



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Ray Young
NAICC
President

LOOKING AHEAD

This article begins my year as leader of a great organization, a great family and hundreds of individuals who are the "salt of the earth." I do this first with a great deal of thankfulness and respect for those leaders who have gone before me. Second, a forward look at what lies ahead with the many issues we as an organization face. And third, a look at the issues American agriculture faces.

I know that most who have gone before me have sacrificed their family, their business and probably their health to some extent. This was not for personal gain nor the many thanks and compliments they received along the way. No, it was for the good of the family (NAICC is a family) and for the good of American agriculture.

The issues we face as an organization are really challenges. I believe any time we accept a challenge and give it our "best" something good comes of it. Maybe we don't arrive at the point we'd like to, but good does come.

The issue of American agriculture is a great challenge. We have the most abundant, the safest and least expensive supply of food and fiber of any nation in the world. There's not even a close second! Let's not take these great blessings for granted. Complacency is dangerous!

I believe as contract researchers and consultants we have a part in this great success story. As the years go by and as the challenge of American agriculture gets greater we will have an even more important role in its success. This will be true if we as

consultants and researchers continue in an unselfish manner. That is if we put our clients' welfare above that of our own personal gain. I believe the Golden Rule—"do unto others as you would have them do unto you"—applies in all areas of life.

Let us keep our independence so that there is never a question about whose welfare we are looking after as we practice our profession.

NAICC has more talent, more "get up and go" and more entrepreneurial spirit than I see in any organization I know. This tells me that we can accomplish just about any worthy task we set out to accomplish. We have the experienced leaders and we have new members who are willing, able and ready when called upon.

It is my hope for the coming year to utilize every person who wants to contribute. If you have not been called and are willing to work on a committee or in any other capacity please let me, Allison Jones or any of the Board members know.

NAICC has been working in Washington on behalf of all its members on Technical Service Provider status. If you are not already doing so, you should be working with your State NRCS. The Conservation Title of the Farm Bill will be a great thing for American agriculture if it is properly handled. If not, it could be a great waste. We can play a role in seeing that is done to its fullest.

We have also been working toward protecting our WPS exemption as consultants and achieving exempt status for researchers. We appreciate all who took part in last year's survey which we presented to EPA. You'll be asked for more input later as we shore up our case for continued exemption.

As time goes by, more input will be required to keep products that agriculture needs in our bag of options. Who knows better than researchers and consultants which products are needed and the safety involved in using them.

I see in consultants and researchers the tremendous capacity to influence agriculture and the image of agriculture. This is not only on the local level, but with policy makers in Washington.

NAICC members, please get to know your congressman and your two senators. It is particularly important to get to know all the members of your state delegation that are on the Senate and House Ag Committees. Often there are issues that come up that affect agriculture that you need to ask your member to vote for or against. If you know that member your views are more credible.

Finally, I can't think of anyone more qualified to advise our Congress on agricultural matters than consultants and researchers. Get to know your members and their Ag staffers and you'll be surprised at what influence you might have.

Next time: more on my feelings about agriculture and our role in its great success story.

Thank you to the 2003 Annual Meeting Sponsors and Exhibitors.

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Thank you, and we wish you a prosperous 2003.

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NAICC Apparel Available at NAICC Annual Meeting

For the first time ever, NAICC will sell apparel featuring the Alliance's logo! Meeting attendees will be able to order classy sweatshirts, lightweight jackets and golf shirts during the Annual Meeting. Simply stop by the NAICC booth in the exhibit hall. Following the meeting, apparel will be available to order online at naicc.org.

Meet the New NAICC Leadership

A new year and a new team of leaders await the growing NAICC membership. This year the Alliance is proud to announce three new members to its Board of Directors: **Daryl Wyatt**, **Robin Spitko** and **Wendy Shoffner**. And reelected as Officers for a subsequent year, **Larry Sax** and **Bill Cox** will continue to provide strong leadership in 2003.

A bit about the 2003 Board...

Daryl Wyatt, a senior research scientist with Bayer CropScience in Research Triangle Park, N.C., has been a member of the NAICC for five years. He's been involved with the Allied Industry Committee since 2000, serving as committee chair in 2002.

Daryl is also a member of the Plant Pathology Society of North Carolina, the Weed Science Society of America, the Southern Weed Science Society and the Weed Science Society of North Carolina. He is a Certified North Carolina Pesticide Applicator and has been with Bayer since 1997. Prior to that time, he worked for the American Agricultural Services, Inc., and the Agronomy and Soil Department at Auburn University.

Daryl has a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy and soils and a Master of Science in weed science, both from Auburn University. He was raised on a family farm, which produced beef cattle, soybeans, wheat, grain sorghum and hay.

