

Peter Fitzgerald, Illinois
Saxby Chambliss, Georgia
Norm Coleman, Minnesota
Mike Crapo, Idaho
James M. Talent, Missouri
Elizabeth Dole, North Carolina
Charles E. Grassley, Iowa

Democrat

Tom Harkin, Iowa, Ranking Democratic Member
Patrick J. Leahy, Vermont
Kent Conrad, North Dakota
Thomas A. Daschle, South Dakota

Max Baucus, Montana
Blanche Lincoln, Arkansas
Zell Miller, Georgia
Debbie Stabenow, Michigan
E. Benjamin Nelson, Nebraska
Mark Dayton, Minnesota

The lecture's over. I sure hope you're making plans to attend our yearly conference this January in New Orleans. We are poised for great things during this Annual Meeting, too. The excellent program, outstanding, informative speakers and a chance to learn from your fellow members will

make all the effort and cost worthwhile. (All you Southern consultants and researchers can drive and bring your families!)

We'll have fun at the Friday night Mardi Gras party. Come enjoy New Orleans food - it's the tastiest in the world! And get ready to enjoy the many interesting and educational activities New Orleans offers.

With this newsletter, you'll find your conference packet. Please register and reserve your room at the Hyatt - you can't afford to miss the 2004 NAICC Annual Meeting!

See you in New Orleans.

Top Twenty Reasons to Attend the NAICC Annual Meeting

By Denise Wright

In no particular order...

1. Network with fellow crop consultants and research consultants
2. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the Big Easy
3. Take advantage of the opportunity to talk one-on-one with our industry and sponsor representatives
4. Savor wonderful Cajun and Creole food
5. Obtain valuable information from experts in various fields of the agriculture industry
6. Tour a traditional southern plantation
7. Keep abreast of the rapidly changing technology in agriculture
8. Maybe see a real alligator in the swamp
9. Be proactive with industry leaders and government personnel (e.g., USDA,
10. EPA) who have influence over agricultural programs
10. Cruise up and down the Mighty Mississippi on a paddle wheel boat
11. Get involved in the NAICC as an active member, which will benefit you first, but will also be advantageous to your fellow members and the agriculture community as a whole
12. Experience soulful blues and jazz
13. Learn what types of certification are available so you can better serve your clients and gain prestige in the industry
14. See King Ray and Queen Dorothy Young arrive on an authentic Mardi Gras float
15. Visit with old and new friends who have come to be part of the NAICC family
16. Tour the largest enclosed stadium in the world — the Louisiana Superdome
17. Take advantage of the New Members Campaign and complimentary registration by signing up as a new member or encouraging a friend or co-worker to join
18. Enjoying unsurpassed entertainment — both at the Meeting and out and about in New Orleans
19. Experience the “one of a kind” culture New Orleans has to offer
20. Experience the “one of a kind” culture NAICC has to offer

Register Now for NAICC Annual Meeting

Visit www.naicc.org and click on 2004 Annual Meeting to register for the convention online. And while you're there, click on <http://www.neworleans.hyatt.com/group-booking/nacc> to book your rooms online, too.

Please remember to take advantage of the special new program brought to you by NAICC and **Syngenta Crop Protection**: you could receive \$10 cash back if you stay at the Hyatt! Just reserve your room at the hotel and, upon checking in, you'll receive

a special NAICC key card.

Those staying at least three nights at the Hyatt, and who are among the first 250 people to register at the NAICC meeting and show their key, will receive \$10 in cash or check from the NAICC at registration.

Sponsor Interaction Centers Ensure Time, Place for Important Meetings

With tremendous response to the Sponsor Interaction Centers (SIC) available to Sustaining Members in recent years, NAICC is again providing these special areas at the 2004 Annual Meeting.

The SIC program provides specific areas for Sustaining Members and research contractors to meet. At registration, attendees

sign up to meet Sustaining Members at their SICs at appointed times, thus ensuring plans for upcoming research trials and other key information are shared. (Previously, this business was “conducted” through informal chats in hallways - with the SIC program such matters don't have to be left to chance!)

Two options are available for SICs, both

at the Hyatt: a hospitality suite or a small meeting room. (There may be a hotel charge for meeting rooms; confer with NAICC Headquarters when registering.)

Reminder to attendees: sign up for SIC appointments will take place at Annual Meeting registration in New Orleans.

Brush Up on New Orleans Trivia & Win a Prize!

As the Crescent City Annual Meeting approaches, be sure to participate in our trivia contest for a chance to win a prize at the Annual Meeting.

Simply be the first to contact NAICC Headquarters with the correct answer to the following questions:

New Orleans has the longest over-water bridge in the world. What is its name and how long is it?

Louisiana's state Capitol is the tallest in the nation - how tall is it?

Congratulations to **Stan Viator**, last month's winner!

Dues Payable Online!

