



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Dan Easton
NAICC
President

NAICC, the Lion Hearted

I recently had the pleasure of attending the Board Meeting of the CCA as a guest speaker in Coeur D'Alene, ID. When CCA President Fred Vocasek, an attendee of our Tucson Meeting, introduced me, he told of this brief exchange with another CCA.

Fred said to the other CCA that he was planning to attend the NAICC Meeting in Tucson and speaking with our Executive Board of Directors, which drew the response, "What, you're going to stick your

head into the lion's mouth!"

While it is true that the NAICC has had to speak boldly for the recognition and value of consulting that is independent of product sales, it is important that we also let our professional peers know that we are so much more than that. We not only have a lion's roar, but his heart, compassion, and nobility as well.

And this is probably the greater benefit of forming a working alliance with the ASFMRA for a simultaneous Annual Meeting with a joint trade show. The concept was originally conceived as a cost saving measure for our Allied Industry members, but the process of working with both Industry and Farm Managers to bring this to fruition has revealed another side of the NAICC... while we can be tough and scrappy when our existence depends on it, we can also be cordial and cooperative when it is in the mutual interests of all concerned.

I believe this is a proud moment in the history of the NAICC. During the develop-

ment and planning stages of the upcoming meeting in Atlanta over the past five years, the NAICC as a whole, as well as numbers of Executive Boards, and individual members, have consistently demonstrated leadership in a progressively professional manner to create a win/win/win scenario for the ASFMRA, the NAICC, and for Allied Industry.

Stereotypes are often convenient, but rarely accurate. I wonder if we sometimes think of CCA as only a certification program, and if others think of us as only an "independence club". Neither is accurate, of course, and we have so much more to offer the profession. I know of no other group in America where 80% of its membership typically attends their annual meeting, which is a proclaiming roar of its value to our members and our profession. And with open doors between the NAICC and the ASFMRA at our next meeting, the attraction just gets better. Plan to be a part of this next bold step in the NAICC's history as it unfolds in Atlanta in February of '07.

Annual Meeting Highlight – Emerging Ag Innovations

NAICC's Voting and Sustaining members: take advantage of the opportunity to present new and emerging technologies to the audience that regularly adopts and introduces these advancements to the growing community at large!

At the Alliance's upcoming Annual Meeting, held simultaneously with the American Society of Ag Consultants and the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers, you'll have the opportunity to provide brief synopses of new products/technologies through a special Emerging Ag Innovations session.

Scheduled for Thursday, February 15, 2007, five-minute speaking opportunities will be available for product/technology overviews, and presenters will have the

option of using three to five PowerPoint slides.

To participate in both activities, abstracts must be submitted to NAICC headquarters by Wednesday, November 1, 2006. (Abstracts are required to be 100 words or less and may contain supporting documentation. Specification can be found at <http://www.agproexpo.org>)

Presentations should represent technologies not previously presented at NAICC meetings, and topics must have broad appeal to research and crop consultants, farm managers, rural appraisers and industry representatives. Only submissions made by Sustaining or Voting NAICC members or companies registered for the AG PRO EXPO will be accepted.

COMMITTEE CORNER

Award Committee Update

*Submitted by Frank Krupala,
Committee Chair*

Seeking COTY, Service Award Nominations!

NAICC's Awards Committee is busy gathering nominations for the Consultant of the Year Award (COTY), Service to Ag Award and the Service to NAICC Award.

About the Consultant of the Year Award (COTY) Award, sponsored by BASF:

Let's face it; our organization is made up of exemplary leaders, so when it comes to choosing a few to award for their outstanding influence, it isn't easy.

But it is an extremely important honor and one NAICC takes seriously because it provides an opportunity "to express our appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our top consultants," as noted by

NAICC Past-President **Bill Cox**.

This year, as in recent years, **BASF** is generously sponsoring the Consultant of the Year Award (COTY). The award will be given to three deserving consultants representing different geographies throughout the nation.

