



# NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By  
**Dan Easton**  
NAICC  
President

## Connected on the Hill

Historically, I have not taken a great deal of interest in politics. Oh, I always make it a point to get to the polls on election day to register my opinion as a voting citizen, but staying connected to those who represent me in D.C. has not been a priority in my past.

But I've observed that my interests have changed since joining the Board of the NAICC. Recently, a number of NAICC members and I spent a few days on the Hill for a variety of reasons. For example, Bob Glodd, the Annual Meeting Coordination Chairman, along with Allison, met with Ray Brownfield and several members of the ASFMRA to coordinate some details of the '07 meeting in Atlanta.

Also, the Executive Board held their spring meeting just a few blocks from the Capital Building and then attended our annual Crawfish Boil on the Hill (March 30

at the Longworth House Office Building). Several NAICC members including Jimmy Ashley, Ray Young and Glenn Luedke joined us at the Crawfish Boil. Ray and Bob also managed a round of personal visits on the Hill.

**Stan Winslow** stopped in at the offices of his state Representatives and issued personal invitations to the Crawfish Boil. **Tim Case** was in D.C. for four extra days making contacts with Congressmen, Senators and Ag Committee staffers. I joined Orvin in tracking down our respective Congressmen's offices in the Longworth building.

It seems like connecting with Congressmen in their workplace brings a certain reality and validity to the entire political process on which our country operates. And getting to know some of the staffers brings a certain respect for the structure. The staffers are quite an impressive lot, actually. One attendee told me that the main reason he comes to eat our crawfish is because the gathering is abundant with valuable contacts, i.e. a valuable workplace. After making a new contact, I observed one young staffer making notes on his Blackberry faster than I can type on my keyboard, not about to let any information escape him.

One staffer for a Congressman from my own state of Iowa really impressed me. I had spoken with her a few minutes last year at the Boil. If you recall from my speech in Tucson, remembering names is not my specialty. This staffer, Suzie, walked up to me at

the Boil and greeted me by name — without first checking my nametag. And asked if my wife Trisha had come along again this year. She also asked about each of my daughters by their respective names. She congratulated me on being elected NAICC President for 2006. (That was not on my badge.) All based on a three-minute greeting at a dinner an entire year ago and perhaps some homework she'd done over the year.

Connections with people are extremely important on the Hill, and I was most impressed with the manner in which these staffers pursue their connections down to the finest detail. And I now further understand the need for our staying connected in D.C., even when no pending legislation is critical to our mission. It's all about connection.

As Suzie completed filling her plate with fine southern cuisine, she thanked me for the visit. I earnestly responded in reciprocal, "and thank you Ms.... ah... er... ma'am." Next year. Yep, next year I'm going to remember her name. I had better, because she's probably reading this article!

On a serious note, NAICC provides a great opportunity for each of us to connect with our national, state and local leaders. Take advantage, if you can — it's the best way to ensure a solid future for our profession.

## EPA Administrator, Several Members of Congress among 300+ Boil Attendees!

With EPA Administrator Steve Johnson, three Congressmen, a former Senator and a record crowd, the 2006 NAICC Crawfish Boil on the Hill was the most successful ever.

The ninth annual event, held March 30 at the Longworth House Office Building in Washington, D.C., hosted more than 300 government leaders and influencers. In

addition to Johnson and members of Congress, the attendee list included representatives from USDA and EPA, several ag lobbyists, and numerous House and Senate ag staffers.

The relaxed venue, designed to thank NAICC's Washington contacts for their work in shaping policy for the ag community, is devoted to fun, good food and mingling -

no speeches or agendas.

And the reaction speaks for itself; comments heard from this year's attendees included:

"I look forward to this event each year."

"I used to attend when I worked on the Hill. Now I work in the private sector but my husband still works on the Hill. I make him promise to keep an eye out for the invi-

tation each year.”

“This is one of the best and most unique events hosted on the Hill.”

“The social event of the season!”