About NAICC, Daryl had this to say: "The NAICC is the premier organization for the independent crop consultant and contract researcher. If I could only attend one meeting a year it would, without a doubt, be the NAICC annual meeting."

Plant pathologist and owner of New England Fruit Consultants, **Robin Spitko, Ph.D.**, has been a NAICC member for 17 years. She served as secretary on the Executive Board from 1994 to 1996 and has

chaired the Legislative Advisory Committee since 1997. Robin was named NAICC Crop Consultant of the Year in 2000, and she gained her Certified Professional Crop Consultant-Independent status through the Alliance.

Owner of New England Fruit Consultants since 1982, Robin's company, based in Montague, MA, provides consulting services for tree fruit production, management and IPM, research project development and implementation and more.

Robin is a member of the American Phytopathological Society and the International Society of Horticultural Science. An adjunct professor in the University of Massachusetts' Plant and Soil Science Department, Robin has also served on the U.S. Apple Association Environmental Affairs Subcommittee, the University of Massachusetts Executive IPM Steering Committee and the Massachusetts Tree Fruit Program Advisory Committee.

She's been very active in representing crop consultants on pesticide issues through EPA and USDA committees, and in 2003 she'll be a USDA/CSREES CAR/RAMP Panel Manager.

Robin earned her Bachelor of Science degree in natural resource conservation from the University of Connecticut and both her Master of Science and Doctorate degrees in plant pathology from the University of Massachusetts.

Robin stated that her involvement with the NAICC membership has been extremely rewarding to her, both personally and professionally. "I am consistently amazed by the knowledge and entrepreneurship we (crop consultants) possess...I firmly believe that independent crop consultants possess the comprehensive and real-world knowledge to help U.S. agriculture transition to the 21st century," she said. "NAICC has gained major recognition on the national

level with various USDA agencies, EPA, and others through our committee and Executive Board efforts." Robin reinforced that she hopes to continue these activities as director of the NAICC Executive Board.

Wendy Shoffner, president and research program manager of Shoffner Farm Research, Inc., in Newport, AR, has attended NAICC's annual meeting for the past 10 years. She's been a member of the Alliance for three years and served on the newsletter involvement committee for two. Wendy also chaired the committee for a year.

Wendy is co-owner of Shoffner Farm Research, Inc. The company provides crop consulting, contract research, custom farming, and seed production and conditioning services. Her prior employment was with ICI Americas for eight years, working in research and development. She also served as treasurer for the American Crop Protection Association for five years.

Wendy has been involved in the Southern Weed Science Society, the National Cotton Council, the American Seed Trade Association, the National Soybean Association, the Arkansas Crop Protection Association, the Southern Seedsmen Association, the Arkansas Agricultural Consultants Association and the Independent Professional Seedsmen Association.

Wendy earned her Bachelor of Science degree in plant science from the University of Florida and her Master of Science degree in plant physiology from the University of California, Davis.

She believes in the Alliance's objective, "to unify and support independent agricultural consultants and researchers, and to provide a forum for information exchange within the agricultural community.

"The NAICC is a great organization with many accomplished members dedicated to its mission. I believe in the future of

the NAICC and I believe in its people," said Wendy.

Owner of Coxco Ag Services, Inc. in Las Cruces, N.M., **Bill Cox** will serve as President-Elect for 2003. He has been an NAICC member since 1992. He's attended every Annual Meeting since his first in Kansas City, 1991.

Bill was a member of the NAICC Executive Board from 1998-1999 and was elected to another two-year term in 2001. He's served on various committees, including the Annual Meeting Coordinating Committee, the Newsletter Involvement Committee, the Consultant Education Committee, the Administrative Services Committee, the Nominating Committee and the Ethics and Grievance Committee. Currently, Bill is the Board Liaison to the Newsletter and Awards Committees. He's helped raise funds for the FEAE and Dick Jensen Scholarship through auctions and various other fundraisers and has represented the Alliance at various industry events.

An Independent Crop Consultant since 1974, Bill not only owns Coxco Ag Services, Inc., he also owned H.P. Wilson Farms since 1985. He is a Certified Professional Crop Consultant - Independent (CPCCI) and a

member of the New Mexico Crop Production Association and the American Phytopathological Society.

Bill holds a Bachelor of Science in agronomy from New Mexico State University.

"The first friend I made in the NAICC was Grady Coburn," said Bill. "He pulled me aside at my first Annual Meeting in Kansas City and told me that NAICC was a family. He said that I would never regret becoming a part of the family if I would make the commitment to become active and involved. Truer words were never spoken. I consider it an honor and a privilege to be a member of this organization.

"Our efforts in Washington are bringing the desired recognition but with that recognition comes more and more opportunity. We must keep NAICC in a position to take advantage of the opportunities as they come," added Bill.