Rewards for the Consultant of the Year include a plaque and special recognition during the NAICC President's Lunch and Awards Ceremony (held in conjunction with the NAICC Annual Meeting). The winners will also receive editorial recognition in *Ag Professional* magazine and in *NAICC News*.

To nominate a colleague for this prestigious award, please submit the application form found in this issue of *NAICC News*. Deadline for submission is December 1, 2006.

About the Service to Ag and Service to NAICC Awards

These honors recognize outstanding contributions and dedicated service made during the past year to agriculture and its practitioners, and to the goals, operations, membership, success and health of the NAICC, respectively.

To nominate a candidate for either service award, please send a letter to NAICC listing the candidate's name and describing the contributions and service that make him or her deserving of recognition in the chosen category. Deadline for submission is also, December 1, 2006.

Awards Committee Hard at Work

NAICC's Awards Committee is responsible for coordinating all awards presented through the Alliance, including the Consultant of the Year Award (COTY), Service to Ag Award and the Service to NAICC Award.

At the most recent Annual Meeting, the Awards Committee met and identified the following goals and recommendations it is working toward:

1. Increasing participation in the NAICC

Consultant of the Year Award (COTY).

2. Educating NAICC member that the existing "Service to NAICC Award" can be bestowed upon either a researcher or consultant
3. Increase awareness and participation in the Awards Committee. If you are interested in serving on the Awards Committee, please contact Frank Krupala, Chair (starrgv@rgv.rr.com), or **Bob Glodt**, NAICC President Elect at agri@nts-online.net.

The Ethics and Grievance Committee

By Bruce W. Niederhauser, 2006 Chair

The E&G Committee is comprised of eight people: myself, Clark Poppert, Frank Sances, Rick Trudel, Dave Genereux, Paul Viger, Derek Lloyd and Jim Steffel, the Board Liaison. This Committee, which has had some activity in the past, is charged with a tremendous amount of responsibility. I imagine that almost thirty years ago when the NAICC was formed in 1978, the first of many codes of ethics was established and then modified by the committee at the suggestion of the membership as a need arose. By the same token, a very specific grievance procedure is in place for a member to notify the NAICC President and E&G Committee on an official grievance. As I see it, the members of the E&G Committee this year have done an outstanding job in upholding the Code of Ethics and managing grievances.

The Code of Ethics is a very detailed and lengthy set of Articles that defines the professional conduct and ethics required on a voluntary basis by members of the NAICC. You can review the Code of Ethics on the NAICC web site by going to the home page www.NAICC.org and choose the link under "About NAICC" on the top left corner.

Out of the five articles and 24 statements concerning ethics there is one that is the most significant to me and it is:

Article I. Statement 2: Each Member agrees to be guided by the highest standards of personal honor and professional conduct.

To me, if an individual questions themselves when they read this statement, it means that there is a probable ethical violation. In the same regard, when a new member or existing member renews their application there are several ethical questions concerning compensation and income from products. At that time any new or existing member should question their high standards of personal honor and professional conduct.

As I mentioned before, the NAICC has a very detailed and private grievance procedure. Similar to the Code of Ethics, I believe there is one statement that members should follow to avoid a grievance. The statement is:

Members assume an obligation to uphold the honor and dignity of the profession, their clients, peers, agriculture, the public and society in general.

In reading this statement as a member of the NAICC and representing the crop/research consulting professions we should never "cross the line" and have to file a grievance. If a situation arises where individuals are at odds, every attempt should be made to arrive at a solution before an official grievance is filed. The E&G Committee and procedures are in place to manage a grievance but it usually takes a lot of time and unnecessary legal expenses.

I have enjoyed and learned a lot by working with the Ethics and Grievance Committee, as I have in the past by being a chairman and participating in several other committees. I suggest that as a member of the NAICC, everyone should participate in or lead a committee and become involved. You never know what you might learn or who you will get to meet.

