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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
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NAICC
President

Precision Ag – The Adjustable Shoe

To meet the needs of their customers, most successful shoe stores carry a large inventory of different lengths, widths and styles of the shoes they sell. I am one whose foot is between a C and D width, and therefore, I have often wondered why someone has not yet come up with an adjustable shoe. Wouldn't it be nice to take out the old electric screw driver, remove a couple of screws, make a slight adjustment in width, tighten the screws back up and go on with your business?

For me, anyway, precision ag is the "adjustable shoe" of agriculture. It is not so much that one size fits all, but rather one precision ag approach can have so many different uses and applications. For example, one consultant may use an infrared photograph to locate problematic weeds in a field, while someone else may take the same photograph and use it to make variable rate pix or harvest aid applications. In the area where I work, irrigation related expenses and water conservation are a primary concern. I use infrared photography as an aid in determining which areas of the field are most representative for placing soil moisture monitoring equipment. I use one type of precision ag, i.e. infrared photography, to help me decide where to use another type of preci-

sion ag technology, i.e. Agri-Link's moisture monitoring capacitance probes.

Now, I'll freely admit that I may not be the brightest light bulb in the box, but there is one thing I can say for sure: if you are an agricultural consultant, young or old, and you aren't learning and embracing precision ag, you are going to be left behind.

The precision ag technology of today offers too many potential applications to ignore. Precision ag is a big term. Kind of like IPM, it is hard to define and cover all aspects of it. But there is one thing for sure; if you are a problem solver, precision ag can help you solve problems. Precision ag could mean variable rate fertilizer applications, yield monitoring, variable rate PGR and harvest aid applications, determining and quantifying if there are irrigation or soil compaction problems in a field.

Precision ag may mean better and more precise record keeping or it may mean that when your client buys that new ground rig that is equipped with variable rate nozzles and a global positioning system, you as a consultant will be asked to ground truth the weeds in the field and make a recommendation of rate ranges to control those weeds.

Precision ag is a logical fit for ag consultants and as I said, those who sit idly by will find it hard to compete with those who embrace the new technology and learn its applications for their particular area.

There are a couple of commonly held misconceptions about precision ag among the consultant community. One is that precision ag is cost-prohibitive for most small businesses. Another misconception is that precision ag is complicated and difficult to learn. Let me address these issues one at a time.

Way back when, a sizeable investment in computer software programs was necessary to get involved in precision ag. That is not the case today. As with any new business

venture there will be associated costs; however, today many of the companies that are promoting their precision ag technology have made it easy and inexpensive for someone like you or me to get involved.

The second misconception about precision ag is that it is complicated and difficult to learn. This is not the case — but precision ag includes so many different facets that it can be intimidating to those who may just be getting involved. I have had consultants tell me "I just don't know where to start in all this."

This is where the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC) comes into play. Our Educational Outreach Committee will sponsor a two-day precision ag workshop prior to our Annual Meeting at the Seattle Westin Hotel. The workshop will be held from noon to 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 21 and 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday.

The Educational Outreach Committee has done a fine job in putting together this year's program. There will be information on software updates, variable rate irrigation, variable rate pesticides and variable rate nitrogen, plus a couple of roundtable discussions that will include industry professionals and ag consultants. AgLeader Technology, AgRenaissance Software, Wilbur-Ellis Ag Division, MapShots and AgTerra Technologies will all be on the program.

The cost of the meeting is \$75 for members and \$125 for non-members. Seating is limited and registration will be on a first come, first served basis. If you are interested in attending you can sign up by going to NAICC's website: www.naicc.org.

I'll see you there, and while you are signing up for things don't forget to register for the NAICC annual meeting, which will be held at the same location from January 23rd through the 26th.

**Register
Now!**

Check your mail box and www.naicc.org for the 2008 Annual Meeting preliminary program – it's packed with great programs, from speakers and round table discussions to educational sessions, tours and receptions. Deadline for early registration is December 21.

Seeking COTY Nominations!

NAICC's Awards Committee is gathering nominations for the Consultant of the Year Award (COTY), sponsored by BASF.

This important honor is bestowed yearly on three exemplary leaders within our industry. Our intent is to single out and express our appreciation for the hard work and dedication of top consultants.

Please join us in selecting three deserving

consultants from different areas of the nation by nominating those you strongly feel deserve the awards. Simply submit the attached application form found in this issue of *NAICC News* to NAICC headquarters by December 21, 2007, or go to <http://www.naicc.org/Applications/COTY.pdf>.

The Awards Committee and BASF will then select the 2007 COTY winners, and they will

be honored at the Annual Meeting in Seattle.

The winners will be rewarded with plaques 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*.

