



NAICCC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

Volume 14, Number 4

The Voice of the Professional Crop Consultant

May 2000

Surviving in Hard Times

by Brent Wright, ICMS, Inc., Portage la Prairie, Canada

In these times of adversity in agriculture, you must impress on clients your ability to conduct their studies at a high quality standard. You can't just do the job as required; you have to "WOW" them.

Start trying to figure out what a client will need before they realize it themselves. One way is through polling the area producers and/or seed/chemical/fertilizer dealers for their opinion on what needs to be sought after in the research world. This is part of the "WOWING" scenario.

In times of limited contracts, don't let yourself get caught up in the price war game. Once you drop the price, it's very difficult to bring it back to a profitable level. If you drop the price, you are going to have to drop the quality or lose money somewhere. Don't drop the price to win a new client. They will expect the same price the next time they ask for bid.

If you have less than a full workload for your staff, you have time to put "the extras" into the projects you've assumed. Clients will remember being "wowed" long after they've forgotten that you gave them a good deal on costs.

At the end of the research season, all the client will remember is whether or not you were able to deliver on the project; they won't remember that you warned them that:

- you couldn't do a good job with the budget they had;
- you were doing them a favor for taking on the project late in the season;
- or they begged you to do the project, even though you told them you couldn't.

Moral - Don't try to squeeze extra projects into your program!

Don't be afraid to make "cold calls." The benefits of contacting potential clients and making them aware of your

capabilities can be rewarding. Don't expect them to find you. They may be trying to find someone to do the work or they may be displeased with their current contractor's methods.

Another way to survive the hard times is to produce marketable commodities on land laying fallow for lack of projects. If you already have the equipment and staff, try producing a small acreage high return crop. We did this successfully in 1992/93 with biennial caraway. The land was already prepped for trials that did not materialize. We planted the caraway with our plot equipment and controlled weeds with mowing rather than buying chemicals in year one. We harvested it with our plot equipment in year two. We made a good return on minimal inputs.

Remember the old adage: "Where there's a will, there's a way!" ■

INSIDE THE NEWS

President's Message	2
Grants Offer Consultants Opportunities	2, 3
Research Consultants Waiting For More Action	3
Louisiana Consultants Meet With D&PL	3, 4
New Member Profiles	4, 5
Spotlight On The States	5
Portfolio Asset Allocation	5, 6
Attitude Is Everything	6
Louisiana Farmers Not Weathering Drought...	6, 7
Members In The News	7
Ethics and Grievance	7
Calendar of Events	8

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: JonesNAICC@aol.com
www.naiccc.org

Dennis Berglund President

102 East Main Avenue/Twin Valley, MN 56584
Phone: (218) 584-5107 / Fax: (218) 584-5100
E-mail: dennisb@tvutel.com

Center for Agricultural Partnerships Established

A team of agricultural experts has been working for several months to transform the Program for Strategic Pest Management (PSPM) into a more diversified organization committed to working with the ag community to meet its production and environmental challenges.

What has evolved is the Center for Agricultural Partnerships (CAP), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. CAP is based on the principles that creating opportunities for ownership, learning, and cooperative problem solving is the foundation for building a legacy of lasting and constructive change.

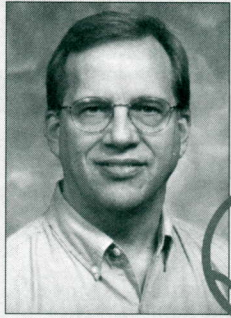
"With CAP, we are uniquely positioned to expand our work on agricultural and environmental issues. We've assembled a team skilled in crop consulting,

economic analysis, evaluation, project and organizational development," said Larry Elworth, executive director.

CAP offers the capacity and experience to develop and facilitate multiple projects and provide consultation to ongoing projects. "As we work with people and organizations throughout the country, we are learning valuable (and agriculturally applicable) lessons about making constructive change possible to benefit agriculture and its environment," Larry added.

