Convention Nov. 30 – Dec. 1, 1999, at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln, Neb. As a special guest speaker, Nebraska Governor Mike Johanns gave a short presentation to NICCA members at the scheduled breakfast session Dec. 1. NICCA's meeting is designed to update its membership, which consists of over 80 independent agronomists and more than 80 commercial members of various ag businesses, on topics pertaining to agronomy and agriculture in general. Follow-up information about the meeting can be obtained by contacting Mark Kottmeyer, meeting chairman, at (308) 234-5622 or [mkottmeyer@kearney.net](mailto:mkottmeyer@kearney.net).

### LACA Legislative Committee Meets with Governor

In a year of agricultural uncertainty, it's a good idea to keep open lines of

communication with all parties concerned. President of the **Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association (LACA)** and NAICC member, **Randy Machovec**, requested a meeting between Louisiana Governor Mike Foster and members of the LACA legislative committee. Governor Foster welcomed the meeting. The meeting was generated to introduce Governor Foster to the LACA and the workings of the independent crop consultant. Many topics were discussed in the hour long meeting on September 1, 1999, including the very positive results of the state's Boll Weevil Eradication program. Also relayed to the Governor were the concerns of the consultant and the producer over the current low market prices and how this is effecting the state's economy.

Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, Bob Odom, and State Representative, Charlie DeWitt, were also in attendance along with several of the Governor's staff. Governor Foster was very receptive to all of the comments offered up by the group of LACA representatives. The

Governor comes from an agricultural background and expressed his concerns over the obstacles facing many of the producers in Louisiana.

LACA representatives made the association available to the Governor and his office as a resource of information with regards to agriculture in the state from the consultant's perspective. The LACA has always had a good cooperative relationship with Commissioner Odom's office and are hoping to now be able to also work with the Governor's office where they can be of service. Both the Commissioner and Governor are expected to attend the annual meeting of the LACA in February, 2000.

Commissioner Odom is usually in attendance at the LACA Annual Meeting, but this will be the first time a Louisiana Governor has attended.

Members of the LACA present were **Randy Machovec**, **Grady Coburn**, (past president of NAICC), **Roger Carter** (current president of NAICC), **Ray Young**, and **Harold Lambert** (past president of NAICC). ■



## HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

### Combust Issues Statement on WTO Talks

House Agriculture Committee Chairman **Larry Combust (R-TX)** recently issued a statement regarding the World Trade Organization (WTO) nego-

tiations that took place in Seattle in early December. He said the World Trade Organization Ministerial in Seattle offered a great opportunity to agree to future negotiations that would level the agricultural playing field, including the elimination of foreign subsidies that put U.S. farmers and ranchers at a significant disadvantage.

Combust said he'd hoped that an agreement could be obtained to proceed with agricultural negotiations. "I hope

that the discussions do resume early next year and can be positively concluded." He added that an international "bidding war" could become very expensive and counterproductive.

Combust and Ranking Minority Member **Charlie Stenholm (D-Texas)** led a delegation of more than 20 members of the House Agriculture Committee to the WTO negotiations. ■

## Meet the 2000 NAICC Leaders

NAICC is proud to announce the new leadership that will carry the organization into the millennium.

**Dennis Berglund**, 2000 President, is CEO of CENTROL of Twin Valley, Minn. He is a graduate of North Dakota State University and has been an NAICC member for 12 years. Berglund is also a member of the **Minnesota Independent Crop Consultants Association** and the **Agricultural Consultants Association of North Dakota**. He's been an independent crop consultant for 19 years and a Certified Professional Agronomist since

1987. Named Cyanamid Consultant of the Year in 1995, he's been NAICC certified under REAP (now CPCC-I) since 1992. Berglund has served on several committees, including Ethics, Technology, Communications, Administrative Services, Consultant Education and the Precision Ag Task Force. He was a board member from 1993-95 and 1999.