Get Ready for a Meeting that Will Improve Your Business for Years to Come

This year's Annual Meeting is chockfull of networking opportunities and valuable workshops specifically geared to independent crop consultants and researchers.

You'll meet and renew acquaintances with a wide range of industry and government experts from throughout the nation - even around the globe! With networking lunches, the exhibit hall and Friday night dinner, you'll have plenty of time to share information and build your contact list for future success.

As for workshops, we're seeking to outdo ourselves with this year's line up, which includes the BIO Focus on Compliance: Corn, Cotton and Soy Workshop, scheduled for Tuesday, January 22. The goal of this workshop - focusing on corn, cotton and soy - is for attendees to better understand how to comply with federal requirements for regulated field trials.

A half-day session, this workshop is designed to address the responsible use of plant biotechnology during the research and development phase. Information gained during the past 16 years of bringing new products to market will be shared during the program, which is specifically geared toward:

- Agricultural research and teaching universities/institutions/governmental agencies conducting regulated field trials in the United States
- Farmer cooperators who are employed by or want to become involved in conducting regulated field trials for technology providers
- Company personnel engaged in regulatory and business management of regulated field trials

Attendees will learn how to develop tools to create and revise compliance programs

for regulated articles, along with methods to assist in compliance and meet federal reporting requirements.

(The intent of this workshop is to serve as an educational tool for participants to better understand and meet U.S. regulatory requirements for conducting regulated field trials of biotech-improved plants intended for food and feed use. It is not intended to substitute for a participant's own individual understanding of the U.S. requirements, for consultation with a participant's legal counsel, or for direct contact with U.S. regulatory agencies. Regulatory requirements may be issued or revised by government agencies after the date of this workshop.)

For more information and to register for the workshop, visit <http://www.bio.org/foodag/compliance/corn/>.

New GDM Tools Improve Trial Quality and Manageability is the 9th Annual ARM Tips and Techniques

ARM 8 software will make you more efficient and effective in managing your research studies. It can improve research quality, and reduce the time required to report results. With over 4 years in the making, ARM 8 has a clean new visual style that is much friendlier for an infrequent user. It includes a multitude of new features and improvements relative to ARM 7. Someone familiar with ARM 7 will be immediately productive, since all ARM 7 commands and

ways of working are fully supported in ARM 8.

Enhanced GDMdef Rating Shell is the data collector GDM offers with Workabout Pro packages, supported through ARM Push and Pull. Features are:

- Sheets (tabs) to enter essentially all information in G-All7 site description, including: crop planting, crop and pest stage at application, weather, soil information, location and site details, application comments, and deviations.

- Full support of subsample data entry, with a border line showing the last subsample for each plot.
- Automatic calculation of treatment means and standard deviation.
- Designed to support standard G-All7 and G-Seed7 study definitions.

The contact information would be the same as in year's past but for additional information and to register they can visit: www.gdmdata.com/Resources/training.htm.

WIN NASCAR PACKAGE, BEACH VACATION, \$1,000 GIFT CERTIFICATE AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!

Three lucky winners will walk away with a special prize at this year's Annual Meeting due to the generosity of sponsors and members alike. A silent auction will be held in the exhibit hall, and during the Friday night raffle three prizes will be given away. This is a change from our regular raffle where multiple smaller items were available. With three prizes available, your chances of winning are better than ever.

On the prize list this year is, again, the wildly popular NASCAR package, donated

by DuPont Ag and Nutrition. The prize includes accommodations, meals and transportation at the race, along with access to the in-field and DuPont VIP tent. (Winner is responsible for transportation to the event.)

Other big ticket items include a week-long stay in Topsail Beach, N.C., donated by **Billy and Martha McLawhorn**. Also available is the popular \$1,000 gift certificate to Cabela's.

On the business end of things, NAICC requests that those submitting items for the silent auction provide descriptions of the

items, with photos if possible. Please also include donor name and address and approximate worth or suggested minimum starting bid for each item. All information should be submitted before January 10, 2008. Minimum raises on silent auction items will be \$5.

For more information, contact NAICC headquarters. And when you get to Seattle, be sure to peruse the prizes so you're ready for the auction and raffle!

NAICC Proudly Welcomes New Board

Dedicated member participation and superior leadership have always been – and will continue to be – critical for NAICC's success.

Stan Winslow, James Todd, Dennis Hattermann, Orvin Bontrager and Shannon Gomes were recently elected to lead and be part of a strong team of dedicated Board members.

As President Elect, Stan anticipates that NAICC will have to work even harder to provide the training, support and networking opportunities each of us needs as the industry experiences all time high grain prices.