New Member Profile — Jack A. Norton

Jack Norton is a familiar name and face to many of our readers, and we're pleased to announce that he's our most recent new member!

His familiarity to many of our members is a result of having worked with CIBA-Geigy for 12 years in Field Development, Regulatory Affairs and as a Regional Research Manager, and with Merck Research Laboratories as Director of Field

Development (global) for six years.

For the last eight years Jack has been self-employed as a Consultant working primarily on high-value per acre crops, also known alternatively as "special crops" or "minor crops." He has worked with many NAICC members in this capacity.

Jack stated that this membership almost "seems like family," one of which he looks forward to being a part! Jack sees obvious

professional benefits to NAICC membership, but also anticipates that joining the Alliance will offer many opportunities for fun social activities.

Jack obtained two Bachelor of Science degrees at Oklahoma State University and a Ph.D. at Texas A&M, all in horticulture.

Welcome aboard Jack!

Is Your State Ag Association an Affiliate of NAICC? If Not, Why It Should Be...

By Denise Wright

Last year, as in years past, the NAICC display booth was prominently set up near the entrance to the convention center where registration was being held for the Louisiana Agricultural Consultants Association (LACA) Annual Meeting in Alexandria, LA.

It was one of the first things attendees saw as they approached the registration desk. While waiting to register they had a chance to pick up a brochure lying on the display table or to talk to **Bob Glodt**, President-elect of NAICC, and other NAICC members who were manning the booth, eager to share news about the Alliance.

Many inquired about NAICC and at least two or three joined from the result of their exposure to the organization at our state association meeting. (Let me take this opportunity to thank **Roger Carter**, his crew, **Blaine Viator** — and others who were unfortunate enough to be standing around at the time — for putting the display together. Had it been left up to me, we would have been in big trouble...)

Bob Glodt also took time out from his

busy schedule to represent NAICC at the Mississippi Agricultural Consultants Association (MACA) annual meeting prior to the Louisiana consultants' meeting, and there are plans for other NAICC Board members to visit other state association meetings, encouraging membership and professional advancement in and through NAICC.

Becoming a State Affiliate member of NAICC not only makes the Alliance stronger and better by obtaining the expertise and ideas of those in diverse agricultural areas; it also strengthens the networking and informational pipeline that the state associations bring to their consultants and growers.

I quote Bob Glodt (with his permission, of course), "You might find this strange, but when I go to the Annual Meetings, it isn't the cotton or corn consultants I seek out, it is the consultants who are experts in tree fruits, vegetables or other crops not common in my area. They make me think 'out of the box' and the rewards to my business have been huge."

By attending the NAICC Annual Meeting each year, representatives from state associ-

ations can bring so much back to their memberships. Likewise, so many good potential speakers and contacts can be made from attending both your state and national association meetings.

Altogether there are nine State Affiliate members of NAICC. North Carolina, Kansas and Louisiana are among those taking advantage of having their Web sites hosted by NAICC. These associations have the opportunity to network directly with members of the NAICC from across the U.S. and Canada, as well as "down under" and "over yonder" (a.k.a. "across the big pond").

There is no where else on earth where more practical information can be found or more common ground be reached than at the NAICC Annual Meeting. Remember the old cliché, "There's power in numbers". Be an advocate for NAICC in your state association and help your membership see the opportunities to be had in becoming an Affiliate member of the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants, our voice in Washington.

CropCam Flying Camera Shows Great Potential for Crop Consultants

Submitted by Michelle Rochon, MicroPilot, and Gary Coukell, ICMS, Inc.

Today's farms and agricultural innovators are on the hop to develop new technologies that increase efficiency and crop yields. Novel tools and systems are popping up everywhere to address changing needs, including a remarkable new crop surveillance system from CropCam (a division of MicroPilot) located in Stony Mountain, Manitoba Canada.

