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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Bill Cox
NAICC
President

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

I gave a talk at an NAICC Annual Meeting several years ago. Basically, I described my business, the hours that I worked and mused about the time that I didn't have. I'm sure there was no information in my talk that wouldn't pertain to most of the consultants I know.

During the question period following my talk someone asked me why I didn't just keep raising my rates until customers started dropping out. It was his theory that, eventually, I would be working half as hard for the same money.

It was a logical solution to my problem but I immediately dismissed it. Why? Because it's not that easy.

I have been in the consulting business longer than I care to think about. I started right out of college and had little farm experience and no vegetable experience. Many of the growers that I work for now are the ones who had the faith to hire me when I really needed the work.

When these growers hired me, I had very little to offer other than a basic education and a desire to do something that I wanted to do and that few were actually doing. I made it clear that I didn't have the answers but would work hard to identify the problems and try to find someone who did have the answers. I have often said that I learned a lot more from the growers in the first five years than I ever learned in school!

These folks fed, clothed and educated me. I would rather work until I dropped than try to price myself so high that they couldn't afford to hire me.

I am truly blessed to have the customer base that I have. There are only three clients that I have worked for less than 20 years. All three were working for existing clients and decided to start their own farming operations and asked me to help them. Many of my remaining clients are the original ones who hired me 31 years ago!

These clients are a special group. Not only are they among the best growers in this area, they are among the finest people anywhere. I refer to these folks as "clients," but they're really family members.

My typical day starts when I leave the house between 5:30 and 6:00 a.m. I have a full day and usually check fields until dark. I then write reports and deliver them as I work my way back home.

On Monday, I usually get to John and Angelina Colquitt's house about 8:00 p.m. This is bedtime for many farm folks but Angelina has supper waiting when I get there.

Tuesday ends at the Don Hackey residence around 9:30 or 10:00 pm. Don's son, Luke, is my Godson and Don has always been more like a brother to me than a client.

On Wednesday, I work along the Mexican border about two hours from my house. Connie Johnson always holds supper until I get done (usually after 8 o'clock).

Thursday is my day to work close to Las Cruces. The farms I check have lots of small fields and it takes until dark to get it done. Anna Lyles always has a plate waiting for me when I get there.

Sandy Shiflett makes the best burritos and cookies I've ever tasted. She usually finds me somewhere on the farm around 10 in the morning. On Friday night, Loyad Anderson, (another brother) has supper and a drink waiting when I get there.

I'm not boastful about the clients or the business that I have. I am simply trying to relay the sense of family that exists between a consultant and his or her clients. It is a special relationship that is more than just business.

I'm sure that all of you reading this can cite examples of similar situations. I have had the pleasure to visit with some of you and your clients and have seen the relationships first hand. This relationship is what makes us who we are and what we do.

Similarly, NAICC has always seemed more like a family to me than merely an organization. We are a group of kindred souls who understand the meaning of trust and commitment. I am constantly in awe of the passion and dedication exhibited by NAICC members, and I count you all as special friends. Thank you for being who you are and doing what you do.

If you aren't an NAICC member, I invite you to join the family. I might even introduce you to crazy Uncle Roger...

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

NAICC wishes Brent Wright, PAg, the best of luck in his new role as President of the Manitoba Institute of Agrologists (MIA).

Previously Vice President of the MIA, Brent has been a member of the organization's Provincial Council since 1999. He is the owner and president of ICMS, Inc., western Canada's leading independent agri-

cultural research company. Brent has been a member of the NAICC since 1998.

The MIA is legislated by the Province of Manitoba as the region's official professional regulatory body responsible for governing the practice of agrology.

The 'practice of agrology' includes the experimentation with or the giving of

advice with respect to the principles, laws or practices relating to the production, improvement, use, processing or marketing of agricultural products, crops or livestock.

There are more than 700 Professional Agrologists (PAg) and Technical Agrologists (TAg or Tech Ag) in the Province of Manitoba.

FEAE Moving Ahead

From helping to establish the doctor of plant health program in universities to funding speakers at NAICC's Annual Meetings, the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture

Education is hard at work. Following is a review of the organization's activities. If you're interested in learning more about the Foundation, please contact NAICC Headquarters.

