



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By **Bill Cox**  
NAICC  
President

## Are They Teaching Us What We Need to Know?

I graduated from New Mexico State University in 1972 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy. Once I got in the crop consulting profession, it didn't take me long to realize that there were a whole lot of things I didn't know that I should have known.

I toyed with the idea of going back to school in the "off" season to pick up some classes that might be useful but never got it done. Fortunately, I was able to use my B.S. (degree) to stay gainfully employed but I always wondered what additional classes I should have taken.

My formal education was extremely light on Entomology. If I knew then what I know now, I would have taken every "bug" course I could find. And I would have spent a lot more time with Plant Pathology and Soil Chemistry if I had known that I would be spending the rest of my life diagnosing plant disease and fertility problems.

These "educational gaps" are fairly predictable and probably aren't news to many

of you, but I can think of several areas that a good crop consultant should consider studying - and they aren't so obvious.

A good crop consultant should know everything there is to know about ornamental plants (house plants). I can't tell you how many hours I've spent trying to figure out what is wrong with "Mrs. Smith's" houseplant.

"Mr. Smith" is the farmer and the one who employs me but "Mrs. Smith" is the bookkeeper and the one who signs the checks. While it's good to have "Mr. Smith" thinking that you know what you're talking about, it's critical that "Mrs. Smith" thinks you're competent.

I think it would also be useful to educate potential crop consultants in Landscape Design. I have spent countless hours over the last 30 years walking around clients' yards advising them on what plants should be planted where and how to design irrigation systems, etc. I can't really charge for all of this advice but it all goes into establishing credibility with the one who signs the checks.

I think a little marriage counseling experience would be useful to a crop consultant, too. I have two clients who have been married five times, one who is on his fourth marriage and several on the second or third. I have managed to stay married to number one for 30 years so that automatically makes me an expert in the eyes of some of these folks. Thus, I am often asked for advice that I am not qualified to give.

Investment counseling and taxation are other subjects that draw lots of questions from my clients. Growing vegetables can be a lot like winning the lottery if things go

right! So sometimes my clients get a pile of money all at once. A casual observer would think I have a master's degree in dance if they saw me "dancing" around the question when a client asks what he should do with the million dollars he just made on his lettuce.

Psychology is another area that would complement a consultant's education. A consultant must gain the trust of his or her client, and reading people is a key element in gaining that trust. I can look back over the years and recall times when my life would have been a whole lot easier if I had known a little more about reading people. I passed up a lot of good business before I learned that not everybody sees things exactly like I do.

There are lots of other things a consultant needs to know. You need to be well versed on the latest farm equipment, kitchen cabinet styles, house colors, swimming pool and hot tub design, animal health, weather, wells and pumping systems, wildlife habitat, markets, transportation systems, vacation spots, hunting, fishing, computers, the internet, cell phones, etc.

On second thought, maybe it isn't the educational system's responsibility to prepare us for the consulting profession. I have often heard the expression "live and learn." We in the consulting profession are lucky to be exposed to the brightest minds and best folks in the world. We are fortunate to have the chance to live among these people and learn what they have to teach us and then pass that knowledge on to others.

This "additional" education that I have been pondering can be summed up in one word: life. And boy what a wonderful life it is.

*I'll see you folks in Los Angeles.*

## NAICC Introduces New Member Boot Camp at 2005 Annual Meeting

This year's meeting marks the introduction of a special program designed to ensure new members maximize their membership in the NAICC.

Anything but strenuous, NAICC's first-ever

"Boot Camp" will provide all new members, and those who've joined within the last two years, a fun and interactive way to learn more about our organization and its members.

Attendees will hear from NAICC president

Bill Cox and will learn more about the history of the organization, its Board, NAICC's Foundation, committees and more. To top it off, a surprise networking activity - sure to provide plenty of laughs - is on tap!

# Annual Meeting Promises Even Greater Insight with Introduction of Additional Programs

There's still time to book a ticket and head to NAICC's Annual Meeting!