The CropCam is a miniature agriculture plane that uses 21st century technology to fly a miniature aircraft in a precise grid pattern over a field and gather "crop intelligence" that gives farmers an extraordinary advantage in irrigation, drainage, fertilizer and other agricultural planning.

Lisa Shaw, CropCam Project Director, is careful to



emphasize that this product is not a radio-controlled (RC) aircraft; rather it is truly autonomous, which reduces potential human error. "Flying a radio-controlled airplane and accurately following a grid pattern while maintaining an exact altitude is difficult for even the most skilled remote control pilots," she says. All navigation and flight control on the CropCam is controlled by a miniature autopilot that uses GPS. After hand launching at one corner of a programmed field, the operator lets the autopilot do the rest.

The natural response to the advent of such technology in agriculture is usually apprehension at the potential costs involved. Actually,

the CropCam proves to be a fairly cost-effective method of crop image collection when given the expenses associated with alternative means and their limited value as planning tools. Considering the seven- to 14-day waiting period involved with obtaining satellite imagery, the drawbacks of cloud cover and maximum 100 foot (30 meter) resolution achieved by satellites, the accuracy and timing provided by the CropCam are proving to be worth the investment. The CropCam is now operating on farms all over the world.

The CropCam uses a five mega-pixel Pentax Optio s5i camera that is controlled by the autopilot and that downloads to software developed especially for the CropCam. The software geo-references the images and rotates the digital images to orient them with north at the top of the screen. It also places the exact longitude and latitude on each individual photo.

Shaw explains that the advantage of CropCam lies in the freedom to return the following day or even 10 years in the future and take almost identical photos from the same altitude in the same locations around your field. Giving you the ability to repeat locations, the CropCam package turns your aerial photos into crop management tools that add measurable value to your operation.

"What the CropCam offers is images on demand," says Shaw, "Imagine the planning

power you have when you can literally watch fields respond to changing conditions! You can layer your images over field data, make prescription maps, design drainage and even locate cattle in rough terrain."

The ability of a pilot or remote control operator to follow exact GPS flight plans, maintain consistent altitudes and operate a camera is pretty tough even for the most talented RC pilot. However, the CropCam autopilot responds to changing wind conditions and stabilizes the airframe while the GPS system supervises its precise location, which provides reliable imaging even in gusts of 12 to 18 mph (20 to 30 km/h). A CropCam image also has 1.2 inch (3 cm) resolution, which is much more useful than the 100 foot (30 meter) resolution provided by satellite images. The camera can provide up to 35 minutes of video if required.

The CropCam airframe is made of fiberglass and composite material. It is a little more than three feet (1 m) long with an eight foot (2.5 m) wingspan and weighs 5.5 pounds (2.5 kg) when loaded and ready for takeoff. The propeller is spring-loaded and folds back to avoid breaking in a rough landing.

It is available in either gas or electric models and will work with a radio control transmitter for manual control of the plane. The CropCam utilizes a MicroPilot autopilot

for navigation and control of the camera. Otherwise, it is composed of regular RC parts (wings, servos, propellers, glow fuel or batteries), which can be purchased locally. This makes the CropCam practical and accessible worldwide, because service can be performed locally. Furthermore, the CropCam lends itself easily to the establishment of a Dealer System due to ease of use, minimal training required, and locally available RC parts.

For added convenience the package includes all necessary hardware, software and training with qualified technicians at CropCam's flight test facility in Stony Mountain. The complete CropCam is available for \$6,999 USD.

"For a device that literally does the work for you, properly, on your schedule, and provides valuable crop management tools not available by any other means, CropCam is truly worth the investment," says Shaw.

If innovation and new technology will drive positive change in agriculture, CropCam remains on the cutting edge. With 10 years of experience developing autopilot technology, the company has 350 clients in 49 countries. From tea plantations in south Asia to the flax or potato crops of the North American prairie, CropCam leads the world in the development and application of knowledge. Visit www.cropcam.com for more details.



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