NAICC members Maggie Jones, Billy McLawhorn and Pat Weddle are actively involved in the on-going CAP projects. NAICC has recently been asked to appoint two members to serve on the CAP Advisory Panel. ■

Safety, Harleys, and Peonies



BY
DENNIS BERGLUND,
NAICC PRESIDENT



Being a country western fan, each spring when I re-unite with my Harley after a long MN winter, I can't keep myself from singing "On the Road Again". Absence makes the heart grow fonder, and this is true of motorcycles, too. But, when I went riding last weekend the shocks were really acting up. Now, let me explain.... shocks are a very important part of your bike and one that you don't often think about. Most of the time they work fine and.... well.... then there's nothing to think about! But, when they aren't working well, you can't STOP thinking about them. The bike handles badly and can be downright dangerous!

The shocks on my Harley remind me of WPS! Certified Crop Consultants have a WPS exemption yet we don't often think about it. We just do our jobs in a SAFE and efficient manner. But, what if we lose our WPS exemption? Well, WPS is the LAW and cannot be ignored. So, instead of thinking of safety and efficiency, we will be thinking about REI, putting on and taking off PPE, and other

UNNECESSARY restrictions! We won't be any safer and we won't be able to do our jobs as efficiently. In the end, IPM will suffer and so will our growers!

NAICC is fighting hard to keep the WPS exemption.... but, we're getting tired and need some help! I want all of you, as professionals, to think about how important the WPS exemption is to your operation. If you're not an NAICC member and you are benefiting from the exemption, then you need to come aboard and help carry the load. If you are an NAICC member and know of anyone who is "freeloading" along, then get him or her to join. Losing just 1 or 2 WPS exemptions will be like soil erosion in a North Dakota field. It starts very slowly, yet once it really gets going, there is no stopping it! And I guarantee you, if we do nothing, WE WILL LOSE IT!

My First IPM Lesson

My Gramma Nellie loved peonies... any color. She had fences of peonies growing around her yard. One day while walking around her yard amusing myself, I

grabbed a large blossom and put it to my nose to breathe in the wonderful scent. And, then I noticed something terrible! The unopened buds were covered with ants! I knew that Gramma would be horrified to see these ants destroying her beautiful flowers, so I began to "de-ant" all the infested buds. I worked feverishly filling up empty jars with ants and I was

determined to "conquer and save". Finally, Gramma came out to check on me to see if I was okay. Upon catching sight of her I ran and told her about the terrible ants and how I was saving her peonies. Instead of the heroic commendation that I expected, she began to educate me about the peonies and the ants. The ants were working FOR her and not AGAINST her! The ants, she informed me, helped the peony buds open up into all the gorgeous large flowers. Tens-of-years have passed since that time and Gramma is no longer living, but every time that I see ants on peony buds, I think of Gramma Nellie and that day so long ago, when I was first exposed to beneficial insects, synergistic relationships and experienced my first try at biological control. ■

Deep "Mother's Day" Thoughts

by Dennis Berglund

Top 10 List of "Things My Mother Said":

10. Don't put that in your mouth. You don't know where it's been.
 9. Look at me when I'm talking to you.
 8. Somebody's gonna end up crying.
 7. Someday your face could freeze like that!
 6. This is going to hurt me more than it hurts you.
 5. I hope someday you have children just like you.
 4. Clean your plate, there are children starving in the world.
 3. Close the door — were you born in a barn?
 2. If they jumped off a cliff, would you do it, too?
 1. You could put an eye out with that thing!
- It's no wonder we think of our mothers as saints. Loving us as children when we were a handful, hugging us when we were sad, and cautioning us against that tempting gum beneath restaurant table tops. Where would we be without them?

Grants Offer Consultants Opportunities

Modern agriculture is evolving at an amazing pace. This accelerating transition is due to many issues: regulatory changes brought on by FQPA and other environmental regulations, precision agriculture, biotechnology, IPM, globalization of food production — the list is endless.

There is concern that these changes are happening too rapidly for orderly transition, but for the optimist and innovator there have never been more opportunities to participate in and influence these changes. Professional crop

consultants, with their entrepreneurial experience and real-world knowledge, are the perfect individuals to be at the forefront of this agricultural revolution.