NAICC would like to thank everyone who helped make the 9th Annual NAICC Crawfish Boil on the Hill a raving success, with special thanks to **Jim Braucht** (“da

cook”) and **Ned Darbonne** for flying in with the crawfish and cooking it on site.

Rest assured we’re already planning how to make the 2007 boil an even bigger hit!



Dorothy and Ray Young greet Congressman Rodney Alexander (R-LA) who has attended the Crawfish Boil on the Hill for three consecutive years.



EPA Administrator Steve Johnson, with wife Debbie (far left), and Burluson Smith, USDA’s Special Assistant for Pest Management Policy (second from right) were special (and are frequent) guests at the Crawfish Boil.



Crawfish Boil alumni Kirk Wesley and his family were in town for the event.



Congressman Mike McIntyre (D-NC) is welcomed by fellow North Carolinian Bruce Niederhauser.



NAICC Board members and staff kick off the evenings festivities with Tom Van Arsdall (far left) representing the Pesticide Policy Coalition.



# ASFMRA Host Leadership Institute

The American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers is expanding its Leadership Institute / Washington Forum in 2006. This larger event will not only heighten agriculture's visibility among policy makers, it will allow better coordination of efforts with ASFMRA, NAICC and other organizations.

The Leadership Institute is September 16-21, in Washington, D.C. Information can be found on the ASFMRA Web site at [www.asfmra.org/evde\\_leadership.htm](http://www.asfmra.org/evde_leadership.htm). Currently the online registration is set up to work with ASFMRA members only. Please call Cheryl Cooley at (303) 692-1215 and she can assist you with your registration. Registration is limited to the first 200 registrants.

The majority of the meeting sessions will be held at the Holiday Inn on the Hill, as opposed to traveling around our Capitol and visiting various offices in years past. The estimated cost is \$1,500 per person, including registration, lodging and airfare.

The benefits of the Leadership Institute / Washington Forum are numerous and include:

1. Expanding one's personal background and knowledge of the U.S. government by meeting those responsible for passing laws that affect your personal and business life.
2. Providing each participant the opportunity to personally meet and see – in action – members of the U.S. Senate and Congress.

## What to Expect:

- Learn About the Inner Workings of our National Government
- Meet the People Responsible for Passing the Laws
- Meet with your Congressional Representatives
- Visit the Hill – See Congress at Work
- Invited Speakers: Secretary of Agriculture Johanns, Senator Chambliss, Jim Wiesemeyer, and Macon Edwards

The sessions will begin on Monday morning, September 18, and conclude by noon on Thursday, September 21.

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## New Member Profiles

*By Gary Coukell*



NAICC welcomes **Ian Macleod** as a new member. Ian serves as Managing Director of Serve-Ag Research, a contract research organization based in Tasmania, Australia.

Ian joined NAICC to meet other members in the field and to build a network of contacts in other countries. He believes that in the next 10 years there will be more international collaboration and sharing of data between countries, which will provide global opportunities for contract researchers.

Since its inception, Serve-Ag Research

has grown from a small operation based in one state to a national business. Ian anticipates future growth will include offering his clients more options and services on a global basis – a good reason for joining NAICC!

We appreciate Ian jumping right in as a new member and participating in the 2006 Annual Meeting. Not only did he attend the meeting from Australia, he made a presentation on his work as a contract researcher there.

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## NEW HORIZONS IN YOUR PROFESSION

*By Earle Raun, CPCC-I*

Six years ago I told you about the thrill I had digging into a new crop and starting to learn about it and its insect problems. Let me bring you up to date on this ongoing experience.

The problem was in 1,500 acres of native prairie grasses being grown for seed production. The demand for seed was increasing for use in set-aside tracts and highway rights-of-way. The grower requested my help as an entomologist because an insect, now known to be the Bluestem Gall Midge, was reducing his seed production by as much as "70 percent" some years.

