



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Phil Cochran
NAICC President

A NEW ERA

Welcome to a new era, the first issue of the *NAICC News* published in *Crop Decisions Magazine*!

It is always amazing to me how helpful and generous our sustaining members can be to organizations like ours. Lynn Henderson, CEO of Doane Agricultural Services, approached the NAICC Executive Board last fall with the idea of inserting the *NAICC News* in *Crop Decisions* (CD).

It didn't take us long to realize that by partnering, we could reach countless potential NAICC members and individuals who may be interested in becoming CPCC-certified — many of whom we haven't been able to reach on a regular basis.

This new and exciting partnership will help us work even more closely with the *American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers* (ASFMRA), since the primary audience of *Crop Decisions* is the memberships of the ASFMRA and the NAICC.

For those of you who are not familiar with us, please allow me to introduce our organization. The National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) is an organization of approximately 500 people, including independent agricultural consultants, independent agricultural research consultants and supporting industry personnel.

We have members in 41 states covering every major crop and cropping system in the United States and Canada. Our membership consists of experts in all aspects of production agriculture, integrated pest management, horticulture, sports turf, cutting edge agricultural field research, GIS

technology and biotechnology.

NAICC members are practitioners working directly for the grower and are in direct contact with the growing crop on a daily basis. Accordingly, we are acutely aware of the fragility of our environment and the necessity to use pesticides judiciously as a tool to protect North America's bountiful food supply.

Our position with our clients is not unlike that of their CPA or lawyer; our client's best interest is our best interest. Our job is to enhance the production efficiency of our clients through the environmentally prudent use of modern technology such as GIS, new pesticide compounds, GMO's, the prevention of pesticide resistance, etc.

We take the meaning of the word "independent" very seriously. To be a voting member of the NAICC, each of us must certify in writing that we have no connection to product sales of any kind. In other words, we are in the technical information transfer business only; we sell no products and have no monetary connection to the products our clients purchase.

Since we are reaching a vastly expanded audience with this issue, I would like to extend a personal invitation to everyone with an interest in production agriculture to join the NAICC. It is not necessary to be a field or research consultant. We have nine membership categories, so we can accommodate anyone who would like to join.

If you have any questions about joining, please contact any NAICC member or check out the details and apply directly from our Web site, www.naicc.org. Or contact our headquarters at 1055 Petersburg Cove, Collierville, TN 38017, (901) 861-0511 phone, (901) 861-0512 fax, or e-mail JonesNAICC@aol.com.

Certified Professional Crop Consultant (CPCC)

The certification program administered by the NAICC is the Certified Professional Crop Consultant, or CPCC. The CPCC certification has two distinct designations,

CPCC and CPCC-I. The latter, CPCC-I, stands for independent, designating the certified person as independent of product sales.

We urge anyone who is working with production agriculture to seriously consider becoming CPCC-certified. You can learn more about the value of a membership in the NAICC and the value of CPCC certification later in this issue.

Creating Agriculture Professionals of the Future

The NAICC created a closely affiliated, yet totally separate entity, which has the sole purpose of promoting the educational activities of our noble profession. This group is called the Foundation for Environmental and Agricultural Education (FEAE) and is a 501(C)(3) corporation.

FEAE is made up of a very dedicated group of individuals who are both NAICC members and friends of the NAICC. Along with financially supporting various educational functions the NAICC sponsors, the FEAE has championed an all-new graduate level educational curriculum called the Doctor of Plant Medicine (DPM).

The DPM curriculum is based on the same methodology that the veterinary medicine community has established. After graduation, the individual must serve an internship under an active practitioner before becoming officially certified as a DPM.

The intent of the DPM curriculum is to produce the technical information transfer specialist of the future. Like the DVM, these individuals will graduate with a well-rounded education in all aspects of production agriculture, such as crops, soil chemistry and soil physics, entomology, nematology, plant diseases, plant pathogens and IPM, just to name a few.

The first DPM School is now in session at the University of Florida. The FEAE is currently identifying several other universities to implement the DPM concept.

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Value of Membership in the NAICC

By Denise Wright, Chair, NAICC Newsletter Involvement Committee

First of all, what is "value?" Webster's Dictionary defines it as worth, utility, importance, precise signification. How would we, as NAICC members, define it? I would say that 95 percent of the value of membership in the NAICC is its MEMBERSHIP!

