



NAICC NEWS

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Outstanding Three Chosen to Receive Consultant of the Year Awards

NAICC and BASF are proud to announce this year's three Consultants of the Year award winners. This is an annual honor that recognizes entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and creativity. Those chosen are professionals who accomplish the highest environmental stewardship for their clients through environmental responsibility and actions that benefit their communities.

Congratulations to Consultant of the Year **Chuck Farr** of Crawfordsville, Ark., a consultant with Mid-South Ag Consultants, Inc. He specializes in cotton, rice, wheat, corn, soybeans, peanuts and milo. He performs soil and nematode sampling, makes fertility recommendations, and controls weeds, disease and insects through IPM.

Chuck is an NAICC member and was co-chair of the 2001 annual meeting

coordination committee. He is a member and past president of the **Arkansas Consultants Association**, serves on the board of directors of his local Farm Bureau, participates in the Memphis-East Arkansas Razorback Club and numerous other industry organizations.

Chuck holds a Bachelor of Science in agronomy from the University of Arkansas and a Masters of Science in plant science from Arkansas State University. He was awarded the 1998 Cotton Consultant of the Year award.

We're also proud to award **Stacy Steward** as consultant of the year. Stacy is a consultant with Grower's Edge, Inc., in Garden City, Kansas. He's been a consultant since 1979 and began his own consulting business in 1986. He consults on irrigated alfalfa, row crops and cereal grains in southwest Kansas. He helps growers with hybrid selection, irrigation scheduling, fertilizer use and environmentally sound pesticide use. In particular, Stacy has worked on maximizing water efficiency through advanced irrigation technologies.

Stacy was one of the founders of the **Kansas Association of Independent Crop Consultants** since it began in 1988. He's been a member ever since and served as

president in 1995 and 1996. As well, Stacy is an NAICC member and has served on several committees.

Other honors Stacy has received include selection to the Kansas Agricultural Rural Leadership program class, 1997-99, consultant representative to the Southwest Research Extension Advisory Board and committee member for support/advisory to the Western Kansas Irrigation Research project.

Our third Consultant of the Year is **Scott Moody** of Kingsville, Texas. He works for Moody Ag Service, specializing in entomology, soil fertility and weed control for cotton and grain sorghum.

Scott is an NAICC member, and he is active in the **Texas Association of Ag Consultants** and the Texas Pest Management Association. He served as president of the Texas Association of Ag Consultants in 1998, and he was honored as TAAC Consultant of the Year in 1994.

Please take a minute to salute these outstanding consultants who are dedicating their talent and energy to serve their clients and to represent our industry in the best possible fashion.

Congratulations on awards well earned. ■

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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: JonesNAICC@aol.com
www.naicc.org

Phil Cochran President

14615 N. 1300th Street / Paris, IL 61944
Phone: (217) 465-5282 / Fax: (217) 465-2706
E-mail: pcochran@tigerpaw.com

2001 Annual Meeting: Record Turn-Out, Networking #1

Each year NAICC's annual meeting reflects the changing needs of its members. This year was no different; a record-breaking attendance by industry leaders provided spirited, thought-provoking informational sessions, political discussions, and enthusiastic networking.

Over 500 NAICC members came together in Orlando not only to take advantage of the amusement provided by the area but to meet friends and colleagues nationwide to learn about technical advances in the industry, to band together as a group with a strong political presence and to celebrate a year of hard work and dedication with

other like-minded individuals.

The meeting couldn't have come together successfully without the dedication of the NAICC members, the willingness of speakers and exhibitors to share ideas and experiences and the generosity of sponsors who support our industry wholeheartedly.

MEETING GIVEN HIGH MARKS

Besides good weather, a solid program and something fun for everyone, NAICC members who evaluated the meeting gave extremely high scores for the quality of speakers. The timeliness of information provided through

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Good People, Tremendous Programming and Great Networking



BY
PHIL COCHRAN
NAICC PRESIDENT



The 2001 NAICC annual meeting was once again a resounding success. With over 500 members and guests in attendance, the meeting was the largest we've ever had.

Bringing 500 people together successfully every year is no small task. Accomplishing this amazing feat requires the unselfish dedication of a multitude of people. I won't try to list everyone for fear of leaving someone out of the list. However, I have always believed in giving credit where credit is due. Therefore, I believe thanking a few key people is absolutely in order.

Allison Jones and her able assistants, Deb West, Nancy Hall, and all the many volunteer NAICC members and wives.

Each year, Allison pours her heart and soul into the success of the NAICC annual meeting. I remember Daney Kepple comparing the task of keeping us organized and happy as the equivalent to "herding ants". If that's the case, Allison, Deb and Nancy are about the best "Ant Herders" I have ever seen! I could take up this entire column discussing accolades for Allison but in the interest of space, a huge "Thank You!!" will have to do for now.

The three annual meeting committees and chairmen, Alan Courville, Neil Miller and Tim White.

These three gentlemen and their respective committee members put together a tremendous program that was well coordinated and thought out. According to the tally of the evaluation sheets, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being Not Favorable and 5 being Highly Favorable, the Quality of Speakers received a score of 4.34 and the timeliness of the concurrent education sessions, a score of 4.3. Additionally, "excellent topics" was tied for second from the comment section as the best thing about the meeting/ program. Not bad considering how diverse the NAICC membership is!!

The one thing that consistently comes back on the evaluation forms is the fact the nearly everyone enjoys and looks forward to the opportunity to network with friends, colleagues and associates during our annual meeting. Networking was by far the highest-ranking item when listing the "best thing about the meeting/program" with "Meeting Nice People", "Excellent Topics" and "Exhibit Hall" tied for second place. Does this mean we need more free time during the meeting? That point is not quite as clear according to your evaluation sheets.