"Transparency" and "partnering" are words carrying favorable connotations in the political world of the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Both agencies are looking for transitional strategies for agriculture; people with innovative ideas based on sound scientific and economic principles should make their ideas known.

One way to achieve these goals is to participate in the competitive grants programs offered by USDA. Some programs are directly open to private sector application, such as the Pest Management Alternatives Program. Others require partnering with land grant universities for eligibility. Both are positive means of gaining exposure for your ideas and possibly the research dollars to implement them. Even if your proposal isn't funded the first time you submit it, you are still reaching a fair number of knowledgeable reviewers who may help

you bring your ideas to other appropriate funding vehicles. If you apply for a research grant, remember that you will be competing with academia for these monies. Your grant presentation should be top notch and your scientific principles excellent. As an independent person, your work will have to stand on its own merit.

To access current funding sources, the best place to start is on-line with EPA and USDA's Web pages. For EPA (www.epa.gov/pesticides), the "What's New" section includes current events published in the Federal Register. There

grant funding can be easily accessed. For USDA, start with their home site (www.usda.gov/). More specifics can be found at www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm.

Several new sources of funds have been released in the past 30 days. Check to see if your research ideas for agricultural innovation are fundable. The only costs to applying are your time and energies — and there is much to be gained. ■

New RFP's Posted

FY 2000 Section 406 Request for Proposal (RFP) is available, and is titled "Integrated Research, Education, and Extension Competitive Grants Program, including the National Food Safety Initiative, Pest Management, and Water Quality." The closing date is June 6, 2000. You may obtain a copy of the RFP at www.reeusda.gov/1700/funding/ourfund.htm.

Also, you can find the electronic version of the Standard Application Kit (Orange Kit) on the site. ■

Research Consultants Waiting for More Action

by Alan Courville

Portland Blues! It was another great meeting! The withdrawal symptoms have eased off, the annual meeting a pleasant memory. I come to you fully charged and refreshed! Now the struggle and work must begin because that's what keeps the bill collectors and creditors away.

We finally got some measurable rain (> 5 inches). Our farmers are starting to breathe a little easier. The corn and most of the rice is planted. The cotton and soybean planting windows are just around the corner.

Dateline: RCWG – Part Deux (for all you non-Louisianians, that's French for two).

With the last issue, I left you a promise to reveal the final six initiatives. I do keep most of my promises. (I have trouble with the hard ones — like at 11:30 p.m.: "I know I told you I would be home by 8:00. I just didn't say a.m. or p.m. or which day.")

The RCWG initiatives are listed below. They are not placed in order of importance — the numerical listing is merely for structure and reference.

1. NAICC will provide education, training and outreach to members.
2. Along with other stakeholders, NAICC will monitor and influence regulatory activities.

3. NAICC will increase membership in all categories.
4. NAICC will adopt a name and structure that characterizes the organization's dynamic membership.
5. Present the resources available within the NAICC to client (sponsor) management.
6. NAICC will be the national advocacy voice for crop and research consultants.

These initiatives don't seem to be particularly exciting sitting there all alone. But they are not alone. Each initiative has several action points that will help provide ways to obtain these goals.

In the last issue I mentioned that the Executive Board developed a strategic plan in Albuquerque. As an added bonus I am going to provide this to you with some comments.

- Increase Revenue. (I don't have a clue. The Board has some great ideas.)
- Membership Services — improve existing services or expand services. (RCWG initiative number one - providing education, training, and outreach.)
- Enhance Recognition and Presence (RCWG initiative number six — NAICC will be the national advocacy voice for Crop and Research Consultants.)
- Grow Membership (We just wanted to

increase the membership in all categories. Is that the same thing? Some of us are long winded and need words to express the same idea!)

- Government Relations (RCWG number two – Monitor and influence regulatory activities.)

Well that's all for now. The lofty goals set by the newsletter staff and **Dennis Berglund** were for me to provide a series of articles. Is two considered a series? I guess not. So the mini-series will continue. You have the meat now. The rice and/or potatoes will follow at a later date along with a side dish or two, I hope.