When you stop to think about all the benefits of being involved in the Alliance, the value of each is overwhelming. The NAICC and its multitude of hard-working committees are dedicated to bringing agriculture back into the "light" where it once was. At the same time that the NAICC is working to make agriculture prosperous again, it is going forward into the new millennium with high expectations of helping to educate its membership in the areas of present and future technology.

NAICC is full of elite professionals with so many different areas of expertise to network with and to lead us in the right direction. Some of these professionals were the cornerstones of the NAICC during its inception, and some have joined in recent years to bring to the Alliance that much more value!

You can be a part of the value of our membership by being an active participant in the workings of the NAICC. Many times, the value of something is found in the ways that something can work for you, and then again, it is sometimes found in the way you can work for it.

Besides benefiting from the availability of resources within the NAICC, we also benefit directly from each other. When we choose not to renew our membership, we extract some of the value from the rest of the members. Each of us has something to offer the Alliance, whether we realize it or not. If we're only a part of the organization to benefit ourselves, then maybe we should take a step back and survey the whole picture.

I believe the NAICC is a voice for all of its membership, but can only be successful with all of us behind it. Sure, you can still benefit from the accomplishments of the NAICC's hard work if you're not a member (e.g., WPS exemptions and other governmental programs or rulings which the NAICC has taken a stand for or against for the betterment of our industry). But you won't have the satisfaction of knowing you were a part of these accomplishments.

I've heard some past members say that they don't think receiving the newsletter (*NAICC News*) is enough benefit to continue their membership in the NAICC. I don't think of the newsletter as "the benefit" of being a member, but only as a perk members receive.

The real benefits, again, are the results of the hard work and dedication of members who do get involved, and who do want to see agriculture thrive and come back to its rightful place globally. We certainly can't give up on it, and sitting on the sidelines waiting, hoping someone else will do something is, in my opinion, a "cop-out."

This is by no means meant to rebuke anyone who doesn't choose to renew his or her membership in the NAICC. It's understandable that extenuating circumstances make it difficult or impossible to do the things we want to do — but if the reason for not renewing is because of a lack of self-serving favors, take a closer look at how the NAICC can benefit you and agriculture.

Remember, NAICC's MEMBERSHIP is its greatest asset; it must grow and prevail if we are to make a difference.

NAICC Membership Requirements

VOTING

Voting Members are independent crop or research consultants who provide recommendations and/or technical data for a fee that is itemized and billed to clients; and who receives no compensation from a client's purchase of products based on those recommendations and/or data. If compensated as an employee, that compensation is not subsidized or supplemented by any portion of the employer's revenue that is derived from the sale of products.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

DEGREE: Four-year college degree in an appropriate field of study (or has attained ten years or more of experience as an independent crop consultant or contract researcher).

EXPERIENCE: Minimum of four years, one year of which may be substituted by a

Masters degree or two years by a Ph.D. degree; or six years of experience in a related field may be substituted for two years experience as an independent crop consultant or contract researcher.

REFERENCES: Submit names of five individuals or other entities for whom the candidate has personally provided consultation and/or research services.

CODE OF ETHICS: Agreed in writing to conform to the Code of Ethics of the Alliance.

ASSOCIATE

Associate members are individuals who possesses a four-year college degree in an appropriate field of study (or has attained ten or more years of experience as a crop consultant or contract researcher).

Associate members must have a minimum of four years of experience as a crop consul

tant or contract researcher, one year of which may be substituted by a Masters degree or two years by a Ph.D. degree; or six years of experience in a related field may be substituted for two years experience as a crop consultant. Individuals who perform Contract Quality Assurance services or those whose service on the staff of a public institution or agency preclude Voting Membership qualify for Associate membership.

PROVISIONAL

Provisional members are individuals who wish to support the mission and goals of the Alliance. It is possible, though not necessary, to move to other membership categories when specific requirements are satisfied.

STUDENT

Student members are individuals enrolled in an academic training program.

Professional Certification – Why Do We Need It?

A collaboration by Harold Lambert BCE, CPCC-I, CPAg, Dan Bradshaw CPAg, CSp, CPCC-I, and Dennis Berglund CPAg, CPCC-I.