Nearly half (47%) said we need more free time respectively during the day and at night. However, 69% of you said the free time on the program was sufficient. One thing is for sure; you have given the 2002 Annual Meeting Committee(s), chaired by Neil Miller, Mike Brubaker and Tim Vargas, something to think about!

We have always said that until a new member has attended the annual meeting, the value of his or her membership in the NAICC has not been realized to its full extent. I think I can speak for the majority of our membership in saying that gathering at our Annual Meeting is truly one of the social and educational highlights of our year. I, for one am already looking forward to seeing everyone in Albuquerque next January. ■

NAICC President Reminds Us NAICC Is Our Organization

Following is a synopsis of NAICC President Phil Cochran's speech, which was given at the recent Orlando, Fla. annual meeting.

NAICC President Phil Cochran began his luncheon speech by sharing with us his first experience with NAICC – 11 years ago, ironically in Orlando. At that time he and another member, **Brent Stombaugh**, CEO of **Brookside Laboratories**, came to learn about NAICC, and Phil has been involved ever since.

Phil went on to pay tribute to the executive board members he's worked with in the past six years, including **Harold Lambert**, **Don Jameson**, **Billy McLawhorn**, **Lee West**, **Roger Carter** and **Dennis Berglund**. He considers them mentors and dynamic leaders with different styles. "I have been honored to be able to experience and learn from their leadership first hand," he said.

Phil also paid special tribute to the people affiliated with Brookside Labs, who helped him reach the position he now holds in his career.

Shifting gears, Phil went on to empha-

size the benefits of being an NAICC member – meeting new members and first-time attendees, and visiting with old friends and acquaintances at the annual meeting. "For you new members and first-timers, this is YOUR organization. Please do yourself a favor and get involved," he said. "I promise you, you will get back much more than you invest in time and energy. You will make life-long friends and have immediate phone and e-mail access to some of the most experienced and sharpest minds in the industry."

Phil discussed his agenda for 2001, including furthering of existing projects such as Dad's "n" DC, the unique Congressional reception hosted by NAICC during the Executive Board's spring meeting in Washington. Last year the event was so successful that more than 65 people signed NAICC's register, including Congressional members and key USDA and EPA officials. "I would like to take this opportunity to invite anyone who could make the trip to Washington in March to join your Executive Board in hosting this reception," said Phil.

Another program Phil would like to continue in 2001 is the Alliance of Agricultural Leaders, which consists of key NAICC committee chairs, state consulting group presidents and other industry leaders meeting to brainstorm new networking ideas for the entire information transfer community.

Finally, Phil emphasized his desire to continue working closely with affiliated groups and sustaining members, including the ASFMRA, ASA, ARA and the CAC. "Discussions have included consecutive meetings, joint educational (CEU) seminars, certification activities and joining forces in Washington," stated Phil. He also noted that the FEAE and NAICC continue to work very closely with each other on projects of mutual interest.

New items and potential new projects Phil highlighted include opportunities to be involved with on-line expertise question/answer forums. Another new opportunity he cited was the invitation to represent our Research Consultants by providing one of four delegates from the United States for the Organization for

Economic Cooperation and Development meeting (dealing with GLP compliance) in England this summer. (The other three delegates will be representing EPA, ACPA and SQA.) "This is truly an honor to be asked to join this delegation," said Phil. "This is a direct result of our persistent activities in

Washington."

Other new initiatives Phil mentioned included the appointment of an ad hoc Task Force to review a new Web site/ media proposal from Doane, **Robin Spitko's** re-appointment to the CARAT committee and NAICC's honor as one of 12 "Centers of Influence" by **BASF** at a

national meeting in Las Vegas.

Phil ended his speech by reminding the group of the tremendous progress NAICC is making in gaining credibility in Washington and allowing members to take advantage of this credibility to "stay ahead of the curve!" ■

2001 Annual Meeting (cont.)

concurrent education seminars also received high marks.

But it is the most important mark of a meeting's success in measuring what attendees felt was the best aspect of the meeting. And again this year the choice was overwhelmingly networking.

Given the vast geography our group covers, the different crop types and chal-

lenges we face from weather, pests, disease, economics and so on, it is essential that we have opportunities to learn from each other. Networking gives us this opportunity, and it also allows us to further our careers through the influence of others in our business. "I've been coming to NAICC's annual meeting for years - and one of the main reasons is to connect with men and women I rarely see, but

who have had a great impact on my life - both professionally and personally. For that opportunity alone I would continue to come. But I gain much more than just that through the educational opportunities the meeting provides," said Mitch Hoekstra, Central of Twin Valley.

Other aspects of the meeting that received high ranking included chosen topics, speakers and various events. ■

Leading Change – The Only Way to Serve American Farmers

Following is a synopsis of William Hubbard's NAICC annual meeting key note address. Hubbard is Vice President of Quality Control at John Deere and Company.



William Hubbard began by emphasizing the importance of serving the "greatest customer segment of all...The American Farmer." He reinforced the many changes our industry has faced

through the ingenuity and energy of our customers and their predecessors.

"Yet, for all that, the success and future of this business has never been more at risk," he noted. With this statement, Hubbard segued into the topic of his speech – change – which paralleled the meeting's theme of "managing change." However, our key note speaker challenged us not just to manage change but to lead change.

He provided examples of attempts at managing change and their failure, such as the small businesses that have struggled with the onset of Wal-Marts in their areas. "My conclusion is that leading change is a far more viable position to hold..."

Hubbard talked about how our customers are now in control and no longer limited by geography in their business practice. He said that since we no longer have geographic control, it is essential that "we clearly understand what it is that customers value in their dealings

with our business."

Some ways he suggested of understanding that value include use of focus groups and interviews – and the ability to recognize different Key Buying Factors of each client. "It will be our responsibility to determine just what our value proposition must be to serve the client base we identify to serve."

With a clear understanding of our value proposition and the potential needs it can meet, he emphasized that the service must be delivered cost-effectively for both parties – with execution taking precedence over cost.