Agronomist **Larry Sax**, who owns Sax Agricultural Services in Brandon, S.D., has been a member of NAICC for 10 years. He's served as chairman and vice-chairman of the Membership Retention, Recruitment and Rules committee and as a member of the Membership Services committee. He will serve another term as secretary of the

Alliance's Executive Board.

Larry started his agronomic consulting and research business in 1999 after moving to Sioux Falls, S.D. Previously, he worked as a consultant and manager with Centrol. He is a member of the South Dakota Independent Crop Consultants Association, and was active in the Minnesota Independent Crop Consultants Association prior to relocating.

Larry earned his Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy from North Dakota State University.

Regarding his NAICC involvement, Larry said he's enjoyed serving as the secretary of NAICC the past year. "This position has provided me with an opportunity to experience the inner workings of our organization. Our organization continues to need members who are willing to help it fulfill its mission," he said, adding that he looks forward to serving again in 2003.

Others who will remain on the NAICC's Board in 2003 to complete their terms include **Al Averitt** as past president, **Bob Glodt** and **Loarn Bucl** as directors, **Bruce Niederhauser** as treasurer and **Ray Young** as president.

CONSULTING ON THE "WILD FRONTIER"

By Bill Cox

Two of my largest accounts are located just north of the Mexican border. In fact, the south boundary of their farms is the border. These farms are 140 miles southwest of Las Cruces and 50 miles from the nearest town on the U.S. side of the Border. The country is desolate, without water other than irrigation wells, and very little shade.

Things are always interesting when you get this far from civilization. The following are a few notable memories from the last 30 years:

Water Wars. There is a little Mexican village just to the south of the farms. When I first started working this area (in 1974) there was no electricity and no water on the Mexican side of the border. Ralph Johnson, who owned the farm just north of the village, took it upon himself to run a water line from one of his irrigation wells to the village. All he asked was that the people in the village pay the electric bill on the pump that supplied them water.

This arrangement worked well for 10 years or so. One day, for some unknown reason, the village decided to stop paying for the electricity. After several months and many threats, Mr. Johnson shut the water off.

I started working for the Johnsons about three months after the water was cut off. When Mr. Johnson hired me, he made it clear that I was to come to his headquarters and pick up one of his boys to ride with me

each time I checked fields. At first I thought it was because he didn't trust me to do the job. It was (and still is) common to carry firearms in this part of the country so I never questioned the boys as to why they all carried rifles.

It didn't take long to figure that out.

There is something about hauling drinking water for 25 miles (one way) in the heat of the summer that makes a person irascible. The folks going after water couldn't resist the urge to shoot at anyone they saw on the north side of the border. The folks being shot at couldn't resist the urge to return fire. The consultant laying face down in the cotton row had a hard time remembering his worm counts until the shooting was over.

Alien Invasion. Illegal aliens are an everyday occurrence along the border. It is a constant game of cat and mouse between them and the U.S. Border Patrol. The border is nothing more than a barbed wire fence that is down more than it is up.

Early one morning I was checking milo fields. The milo had lapped the rows and I couldn't see the ground. The morning was still and the only sound was from a Border Patrol airplane circling around looking for illegals. I didn't think there was another living soul around for miles. I was well into a 100-acre field, walking up the rows, when I tripped and fell face down — right on top of

a man laying face up in the furrow. We were nose to nose, both yelling at the top of our lungs and trying to get our feet under us. When I finally got my footing and stood up, there must have been 50 people running in all directions. So much for the "serene" morning.

I Hate Pumpkins. The reason I hate pumpkins is because rattlesnakes love pumpkins. The large leaves provide shade and attract rodents, much to the rattlesnakes' delight. I never go into a pumpkin patch without a pistol, and I frequently use it.

One day I was working my way carefully through a field of almost-ripe pumpkins when I felt something hit my leg just below the top of my boot. I looked down and saw a four-foot snake attached to my pant leg. He wanted loose and I wanted him loose. I jumped, kicked, screamed and shot. He coiled, rattled, and followed my every move. After what seemed an eternity, the snake came loose and slithered off through the pumpkin vines and spent .45 cartridges.

I rolled up my pant leg to look for fang marks. There were none visible so I figured I had gotten lucky. Within 10 minutes my leg started to ache so I rolled up my pants and looked again. Still no fang marks. My leg continued to ache and I continued to examine it the remainder of the day. It is really a miracle that I didn't shoot myself that day.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES

MACA Takes Stand for Technical Service Providers

By Marianna Hayes, Communications Specialist for MACA

In recent years, the Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association (MACA) has maintained that a major function of their organization is to explore new opportunities that might prove profitable for their membership. The Association then equips their members with the tools and information needed to pursue these opportunities. One area of emerging opportunity for Mississippi consultants is through the provision of technical service via the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

As you know, the Natural Resources Conservation Service held a live telecast from Washington D.C. on September 12, 2002, to present preliminary insight into their forthcoming rules regarding technical service providers.