Certification is a challenge to one's responsibility to do what he or she can to uphold and maintain the stature of the profession — the profession of independent crop consulting.

Meeting minimum standards set by and reviewed by one's peers conveys to our consumers a level of assurance that will give them appreciation for — and confidence in — our practice of applying expertise to their good and the good of society.

Many consultants may feel that this is well and good, but since their current situation indicates that non-certification is not a problem for them, why worry about it? What they aren't realizing is that over the course of time, without standards to adhere to, the marketplace will gradually come to regard crop consulting as a technical trade rather than a professional practice.

Certification promotes the professional aspect of our business! As professionals, we must strive to maintain the flexibility to deal with complex matters in a site- and situation-specific manner, rather than going down a checklist, as technicians would.

Drawing from an article by Richard Daum, Ph.D., R.P.E., "Professional Certification of Entomologists...What is it?...Why is it needed?" ARPE News, Entomological Socie-



Harold Lambert



Dan Bradshaw



Dennis Berglund

ty of America, No. 38, May 1985, "If the marketplace, rather than the entomology (substitute crop consulting in place of entomology) profession, were allowed to set the standards, entomology (crop consulting) would soon be regarded as a technical, rather than professional, occupation.

"Not because the knowledge and training gained in colleges and universities was not marketable, but because the purchasers of entomological (crop consulting) services would have no assurance that each entomologist (crop consultant) met, and continues to meet, specific standards of practice...as prescribed by his or her peers."

"(So consequently)...each professional entomologist (crop consultant) can command reasonable compensation, which is not the right of the professional, but a privilege that must be earned by continuing to meet standards..."

Our profession transcends familiar ag-science/ag-disciplinary lines and, hopefully, is evolving in the direction of the "doctor of plant health." What has gotten us this far, to

a large extent, is the defacto "certification" of an academic degree. That won't always be the case, and may not be the case now, considering the "field-readiness" of the typical ag degree graduate.

One notable difference that the Certified Professional Crop Consultant (CPCC) has compared to the other certifications is our stringent educational standards and the requirement to maintain 36 hours of continuing education per year. In addition to the four-year degree and CEUs, CPCC also requires six years of experience, passing an exam and submitting a case study analysis.

Referencing the January, 2000, *Crop Decisions* survey, the largest 50 crop consulting firms in the nation only had 42 percent of their consultants holding certification. (The actual numbers are 181 certified out of 431 full-time professionals!) This low number exists even though the WPS law clearly states that the WPS exemption exists only if the consultant is "qualified," (which is interpreted as certified or licensed) or working under their direct supervision of a qualified advisor. True professionals should not qualify by working UNDER someone else who is certified. Professionals owe it to themselves, their profession and their clientele to GET CERTIFIED!

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL CROP CONSULTANT

Individuals meeting the standards of professional certification, established by the NAICC Certification Board, are qualified to apply for certification. Applicable standards are the following:

EDUCATION: B.S. or B.A. in Agriculture, Pest Management, or Biology. A person with a non-agricultural related four year degree and ten (10) years of consulting experience, may petition the Certification Board.

EXPERIENCE: An applicant must have a minimum of six (6) years' experience, unless the applicant has a master's degree in Agriculture, Pest Management, or Biology whereon the experience requirement is five (5) years or a doctorate degree, whereupon

the experience is four (4) years as a crop consultant providing crop management recommendations and/or technical data for a fee. That fee may be paid directly to the consultant, or to the company which employs that consultant. Two or more years of farming, scouting, or Extension experience may substitute for no more than one year of consulting experience.

EXAM: Passing a state licensing exam or a state/regional CCA exam is required. In states where no state or regional exam is offered, the national CCA exam will be accepted.

CASE STUDY ANALYSIS: An applicant must submit a case study analysis of a minimum of five (5) typewritten, double-spaced

pages that describes a crop production problem which he/she has encountered for which he/she developed a practical and logical solution, and implemented satisfactorily for his/her client.

CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS: Thirty-six (36) CEUs are required each year and are to be reported at renewal time.

REFERENCES: Applicant must submit names of five clients as references.

PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING: Applicant must document all pesticide safety training equivalent to the requirements set forth in the Worker Protection Standard.

CODE OF ETHICS: Applicants must agree to adhere to the NAICC Code of Ethics.

Relief Just Ahead for Research Consultants

NAICC research consultants will feel some relief from parts of the current Worker Protection Standard (WPS) following a recent discussion between NAICC representatives and the EPA's Certification and Worker Protection Branch.

Last month, NAICC Legislative Advisory Committee members Tim Case and Mark Jensen, NAICC Executive Vice President Allison Jones and Rob Hedberg, representing the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) met by conference call with EPA representatives to discuss the proposed exemption from the WPS for research consultants. While a formal letter is forthcoming from EPA, researchers now have a clearer picture of how WPS affects a research facility.

Since 1998, research scientists from NAICC, the WSSA, the American Phytopathological Society and the Entomology Society of America have petitioned EPA to grant an exemption from the WPS to individuals who work on research facilities. While hesitant to grant an exemption, EPA's interpretation of the current WPS guidelines allows for the uniqueness of the research setting while preserving the intent of the various requirements.

Four key areas of the WPS were identified by the researchers as having a direct conflict with general field study trials including Good Laboratory Practices. They are:

Central Posting

Central posting requirements of the WPS are meant as means for any employee on the agricultural establishment to freely obtain information about pesticide applications that have taken place within the last 30 days. The WPS specifically outlines the information that must be displayed near the safety poster in an accessible and legible fashion.

EPA has determined that the research notebook, containing the prescribed information and updated as applications are



HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

scheduled, would be sufficient to meet the WPS requirements for central posting.

Discussion centered around terms such as "freely accessible" and the confidentiality of the notebook. EPA has stated that no specific format is required for "Central Posting," but only that the information required by the WPS is freely accessible to employees. Mandatory information required at a Central Posting location includes:

- Location and description of the treated area
- Product name
- EPA registration number
- Active ingredients
- Time and date of application
- REI

Spray sheets or records, plot plans, field logs or reports printed from electronic notebooks would, in most cases, suffice as long as the above information is presented in a legible format and all employees know where they can obtain this information.

Field Notification

The petition submitted to EPA suggested that research facilities could post a general warning sign to replace the WPS requirement for written and verbal field notification. While EPA reiterated that posted warning signs were required only for a small subset of double notification products and that all other warnings could be verbal, petition supporters countered with the argument that verbal notification of all treated plots on a research facility was extremely difficult and confusing.

EPA stated that posting an entire experiment and not specific plots was already granted under the current WPS requirements for Field Notification.

While resolution was not completed on

the call, EPA did agree to consider the use of both registered and unregistered compounds on a research facility as "experimental compounds." This point was driven home by explaining that using a registered compound "off label" in a residue and efficacy trial is considered unregistered. Therefore, it is not governed by WPS requirements. This interpretation would also satisfy all concerns about WPS requirements conflicting with GLP requirements.

Restricted Entry Intervals

EPA stood by their 1996 decision to exempt certified or licensed crop advisors or those performing crop advising tasks from the WPS including REIs.

According to EPA, researchers who are certified under the NAICC Certified Professional Crop Consultant or the Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) program administered by the American Society of Agronomy are exempted from the WPS requirements with the exception of pesticide safety training. The exemption also applies to employees under the direct supervision of licensed or certified crop advisors. Each state lead enforcement agency has the authority to recognize these and other certification or licensing programs.

The WPS states that during the REI and the 30 days following the REI, qualified persons performing crop advising tasks would not be required to comply with certain requirements of the rule. Examples of crop advising tasks include assessing pest numbers or damage, pesticide distribution or the status and requirements of agricultural plants.

Follow-up

NAICC and WSSA are awaiting a formal letter from EPA that will outline the above interpretation. EPA will also issue "interpretive guidelines" to each state lead enforcement agencies on these issues.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CONT. FROM P. 11

We Hope to See YOU in Albuquerque Next January!

The annual meeting of the NAICC will be held in Albuquerque, N.M., January 23-27, 2002. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join us for five days of informative presentations, exhibits, fun and camaraderie.

For more information contact the NAICC headquarters at (901) 861-0511, (901) 861-0512 (fax) or JonesNAICC@aol.com.



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