Hubbard acknowledged that customizing a product to your customer's values "implies there will may be deliverables you cannot meet with your core competencies." He suggests that the new millennium's business model, then, should be one of partnering with people and organizations to deliver to the customer's needs.

With these partnerships, your value to your clients is enhanced, he said. And by looking at your customers and suppliers as partners, the old stereotype of clients as just sources of sales evaporates.

Hubbard then talked about the vitality of technology in agriculture and our use of these tools to bring better solutions to our clients. "Both your knowledge (of technology's tools) and competencies in their use offer value not before available to your clients," he said.

With the evolution of the Internet and other new technologies, businesses have moved to better understand the impor-

tance of customer satisfaction and loyalty, Hubbard noted. "Even as we begin to understand the power of the customer, we must learn to clearly identify the needs of the customer." One size fits all is no longer an option; instead, there is a growing understanding of differentiation among our customers.

"What each of us must do is to learn to segment our markets and our customers." He went on to say that once we understand customer segments, we must drill down to achieve a market segment of one. He added that we must use technology to improve the customer/client experience, while being respectful of the privacy of our customers.

Hubbard emphasized that customer service is why people buy products and services, not price. His top two reasons for people to purchase?

1. Service Level
2. Treat me and my family with respect.

The goal of business, then, must be customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. "It is achieved by clearly understanding what the customer values, and your organization's ability to deliver on the value proposition."

When it comes to quality, Hubbard firmly stated that size of operation has no effect on expectations of quality. "...As the manager or owner of a business, I cannot imagine operating it and not pursuing Business Performance Excellence."

He reinforced that quality is the most obvious thing one sees or experiences when one deals with an organization. "And...when you see it...you have a

(Cont.)

strengthened relationship with the organization. You also become an unpaid salesman for the organization." The opposite occurs if quality is not experienced. Similarly, employees perform in accordance to the standards set at an organization.

Hubbard talked about the importance of a committed workforce. "It's important for leadership to understand that em-

ployees desire the same output as they do – it's just a different perspective....Do everything possible to have everyone working for the same outcomes and reward all for achievement and the likelihood of reaching the goals increases greatly."

Other suggestions Hubbard made to reward employees: "Do not forget to say "thank you for a job well done"...

Encourage risk taking as it increases learning. Do not chastise those who make learning mistakes. Share the learning with the whole organization."

He finished his speech by reinforcing the importance of investing in employees by nurturing, coaching and mentoring – and to begin by selecting them carefully. ■

FEAE Serves NAICC's Educational Goals

By Earle Raun, FEAE Board member and first president of NAICC

Recent NAICC members probably aren't aware of the early activity that caused the NAICC to foster the FEAE organization. The Foundation of Environmental Agriculture Education was created to provide a 501(C)(3) organization for educational purposes. Such an organization must follow strict IRS regulations to remain a repository for tax deductible gifts and earnings.

For most of the years that the NAICC has existed (it was founded in 1978), members have been striving to influence the educational offerings of academic institutions. NAICC recognized that crop production is a system every bit as complex as the human or animal body. Yet curricula that adequately integrate the aspects of the system were (and are) lacking. A "Practitioner" graduate program paralleling the practitioner programs of Veterinary or Human medicine was (and is) the goal.

Thus, the main purpose of the establishment of the FEAE was to provide a tax deductible repository for supporters of NAICC's educational efforts. The FEAE Board pursues the NAICC goals in several ways. The newly established Doctor of Plant Medicine degree at the University of Florida is generally the direction of our primary efforts. That doesn't eliminate other educational uses for FEAE funds.

As an example, the Richard Jensen Scholarship provides \$1000 to a student whose goal is crop consulting. Applications for this annual presentation must be in to NAICC headquarters each year by October 15, with the scholarship available for the following year. The FEAE has also supported the involvement of NAICC members with the FFA, educational presentations to the NAICC annual meeting, and other educational activities.

From where do the funds handled by the FEAE come? Many NAICC members

have contributed to the FEAE directly. Jensen Memorial funds have been designated for that scholarship program. Income from the NAICC auctions not only provided funds to the FEAE, but the auctions are great fun for members. The FEAE invests all income, with a primary goal of providing income from investments in its fund allocations. The Board members serve without compensation. Their travel expenses are paid to one meeting each year. Reimbursement for expenses to the FEAE annual meeting held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the NAICC is made to only the one Board member, not a member of NAICC.

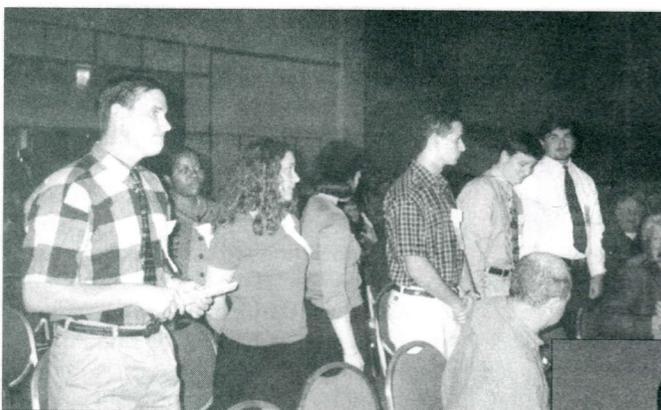
When you contribute to the FEAE, you are making a tax deductible contribution toward the educational goals of the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education. ■

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA STUDENTS HONORED

Dr. George Agrios, Director of the Doctor of Plant Medicine Program (DPM), introduced NAICC Annual Meeting attendees not only to the DPM program that he heads at the University of Florida, but also to the first class of students enrolled in the program. Twelve of Dr. Agrios' students attended the meeting and networked with their future colleagues. The FEAE also is sponsoring NAICC Student Memberships for the 12 students who were in Orlando.