Due to MACA's involvement in this issue for at least the last two years, and a Memorandum of Understanding with this agency that has existed nearly that long, Delmer Stamps, State Resource Conservationist, invited MACA representatives to the September session. MACA member Jeff North, along with Communications Specialist Marianna Hayes, represented MACA at the forum in Jackson and participated in the

question and answer session that followed. According to information provided at the forum and subsequent conversations with our state NRCS officers, the NRCS on federal and state levels seeks to implement policies regarding technical service providers, formerly known as third-party vendors. Meanwhile, the organization plans to maintain sufficient permanent, full-time federal staff to carry out the core functions of the agency.

Additional technical assistance needed to address the workload caused by the new Farm Bill will be market-driven. Private-sector technical service providers will receive first priority or emphasis under the program, followed by public agencies, temporary federal staff and full-time federal staff.

Qualifying individuals (as determined by the State Conservationist) must be certified as technical service providers. Certification criteria are already in place for Conservation Planning, Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans and Conservation Planning that includes pest management. For certification in all other areas, the State Conservationist will establish criteria. The NRCS will assess fees to recover the costs of certifying individuals.

Technical service providers will be paid based on the concept of "additional." This means that technical service providers will be paid to provide additional technical services above and beyond what was in place

on May 13, 2002, when the 2002 farm bill became law.

Once again, the NRCS views the private sector as their priority source for technical services. The government will pay the program participant who, in turn, hires and pays the private sector technical service provider.

Technical service providers will be responsible for assuring that all technical services meet NRCS policies, procedures, technical criteria and USDA program requirements. The Designated Conservationist (in the district NRCS office) will provide certification for program payments. This does NOT include certifying technical quality.

Technical service providers will be responsible for several regulatory matters. They must work with their clients (program participants) to ensure that all approvals, authorities, permits, etc. are obtained. And the technical service provider must provide technical certification after compliance with all federal, state, tribal and local laws and requirements.

Each state NRCS agency will establish its own quality assurance plans, policies and procedures. However, the bottom line is that technical service providers are legally responsible for the services they provide.

NEW MEMBER PROFILE

James E. Todd Agri-Search, Inc. Plainview, TX

NAICC welcomes James as a new member and attendee of the 2002 Annual Meeting in Albuquerque. He is an assistant research manager and agronomist for Agri-Search, Inc., in Plainview, Texas.

Agri-Search is a contract research company that specializes in efficacy testing and GLP research, including soil dissipation studies. It is also a consulting firm that provides information on soil fertility, weed control, IPM, irrigation management, variety selection and harvest management. Cotton, corn, grain sorghum, wheat, alfalfa, sunflowers and soybeans are crops serviced by consultants at Agri-Search.

James earned a Bachelor of Science degree in agronomy from Texas Tech University. He currently serves as president of the High Plains Association of Crop Consultants.

When asked about anticipated changes within the agriculture industry in coming years, James responded, "I believe tremendous change in the agriculture industry will occur over the next ten years. With the sale of chemicals over the Internet, dealers are

struggling for business and are offering additional services (such as scouting) to try to maintain their market share. In many areas, consultants are struggling to compete with these free scouting services.

"Also, with all the chemical company mergers and consolidations, there are fewer and fewer companies manufacturing pesticides. This puts an additional strain on the contract researchers, because very few new chemicals are being developed, as competition has been limited and fewer new products are being tested. All of these factors will have a tremendous effect on the members of the NAICC. Our success in many instances will depend on organizations such as the NAICC, which educates and promotes independent consultants and researchers to legislators, regulatory agencies and the chemical industry. Even so, many unforeseen changes will occur in our industry."

James said he joined the NAICC "to become active in an organization that supports the needs and goals of independent crop consultants." His interests within the NAICC include membership recruitment, newsletter involvement and membership services.

IPM Symposium Scheduled for April 8-10, 2003

"Building Alliances for the Future of IPM," the fourth national IPM symposium and workshop, will be held in Indianapolis this spring. All disciplines related to IPM are encouraged to attend the meeting, which will include workshops, debates, speakers, posters and more. Visit conted.uiuc.edu/ipm for more information, or email ipmsymposium@ad.uiuc.edu.



**National
Alliance of
Independent
Crop Consultants**

Allison Jones
Brenda Weber

Executive Vice President
Managing Editor

349 E. Nolley Drive / Collierville, TN 38017
Phone: (901) 861-0511 / Fax: (901) 861-0512
E-mail: JonesNAICC@aol.com
www.naicc.org

Ray Young

President

Box 648 / 521 Hope Street / Wisner, LA 71378
Phone: (318) 724-6287 / Fax: (318) 724-6347
E-mail: RDYoung@3g.quik.com