However, as I write it is the second week in April and the soil temperature is right. We have initiated sugarcane, corn and rice studies already and some cotton and soybean work will commence next week.

The ladies have been off the buckets now for several days down here. (Talk to someone from the Delta, they can explain.)

So, until things slow down around here — Au Revoir! (It means good bye, see you later, etc....French again, Dennis. Oh, by the way, is it still frozen up there? I would like to visit, but let's wait till summer. I'm still dodging and ducking dishes from the last time I got home late, again.) ■

Louisiana Consultants Meet with D&PL

by Randy Machovec, Pest Management Enterprises, Inc., Cheneyville, La.

In early March, a group of Louisiana Consultants traveled to Scott, Miss., to meet with corporate members of **Delta and Pine Land Company**, a sustaining member of the NAICC. Thirteen of the 16 consultants attending were current NAICC members or were in the process of completing membership applications.

The group of consultants requested

the meeting in order to raise concerns regarding several cotton and soybean issues. Discussions were aimed at discovering how consultants can further interact with industry members to help clients.

Some of you may have read **Roger Carter's** Ag Report from March 18, 2000, posted on the NAICC Web site under the

discussions (southern crops) section. The report outlined a major issue presented at the meeting — university or research consultant cotton yield data needs to be obtained prior to releasing a particular variety to the farmer.

D&PL indicated that they would be sending "numbered or experimental" varieties to the universities two years prior

Louisiana Consultants Meet with D&PL (cont.)

to commercialization and to research consultants at least one year prior to commercialization. This will help them in their selection process to determine which varietal types are best suited for specific soil types or regions. It will also reduce the "experimentation" factor using large scale commercial production of a variety with unknown quality or yield data – a high risk venture for farmers.

Hopefully, prior to commercialization of each variety, there will be sufficient data to help consultants decide which varieties are best suited for the producer's soil type, insect and weed infestations, management style, marketing arrangements, tillage practices, fertility levels and other considerations.

In these times of low commodity prices, sensitive environmental issues, and increased government regulations, it is imperative that consultants and industry members cooperate and communicate to solve issues that affect our producers' bottom line.

The sharing of information between D&PL and these consultants laid a strong foundation of mutual respect and paving

the way for stronger relationships in the future.

Steve Hawkins, president and COO of D&PL, greeted attendees, and many of D&PL's key staff members were on hand, including technical, sales and research representatives, to field questions. Each consultant was given the opportunity to present questions and viewpoints on particular issues. An informative open roundtable discussion was also held.

Mr. **Ray Young**, one of the consultants in attendance, stated, "Each topic raised at the onset of the meeting was covered in-depth. A highlight of the discussions was D&PL's assurance that they keep up with conventional breeding to address quality and yield.

They suggested that it might be necessary to increase their efforts in this area (e.g., research endeavors in cooperation with universities and research consultants). They also stated that they are striving to get us the best quality seed possible in any given year. They have raised their standards on "leftover" seed that is blended into new seed for sale. They encouraged us to keep up with "seed lots" so that if a problem develops we can trace it back to determine if it was a seed problem."

I feel most of the consultants left the meeting with a better understanding of how D&PL is working to provide the best possible product for cotton and soybean producers. I also believe the staff of D&PL better realizes how devoted Louisiana consultants are to agriculture and that they are committed to providing their clientele with the best information available to increase that "ever so important bottom line".

Many thanks go to Janice Person, D&PL's public relations manager, for her time and perseverance in making this meeting a reality. Thanks also to Roger Carter and D&PL's Mike Martein, who were the originators of the meeting.

Don Kimmel, vice-president of sales and marketing and an active supporter of the NAICC, suggested initiating a consultant advisory panel. This panel would consist of several consultants from states within the mid-south cotton region who would meet to discuss issues pertaining to upcoming crop growing seasons.

Networking ideas and issues are needed if we are to survive. We all need to make it a point to keep the lines of communication open. Thanks to all who participated. ■

NEW MEMBER PROFILES

Marla Siruta, Easton Agri-Consulting, Inc.