At the end of Dr. Agrios' presentation, FEAE Secretary Earle Raun presented the DPM program with a check for \$1000. The scholarship money will be awarded to a student currently enrolled in the DPM program.

Following are two letters received from Dr. Agrios and Stephanie Dickerson, president of the Doctor of Plant Medicine Student Organization.



DPM students were recognized at the Plenary Session during the NAICC Annual Meeting.



FEAE Secretary Earle Raun presents \$1000 scholarship check to Dr. George Agrios to be awarded to a worthy DPM student.

Dear Ms. Jones:

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation and that of the Doctor of Plant Medicine students for the superb hospitality and treatment we received from all of you during our participation at the NAICC Meeting at Orlando, FL.

I would like to specifically thank you for making all the arrangements for me and the students as well as for the visual equipment for my talk. I would like to thank Madeline Mellinger for inviting me to speak at the meeting and for her, as well as of others', constant encouragement for the DPM program. I would also like to thank Earle Raun for his general support, help at the meeting, and for introducing me as a speaker. I am always indebted to my "old professor" Artie Browning for his sustained faith in the success of the DPM endeavor and for his help and support at the meeting. I am also greatly indebted to David Harms and Dan Bradshaw for talking to the DPM students and me about the business of Crop Consulting and for their strong support of the DPM program.

I certainly was pleased with everything at the meeting and I enjoyed, and learned a great deal from, meeting and talking with many NAICC members. The students were both pleased and impressed with the people they talked to, the talks they heard, the overall atmosphere of the meeting, and with the interest the members showed in talking to them and in the DPM program. Some of the students are already talking about the possibility of attending the next meeting. The students are also very appreciative for the gifts of free registration, lunch, and free subscription.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Board of the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education for their moral and financial support of the Doctor of Plant Medicine program.

Sincerely Yours,

George Agrios, Director
Doctor of Plant Medicine Program

January 24, 2001

Dear Sir/Madam:

On behalf of the Doctor of Plant Medicine Students, I would like to thank you for hosting us at the recent NAICC convention. We were all delighted by your warm welcome, hospitality, and support, and as new members we look forward to being a part of this organization. This opportunity to relate with the professionals of crop consulting has been an encouragement for us to pursue our DPM degrees even more enthusiastically than ever as we look forward to embarking on careers as plant doctors, and becoming your colleagues.

The new DPM Student Organization will be fund-raising throughout the year in anticipation of attending next year's convention in Albuquerque, NM. We look forward to seeing you there. Thank you again, and have a great year!

Sincerely,

Stephanie Dickerson
President
Doctor of Plant Medicine Student Organization



Cane Dance Finalists front row from left: Ken Trammel; Cassidy Berglund, daughter of Annette and Dennis Berglund, Emily Morin, daughter of Robin Spitko and Glenn Morin, Hope Jones, daughter of Allison and Charlie Jones, Devin Berglund, daughter of Annette and Dennis Berglund; and Denise Wright. Tim White and Alan Courville are shown on the back row congratulating the four winners.

FEAE Auction Hits Record



Tim White is ecstatic about his winning bid on the Louisiana Mardi Gras basket.

Donations and receipts for the 2001 FEAE auction hit an all-time record this year in Orlando. The auction brought in over \$16,000 for the Foundations educational projects. Once again, auctioneers Bill Cox and Grady Coburn were the hit of the evening and brought in those winning bids.

Auction donations and bidding didn't stop with the actual auction in Orlando. Mike Brubaker, Alan Courville, and Tim White led NAICC members (and their children) through a "cane dance" contest that raised money as well (see picture below for finalists).

Also, several years ago Mr. Ray Young auctioned a box of Louisiana yams. Charlie and Madeline Mellinger lost the \$50 bid to someone else. Mr. Ray agreed to mail the Mellingers a box of yams if they would make a \$50 donation to the Foundation, which they have done for each of the past several years.

In keeping with this tradition, Bruce Nowlin and Maggie Jones asked to use the Mellinger's "beach house" for a family vacation. The final negotiations yielded yet another donation to the FEAE. ■



Auctioneers Grady Coburn and Bill Cox warm up the crowd at the 2001 FEAE Live Auction.



Lynn Henderson with Madeline and Charlie Mellinger admire a Raggedy Andy doll that was donated by Dave Harms and handmade by Dave's mother.

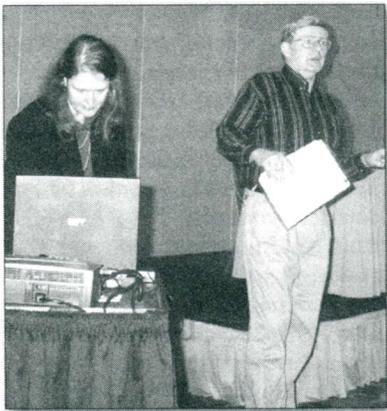
2001 Annual Meeting Orlando, Florida



2001 President Phil Cochran accepts the gavel from 2000 President Dennis Berglund during the President Luncheon and Awards Ceremony.



Glenn Morin, Roger and Lise Carter visit with Harold Lambert during the Everglades Adventure.



Renee Daniel and Tom Armstrong prepare remarks during the APHIS/GLP workshop held prior to the Annual Meeting, sponsored by Monsanto.



NAICC 2000 Executive Board members from left: Phil Cochran, Mark Fering, Roger Carter, Kirk Wesley, Charlie Mellinger, Dennis Berglund, Al Averitt, Bruce Niederhauser, Larry Emerson, Glenn Morin.



NAICC 2001 Executive Board members from left: Chris Cole, Bill Cox, Dennis Berglund, Charlie Mellinger, Phil Cochran, Al Averitt, Bruce Niederhauser, Larry Emerson, Glenn Morin, Tim Case.



Fred Hepler, Education Chair for the American Society of Agricultural Consultants beams with pleasure as he shows off his auction purchase which was an artist rendering used for the cover of the December 2000 *Crop Decisions Magazine*.