If you miss this key yearly event, you'll miss new programs, including the introduction of concurrent breakout sessions. The opportunity to attend three breakout sessions – rather than the traditional two – will ensure consultants and researchers a greater opportunity to increase their insight.

You'll also miss a line-up of speakers who'll share expertise directly relevant to consultants' and researchers' business needs and the growth of our industry as a whole. Among them are keynote speaker Patrick J. Donnelly, Ph.D., who serves as senior vice president of CropLife America and Dr. Pete Goodell, regional IPM Advisor for Kearney Agricultural Center (University of California, Riverside).

Joel Cape and Jeff Masson of Frilot, Partridge, Kohnke & Clements, a law firm in New Orleans, will present "Anatomy of a Lawsuit."

Still wavering on attending? Consider the value you'll gain through insightful workshops offered in conjunction with the Annual Meeting. Many people have worked hard to pull these workshops together around the meeting timeframe so members can avoid additional travel throughout the year.

Following is a list of workshops that will take place at the meeting in California:

**ARM 7 Tips and Techniques Workshop** – January 19, 8:00 a.m. to noon. Register by January 12 (email [francine@gdmdata.com](mailto:francine@gdmdata.com) or call (785) 565-0793.)

**First Detectors Certification** – January 19, 9 to 11 a.m. Register online at [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org).

**Dangerous Goods Training** – Initial and revalidation training sessions will be offered at various times and dates during the meet-

ing. Contact NAICC Headquarters for more information.

**GLP Refresher Course** – January 18, 1 to 5 p.m. Contact NAICC Headquarters for more information.

If you still aren't convinced you must attend the Annual Meeting, consider the prizes you'll miss if you elect to stay home this year!

This year's meeting attendees will walk off with more prizes than ever with three raffles on the agenda:

- A raffle will be held during Friday night's elegant, L.A. style dinner. (Where else can you win prizes and rub elbows with the Rat Pack???)

The money raised through this raffle will help fund the Richard L. Jensen, Ph.D., Scholarship, the FEAE general fund and the Dads in D.C. program. Prizes will be on display in the Exhibit Hall throughout the meeting.

- Back by popular demand, the Exhibit Hall Extravaganza's raffle will feature prizes donated by more than 40 exhibitors!
- Last, a special Sustaining Members Only raffle will provide a great opportunity for companies to shine by donating toward special prizes like tickets to Universal Studios Hollywood, a desert/jeep tour, restaurant gift certificates and more.

Among the other Annual Meeting gems you won't want to miss are the networking lunches, where you can be sure you address the topics you want to cover with your colleagues during this year's Annual Meeting. After all, you only get to see some of these

folks once a year!

The Networking Luncheon program is ideal for in-depth discussions on specific topics. Simply sign up to attend the lunch discussion that interests you when you check in at the registration desk in California, or submit an idea for a meeting

by contacting NAICC Headquarters prior to the meeting.

Another opportunity to connect with key meeting attendees is the Sponsor Interaction Center program. Be sure to sign up at registration for an appointment with a Sustaining Member Company to address your 2005 research plans and other business.

And, of course, be sure to enjoy informally catching up on the year's activities during coffee breaks in the Exhibit Hall!

NAICC's Annual Meeting truly provides its members a great opportunity to start the year off on the right foot with plenty of information, interaction and fun. If you haven't already, make your arrangements to join us by clicking your way there:

To register for the Annual Meeting, visit <http://www.naicc.org/meeting/index.cfm>

If you're a new member of the NAICC, you receive complimentary registration courtesy of **Bayer CropScience!** Visit <http://www.naicc.org/joinus.cfm> for details.

To make hotel reservations, visit: <http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/NAICCJAN05>.

For airport shuttle information and coupons, visit <http://www.naicc.org/meeting/Shuttlecoupon.pdf>.

## Donations of Raffle Prizes Still Welcome!

Want to help make sure our raffles are more successful than ever?

Consider donating a prize! From jewelry and handmade clothing to wine, trips, hotel or condo stays and more, your generosity will be placed toward a great cause.