**Phil Cochran** is currently serving a third term as NAICC Secretary and will serve as President-Elect in 2000.

Cochran is a consulting agronomist

and owner of Cochran Agronomics, Paris, Ill. He is a graduate of Illinois State University and has been an NAICC member since 1990. As well, Cochran has been involved in the **American Society of Agronomy**, the **Professional Crop Consultants of Illinois**, ARCPACS and has served on the editorial advisory board for *Ag Consultant* magazine. Cochran is a Certified Professional Agronomist and he's certified as a Certified Independent Crop Consultant-Independent (CPCC-I). He was selected

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## Meet the 2000 NAICC Leaders

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as one of the six 1996 Cyanamid Consultants of the Year, and he was an appointee to the Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Grant Review Committee by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. As an NAICC member Cochran has been active on various committees, including the Executive Board, Membership Services, Membership Recruitment, Retention and Rules and as a liaison to the Board. "My activities with the NAICC over the past several years have truly been one of the highlights of my professional career," said Cochran.

Serving as 2000 Secretary, **Bruce Niederhauser** is an agronomist/consultant with IMPACT Agronomics, Inc., Washington, N.C., and is a graduate of Colorado State University. He's been a member of the **North Carolina Agricultural Consultants Association (NCACA)** since 1990, and has served as the group's Chair of Budget, Membership and Program committees and Secretary/Treasurer, 1996-1998.

Prior to becoming an independent consultant he worked in purchasing for Frito-Lay and PepsiCo Foods International for 10 years in various parts of the world and country.

Niederhauser has been an NAICC member since 1992 and served on the Membership Retention, Recruitment and Rules Committee for four years and as Chair for two years.

**Glenn E. Morin** is an entomologist with New England Fruit Consultants in Montague, Mass., and will serve as NAICC Treasurer in 2000 and 2001. He is a graduate of the University of Massachusetts. Morin is a member of the Entomological Society of America and the **Massachusetts Alliance of Crop Consultants**.

He has been a member of NAICC since

1985 and has represented NAICC on the USDA Committee on Pesticide Use Data and served on the following: National Center for Food and Agricultural Policy, PMAP Grant Programs Relevancy Committee, USDA Tolerance Reassessment Advisory Committee (proxy), various EPA internal committees; and NAICC's committees, including Allied Industry, Consultant Education, Administrative Services and Evaluation.

Returning to the Executive Board now as a director is **H. Charles Mellinger, Ph.D.**, who is director of technical services at Glades Crop Care, Inc., Jupiter, Fla. He received his doctorate in botany and plant pathology at Michigan State University. Mellinger is a member of the **American Phytopathological Association**, Entomological Society of America, American Society of Horticultural Science, Florida Horticultural Society and CAST. He's had more than 27 years of experience in applied field research and consulting work in vegetable and field crops, ornamentals, citrus and sugarcane. Mellinger has done continuing GLP education through certified seminars since 1989 on GLP for residue trials; gained the USDA Certificate of Appreciation, is member of Sigma Xi, serves on the APS Board of Plant Disease Journal; was awarded the American Cyanamid 1997 Outstanding Consultant of the Year; was awarded the Florida Horticultural Society President's Industry Award three times; holds a CPCC-I; CPPP; and serves on the USDA/EPA Tolerance Reassessment Advisory Committee.

Mellinger has been a member of NAICC for 16 years, serving on the following committees: Allied Industry Committee, 1993-1996; Certification Board, 1991-1993; Membership

Committee, 1991-1994, 1997; Public Relations Committee, 1988-1989; Convention Program Committee, 1990-1992; Convention Program Chairman, 1988, 1996; Convention Coordinating Committee, 1995; Treasurer, 1997-1999; Administrative Services Committee Chairman, 1997-1999.

**Larry Emerson** is president of South Texas Ag Research, Brookshire, Texas and will represent NAICC members during his two-year term as a Director. He gained his doctorate in Integrated Pest Management from the University of California, Riverside.

Emerson is a member of the **Texas Association of Ag Consultants**. Emerson carries the following experience and honors: Post Doc, Corn Insects, University of Missouri, 1974; Field Research Rep for Bayer, 1975-1977; Independent Crop Consultant for Texas Rice, Cotton, Soybean, and Grain Sorghum Growers, 1978-1994; Partner - Double STAR Farms, Uvalde, Texas 1990-present; Owner, Principal Investigator - South Texas Ag Research (STAR) - Coastal 1988-present; President, STAR, Inc., President STAR, High Plains, Inc., partner STAR, Rio Grande Valley, and Director of Research, STAR Affiliates, 1989-present; President, Texas Association of Ag Consultants, 1982; TAAC Outstanding Consultant of the Year, 1989.