Marla Siruta is employed with Easton Agri-Consulting, Inc., an agricultural contract research facility in Bagley, Iowa. Besides conducting efficacy and GLP studies,

the company does claims investigations and expert witness.

Marla studied criminal justice at the University of Colorado in Denver from 1982-86. She then worked on the family farm from 1986-90. In 1990, she and her husband moved to Iowa. Shortly afterward she took a position as research technician with her current employer. She also attended Iowa State University and graduated with a degree in Agronomy in 1998. Marla now holds the position of principal field investigator with Easton.

Marla said she was impressed with

NAICC members' esteem of the organization and their encouragement to join. She appreciates the Alliance's commitment to agriculture. "As a member, I hope my participation in NAICC helps me to stay current on issues concerning contract research," she said. As a first year member, Marla is already involved, currently serving on the Membership Services Committee.

Regarding the current situation in agriculture, Marla said, "I see this situation happening in ag-related and non-ag related industries alike. For example, I've seen the pork industry change drastically over the past few years. We are now seeing the same industry cutbacks and company mergers in our industry and it concerns us.

"The effects of these cutbacks and mergers are trickling down. I think we will see a continuance of what the other industries are experiencing — a trend toward big corporations. I see large chain stores eventually closing down our small town main streets. I see the pork producers in my area being absorbed by large corporate pork producers. I can only be-

lieve it will find its way to our own industry as well."

Quanzai Jia, Northern Plains Ag Research

New NAICC member **Quanzai Jia** earned a bachelor's degree in plant protection and master and doctorate degrees in soil science. He has five years of experience in conducting contract research trails.



Quanzai owns a contract research business called

Northern Plains Ag Research. The business provides field research service in EPA regions V and VII in Minnesota and North Dakota.

Quanzai joined the NAICC because "it is an organization of agricultural researchers and consultants. It is a place where I can communicate with others, gain current information, express con-

cerns and meet with clients." He expects to be increasingly involved in NAICC in the future.

Regarding industry cutbacks, mergers and buyouts, Quanzai does not anticipate they will have an impact on

agriculture. "There are still enough companies out there to maintain a competitive market. Companies enjoy finding ways to be more efficient and competitive."

Over the next 10 to 20 years, Quanzai

expects that environment friendly pesticides and accurate and efficient fertilization programs will draw more public attention. ■



SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES

The Professional Crop Consultants of Illinois (PCCI) recently participated in the annual Ag Legislative Day, March 23, 2000, in Springfield, IL, PCCI board member **Randy Darr** attended the event, which is designed to bring all agricultural organizations together to meet with legislators and to draw attention to agriculture in Illinois.

Sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau, representatives from all agriculture organizations are encouraged to attend the

event to focus on ag-related issues in the political arena. The PCCI believes the day serves as a helpful informational voice for certain issues that pertain to many of the crop production and environmental concerns that have risen in Illinois. "As consultants we don't have any particular ax to grind," said Randy. "However, we are making strides to inform our legislators and other organizations that we can be a valuable resource for information due to our grassroots experience.

"As well, the Ag Legislative Day offers us an excellent opportunity to differentiate fact from fiction on many topics."

While attending this year's event, Darr

met with Joe Hampton, director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture. He received a first hand account of Hampton's recent trip to Cuba. Other meetings were held throughout the day with members of the Illinois Drainage District Association.

Before the day ended, Darr was interviewed for a segment to be aired on Illinois radio stations affiliated with the Browfield Network. "It was a very rewarding day that may also prove fruitful down the road," said Randy. ■

Portfolio Asset Allocation

By Matthew Tuttle, MBA, financial advisor with Prudential Securities in New York City.

Individual investors tend to build their portfolio with whatever is handy — stock in the company you work for, hot tips from friends or a bond with an interest rate that seemed too good to resist. A little here, a little there with no organized plan.

Unfortunately, not only does this often result in an unbalanced portfolio, but also one that is not positioned to maximize value, and possibly even exposes an investor to inordinate risk.

