



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Bill Cox
NAICC
President

NAICC Sets Stage for Educational Opportunities!

Since I became a member of NAICC in 1991, I have always been amazed at how one group can consistently host such good Annual Meetings! My first meeting was in Kansas City, where I had the good fortune to meet **Grady Coburn**. I can honestly say that one of the highlights of returning to the NAICC Annual Meeting each year is seeing Grady and other friends I've made over the years.

Aside from the networking opportunities, I am amazed at the topics that fill the agenda. Nowhere else can independent crop and research consultants get so much information under one roof.

The Annual Meeting Coordination Committee has worked non-stop since January making sure that we have a good program in California. Under the supervision of **Denise Wright**, the Consultant and Research

Education Committees are seeking speakers from across the country to educate our members on important topics such as Soybean Rust and available GIS software and hardware.

Also on the agenda are homeland security and the protection of American agriculture, electronic research data management, resistance management, remote sensing in California viticulture and much, much more.

This year we're honored to have as our keynote speaker **Pat Donnelly**, Executive Vice President and COO of **CropLife America**. The Executive Board met with Pat and his staff while we were in D.C. in March. During our discussion we found many ways we as associations can work together on issues affecting all categories of our membership.

At the meeting, Pat will update us on CropLife's activities in Washington, and he'll provide insight on the Pesticide Policy Coalition, of which NAICC is a member.

This year's Annual Meeting will again include the ever-popular breakout sessions. This time we'll even offer crop-specific ones!

We'll also introduce a New Member "Boot Camp" for folks who've joined in the last two years. This fun and interactive two-hour session will give us a chance to get to know our new members better and to ensure they maximize their membership.

Please take a moment to register for the meeting - you'll find registration, program and exhibit information enclosed with this newsletter. You can also register on-line at www.naicc.org.

You'll also want to get your calendar out

and mark our 2006 Annual Meeting on it. We'll travel to Tucson, Ariz. January 18-21, and the meeting will be held at the new Marriott Starr Pass Resort.

In 2007 we'll have a special Annual Meeting - the first-ever simultaneous meeting of the NAICC, the **American Society of Agricultural Consultants** and the **American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers**.

This event is designed to expose all participants to a larger networking and educational opportunity - and to harness the energy of this huge group of top ag professionals!

It will include an array of educational sessions (each group's sessions will be open to all participants), as well as an ag tour, trade show, grand opening and other exhibit hall receptions, group tours and golf tournament.

Individual organizations will conduct their own business and committee meetings, award ceremonies and Friday evening events. The meeting will be held during one of the first two weeks in February, 2007, in Atlanta, Ga., or Jacksonville, Fla. More information to come!

Obviously, NAICC has plenty of plans to enrich its membership! The best way for you to get something out of the Alliance is to put something (besides your dollars) into it. I personally invite you to attend the 2005 Annual Meeting this January to experience the friendship, fun and educational opportunities that we have to offer. See you in California!

NAICC Ambassador Program Needs You

NAICC is an incredibly viable - and visible - organization in our nation's capitol.

Our momentum, our networks, our input all continue to grow as we look for ways to influence leaders - and as leaders look to us for expertise.

To continue our success, our membership needs to continue to grow.

So we're asking that you take a minute to participate in the NAICC Ambassador Program.

All you have to do is provide the names of two or more crop consultants, researchers or quality assurance personnel who you feel would be good candidates for NAICC membership.

Potential members will then be contacted by NAICC ambassadors (current members who live in different states or geographies than potential members).

You can also serve as an ambassador. Ambassadors simply contact potential can-

didates and share information about the Alliance, how they've benefited from their membership, etc.

As you encourage new members to join NAICC, please be sure to let them know they'll have an opportunity to learn in-depth about the Alliance at the Annual Meeting's new Boot Camp program.

This entertaining two-hour session is designed specifically to ensure new members realize all the benefits the Alliance

offers. It's an interactive opportunity to meet many people in the membership and to share a few laughs - the best way to become comfortable with the NAICC family!

As you consider potential NAICC mem-

bership candidates, keep in mind that your recruiting efforts will not go unnoticed. The year's Top Recruiter will receive an award and recognition at the Annual Meeting, as well as reimbursement for travel and regis-

tration costs to the meeting.

Thank you in advance for your efforts at building an even stronger Alliance!

You Can't Afford to Miss the 2005 Annual Meeting

If you've attended an NAICC Annual Meeting in the past, you'll know there is no replacement for the value it offers.

From the opportunity to network with key industry influencers to the topical speeches and workshops, you'll gain powerful insight that you simply cannot experience in your office or in the field.

People who attend the Annual Meeting say over and over that they return refreshed, more knowledgeable on a variety of levels and better armed with tools to succeed in the year ahead.