He's been a member of NAICC since 1979 and was a Board member in 1990. "Through my years as a crop consultant I always believed that my greatest asset in the eyes of my grower clients was my independence," said Emerson.

Also returning to the 2000 Executive Board are **Roger Carter**, Past President; and **Al Averitt, Mark Fering and Kirk Wesley** as directors. ■

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## The Gift of Christmas

Once upon a time, as a friend once told me, two brothers who had grown up on the farm each chose farming as a living. Both stayed bachelors and farmed near each other. Nevertheless, they liked to be pretty much on their own. All in all, they were good brothers to each other - their mother had made sure of that. She even ingrained in them the importance of exchanging Christmas presents - no matter what.

As the years passed, only the two bachelors were left to celebrate the season. They'd religiously arrange to stop by the local establishment and exchange their Christmas presents. First the eldest would solemnly hand his brother a creased \$1 bill. The youngest would then pull out his wallet and hand a different dollar to his sibling.

More years passed and the brothers faithfully carried out their so-called

Christmas gift-giving. But one year, a year of drought and poor crops, the brothers had to alter their long-standing tradition. Instead of \$1 bills, they exchanged quarters.

Seems a poor excuse for giving, but, then again, maybe those two old bachelors had something there. Okay, maybe celebrating Christmas in a bar isn't the most appropriate. But I did like their

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## The Gift of Christmas

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attitude toward presents. They knew they didn't really need to give each other anything but the chance to get together.

You see, I think Christmas isn't about presents, but about a presence. It's not about getting what my childish mind saw as a skimpy pair of mittens and a bit of candy one year, but a heavenly present of everlasting love and life.

Life can be viewed in the same man-

ner. We aren't always going to get what we think we want or need. Some years we may get only what we really need.

For many, this wasn't a good year financially. Farm prices, and farmers, are more than a little depressed.

Newspaper, magazine and TV reporters daily remind us of farmers selling out, suffering from flood or drought, or just barely squeaking by.

Some, like my farming brother, feel fortunate to be breaking even. Others are happy to actually be making a

profit. Are you able to feel this season's joy?

I'm not in your shoes, but in my conversations with others in the industry I see hope. This farm crisis is another storm that can be weathered. It may mean the loss of one dream but the start of a new life in a new way.

May you all have a Christmas to look back upon with joy!

*Reprinted with permission by: Fae Holin, Senior Associate Editor Soybean Digest.* ■

## Stumbling Blocks Addressed

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oped to help facilitate communication among busy consultants.

### Lack of Member Participation

Groups suggested that creating dynamic and beneficial meetings with, when possible, something for everyone and satisfying CEU requirements would be one important way to combat lack of membership participation. By maximizing networking opportunities, instituting leadership mentoring of new and non-participating members and communicating one-on-one about the benefits of participation, the problem

could be alleviated.

In addition, one group recommended having an NAICC representative attend state meetings to update members on national affairs, especially governmental relations. Circulating a list of good speakers, sending invitations to meetings across state borders, joint meetings with other organizations, regional meetings, and getting state leaders on agendas of industry-related and cooperative state/university meetings will also help attract non-participatory members as well as non-members.

Associations should also build in time during meetings – for networking and fellowship, align with other groups that have a common interest and get

state leaders from other groups to be on the program. The group also felt that each state organization should encourage new state members to join the national organization and vice versa, and perhaps include incentives to do so.

Also while in Fort Collins, Executive Board members, several committee chairs and staff met with Limelight Technologies (webmasters for VantagePoint's Internet based information system) to discuss ideas for generating revenue from the NAICC website (see President's column in November issue for more information on "information for sale") ■

## Electronic Notebooks – A Field Technician's Perspective

CONTINUED FROM PG. 3

especially when only one time can be entered into the notebook. This tells me there's still a lot to be done with the formatting of the electronic notebooks. Another problem we have encountered this year is calculations, meaning the difference between the way programs calculate and the way field investigators calculate. This year is the first year that I have had to use the terminology "come close" rather than "dead on."

Understand that we are within 0.010 of the computer calculations, but I still like

to be "dead on."

Flexibility is one thing that right now is lost with electronic notebooks. There is not much room for a slope that goes from 0 to 8 percent or irrigation that can be measured in two to four inches. And crop height, if you ever find the field that is consistently 13.5 inches tall, call me. I want to see that one. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to correct errors in the test substance receipt module. This year I had deviations dealing with the electronic notebooks. And they weren't even my fault!