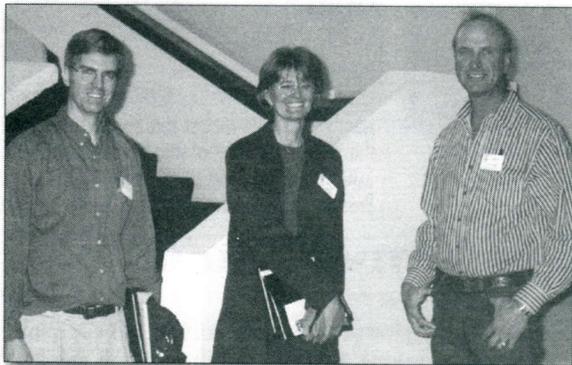
Allison Jones presents out-going president Dennis Berglund with his own Harley-Davidson. Luckily for the treasury, the gift was only a model, but also came with a Harley pocket watch.



Bob Edwards, FMC Corporation, Rob Wiley, *Crop Decisions Magazine*, and J.L. Taylor, FMC Corporation congratulate Jim Ussary, Ussary Scientific Services (third from left) on winning 4 raffle tickets to Disney Theme Parks that were donated by FMC Corporation.



(from left) Board member Kirk Wesley enjoys a few laughs with NAICC Sustaining Members, Tom Krill, Vantage Point Network, Joe O'Connor, IMC-USA, and Doug Reeves, Pioneer during the Sustaining Members dinner.



Dennis Hatterman, Wendy Shoffner and David Wilde take a break between educational sessions.



Denise Wright and members of the Newsletter Involvement Committee make plans for the 2001 NAICC News.



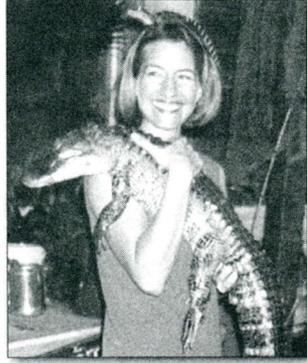
Mike Striebel, Nelson Prochaska, Pat McFadden, Ken Mickelson, James Todd and Gary Cramer enjoy local cuisine while in Orlando.



Ron Wiley, *Crop Decisions Magazine*, Jimmy Johnson, Bayer Corporation, and Bob Thurow, Spectrum Technologies, Inc., visit between breaks in the exhibit hall.



Alan Courville, 2001 Annual Meeting Coordination Committee Chair, welcomes attendees to Orlando and the annual meeting.



Alligator handlers come in all sizes.



Julie Averitt, Ray Young, and Bill Peele delight auction goers with several songs during the live auction.



Dennis and Annette Berglund show "crop consultant" dolls that she handmade for the FEAE auction.



Randy Machovec makes sure no one messes with the President's hat that was handed down to 2001 President Phil Cochran from 2000 President and Minnesota Viking Dennis Berglund.

MAKING TECHNOLOGY WORK: EFFECTIVE E-MAIL

By Jerry Gitchel

I enjoyed meeting all of you at the national convention last month. It was great to hear about your technology challenges; it gave me plenty of ideas for future columns.

Congratulations to our door prize winner. Please visit www.jerrygitchel.com/naicc to see who won a SanDisk ImageMate CompactFlash reader. While you are there, download the Tips & Tricks from my presentation, "Digital Harvest."

Now, on to this month's topic to help you improve your digital communications.

Effective E-mail

February is a good time to review business procedures before you ramp up into spring. Quick and accurate communication with sponsors, vendors and customers is essential to your business. That's why e-mail can be an effective communications medium because it's faster than a letter, but more detailed than a phone call. I say "can be" because I hear complaints from program attendees about problems they're have using e-mail—particularly how to address messages and how to access e-mail attachments. Let's see if we can make your use of e-mail more effective.

Addressing

When you address a new message, you need to place the recipient's name in one

of three boxes TO:, CC:, and BCC:. Which one? Here's how I decide.

TO: - If you want someone to take action on the contents of your message, place their address in this box.

CC: - If you want to share the contents of your message with someone without requiring any action on their part, place their address in the CC: box.

BCC: - If you want to distribute information to many recipients, without revealing their address to everyone on the list, use this choice.

BCC is a great way to distribute newsletters or any other one-way notice. I address the message or announcement to myself in the TO: and place everyone else on the distribution list in the BCC: box.

Extra Tip – Must Open Subject Lines

Now we know how to get the message to the right person. Our next challenge is to get them to open it and take action! Have you ever searched your inbox for that very important message you read but didn't respond to? If your message seems to fall on deaf ears (or eyes) review the subject line before you click Send.

It's a good policy to create subject lines that start with the project name followed by the topic of the message (Act! 2000 Migration Project - Progress Report 2). It

helps the recipient sort all project related messages into one "chunk."

Attachments

Attaching a file to a message and sending it around the world is a great concept. It's ironic that something this good causes so much grief. It's not sending that's a challenge; you either insert a file into the message or click a picture of a paperclip to "attach" the file. The biggest problem seems to be what to do with it at the other end. For some reason, those people at the other end just don't know how to open our file.

Whether you've been the sender or that person at the "other" end, I've found a way to save you at least one hour per attachment (the hour you spend on the phone trying to help each other open the file). If you would like to save yourself an hour, include three things in the text of your message.

- The application used to create the attachment
- The version of the application
- The name of the file

Here is an example. "Attached is my Excel 97 file named budget.xls." No more hour long phone calls!

The usual problem with opening an attachment is not having the right application or version. Here are some of the

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HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

NAICC Invited to be Part of U.S./OCED Delegation

NAICC has been invited to be part of a U.S. delegation to a Censuses Workshop, June 18-20, 2001, in the United Kingdom. The workshop, entitled "The Application of the OECD Principle of GLP to the Organization and Management of Multi-site Studies," is being organized by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Mick Qualls of Ephrata, Wash., will represent NAICC and will be joined by representatives from the Society of Quality Assurance, **American Crop Protection Association** and the Environmental Protection Agency. The objective of the workshop is to reach a common understanding among OECD member countries of how to organize and manage a multi-site study to ensure compliance with GLP.