So take the time to attend. Send in your registration and book your flights now. (Good deals can be had at expedia.com, travelocity.com, orbitz.com, cheaptickets.com, etc. Be sure to check major air carriers' Websites, too!)

Then look forward to some highlights this year's Southern California style meeting will offer:

1. The sights and sounds of Hollywood
2. The opportunity to talk one-on-one with our industry and sponsor representatives
3. Wonderful California cuisine
4. The Hollywood Walk of Fame
5. Updates on agriculture's rapidly chang-

ing technology

6. Movie stars!
7. The opportunity to be proactive with industry leaders and government personnel who influence agricultural programs
8. Serious muscles at Venice Beach
9. The Tonight Show or the Price Is Right — live
10. Certification options – so you can better serve your clients and gain prestige in the industry
11. Raffle prizes ranging from hunting equipment to California wine
12. Renewal of old friendships, opportunities to create new ones
13. The excitement of Universal Studios Hollywood; the relaxation of Universal Citywalk's restaurants, cafés and night clubs
14. Complimentary registration through the New Members Campaign (sign up as a new member or encourage a friend or co-worker to join)
15. The "one of a kind" culture North Hollywood has to offer
16. The "one of a kind" culture NAICC has to offer

We'll see you there!

Register Now for the 2005 NAICC Annual Meeting

With the Annual Meeting only a few months away, please send in your registration materials, which you'll find enclosed. Or visit www.naicc.org for quick and easy online registration.

Once you're on the site, click on 2005 Annual Meeting to register for the convention. While you're there, book your rooms, too!

Simply click <http://www.starwoodmeeting.com/book/NAICCJAN05>



Sponsor Interaction Centers Ensure Time, Place for Important Meetings

The response to our Sponsor Interaction Centers (SIC) at recent Annual Meetings has been tremendous. Because of the great response, we're again making the program available at the 2005 Annual Meeting.

The SICs provide sustaining members and research contractors specific places to meet so they can set up appointments and handle business professionally. At registration, attendees sign up for these appointments, which enable both parties to plan for upcoming research trials and to share

other key information.

(Previously, this important 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, and both will be held at the Sheraton Universal: 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 Annual Meeting Attendees:

Sign up for Sponsor Interaction appointments at the Annual Meeting registration desk at the Sheraton Universal.

Ballots for 2005 Candidates Coming Soon

NAICC voting members, watch your mailboxes! You'll soon receive ballots to elect the 2005 candidates.

Having spent the summer compiling the nominee roster, informing the group of particular roles and finalizing the candidate slate, the Nominating Committee encourages all members to be active in the leader-

ship 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 were key considerations. (Consult current NAICC leaders to learn how you can be more active in NAICC's future success.)

Mellinger Chosen as Original Inductee to CSREES Hall of Fame

NAICC is proud to announce that **Madeline Mellinger** has been selected as one of the first 10 people to be inducted into the USDA's Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service (CSREES) Hall of Fame.

This honor "signifies contributions made (by Mellinger) over the past 10 years to help CSREES complete a 'Decade of Excellence,'" according to CSREES.

The induction honors took place in Washington, D.C., on October 21, during an awards luncheon. There Mellinger spoke briefly about CSREES and its 10-year-history.

"I'm proud of my work with CSREES, and honored to be recognized as a member of the Service's Hall of Fame," said Mellinger. "I look forward to continuing my involvement."



USDA Revises Payment Rates for Technical Service Providers

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) recently released revised "not to exceed" (NTE) payment rates for certified technical service providers.

NRCS Chief Bruce Knight said the NTE rates are generally higher and offer greater

flexibility in use. He also said inconsistencies in payment rates among neighboring states and regions have been significantly reduced.

The revised payment rates, which were changed based on public comment, apply to new contracts through calendar year 2005. Existing contracts will continue to use the 2003 payment rates.

To view the revised NTE rates, visit www.tsp-nte.nrcs.usda.gov/tspnte2/. (The 2003 NTE rates can be found at www.tsp-nte.nrcs.usda.gov/TSPNTE03Archive/.) For information on the technical provider process, visit <http://techreg.usda.gov>.

To submit comments on payment rates, address them to Liu-Hsiung Chuang, USDA-NRCS, Resource Economics and Social Sciences Division, 1400 Independence Ave., SW, Room 6141-S, Washington, D.C. 20250, phone: 202-720-7076 or Liu-Hsiung.Chuang@usda.gov.

Manitoba's Ag in the Classroom Program Expands to Reach Teachers

By Brent Wright

What do you get when you take 20 school teachers away from their homes and give them an intense, week-long agriculture adventure? Twenty enthusiastic agriculture ambassadors who will take the experience back to their classrooms and develop hundreds of enthusiastic children.