Still, I am a supporter of electronic notebooks. Verification of actual rate applied and GPA are instantaneous. (I

still do a calculation by hand just to make sure that the heat hasn't sent the laptop over the edge.) It will be the tool of the future. No paper cuts or over-stuffed file folders. But still, every time I say no paper, I get cold chills. We are creatures of habit and the EPA embedded the GLP habit in us, so... You know what they say, old habits are hard to break.

Years from now, as easily as we say GLP and smile and let everyone know how good we are at it, we'll be singing the praise of the electronic notebook and swearing we don't know how we did without it. Sometimes, though, I wonder just how many years it will take. ■

## Y2K Predictions

Several NAICC members have submitted the following predictions for the Year 2000.

Please send us your predictions!

1) Producers, as well as their financiers, will require, more than ever, a knowledgeable consultant to guide them through these difficult times we are experiencing in agriculture.

2) There will be a host of pranksters around the country who will sneak

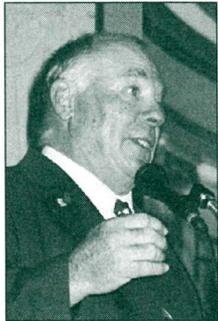
out of New Year's Eve parties to shut off the lights at the breaker boxes at 12:01 AM (of course, alcohol will not have played a part in this trickery).

3) At least 50% or more of NAICC membership will submit articles of interest to NAICC News in the year 2000. ■



## MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

Dave Cole, CPAg of Prairie du Sac, Wisc., was recently featured in *New*



*Horizons*, the Newsletter of the Wisconsin Association of Professional Ag Consultants. The article was about Cole's receipt of the Honorary Recognition Award from the College of Agricultural and

Life Sciences (CALs) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the College, recognizing people who've made outstanding contributions toward the development of agriculture, protection of natural resources and improvement of rural living. ■

*Remember: the NAICC membership booth is available for your state or professional meetings. To reserve the booth for your function, contact NAICC Headquarters. ■*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 4-8, 2000

National Cotton Council of America's Beltwide Cotton Conference, Marriott Rivercenter, San Antonio, Tex. For more information and registration materials call (901) 247-9030 or visit their website at [www.cotton.org/beltwide/](http://www.cotton.org/beltwide/).

### January 10-12, 2000

Second International Conference of Geospatial Information in Agriculture and Forestry, Disney's Coronado Springs Resort, Lake Buena Vista, Fla. For more information or on-line submission and registration visit <http://www.erimint.com/CONF/ag.html>.

### January 19-22, 2000

NAICC Annual Meeting, Doubletree Lloyd Center, Portland, Ore. For more information contact Allison Jones at (901) 861-0511; (901) 861-0512 (fax) or [JonesNAICC@aol.com](mailto:JonesNAICC@aol.com). This program has been approved for 18 CEUs toward CPCC certification. CCA approval is pending.

### February 1-2, 2000

Mississippi Agricultural Consultant's Association Annual Meeting, Bost Building, Mississippi State University, Starkville, Miss. For more information contact Marianna Hayes at (601) 834-4099; (601) 834-4788 (fax); or [marihayes@aol.com](mailto:marihayes@aol.com).

### February 3-4, 2000

Minnesota Independent Crop Consultant's Annual Meeting, Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, Minn. For more information contact Steve Howey at (507) 872-5035 or [howey@starpoint.net](mailto:howey@starpoint.net). (Call 1-800-813-7349 or visit <http://www.mysticlake.com> for hotel reservations.)

### February 15-16, 2000

Louisiana Agricultural Consultant's Association Annual Meeting, Louisiana Convention Centre in Alexandria, La. For more information contact Randy Machovec at (318) 279-2165 or [Hawk171717@aol.com](mailto:Hawk171717@aol.com).

### February 17-18, 2000

Independent Agricultural Consultants of Colorado Annual Meeting, Landmark Hotel, Denver, Colo. For more information contact R. Gene Gilbert at (303) 932-9310.

### March 1-2, 2000

Iowa Independent Crop Consultant's Association Annual Meeting, Gateway Conference Center, Ames, Iowa. For more information contact Robin Pruisner at (712) 792-6248.



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