From these discussions, a draft Consensus Document will be developed. Preliminary areas that working groups will discuss include:

1. Initial planning and ongoing management of a multi-site study
2. Roles and responsibilities of study personnel
3. Handling of study data, reporting of study and archiving
4. Role of Quality Assurance

According to Qualls, if everyone plays by the same rules, then the chemical companies of the world can use the data generated by U.S. researchers in all countries. This would benefit the U.S. companies and EPA – as well as give a major business benefit to contract researchers. ■

CROMERRR: What Is It and What Does It Mean?

By Denise Wright

CROMERRR is the abbreviation for Cross-Media Electronic Reporting and Record keeping Rule, but what does it mean to the contract research community? There are varying opinions or interpretations of "the Rule" by Quality Assurance Specialists in our field. Debi Garvin of Pacific Rim Consulting, Inc., and Chuck Moran of **Valent USA Corporation** offered their insight on the subject and the following synopsis is meant to further explain CROMERRR and its potential impact on our industry.

CROMERRR addresses valid concerns in the transmission and retention of electronic documents by electronic means. One of the problems, as some see it, is the difference between the actual document and the document as it seems to exist in the minds of people. Of utmost importance to contract researchers is how it might affect operations in the field.

It is the opinion of some that sponsor companies who choose to collect and report data exclusively by electronic means (other than diskette, CD or tapes which are already excluded from the Rule) and the EPA itself are the entities which will feel the impact of this rule the strongest. Others feel that CROMERRR will apply to all electronically generated records, not just raw data, and this would definitely have an influence on contract research facilities.

Records such as Master Schedules, SOPs, QA reports, temperature data for storage of test substance and study samples, weather data, etc. would be included. If this is the case, electronic raw data collection, as well as the generation of electronic facility records would have

to change. The electronic systems we have in place now will not be CROMERRR compliant, if this is indeed the case.

The EPA is calling the Rule voluntary, but if the above criteria are accurate, we need to band together and be proactive to convince EPA that the Rule is not voluntary and to stress the financial impact it will have on the research community.

It has been suggested that "alerts" made to the new Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, would be appropriate. If she is made aware of how CROMERRR (an environmental rule) will negatively impact the ag research community that may carry more weight than going through the EPA. Obviously, both would be best.

Another plus in our corner may be that Christine Todd Whitman, new EPA Administrator and successor to Carol Browner, is expected to be more attentive to agriculture's needs. Dealing with environmental issues in the past, Whitman was often at odds with the Clinton administration.

On the flip side, it is the opinion of some that documents residing temporarily on electronic media (e.g., SOPs, Master Schedules, communications (memos) between field investigators and Study Directors, spreadsheets used to report progress of field studies) could be defined as "transient documents." Once they are printed out, signed and dated as authentic and correctly expressing the intent of the originator, they are then, and only then, the "document of record" and can be archived in compliance with CFR 40 Part 160 (GLPs). These documents should not be a concern of CROMERRR.

This point should be addressed specif-

ically in the Rule because it is currently, and otherwise always will be, an area of debate and uncertainty (one of too many gray areas we're already faced with). Care should be taken that an electronic signature not be affixed to any transient document, since this would make it the document of record and bring it under the scrutiny of CROMERRR.

Specifically, to avoid inconveniences of the Rule, SOPs should not be maintained exclusively by electronic means. The original signed copy of an SOP must be archived to protect against corruption and could be compared at any time with so-called working copies (whether they are maintained as hard-copies or as read-only documents on computers). A hard copy of the Master Schedule must be printed out at intervals that adequately represent the condition of the test site, authenticated by signature and date, then archived. As iterated by the Rule, maintaining records required by 40 CFR Part 160 in a purely electronic form is voluntary. So, why do it?

Definitions of words used in the Rule are very important:

Electronic record means any combination of text, graphics, data, audio, pictorial or other information represented in digital form that is created, modified, maintained, archived, retrieved or distributed by a computer system. (Digital form does not mean printed out on paper.)

Electronic record-retention system means any set of apparatus, procedures, software, records or documentation used to retain exact electronic copies of electronic records and documents.

This is not to say that we don't need

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

clarification to the Rule. For example, things such as "hobo temperature recording devices" need to be defined as to where they fit. They should be exempt since they are not a permanent record-retention system. The authors of CROMERRR more than likely didn't think of such things, so it's up to us to remind them.

The EPA should resist introducing unnecessary complications to the Rule just because they exist in 21 CFR Part 11 (FDA's electronic rule). They should listen to the problems being experienced by those regulated under that rule and act accordingly. Additional paperwork should not be a part of a system designed to implement the Paperwork Elimination Act, although this might just mean writing another SOP. However, it could also mean attending another expensive training class.

In the end, it is the opinion of some that the only way to get some relief is to acknowledge CROMERRR would apply to electronic data capture systems (e.g., electronic notebooks), but fight it on the "electronic records" (e.g., SOPs, Master Schedules, QA Reports, etc.) issue.

For more information on CROMERRR and for guidance in contacting the EPA with your comments, the URL for the preamble to the Rule is <http://www.epa.gov/cdx/cromerrrule.pdf>. ■

Making Technology Work:

Effective E-Mail (continued from page 8)

more common file formats and the application you'll need to open it.

File Type	Application
XLS	Microsoft Excel
DOC	Microsoft Word
JPG or GIF	Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator (Web images)
ZIP	File compression application like PKZIP or WinZip
PDF	Portable Document Format – Adobe Acrobat Reader (Free)

Handling file attachments is a big topic. For more Tips & Tricks on attachments please visit:

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Effective communications over long distances is essential for mobile professionals. If you have tips you would like share, contact me at info@jerrygitchel.com.