Agriculture in the Classroom-Manitoba (AITC-M) is well known in the area for providing hands-on learning experiences designed to bring knowledge about agriculture into schools. AITC-M's signature program, the Amazing Agriculture Adventure, provides 3,000 school children a one-day learning adventure each year.

In 2003 AITC-M developed a new program, an experiential learning opportunity aimed at teachers, again with the intent of bringing production agriculture closer to students. It's called the Teachers Learning Adventure.

It was this adventure that the 20 Manitoba teachers, many with little or no experience or knowledge of farming, experienced.

With a base camp at the Riding Mountain

Guest Ranch near Elkhorn Manitoba, the teachers ventured to several local farms where producers played host and teacher, sharing their personal experiences and providing connections to agriculture.

The group visited a model farm, a grain elevator, a dairy farm, a grain farm and, for an environmental adventure, even tracked elk through Riding Mountain National Park.

The curriculum components of the week were led by Dr. Deanna Binder, a specialist in linking curriculum concepts to agriculture through experiential learning.

Through AITC-M's Adopt a Teacher program, the support of several generous sponsors allowed AITC-M to offer the course at no cost. To complete the program, teachers will make presentations to their sponsors.

Response from the first Adopt-a-Teacher workshop has been extremely positive and should ensure the program's continuation, according to Johanne Ross, Executive Director of AITC-M. "This event was one of the most rewarding experiences I have had

in my history with the organization." He added that the program is already almost completely filled for the next session!

AITC-M's Adopt a Teacher program can be used by teachers as credit toward Post Baccalaureate degrees.

Another new program developed by AITC-M is the Made-in-Manitoba Breakfast, where students are treated to a nourishing breakfast made of local products and served by producers.

"It's a novel way to illustrate the variety of products available in our province, as well as to show the students that these products in some cases are produced by their neighbors," said Ross. "It can be a truly eye-opening experience for the students, including those from rural schools."

AITC-M is a non-profit organization supported by members and sponsors. In addition to its educational programs, the organization operates farm tours, conducts teacher workshops, organizes special events and develops and distributes teaching resources to schools.

Your NAICC Executive Board and Committees Working Behind the Scenes for You

By Denise Wright

Over the past few years, I've heard from NAICC members — as well as members of other organizations — the statement, "I don't see what I'm getting out of being a member." I've always thought (but never said) "First of all, it should be a reciprocal thing - you will get out of it what you put into it, and more."

While this is true, even if you aren't cur-

rently putting a whole lot of your time and energy into NAICC, you are benefiting from the actions of your Executive Board and your committees. These groups are made up of individuals who believe in the Alliance and who are progressively working to implement positive changes in agriculture.

Whether it's gathering information on soybean rust identification or securing and

nurturing relationships with EPA, USDA, state and federal legislators, ASFMRA and others, they are hard at work to advance agriculture for all of us.

I joined the NAICC in 1998. Of course I only knew a handful of existing members and I was a bit timid (yes, I was at one time...). I didn't want to show how little I knew about the Alliance. I commented to a

fellow contract researcher that I would like to get involved so I could learn more about the Alliance and be an asset. Well, did that comment ever change my life!

Next thing I knew I was not only sitting on a committee but chairing one, helping to line up speakers for an Annual Meeting and chairing the Annual Meeting Coordination Committee. Then, lo and behold, last year I was nominated to the Executive Board!

"Whoa!!!" is what I thought; this is just "little ole me". I thought to myself, "I can't handle all of this" — but the reality is I can

— and I am — and so can you!

You have become a member of an elite group of crop consultants and researchers, and your voice counts. Getting involved and staying involved can improve you personally and professionally, inside and out.

In addition to the benefits made available to you through your involvement, you are benefiting other NAICC members and agriculture as a whole through your input and your efforts.

If you are a new member and want to get involved, I invite you to contact me personally for a "pep talk." I met several new

members at the New Members and First Timers Reception in New Orleans and was very impressed with the obvious vivacity of these people.

NAICC has always had some very dedicated and hardworking people "behind the scenes" getting the job done, and we need to continue this tradition. I encourage you to get involved, ask questions and offer information. And always know your membership in NAICC is a valuable asset to you, your fellow members and to our livelihood.

DUES PAYABLE ONLINE!

It's that time of year again - time to pay membership dues and certification renewal fees. In fact, to be included in the 2005 NAICC directory, dues must be submitted by October 31, 2004.

To ensure your dues and fees are submit-

ted by the deadline, you may want to take advantage of the option to pay online; simply visit www.naicc.org to submit both dues and fees.

Your membership in the NAICC is an important investment in your business and

in your credibility as a consultant, researcher or sustaining member. We appreciate your support and look forward to working with you in 2005!



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