It's that time again - please remember to pay your membership dues and your certification renewal fees (you may want to take advantage of the option to pay online by going to www.naicc.org).

This is an important investment in your business, and in your credibility as a consultant, researcher or sustaining member. NAICC appreciates your support!

Send in Your Nomination for Consultant of the Year!

It's not too late to nominate a colleague or yourself for the 2004 Crop Consultant of the Year awards. Three deserving individuals, each representing a different geographic area, will be selected to receive the award, sponsored by the NAICC and BASF.

Rewards for the three Consultants of the Year will include a plaque and special

recognition during the NAICC's President's Lunch and Awards Ceremony held in conjunction with the NAICC Annual Meeting.

The winners will also receive editorial recognition in *Ag Professional* magazine and in *NAICC News*. As part of the award, winners' 2004 Annual Meeting costs (travel, hotel, meal and registration) will be covered.

Applications can be downloaded from the NAICC Web site (www.naicc.org). (All applications will be reviewed by the NAICC awards committee, and five finalists will be selected. A committee of NAICC members and representatives from BASF and *Ag Professional* magazine will then select the three winners.)

Members: Look Out for NAICC Survey

NAICC members will soon receive this year's survey, again conducted **Doane Agricultural Services**. This time the survey incorporates questions submitted by Sustaining Members, in an effort to provide us with information to educate, attract and keep current and future industry supporters.

Survey results will be made available to Sustaining Members so they can update colleagues on consultant activities.

Ballots for 2004 Candidates Coming Soon

NAICC voting members will soon receive ballots for 2004 candidates. The Nominating Committee, which spent the summer compiling the candidate roster, informing the group of particular roles and finalizing the candidate slate, encourages all members to be active in the leadership selection process.

Please take the time to make informed voting choices by studying the information you receive, and be sure to postmark your

ballot by the deadline so the process can move smoothly and efficiently.

Candidates have been chosen from varying geographies and from the contract research and crop production consultant fields based on their participation in NAICC. Involvement in the Annual Meeting and committee performance are key considerations. (*Consult current NAICC leaders to learn how you can be more active in NAICC's future success.*)

NAICC Works to Resolve TSP Program Issues

A number of issues, including the TechReg website programming problems, have delayed or impaired NAICC members' opportunities to take advantage of the Natural Resource Conservation Services' Technical Service Providers program.

NAICC has taken action to address these issues, submitting comments and recommendations to the NRCS to resolve the roadblocks preventing qualified members from providing TSP services.

Below is a recap of the issues preventing participation:

- Despite the Memorandum of Understanding between NAICC and NRCS allowing the Alliance to serve as a certifying organization for technical service providers, NAICC member names have not been posted on the TechReg Website. In addition, members registering independently of NAICC remain in the "pending" category.
- According to the NRCS website, eight groups have signed MOUs - and only one of them is allowed to automatically be listed on the TechReg website. Given that several organizations have been involved in developing the program, the site should

have been designed to accommodate more than one certifying organization.

- The Not-to-Exceed rates presented at the September 17, 2003 meeting of the Certifying Organization Coalition meeting are not realistic. In some instances, NRCS would pay TSPs only 0.035% of its own costs of operation, based on figures that have been published recently.
- As written currently, the individual TSP shoulders the entire liability burden for errors committed by any individual involved in implementing conservation plans.

NAICC proposed the following changes to the NRCS earlier this month:

- The Alliance requested that NRCS redesign the current TechReg website, allowing all certifying organizations the same access and exposure by October 31, 2003.
- NAICC requested that all TSPs be required to adhere to the same qualifying requirements and timeframe to become current on performance requirements. (Currently, NAICC and organizations signing MOUs after ours are required to have members qualify under TSP Performance Proficiencies written by NRCS's Science and Technology Division.)

- The Not-to-Exceed rates should be changed to encourage participation. The current not-to-exceed rates do not reflect the cost analysis data NRCS requested from our members to develop rates.

NAICC also requested that NRCS hold additional meetings with stakeholders to develop realistic, fair and equitable Not-To-Exceed Rates for all involved in conservation planning and technical assistance.

- NAICC recommended that NRCS standards should be used as the guideline to determine if there is a liability, and if recommendations fall within these standards, no liability should be assigned to the TSP.

In addition, if training was delivered by the NRCS or Cooperative Extension and was sanctioned by the state NRCS, NAICC proposed that liability also rest on the entity that sanctioned the training.

As this newsletter goes to press, NAICC and NRCS representatives are discussing the concerns outlined above via conference call. Stay tuned for further updates regarding the TSP program.

A Dying Breed - I Don't Think So... (A Positive Perception of the Contract Research Business)

By Denise Wright

Over the past few years, I have heard numerous times, "Looks like the contract researcher is going to become extinct." This opinion stems from the fact that more and

more of our agchem companies are merging, being purchased outright by other agchem/pharmaceutical companies or simply losing products due to depressed mar-

keting, EPA denial on registration or re-registration, etc.