What most investors want and need is a portfolio in which the assets are allocated among a range of investments, each carefully selected to help meet their individual financial goals. A qualified financial advisor can help build a balanced portfolio, but each investor should understand the basic elements.

One easy way to visualize asset allocation is as a pyramid divided into three layers, with each layer decreasing in size from bottom to top. This illustrates the practical idea that you should first establish a relatively large foundation of secure, low-risk investments and then move up, layer by layer, to potentially more rewarding (and also riskier) growth-oriented and tax-advantaged investments. The peak of the pyramid is reserved for the most speculative invest-

ments, consisting of "play money" which an investor can afford to lose.

The bottom (and largest) layer of the pyramid should establish a relatively safe, broad base and is made up of cash equivalents — bank accounts, CDs, money market funds — as well as vehicles such as your IRA and insurance, which are designed to meet special financial needs. Think of this layer as a foundation upon which to build.

The second-largest layer consists of more income and growth-oriented investments and tax-advantaged investments. This layer includes such fixed-income investments as corporate and municipal bonds, zero coupon bonds and utility company stocks. Most of these investments are liquid, meaning that they can be converted to cash relatively easily and quickly. However, because yields and market values will fluctuate, your investment may be worth more or less than its original cost when converting to cash.

Moving up the pyramid in terms of risk, the top (and smallest) layer consists of growth stocks, aggressive growth-oriented mutual funds and other growth vehicles. The objective of these investments is capital appreciation or "wealth building," not mainly income.

Each of the investments in this top

layer is subject to market fluctuations, and offers no guarantee of income or increase in value. A growth company, for example, may have above-average per-share sales and earnings growth, pay little or no dividend and carry a large amount of debt. If the company appears to have a strong position in its industry and good prospects, an investor's stake in the company could substantially increase over time.

The investment pyramid described above is only a basic model of asset allocation. The levels at which you invest and the amount invested at each level will depend on available assets and objectives. For example, a young family that needs more income is likely to concentrate most of its assets in the second level, while a successful single person may devote more funds to the top level in an effort to build greater wealth.

Another key issue in determining asset allocation is the number of years an investor has until retirement. A young executive will look for long-term growth, while someone in their sixties will be moving investments into more stable income-oriented options.

Most financial advisors have access to sophisticated allocation models that are constantly updated to changing market conditions. These models provide guide-

Portfolio (cont.)

lines for how much money you should keep in cash, stocks, bonds and other investment alternatives within each cate-

gory to help build a tailored portfolio that is right for you.

Mr. Tuttle is president of the CPA/LAW FORUM of New York City and the New

York City Chapter of the Institute of Certified Investment Management Consultants. ■

Attitude Is Everything

By Randy Darr

Life. It is a very interesting concept. As consultants and researchers, we work with the finer points of life everyday. Whether it is a livestock nutrition program, the life cycle of a European corn borer or the microscopic life forms in the soil, you and I have a unique advantage of looking at life. We work with it all the time.

In life good and bad — and everything in between — happens. If you are a consultant for any length of time, you soon realize that to be successful you have to keep a positive perspective around your

clients. Look at your client list and see how many of those growers are down in the dumps all the time. If there is one, you better not keep him very long.

I am convinced that 10 percent of life is what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. Attitude is everything. Successful people have positive attitudes. What good does it do to worry about 10 percent of life? We always have a choice in how we react to a situation.

Today, many of our clients are reacting to a fairly discouraging farm economy and people who want the country to im-

port all of its food. These are things that can really affect attitudes.

If you're done looking at that client list, I doubt if you have many clients who aren't positive in their attitudes. I hope you look at yourself and examine your attitude. As we are on top of a new season, watch your attitude. React positively and you may be surprised by the results.