I initially knew nothing about these

prairie grasses, other than that they had originally covered the Great Plains. After six years, this grower request has turned into a great learning experience, as well as an entomological research challenge. I have come to appreciate the warm season native grasses, and have even begun to understand them a bit (I think!), and I find that, entomologically, there has been very little study on the insect groups that exclusively inhabit these grass species.

Of course, there are many insects, such as grasshoppers, that live in and on these grasses but aren't exclusive to them. As their name might lead you to expect, warm sea-

son grasses don't flower until mid- or late-summer. Indiangrass begins seedhead emergence in early July in Nebraska. It is followed by Sand Bluestem, Big Bluestem, and finally by Little Bluestem in late August or early September.

As seed heads begin to emerge Indiangrass is about waist high, Sand Bluestem shoulder high, Big Bluestem seven feet tall and Little Bluestem waist high.

In the six years since getting involved with the problem, we have found that the adult of the Bluestem Gall Midge was first identified in New Mexico in the 1950's. The taxonomist identifying it worked his career

in the National Museum and has recently retired. I got to know him through correspondence. Little was known of its life cycle, immature stages, over-wintering forms, or grass hosts when a student at the University of Nebraska studied it briefly for his MS thesis. He left plenty for me to do!

In the past six years we have detailed egg deposition, larval growth in the seed, four generations of the Bluestem Gall Midge and its over-wintering diapauses. We have tested a means to reduce seed loss to the grower. Now we are starting to consider varieties of these grasses, searching for germplasm

resistant to the depredations of the midge. We have learned much, but every answer to a question seems to bring up another question. I guess research is like the horizon which you never reach. As you learn, you find the knowledge horizon is still ahead.

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## FEAE's Efforts to Establish DPM/H Program Supported

The Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education (FEAE) is pleased to announce it has received a financial grant from **BASF Corporation** and continued support from **Syngenta Crop Protection** to establish a Doctor of Plant Medicine/Health (DPM/H) degree program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

**Billy McLawhorn**, president of FEAE (NAICC's educational arm) said it has been a goal of the organization to have a Midwestern university offer a DPM/H degree program. He hopes the financial support from organizations like BASF and Syngenta will help "jump start" the process at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. (Currently only the University of Florida offers such a program.)

The DPM/H degree program is a multi-

disciplinary non-thesis advanced graduate degree program that parallels the professional doctorate degrees in human medicine and veterinary medicine.

BASF Corporation's manager of technical services, Dr. Rick Chamblee, said he believes multidisciplinary trained graduates are "exactly what our company needs down the road to meet our new challenges" as well as those of the industry.

McLawhorn noted that BASF's grant will enable FEAE to offer a DPM/H graduate assistantship to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in the name of the company. The grant will also be used by FEAE to continue its support of other educational efforts, including the University of Florida program.

Dr. Mike Moss, the Head of Biological Research and Development for Syngenta

Crop Protection, is extremely supportive of FEAE's efforts to grow the DPM/H program and has been very vocal in raising awareness of its importance. His efforts and Syngenta's support were officially recognized by the FEAE at its recent board meeting in Tucson, Arizona.

Dr. Moss said he wishes some of Nebraska's student interns were available now to fill positions in agribusiness, "where a broad-based understanding of production agriculture is needed."

FEAE would like to thank Syngenta, BASF and other organizations that have expressed their support for the growth of DPM/H programs in the United States. For more information about DPM/H or other FEAE activities, contact Billy McLawhorn at (252) 229-3090.

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## Spotlight on the States: LACA

Congratulations to the **Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association** for sponsoring the most successful Louisiana Agricultural Technology & Management Conference ever.

This year's event boasted nearly 300, a

considerable increase from prior years' 150-175 attendees.

LACA also proudly announces its 2006 Executive Board:

**President: Bryant Williams**  
**President-Elect: Chad Nelson**

**Past President: Blaine Viator**  
**Secretary: Roger Carter**  
**Treasurer: Cary "Mugs" Cheek**  
**Director: Richard Costello**  
**Director: Lance Rodriguez**  
**Executive Director: Denise Wright**



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