Contact NAICC Headquarters if you want to participate.

## Many Thanks to 2005 Annual Meeting Sponsors, Exhibitors

NAICC's upcoming Annual Meeting will truly be one of the best we've ever held, thanks to the depth of support we've received from our sponsors and exhibitors.

This level of involvement and generosity is not only appreciated, it is essential to the continued success of our industry.

### 2005 SPONSORS

#### BASF

- Consultant of the Year Award

#### Bayer CropScience

- New Members Campaign
- Annual Meeting T-Shirts

#### Cerexagri, Inc.

- Continental Breakfast

#### Delta and Pine Land Seed Company

- President's Luncheon/Awards Ceremony

#### Dow AgroSciences

- New Members' and First Timers' Reception
- Executive Board Breakfast

#### DuPont Agriculture and Nutrition

- Annual Meeting Program and Printed Materials
- Audio Visual Support

#### Emergent Genetics, Inc.

- Coffee Break

#### FMC Corporation

- Rat Pack Dinner Party

#### Helena Chemical Company

- Coffee Break

#### Monsanto Company

- New Members' Boot Camp
- Registration Welcome Bags
- Audio Visual Support

#### Syngenta Crop Protection

- Exhibit Hall Extravaganza Wine Tasting

#### Valent USA

- NAICC Ball caps

#### Cotton Farming/Vance Publishing

- Coffee Break

## 2005 EXHIBITORS

ABC Laboratories  
Ag Leader Technology  
*AgProfessional Magazine*  
AgRenaissance Software LLC  
Ag Terra Technology  
AGVISE Laboratories  
AMVAC Chemical Corporation  
BASF  
Bayer CropScience  
Capstan-Wilger  
Cerexagri, Inc.  
Delta and Pine Land Company  
Dow AgroSciences, LLC  
DTN Agricultural Division

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*Farm Press*  
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Precision Farming Enterprises  
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Power Technology Solutions  
Servi-Tech Laboratories  
Spectrum Technologies  
Sunrise Software  
Stoller Enterprises, Inc.  
Syngenta Crop Protection  
Syngenta Seeds  
Valent USA  
Vaughn Ag Research Services, Ltd.

Please extend your thanks to the sponsors and exhibitors listed, and look for additional names to appear in the Annual Meeting program as companies continue to sign up for booth spaces!

***Have a wonderful holiday and a prosperous 2005!***

## PERSPECTIVE OF A NEW BOARD MEMBER

*By Paul Gronenberg*

My first NAICC Board Meeting in January, 2004, was a whirlwind and a fog. It was like a first-time race driver starting out at full speed in the fog with no idea what the course is. In retrospect it was a little like my first year in the consulting business.

However, the team approach of the NAICC Board quickly became apparent as they helped lift me out of the fog to focus on the course at hand. This was critical because of the multitude of issues that need to be discussed by the NAICC Board.

The dedication of those serving on the

NAICC Board is unmistakable. The time, talent and financial resources committed by each board member are phenomenal. It gave me a deeper appreciation for those now serving, but especially for those who have served in the past. All of these professionals have helped build the foundation of the NAICC so there will be a solid base on which to build the future.

These are some of the reasons why you will benefit from becoming involved in the activities of the NAICC. When you become an ACTIVE member of this team, you will

become a stronger consultant and business manager. The building blocks for your future as a consultant are:

1. Attending the NAICC Annual Meeting.
2. Networking with your fellow professionals.
3. Requesting to be on a committee (you did not grow your business by waiting for your clients to come to you).
4. Serving as a committee chairperson.
5. Running for a board position.

As you accomplish these goals, you will continue to grow as a professional and as a person. TAKE THE NEXT STEP NOW!!

## 2004 FALL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The NAICC Executive Board met in Kansas City November 11-13, for its 2004 Fall Board meeting. Hosted by **Bayer CropScience**, the meeting was held at the company's Environmental Research facilities, part of the Bayer Research Park in Stilwell, KS.