Randy Darr, CPCC-I, with Soil-Right Consulting Services in Shipman, Ill., is a Voting member within NAICC. ■

Louisiana Farmers Not Weathering Drought, Low Commodity Prices Well

by Denise Wright

The new year began and drought conditions had farmers concerned about making it through another planting season. In some farmers' opinions, it would take above normal rainfall, every day for one month, to bring us back to normal. It's now April, and that hasn't happened, although over the past month or so, we have received some relief, mainly in the northern part of the state. Over the last two years, some smaller cattle producers have called it quits. Without the grass, they have to feed their cattle grain, and that's costly. More will quit if it doesn't rain enough to replenish our groundwater supply.

Our area (St. Landry Parish) has been in a moderate to severe drought for a year and a-half. Based on climatological data, St. Landry Parish last had normal precipitation in June, 1999. Prior to that, it was January, 1999.

February, 2000, was one of the driest months on record, and the precipitation outlook is bleak. It would take approximately 7 to 10 inches above normal rainfall, scattered over a two to three month period, to bring us to our normal soil moisture content. Since February's extremely dry weather pattern, we've

received 2 to 12 inches of rainfall depending on what part of the state you're in. The problem is, the rainfall received has either been too hard and fast to replenish our aquifers or it simply hasn't been in enough volume to end our drought situation. It has helped to green things up, but this seems to be only a patch for what we really need.

The continuation of drought conditions is as severe as any in the past few years and shows no signs of letting up. Ninety days out, the meteorologists expect 40 to 50 percent below annual precipitation.

A local farmer who was asked what he saw for his future in farming, replied, "To keep farming is becoming harder and harder. If it isn't the weather hindering production, it's low crop prices, and lately (last two to three years) we've had to deal with both. We're at a 30-year low in soybean pricing and it doesn't look like commodity pricing will be much better in 2000."

"Farming depends on the ability to recoup losses through a few good years of product and sales. Over the past ten years, we've seen our equity erode. Most farmers have everything mortgaged,

other than their house and the land it sits on."

Some area farmers have quit farming to go to "regular jobs", but are committed to getting back into farming when conditions improve.

The public has the impression that when farmers have a bad year, the government steps in and bails them out. It doesn't work that way... Disaster money, both free and loaned, is based on proven losses. For example, you may have lost \$100,000, but can only prove you lost \$50,000. On that \$50,000 you might get \$2,000 in grant or free money, but that's not enough to make much difference, so you borrow the rest — if you can. Also, federal disaster relief money never seems to go far enough because there are usually so many producers applying for it. The only real help would be to allow farmers more representation in the pricing process. One area farmer quoted, "Twenty-three cents out of every food dollar goes to the processor and about 3 cents actually goes to the farmer."

Corn acreage has gone in at this point, rice planting is for the most part finished and farmers are preparing for cotton and soybean planting. Some fear they are

wasting diesel fuel and labor costs if sufficient rainfall isn't received at the critical times.

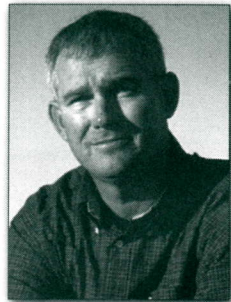
As this story is being finished, there has been needed rain of about 2 to 5 inches in different areas. To rice farmers

in South Louisiana, who are abandoning their potential rice acreage because of salt water intrusion, it appears that the rainfall is only a "teaser". We are thankful, however, for the refreshment and the slight hint of a good memory (Louisiana

has been known in the past for it's spring floods, not droughts). At least it confirms that it can indeed still rain in this part of the country. ■



MEMBERS IN THE NEWS



Bob Griffin with Griffin Ag Consulting, Jonesboro, Ark., was name 1999 Cotton Consultant of the Year by *Cotton Farming Magazine*.

Griffin was featured in the April issue of *Cotton Farming* magazine and also at the National Cotton Council's Beltwide Cotton Conference in January in San Antonio, Tex.

NAICC member and Illinois crop consultant **Kirk Wesley** was recently referenced in two articles in *Soybean Digest*. The first, titled "Concentrating on Compaction," reviewed the benefits of controlled traffic patterns for enhanced soil texture and other reasons. Wesley had recommended a compaction management program to a grower who found it helpful.