FEAE Funding Priorities

At the Annual Meeting earlier this year, the Foundation agreed that its 2004 funding will be distributed in two directions:

- 1). Educational program support for NAICC, its parent organization and
- 2). The Master Plan for the Doctorate of Plant Health (or Medicine).

According to FEAE Secretary Earle Raun, Ph.D., "Eighty percent of funds raised for the FEAE by NAICC will be returned to

NAICC for educational programs. The remaining 20 percent will be retained for operating expenses of the Foundation, such as brochures and meeting expenses."

Donation can be made at any time of the year to the FEAE in care of the NAICC headquarters or sent to FEAE Treasurer Grady Coburn, Ph.D., 1258 Bayou Road, Box 302, Cheneyville, LA 71325.

Educational Support

PAW Sponsorship

The FEAE has awarded \$1,000 toward the Precision Ag Workshop (PAW) program, which was held in February in Memphis, Tenn. Because the meeting was such a success, the NAICC Executive Board has commissioned another of these regional educational programs to be held in Memphis just prior to the annual Gin Show. (NAICC is also considering moving the workshop around the country.)

Speaker Sponsorship

The FEAE has and continues to give \$3,000 toward speaker costs for the NAICC's Annual Meetings. In addition, \$1,000 in travel funds for University of Florida students was provided for travel expenses to the 2004 Annual Meeting in New Orleans.

Plant Health Doctorate Program

The FEAE's efforts to establish a Doctorate of Plant Health Degree Program at a university in the United States are underway! The program would be similar to that offered by the University of Florida.

To help establish the new DHM program, the FEAE has contracted with Ken Bader, Ph.D., President of Global Agribusiness and long-time agribusiness professional. Bader was initially interviewed by FEAE advisor, Lynn Henderson of *Doane Ag Services* who headed up the selection committee.

Ken has 30 years of experience in managing trade associations, university programs and international projects. His consulting company, located in St. Louis, Mo., specializes in international business development, market assessment, strategic planning and market strategies.

He has served as CEO of the American Soybean Association, worked for the Ag Cooperative Development International, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Ohio State University. Bader also previously received the National Agri-Marketing Association's "Marketer of the Year" award.

"The wealth of experience Ken brings, from the university to his work around the globe, will play a big role in helping us make the doctorate of plant health program a priority at more universities nationwide," said Madeline Mellinger, FEAE's President.

The FEAE's plan for establishing another DHM program consists of several phases, including a review of the University of Florida's program (why and how it was developed, how it's progressing, etc.).

Much of this information will be used to develop a presentation illustrating the need for a DHM program. It will be used in meetings with university administrators to discuss the concept, understand the process of establishing such a program, etc.

Once a university is identified as a good candidate for the DHM program, the FEAE will develop a plan for fundraising and will assess the need for support from industry and commodity groups.

The FEAE is committed to working with university administrators and faculty as needed throughout establishment of the program.

New Board Members

The FEAE is proud to announce its new Board members, elected in January during the Annual Meeting:

PRESIDENT

Madeline Mellinger
Glades Crop Care

VICE PRESIDENT

Billy McLawhorn
McLawhorn Crop Services

TREASURER

Grady Coburn, Ph.D.
Pest Management Enterprises

SECRETARY

Earle Raun, Ph.D.
Pest Management Company

DIRECTORS

Dan Bradshaw
Crop Aide Ag
J. A. Browning, Ph.D.
Mike Brubaker
Brubaker Corp.
Glenn Luedke
Farm Press
Dean Wesley, Ph.D.
Key Ag Services

NAICC EXECUTIVE BOARD LIAISON

Ray Young
Young & Young Consultants

Scholarship Deadline Rapidly Approaching

The FEAE's annual scholarship application deadline is July 1. Please encourage any qualified college student to apply. (To qualify, a student must be entering their junior year in the fall with a major in crop production sciences, entomology, plant pathology or weed science.)

Applications for the Richard Jensen Scholarship are available at www.naicc.org/applications/scholarship.cfm or from NAICC Headquarters. The winner will be notified in August.