Craig Price
ICMS, Inc.
ALBERTA CANADA

Craig Price of ICMS, Inc. is a new NAICC member. He is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan, where he attained a BSA in Crop Science in 1999. Prior to this degree, he attended Brandon University where he received a B.Sc. in Physics (1996). His background is in the grain handling/farm supply business.

He has been employed by ICMS, Inc. since graduating from the U of S and currently holds the position of Regional Manager, Alberta. ICMS has been providing agronomic research, extension and consulting services across western Canada since 1985. ICMS facilities are recognized by the Standards Council of Canada as being GLP compliant. They conduct a wide variety of GLP compliant studies including RAC/MOR, soil and aquatic dissipation, and foliar dislodgeable. In addition to GLP services, ICMS provides agronomic research and project management for product and variety evaluations, production system performance and environmental impact assessment. With facilities located across western Canada, they provide services in several GLP crop zones and have access to most crops grown in Canada. The peas, lentils, potatoes, grasses, forages, hemp, and various GMO crops.

Craig decided to join the NAICC after attending the 2000 annual meeting in Portland. He saw there that the NAICC provides our industry with a forum for information exchange. The annual meetings, supplemented by the newsletter, provide members with an excellent means to exchange information, tap into experiences of other research consultants and stay informed on emerging technologies. He feels as a Canadian member of NAICC, his role is to promote the organization "north of the border". The number of research consultants/consulting companies in Canada is small compared to the U.S. However, with crop production company cutbacks and mergers, the number of research consultants/consulting companies is growing. Increased Canadian involvement would give the NAICC more power to address cross-border issues and provide Canadian researchers and consultants with a place to

exchange information and address Canadian issues.

Regarding company mergers/buy-outs and industry cutbacks, he believes, in the short term, this is responsible for the decrease in research being conducted. He feels, although, that once these 'new' companies settle, there will be increased opportunities for research consultants. Some of the recent mergers have involved companies that do not have many competing products. These companies have made slight reductions in new products, but have made large reductions in research staff and facilities. When the dust settles after a merger, crop production companies will require research consultants to fill the void created by merger activities.

When asked where he thought agriculture is going over the next 10-20 years, he gave the following synopsis. The future of agriculture lies in two directions: diversification and growth. Agriculture is cyclical and these tactics are key to survival in the agriculture industry. Small farms only survive through acquisition of more land or by diversifying into new crops and livestock opportunities. Crop production companies merge to grow financially and diversify their product portfolios. Even research consultants have adapted by providing a variety of services to sponsors and producers. In addition to field research, research consulting companies now provide project management, quality assurance, crop consulting, and data base entry via eFNs. If one was to survey all the research consultant companies, this list would get quite lengthy. More simply put, we provide the services someone is willing to pay for. ■

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

NAICC member **Harold Lambert**, was interviewed for a *Progressive Farmer* article which ran in January, regarding fertilizer investments. In "Put Fertilizer Where it Belongs," Harold, an independent consultant in Innis, La., reinforces the use of site-specific management to reduce fertilizer costs and improve yields.

Billy McLawhorn appeared in *Progressive Farmer's* mid-January issue as the center focus of an article titled "Cotton Consultant: a Tough Job." The article highlighted Billy's long career as a cotton consultant and the challenges he's incurred. The same article also highlighted cotton consultant Tim Macha. He

works for about two dozen growers over four counties – and enjoys the time he has with his three daughters, who work with him as scouts.

The third and final consultant profiled in the cotton consultant article is **John Kimbrough**, Lexington, Miss. His firm is called “Pro-Tech Ag,” and he enjoys the challenges provided by cotton because, as he said in the article, “...it’s (cotton) a tropical perennial we grow as a temperate annual...that presents a whole set of problems we don’t face in other crops.”

Kimbrough was also featured in the same issue’s “Choosing a Crop Consultant” article. He emphasized the need for both growers and consultants not to enter into a partnership lightly, but to understand each other’s expectations and working styles.

Consultant **Danny Bennett**, Cochran, Ga., was referred to in the article by a grower who praised his methods of testing new and existing products and providing independent analyses and interpretations.



Roger Carter of Clayton La., received top billing as the 2000 Cotton Consultant of the Year. His profile appeared in *Cotton Farming* magazine with

several photos of him at work. Sincere congratulations to one of NAICC’s finest – a man who has shown an undying dedication to his work.

Dennis Berglund, CEO of Centrol Crop Consulting and NAICC past president, was in the news in a side bar regarding the health of the independent crop consulting business in the United States. The article it ran adjacent to, “Crop Advice Goes Private,” appeared in *Country Guide’s* January issue.

Independent crop consultant **Dave Harms**, Crop Pro-Tech, Bloomington, Ill., was interviewed by *Soybean Digest* for a January article called “All Dark at High Noon.” The article focuses on monitoring available sunlight in corn canopies.

In that same issue, Roger Carter is featured using advances in digital imaging to help him identify plant diseases and unknown pests spied in the field. In the article Carter talks about his reliance on distance diagnosis, which allows county agents and others to upload digital images for diagnosis.

Grady Coburn, operator of Pest Management Enterprises, Cheneyville, La., stressed the importance of the Scout Smart Scholarship Program in mid-January’s *Progressive Farmer*. The program is sponsored jointly by *Progressive Farmer* and **Bayer Corporation**. A \$2000 scholarship will be awarded this summer to five deserving

insect scouts pursuing a career in agriculture or agribusiness. (Applications can be downloaded at www.progressive-farmer.com/scoutsmart or www.scoutsmart.com or will be sent to those who provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Scout Smart Scholarship, Progressive Farmer, P.O. Box 2571, Birmingham, Ala. 35202.