There, Board members had the opportunity to meet with Richard Allen, the Manager of Residue – Soil and Water, and Mike Persell, NAFTA Product Complaint Manager.

Business items addressed by the Board included the election of three new members to the FEAE Board. **Al Averitt**, **Dan Bradshaw** and **Don Jameson** were selected to fill the three-year terms. Their first official meeting will be in January, when they and the other six Board members convene during the 2005 NAICC Annual Meeting in Universal City, CA.

**Madeline Mellinger**, FEAE President, joined the Executive Board via conference call. She updated the Board on the FEAE's visit to four Midwestern universities to introduce the organization's Doctor of Plant Medicine program, reporting interest from two of them. Mellinger also noted that the FEAE has developed a PowerPoint presentation to promote its DPM program.

Other Board business included approval of the site for the 2007 Joint Meeting with ASFMRA. It will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, GA, February 14-18, 2007.

Plans are already underway for this exciting event, wherein NAICC's Annual Meeting will take place in the same hotels as the yearly meetings of the **American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers** and the **American Society of Agricultural Consultants**.

At the meeting the three groups will come together for a joint tradeshow and Plenary Session/luncheon. The three organizations have also agreed to hold their meeting concurrently in 2008.

Also during the fall meeting, Board members reviewed the preliminary 2005 Annual Meeting program for final approval.

Another Soybean Rust presentation was added to the agenda, given the importance of educating the membership on this topic.

A final item of Board business was the opportunity to meet with Tom Quade, John Steffel and Terry Mize from **FMC Corporation** and **Syngenta Seeds'** Mark Jirak to discuss the value of NAICC members to Sustaining Members and to answer any questions or concerns.

## Welcome, 2005 Officers and Directors

Over the years, NAICC has blossomed under the strength of its leadership - talented men and women who've helped ensure we're a strong, viable voice in Washington.

We can only expect that voice to grow louder as we move into 2005 with our new leaders, a talented and dedicated group of officers and directors. We're proud to con-

gratulate - and welcome — the following individuals in their new roles:

President Elect: **Dan Easton**  
Secretary: **Orvin Bontrager**  
Directors: **Bob Glodt**  
**Jim Steffel**  
**Daryl Wyatt**

We're also pleased to note that more than 51 percent of NAICC's voting membership participated in electing these officers! They will be inaugurated during NAICC's upcoming Annual Meeting.

## NAICC Approves On-Line CEUs

NAICC has accredited a pair of online continuing education courses offered by **Farm Press** on its new website as well as the website of Farm Press' Far West publication.

The courses, "California's New Groundwater Protection Laws" and "Spray Drift Management", were developed by the Farm Press editorial staff using a variety of resources from the University of California, University of Arizona, California Department of Pesticide Regulation, the Arizona Department of Agriculture and others.

The courses are sponsored online by **Bayer CropScience** and **Valent USA**.

More than 400 licensed California and Arizona pest control advisers and other licensed professionals have taken the

courses since Farm Press began offering them last spring.

The courses range from 10,000 to 15,000 words. They are interactive courses. Those taking the courses read a portion of text and then answer a series of questions. Each question must be answered correctly to proceed.

Upon completion of the course, a verification page appears for course takers to fill out and e-mail to *Farm Press*, which sends the necessary paperwork to the accrediting agency for the individual.

With the one hour accreditation given each course by NAICC, a new category will be added to the verification page after Jan. 1 for NAICC members. However, NAICC members can take the courses now and on

the verification page indicate you are a NAICC member.

The courses are available at [www.farm-pressuniversity.com](http://www.farm-pressuniversity.com) and [www.westernfarm-press.com](http://www.westernfarm-press.com).

"We are very pleased and appreciative NAICC has accredited two of *Farm Press*' new continuing education courses," said *Farm Press* publisher Greg Frey. "We look forward to submitting additional courses to NAICC's accrediting committee.

"This new educational service offered by *Farm Press* has experienced tremendous demand from busy agricultural professionals like NAICC members who like the convenience of taking continuing education courses online."



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