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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
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Early Season Weather Challenges Make NAICC Even More Valuable

I will always be amazed at the diversity of the weather we deal with while helping our farmers raise their crops.

Last year our cotton crop was one of the best on record for my little neck of the woods around Dodson, TX. It seemed like I had a faucet that I could turn and generate exactly one inch of rainfall every ten days. Insects? Well, I almost forgot what they were. I applied Pix on several of my fields one time as the plants were fairly compact and fruiting heavily. Finally, the defoliants we applied worked without a hitch and we were stripping some four+ bale cotton in October.

Everybody was happy and my farmers, as well as their bankers, were thrilled.

Now, let's fast forward to this year. On the 2nd of May, we had about six inches of snow. Good moisture, but it was going to delay our planting. Temperatures turned warm and we put a good bit of our cotton in the ground with some soil temperatures running up around 59 to 60 degrees. Three days later, a cold snap pulled through and our soil temperatures dropped to the mid 40's for about a week. We finally warmed up again and our cotton got out of the ground. About the time we could row out the fields, it began to rain. And rain. And hail. And rain. And hail. And as it all began to let up, we had a couple of days with 90 mph winds that completely stripped the plants of all their leaves (I'm not even going to mention the tornadoes).

After a week of deciding whether or not the plants were dead, we began to get a bit of regrowth. It turned out that it was just enough regrowth for the insurance adjusters to deem the crop healthy enough to be left in the field.

After this poor start, our crop is now beginning to look like cotton is supposed to. Squares are forming and a nice healthy crop of fleahoppers is moving into the fields. However, over the last five days we've had

three rains and several gale force winds, but I'm not sure it's enough to hurt our cotton after what it's already been through!

All in all, I believe that years like this turn us into better consultants. It forces us to reach out to fellow consultants and dig deeper into educational material to see what can be done to make a profitable crop out of the early season hardships. This is where the NAICC pays off for me because the friendships I've generated through the Alliance provide me the resources I turn to when I'm scratching my head over problems I encounter in the field.

I've said this before many times – the best place to forge new friendships and glean new ideas from fellow consultants is at the NAICC Annual Meeting. One of the best incentives this year to me is that we are going to Tucson, AZ in January to a resort that just opened in December 2004!

We were able to secure an unheard of room rate of \$135 (groups coming in the following weeks are paying upwards of \$200)! And when we signed the contract for the Marriott, we had them guarantee our food and beverages at 2004 prices!

Registration and program materials will be available in October, so make plans now to attend the 2006 Annual Meeting so you will have those valuable resources at hand when the weather becomes unpredictable – and you know it will.

Oh, by the way, I still think that crop adjuster is wrong...

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

The 2006 NAICC Annual Meeting will be January 18-21, 2006 at the Marriott Starr Pass Resort & Spa in Tucson, AZ. Program, registration and exhibit information will be available in October at www.naicc.org. Check out the NEW RESORT at <http://www.starrpassmarriott.com>!



Wildflowers near Kitt Peak by Bruce Griffin/Tucson Convention & Visitors Bureau

NAICC Members Formally Named “Experts” for Crop Insurance Claims

The Alliance’s certified crop consultants are officially listed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Risk Management Agency as agricultural experts!

This title applies to recommendations made for Good Farming Practices (GFP) in the documentation of growers’ Federal Crop Insurance Claims. USDA-RMA also listed Certified Professional Crop Consultants (CPC) as agricultural experts in claims specifically related to Asian soybean rust.

The listing, released in June, was designed to help ensure growers know who to use as experts in making Federal Crop Insurance claims. This is an important communication for producers who

must show they’ve worked with approved professionals when filing these crop loss claims. As well, producers who have familial or existing business relationships with current experts are required to obtain an opinion from at least one other approved professional.

While NAICC members have served as GFP experts in the insurance claim process in the past, NAICC president **Tim Case** said he expects the recent announcement to further enhance the role independent crop consultants play in helping growers.

“With this formal listing, I anticipate more producers will turn to us for aid in implementing and documenting Good

Farming Practices,” said Case. He added that being listed by the USDA-RMA as such experts makes sense given the level of training Alliance members have, along with the “in-depth working relationships” they form with their clients.

With USDA-RMA’s recent announcement of agricultural experts for Federal Crop Insurance Claims, the Agency released a bulletin guiding insurance providers in making GFP decisions and seeking RMA review of such decisions. This bulletin, available at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/>, also sets forth due process by which producers may appeal adverse GFP decisions made by insurance providers.

Scholarship Winner Announced!



Austin Winslow, a junior at North Carolina State University, is this year’s recipient of the Richard L. Jensen, Ph.D. Memorial Scholarship, sponsored by the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture (FEAE)!

A native of Belvedere, N.C., Austin is majoring in agronomy with an emphasis on turf and ornamental study. He’s already put much of

his course work to test, serving as a crop scout for Tidewater Agronomics and Edward Winslow and as a field technician, lab assistant and golf course maintenance employee in recent years.

Austin has also been very involved in school and community related activities, including FFA, BETA CLUB, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Students Using Responsible Guidelines to Teach Drug Education (SURGE Team) and Wilborne Men’s Bible Study Group. He’s earned a place on the Dean’s List and was awarded the R. Flake Shaw Scholarship and the Progressive Farmer Scout Smart Scholarship.