DPM Assistantships Available at University of Florida, IFAS

The University of Florida's Plant Medicine Program currently has assistantships available for qualified incoming students. Those interested can visit the DPM's Website www.dpm.ifas.ufl.edu to learn more about these opportunities and other developments in the university's program.

Soybean Rust Management a Growing Concern Worldwide

Along with numerous government agencies and private companies, the NAICC is vigilantly monitoring and preparing for soybean rust.

This highly destructive pathogen has not yet entered North America, and a number of research and management efforts have been implemented in areas where soybean rust has appeared (southeast Asia, the southwest Pacific and parts of Africa and South America).

This information, along with the summary below, is derived from information supplied by Kent L. Smith, Ph.D., USDA Office of Pest Management Policy. The NAICC will continue to work with Dr. Smith and others on the soybean rust issue, and is also engaged with Bayer CropSciences's efforts to make soybean rust sampling bags available in the U.S.

HISTORY OF SOYBEAN RUST

According to Dr. Smith, soybean rust was first reported in 1902 in Japan and later discovered in Southeast Asia, China, India, Taiwan, and Australia. In 1994 it appeared in the Hawaiian Islands, and in 1996 the pathogen entered Africa quickly spreading to Zimbabwe, South Africa, Nigeria and other parts of Africa.

Three years ago soybean rust was discovered in Paraguay and has since caused serious losses not only in Paraguay but also in Brazil, Argentina and Bolivia, reported Dr. Smith. He noted that a lesser form of soybean rust (caused by *Phakopsora meibomia*), which does not cause significant yield losses, is present in the Caribbean and

Central and South America.

The yield-reducing form of soybean rust (caused by *Phakopsora pachyrhizi*) has not been reported north of the equator in the western hemisphere, said Dr. Smith. He gave estimates based on a USDA Economic Research Service report published in April of this year that projected that soybean rust would cause losses to the U.S. economy of \$0.2 to 2.0 billion per year. These projections were based on the assumption that fungicides and application equipment would be available to combat this disease, a situation currently in doubt.

Dr. Smith also noted that soybean rust has an impact on specialty leguminous crops, as it has a wide host range (lima beans, black-eyed peas, kidney beans, green beans, etc.).

SOYBEAN RUST RESEARCH

Research efforts on soybean rust include screening of existing soybeans for host resistance by ARS, fungal genome sequencing and comparative efficacy trials, according to Dr. Smith. (He noted that in Africa trials are being funded by the United Soybean Board and directed by ARS, while in South America they're being funded by registrants and, again, directed by ARS.)

Research on application methods is being funded by CSREES, while ARS is working on diagnostic methods and other biological studies.

MANAGING SOYBEAN RUST

In his presentation, Dr. Smith noted that management efforts for soybean rust include as many as four fungicide treat-

ments a season. Weather-based advisories, sentinel crops and timing (generally during reproductive growth) are taken into account in managing the pathogen.

Dr. Smith said that the ASA estimates the cost of fungicide treatments to be about \$15 per acre per treatment. Currently, fungicides that are registered for soybean rust on soybeans include Azoxystrobin (Quadris) and Chlorothalonil (Bravo and Echo).

For other legumes (lima beans, green beans, kidney beans, cowpeas, pigeon peas, etc.), registered fungicides include Azoxystrobin (Quadris), Chlorothalonil (Bravo and Echo), Pyraclostrobin (Headline), Maneb on dry beans and Myclobutanil (Laredo, Rally) on green beans.

Fungicides requested to control soybean rust on soybeans under Quarantine Exemption (Section 18) by South Dakota and Minnesota include Propiconazole (Tilt, Propimax, Bumper) granted 4/23/04, Tebuconazole (Folicur), Myclobutanil (Laredo) granted 3/25/04, Trifloxystrobin + propiconazole (Stratego), Tetraconazole (Eminent), Pyraclostrobin (Headline) and Boscalid + pyraclostrobin (Pristine).