NAICC members **Mike Brubaker**, **Dan Bradshaw** and **Charlie and Madeline Mellinger** were featured in *AgRetailer’s* November cover story, “Can These Relationships Work? The Pros and Cons of Retailer Ties with Farm Managers, Crop Consultants.” Mike’s company was also featured in “Trade Talk: People and Companies in the News” for teaming up with SST Development Group to bring precision ag technology to producers, crop consultants and dealers in the mid-Atlantic and New England states.

Danny Bennett was profiled in November’s *Crop Decisions* magazine, and Dan Bradshaw was featured in the same issue’s “The Doctor of Plant Medicine – A Multidisciplinary Approach.”

In October’s *Crop Decisions* magazine, NAICC members **Dan Filbert**, **Harold Lambert** and **Kirk Wesley** were highlighted. In “Kansas Consultant Provokes Growers – with Different Ideas,” Dan was featured. Harold and Kirk were mentioned in “Site-Specific Technology – Focus Q&A.” ■

Former Honorary NAICC Member Remembered

It is with pride that NAICC remembers the great contributions of Dr. Robert S. Cox, Honorary NAICC and Hall of Fame member. Dr. Cox passed away Sept. 17, 1999 after 32 years as a crop consultant.

Below please find a reprint of Dr. Cox’s profile, which appeared in the April, 1993, issue of NAICC News. Many thanks to Mrs. R.S. Cox for reminding us of the article and affording us the opportunity to pay him tribute.

Pioneer Private Consultant Gets NAICC Membership

By Jackie Flaum, editor

When Robert Syd Cox decided to go into the agricultural consulting business in 1957, a lot of people resented him. Especially, he said, his old friends in the Extension service system.

“They thought I was infringing on their prerogatives and a threat to their security,” said Cox.

But those plowing a new field expect a little resistance here and there. For his efforts in seeing a need and filling it – and

in the process helping to found a whole new career opportunity in agriculture – NAICC awarded Robert Syd Cox honorary membership.

But in addition to helping launch the job of private crop consultant, Cox and his fellow pioneers in California and Mississippi changed the roles of almost everyone in agriculture.

Cox graduated from Oklahoma A&M in 1940, got his Master’s from North Carolina State in 1942, spent three years in the Army and earned his Ph.D. from North Carolina State in 1949. He worked for DuPont a year, then went to the University of Delaware to teach and experiment until 1954, when he came to the Everglade Experiment Station in Florida.

In 1957 Cox was hired by a group of growers to scout their fields regularly and advise them on treatments for pests and disease.

“I was probably the first one to venture out on my own and have growers pay me,” he said. What growers needed that

the Extension service could not provide was regular attention to the fields. Extension services representatives, he said, would be called in during a crisis – what growers needed was someone to prevent the crisis.

During his 32-year consulting career, Cox has worked on vegetable and subtropical fruit crops in Florida, Central America, the Bahamas and Mexico. About 60 percent of his time, he said, was spent working with the cut flower industry in Florida. At one time he had more than 40 clients.

“I was a little busy,” he said, recalling months of six and seven day work weeks that left little time for his wife and children.

Through the years Cox saw his fledgling profession expand and take on different responsibilities - not the least of which is advising farmers on conservation of the land and protecting the environment.

He can see the day when “private consultants will supplant the Extension stations as far as grower services are con-

cerned." He sees a role for the Extension service in agricultural education, home economics and special agriculture problem management.

Opportunities for crop consultants are limitless, he said. There are opportunities to expand into advising growers on farm management techniques as well as the chance to perform forensic work.

In fact, he said, 15 percent of his time in the last few years was spent as an active consultant centered around forensic work or testifying in court as an expert witness in a lawsuit. He said he knows several consultants in California who devote all their professional time to being an expert witness.

Cox's most memorable involvement with a lawsuit raged for years and involved the herbicide 2,4-D, which sugar cane growers sprayed aerially over crops. The wind carried some of the material onto sensitive vegetable crops causing huge losses and millions in lawsuits. Cox said he was called to testify several times in cases involving crop loss.

One of the things Cox envisioned as he

got more deeply involved in private consulting was an organization that would make the private consulting business an accepting profession with a licensing procedure and a code of ethics "so that not every fly-by-night drugstore cowboy could go out and advise growers." That came about with the creation of NAICC and REAP.

Instrumental in developing crop consulting as a bona fide agricultural career choice was Cox's two books called *The Private Practitioner* published in 1971 and *The Agricultural Consultant* published in 1982. Both contain information about the evolution of consulting as a profession, personal anecdotes and some predictions.

And while Cox's ability to predict the future direction of agriculture has had stunning accuracy - his notion of a professional organization, for example - he admits to one serious error. He never thought women would make it as crop consultants. "But I never thought some ole red neck farmers would listen to a 'girl.'" I confess I was wrong. They are

playing a great role in consulting out there in the fields," he said. ■

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

NAICC members receive 25-45 percent off the list price of the Crop Protection Reference Manual, MSDS Reference Manual, Turf & Ornamental Reference Manual, and the following electronic programs: EPR Standard, EPR Premium and EPR T&O. Contact the NAICC headquarters for more information and order forms. ■

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Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame Honoree Retires

After 37 years of university service and 34 years of private agricultural consulting (1965-99) in Louisiana sugarcane country, Dr. William "Henry" Long has retired. He spent eight years at LSU as a professor of entomology from 1957-65, and 29

years at Nicholls State as professor of biological sciences and distinguished service professor from 1965-94.

Dr. Long lives with his wife, Janice, at 8002 Sunrise Circle, Franklin, Tenn. 37067 (saccharalis@cs.com). He was honored by the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association in February

2000 by induction into the Louisiana Agriculture Hall of Fame, and at the Inter-American Sugar Cane Seminar in Miami, Fla., September 1993 with a plaque of recognition for his work in pioneering, developing and practicing Integrated Pest Management in sugarcane. ■



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