It's true that many contract research businesses have shut their doors or are in

the process of selling out for whatever reason, but I believe the majority of us are going to be all right. My opinion is generated from a positive perception that the remaining agchem companies (and I optimistically look for new ones to emerge with biotech leading the way in today's society) need our contract research services now more than ever.

The harsh truth is that with mergers and acquisitions, some really valuable people lose their jobs. Sadly, many of them were best suited for those jobs but they're either close to retirement or at the top of the pay schedule, so they're replaced with less experienced employees who earn less and (often) do less. Or the position is simply left vacant.

This is one area we, as contract researchers, can overcome. Sponsor companies can contract research out to us with significantly less expense than an in-house representative might cost. (By using us, companies avoid overhead, such as salaries, expense budgets, insurance, retirement, materials, land rent, etc.) Companies can come to us and get everything they need at a

fraction of the cost.

That's not to say I want to see anyone lose their job so we can get more of the work. I miss the camaraderie of some that have gone on to other careers, those who were very successful in their agchem careers, and some who have helped me grow personally and professionally.

But, the truth is, this is the turn the agchem industry has taken. So this is where we have to exhibit our professionalism to ensure we are looked upon with respect and confidence. We need to make these agchem sponsors aware of our dedication to quality research by showing an interest in their endeavors.

Upon initially learning of potential studies to be conducted, we should offer our expertise (i.e. knowledge of producing specific crops, experience with application/sampling equipment, etc.) to those responsible for setting up and running studies. Let's extend our assistance in drafting protocols, formatting field notebooks, locating potential study sites and other facets of conducting a study.

Most of you would agree that a lot of our

agchem contacts have extensive chemistry backgrounds but have never been out in the field. We (contract researchers and agchem company representatives) can work closely together to make the agricultural research arena thrive once again.

So I challenge you, as contract researchers, to take the lead in developing a strong relationship with your agchem representatives rather than retreating to some other career because of "down times" in agriculture.

And keep encouraging your children and other students to carry out your profession.

Let's not allow ourselves to become a dying breed – let's become a complement to the agchem industry, which I believe we've been doing all along.

I remember a mentor saying to me years ago, "If you do your best in whatever is required of you, and make your (industry) rep look good in the process, he (or she) will be back year after year." Isn't that what we're supposed to be doing anyway – consultants and contract researchers – making our clients look good...



**National Alliance
of Independent
Crop Consultants**

349 E. Nolley Drive • Collierville, TN 38017

Allison Jones Executive Vice President
Brenda Weber 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: RYoung@3g.quik.com

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NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Ray Young
NAICC
President

Poised for Great Things

Harvest is winding down in our part of the country for corn, cotton, rice and soybeans. Sugar cane harvest has just begun.

Things never seem to wind down at NAICC, though. We were finally able to get researchers exempt from the WPS after a long struggle. We are still in the process of getting monitoring profiles for EPA. This charge is being led by **Dennis Berglund**, and we will probably have a meeting with Don Eckerman and his staff at EPA sometime in late November or early December.

Hopefully, we'll come away with assurance that our exemption from the WPS will stand.

Our status as Technical Service Providers (TSP) with NRCS is not yet nailed down. We signed a Memorandum of Understanding with NRCS in June, making us one of the certifying organizations. However, we are not yet listed on their website. But we have good people working of this one and no doubt this will be resolved. Unless something is done about the pay for TSPs, I can't imagine there will be much interest in doing the work.

Harold Lambert and I will meet with Don Gohmert, Louisiana's State Conservationist, and Bob Odom, our Commissioner of Agriculture, to discuss some of the problems with getting the program going. **Al Averitt** recently went to Washington to meet with NRCS. Thanks to Al and to all of you who have spent valuable time working for NAICC, and all without a per diem!

Our organization is poised for great

things. I have mentioned this subject before but I want to get down to where the rubber meets the road. That is the subject of getting to know your members in Congress, especially those on the Agriculture Committee. We have lots of sharp minds in NAICC, so let's put them to good use for Agriculture.

When Ag issues come up, if every member of the Ag Committee had a call from an intelligent, well informed constituent, imagine what would happen. Who can better relate the needs of Agriculture than consultants? We're out there everyday. We know the problems and often have good ideas about solutions. Why shouldn't we call our member of the Ag Committee and make suggestions?

Most of them would appreciate hearing from us.

We will be working on a new Farm Bill before you realize it. Our numbers in Agriculture are getting smaller so it will be necessary for all of us to be more informed so we can provide useful input.

Please get to know your members of Congress and develop a relationship before you need them. Establish credibility; it doesn't come over night.

Below you'll find a list of House and Senate Ag Committee members. E-mail me and tell me who your members are. The first person to respond gets a prize! Our Legislative Advisory Committee will be glad to know you're doing this.

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