More information on soybean rust can be found at www.ipmcenters.org/NewsAlerts/soybeanrust, and NAICC will provide updates as new information is available. Dr. Smith and Teung F. Chin, Ph.D., can also be contacted for further information. Dr. Smith is available at 202-720-3186 or ksmith@ars.usda.gov. Dr. Chin's phone number is 301-734-8943 and his email address is Teung.F.Chin@usda.gov.

NAICC Updates Strategic Plan to Reflect 2004 Priorities

With NAICC's growth - and with the ongoing changes in our industry - it's crucial that the Alliance update plans and priorities regularly to best serve its members.

Last month the Board did just that. Below is the Alliance's list of 2004 priorities and how they'll be addressed:

Increase Revenue. The Alliance will meet this goal by increasing membership numbers and services. (NAICC's updated membership goals include increasing individual memberships by 100 within five years and increasing sustaining memberships by 10 during that same timeframe.)

Retention efforts will be augmented through state association interaction, regional workshops/continuing education and the New Member Boot Camp program.

The New Member Boot Camp is designed to help ensure new members fully realize the benefits available to them through NAICC, as well as the importance of their involvement in the organization.

The program is a two-hour meeting that all new members will attend, and it will include an overview of NAICC's purpose and goals (given by President Bill Cox). A synopsis of the Alliance's history and how its role has changed will be given by Allison Jones.

Boot Camp attendees will also learn about the NAICC's Board and the organization's election processes. Dan Bradshaw will share information about the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education, and Tim Case will discuss NAICC's committee opportunities, how and why new members should get involved, etc.

Other NAICC priorities for 2004 include Education and Training and the Improvement of Membership Services. The Alliance will host Precision Ag and other regional workshops and is considering additional educational opportunities (Dangerous Goods Seminar, Biotech/APHIS Training, GLP/QA, TSP/NRCS training, drip irrigation, etc.)

Other membership services NAICC will investigate include general liability, errors and omission and health insurance for members and an NAICC credit card. The Alliance plans to enhance the current CPCC certification program and to develop a new Marketing Committee.

Government Relations. NAICC will maintain working relationship with key legislative staff in Washington and will work to maintain exemptions to WPS regulations. New members will be encouraged to participate in the Government Affairs Committee.

Enhanced Recognition and Presence. With the shrinking size of the ag industry, NAICC will seek new ways to work with sponsors. The NAICC will encourage members to seek out opportunities for visibility (submitting articles to magazines and newsletters, speaking at state and local meetings, etc.). The development of additional educational programs will also extend NAICC's presence within the industry.

NAICC Leaders Meet with CropLife America

NAICC leadership renewed the Alliance's membership in the Pesticide Policy Coalition (formerly the IWG) when the group met with CropLife America representatives in Washington, D.C., earlier this year.

The Pesticide Policy Coalition is made up of more than 60 food, agriculture, pest management and related organizations that support full, fair and science-based implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA).

Members include national and regional representatives of farm, commodity and

specialty crop organizations and cooperatives; food processors and marketers; manufacturers of agricultural and specialty pesticides; pest control operators; research organizations; and others.

Those representing NAICC at the meeting included board members Ray Young, Robin Spitko and Bill Cox, Government Affairs Committee Chair Harold Lambert and Executive Vice President Allison Jones.

The NAICC also asked CropLife America COO, Pat Donnelly, to be the Alliance's keynote speaker at the 2005 meeting.

CropLife America represents developers, manufacturers, formulators and distributors of plant science solutions for agriculture and pest management in the United States. The organization's mission is to foster the interests of the general public and its member companies by promoting innovation and environmentally sound manufacture, distribution and use of crop protection and production technologies for safe, high-quality, affordable and abundant food, fiber and other crops. For more information about CropLife, visit www.croplifeamerica.org.



NAICC members and CropLife America staff from left are Ray Young, NAICC past president; Mike Naig, CropLife state affairs leader; Pat Donnelly, CropLife COO; Robin Spitko, NAICC director; Bill Cox, NAICC president; Harold Lambert, GAC chair; Christy Robbins, CropLife regulatory affairs leader; and Rich Nolan, CropLife vice president for government affairs.



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