The other article, titled "Are Tracks a Trend?" covered the increased use of

tracks over tires for large equipment. Wesley was quoted regarding the advantage of tracks on heavy equipment compared to using duals or triples.

In the April issue of *Cotton Farming*, **Roger Carter** was interviewed for an article on keeping abreast of the tremendous amount of information that is available today. According to Carter keeping only what is considered reliable is the best way to keep from being overwhelmed. He relies on his own experience; on-farm test conducted by Extension and industry representatives; magazines and journals; seminars; and networking with other consultants as the best sources of information. ■

Ethics and Grievance – *Where Do We Stand?*

In the very near future, members of the NAICC will receive a new, recently revised copy of the NAICC Code of Ethics printed on a high quality, attractive print suitable for framing. The Ethics and Grievance Committee believes very strongly in the language and content of the Code of Ethics as it is written and hopes you will feel the same and proudly display it on a wall in your office, allowing for your clients and visitors to see your dedication and conviction to our profession.

The industry of agriculture is ever changing these days and with these changes come thoughts of uncertainty and even fear. All of us are having to change the way we look at things and be able to keep an open mind and not be too quick to judge or make a fast decision. The Ethics and Grievance Committee would like to poll the membership by having you read the following

mock situation and write back with a response. This is the first in a series of hypothetical situations that the committee will present for your feedback.

The situation, as it is written, is hypothetical, but does not mean that it couldn't happen. The names used are fictitious and are not meant to parallel anyone. The situation is as follows:

Acme Seed Company, an old established corn and soybean seed company whose roots are based in the Midwest, are finding that competition is beginning to take too big a slice of the seed business pie, which for a long time had been controlled by Acme. To combat this problem, Acme decides to work a "deal" with Superb Consulting Company. Superb consults with clients in a fifteen county area on all the agronomic factors involved with their farming operation, including variety selections. Superb is just one of four consulting firms that work in the

same fifteen county area. Acme Seed Company made a proposal to Superb that for all Superb's clients, whether they're old clients or new ones they may pick up, Acme will discount each bag of corn seed by \$2.00. This is for Superb Consulting clients only. Superb Consulting would not receive any monetary compensation from Acme Seed Company, although this would provide an avenue of more clients for Superb and would also sell more seed for Acme.

So, what about the other consulting firms? After all, business is business! Or is it? Please let us hear from you on whether or not you think there is an ethical problem with this scenario.. We will tabulate the responses and let everyone know the outcome. Your responses will be kept confidential.

*Randy Machovec, Chair
Ethics & Grievance Committee* ■

Please tell us what you think by returning this form to the NAICC Headquarters, 1055 Petersburg Cove, Collierville, TN 38017, or by sending an email labeled "Ethics and Grievance Response" to JonesNAICC@aol.com.

Name (optional) _____

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

July 8-12, 2000

Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Conference, "Gateway to the Future-Conserving Private Lands," Regal Riverfront Hotel, St. Louis, Mo. For more information call (515) 289-2331 or visit their website at www.swcs.org.

October 9-13, 2000

16th Annual SQA Meeting, Queen Elizabeth Hotel, Montreal, Quebec, Canada. For hotel reservations call (514) 861-3511. For more information contact Haley Johnson, SQA Executive Director at hjohnson@clarionmr.com or visit the SQA website at www.sqa.org.

October 26-29, 2000

NAICC Executive Board Meeting, Raleigh, N.C. For more information contact Allison Jones at (901) 861-0511, (901) 861-0512 (fax); or JonesNAICC@aol.com.

January 17-21, 2001

NAICC Annual Meeting, Hyatt Orlando, Orlando, Fla. Registration, exhibit and sponsorship information will be available in October 2000. For more information contact Allison Jones at (901) 861-0511, (901) 861-0512 (fax); or JonesNAICC@aol.com.

REMEMBER:
It's time to renew your
CPCC certification.
Renewal forms were
mailed mid-March and
are due May 31. ■



NAICC

1055 PETERSBURG COVE
COLLIERVILLE, TN 38017

FIRST-CLASS MAIL
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
COLLIERVILLE, TN
PERMIT NO. 19