Regarding the FEAE scholarship, Austin

said the award “parallels the work that I have done in the past, the work I am doing now and the work I will do in the future.” He added that the scholarship provides a great opportunity for him to continue exploring the avenues agronomy offers for his future career.

The FEAE scholarship, a \$1,000 award, commemorates one of NAICC’s earliest members and is bestowed yearly upon a college student entering his or her third year of study in crop production or an allied field.

The NAICC is proud to add Austin Winslow to its list of scholarship recipients and wishes him best of luck as he continues his agriculture studies!

Committee Corner

NAICC’s Awards Committee met to discuss how to further “energize” the Alliance’s awards programs. Suggestions included introducing new NAICC awards, sponsored by various supporting member companies, and tying the awards voting process with membership re-registration. (This suggestion was made as a potential way to enhance participation in the awards voting process.)

The committee also brainstormed about how to enhance participation in the Annual Meeting. One of the ideas proposed by the group was the creation of a fiscal “added

value” program for participating in the Annual Meeting. This could take the form of investing a small portion of the Annual Meeting registration fee in a no-load Mutual Fund Company. (The NAICC Board could select a company to choose a certain fund or group of funds, and NAICC members could own shares of those funds, which would increase with every meeting attended.)

Another suggestion was to choose less costly sites for the meeting (i.e. cities with lower hotel rates, more economical restaurants, etc.). Last, the committee suggested re-visiting the idea of having the Annual

Meeting in conjunction with state association meetings to save cost and boost attendance.

If you have suggestions to share regarding NAICC’s awards program, enhancing Annual Meeting participation or any other topic, please submit them to NAICC Headquarters.

If you’re a committee member with a report to share with the NAICC membership, please submit it to Headquarters for inclusion in an upcoming edition of *NAICC News*.

New Member Profile

The NAICC is pleased to welcome **John Hecht** as a new member! A consultant with Crop Quest, Inc. in Farmington, NM, John was able to fully experience the fun, informative aspects of the Alliance at the recent Annual Meeting in Los Angeles.

At Crop Quest, John serves as a special projects manager, providing full agronomic services, including crop budgeting and water management, nutrient management and disease and insect management.

John earned his Bachelor of Science

degree in agronomy from Kansas State University. He is involved in residue management, no-till and Kids Ag Day organizations.

When asked why he joined NAICC, John said he wanted to “meet and work with consultants nationwide.” He is particularly

interested in NAICC's Consultant Education and Membership Services Committees.

John's long-term goals include becoming increasingly important – even necessary – to the industry he's chosen as a career.

The NAICC also extends its welcome to **Thomas Mueller**, another recent attendee of the Los Angeles meeting. As one of our few international members, Thomas Mueller's membership is evidence of the growth and impact our organization is having beyond the borders of our country.

Thomas works for RCC, Ltd. in Intingen, Switzerland as Project Leader/Head of Regulatory Affairs. RCC Ltd. provides service in the area of international develop-

ment and registration of crop protection products and biocides.

Thomas obtained a Master of Science degree in Organic Chemistry and a Doctorate in Biochemistry with a focus on the mode of action of natural products on hormone cycles in insects. He's had special training in the metabolism of plant protection products in mammals and plants. Prior to his present position, Thomas worked on risk assessment teams and in regulatory affairs in the crop protection industry for 15 years.

His reason for joining the NAICC is to build a network of experts that goes beyond his area of expertise. He has not yet deter-

mined how he'll be involved in the Alliance due to his location, but anticipates that, with today's communication systems, he'll be able to participate fully.

When asked how he thought his position may change in the coming years he said, "Regulatory affairs play and will continue to play an essential role in making plant protection products available to the farmer. While the agrochemical industry strives to develop new products, the regulatory environment will remain in flux — a fact that presents a major challenge to the industry. It is going to become even more important to look down the road and anticipate tomorrow's requirements."

Soybean Rust Update

The American Soybean Association and **Doane Agricultural Services** have teamed up to build a Web site furnishing information for the fight against Asian soybean rust.

Unique to the site will be reports from independent crop consultants as to what actions growers should take to protect their crops based on movement of the disease.

Information provided by Doane's chief economist regarding market impact will also be featured. To access the site visit <http://www.soyrap.com>.

White House Holds Conference on Cooperative Conservation

The 2005 White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (www.conservation.ceq.gov) convenes on August 29, 2005, in St. Louis, MO. Key aspects of the conference include learning what Americans are doing within their communities and in cooperation with others to steward and conserve the nation's natural resources, along with sharing the lessons, information and resources that are critical to everyone's conservation success.

All Americans — including individual citizens, non-profit organizations, civic

groups, schools, businesses and government agencies — are urged to be part of this cooperative conservation effort and to help shape the conference outcomes.

If you want to contribute and share your conservation project story, please visit the Cooperative Conservation America Web site (www.cooperativeconservationamerica.org). There you'll find more information about cooperative conservation, and, with a few simple steps, you can enter your project story into the database. (Examples of project stories and instructions for writing

them are included on the site.)

Cooperative conservation project stories submitted by July 22, 2005, will be listed in Faces and Places of Cooperative Conservation, a publication of the 2005 White House Conference. In addition to being part of the conference, all stories submitted will become part of the cooperative conservation project internet database, which will serve all Americans engaged in the conservation of their land, water and wildlife.



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