Stan is president of Tidewater Agromonics, Inc., in Belvidere, N.C. A member of NAICC since 1996, Stan is a CPCC-I, a NAICC Technical Service Provider and has served on the Consultant Education Committee. He has also been involved in the North Carolina Ag Consultants Association, the North Carolina CCA Board and the North Carolina Extension IPM Advisory Committee.

With a Bachelor of Science degree in Agronomy from North Carolina State University, Stan worked for the North Carolina Ag Extension Service for several years, becoming a full service crop consultant in 1991. He is a Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner, a Technical Specialist in Waste Utilization in North Carolina and has completed numerous training courses in nutrient management and conservation planning.

James Todd, elected to the position of Secretary, is owner of Todd Agricultural Consulting, L.L.C., in Plainview, Texas. He also serves as corn and beans operations manager for Glades Crop Care, Inc., in Jupiter, Fla. James believes NAICC will be instrumental in shaping the role consultants and researchers will serve in the next few years, addressing issues such as food safety, bio-fuels and worker protection.

A member of NAICC for seven years, James has served on numerous committees. He is also active in the High Plains Association of Crop Consultants. James founded Todd Agricultural Consulting in 2007. He consults on corn, cotton, grain sorghum, wheat and sunflowers. With Glades Crop Care he provides consulting services on sweet corn and green beans from November through May. Between 1992 and 2006 James built his own consulting base and participated in GLP and efficacy research with Agri-Search, Inc. James has a degree in agronomy from Texas Tech University.

Dennis Hattermann will serve as NAICC treasurer in 2008. He is particularly

impressed with NAICC's Crawfish Boil on the Hill. "I have come to realize how important this yearly event is to our organization," said Dennis. "I have made many good contacts in visits with Congressmen and their support staff and am looking forward to continuing to strengthen and build additional relationships and push the cause of rural America in our nation's capitol."

Dennis has served as director of research and radiation safety officer for Landis International, Inc., in Valdosta, GA for the past 17 of the companies 25 years. A member of NAICC for nine years, he's attended nearly every annual meeting, has been active on the newsletter committee (chairman in 2005) and was treasurer for the past two years.

Aside from NAICC, Dennis is a member of the American Phytopathological Society. He earned undergraduate and masters degrees in environmental biology and botany and from Eastern Illinois University, Charleston and his doctorate in plant pathology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He also held a post-doctoral position at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville working on molecular control and regulation of soybean nodulation by *Bradyrhizobium japonicum*.

Serving as a director in 2008 is Orvin Bontrager. Orvin is an education director for Servi-Tech, Inc., in Aurora, Neb. He's been a member of NAICC for 13 years and has served on both the Membership Recruitment, Retention and Rules and Consultant Education Committees for three years and as Board Secretary for two years.

Orvin believes NAICC is the premiere

organization representing independent crop consultants and researchers on the national level and that we must persist in showing the benefits of joining NAICC.

In addition to the NAICC, Orvin is active in the American Society of Agronomy and he is a Certified Crop Advisor and Certified Professional Agronomist. In 1996 he was named one of six American Cyanamid consultants of the year, and in 1992 Servi-Tech honored him as employee of the year.

Orvin has been a regular contributor to CropTalk on www.agprofessional.com since 2000. He has a Master of Science degree in range/weed science from Texas A&M and a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife conservation from Kansas State University.

Also serving as director in 2008 is Shannon Gomes, president and crop consultant for Cedar Basin Crop Consulting, Inc., in Waverly, Iowa.

A Certified Professional Soil Scientist (CPSS), Shannon has been a member of NAICC for 16 years. He served as secretary in 2007 and has been a member of the Precision Ag Committee. Shannon has also made presentations on Electrical Conductivity Mapping and TSP involvement at NAICC Annual Meetings.

Shannon said he believes NAICC can play a very important role in shaping sustainable and profitable crop production systems as we look to the future and consider the impact of globalization and energy policy. He holds a Master of Science degree in soil fertility from Iowa State University and a Bachelor of Science degree in soil science from California State Polytechnic University.

NAICC Sponsor List Keeps Growing!

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NAICC would like to thank these individuals and the returning officers and directors listed below for assuming leadership roles within the organization. We invite you to take a moment to congratulate them at the Annual Meeting.

Returning 2008 Executive Board Members:

President: Jim Steffel
Past President: Bob Glodt

Directors: Ron Britt
Dan Moser
Bobby Haygood, Ph.D.

Resolve to Become More Involved in '08!

NAICC's voice resonates from the grassroots level all the way to Washington. How? Through the strength of our committees - people who invest their time and talent in shaping our industry's future.

One of the best things you can do as a NAICC member and as an independent

crop consultant or researcher is to join or lead one of our many committees. From Membership, Recruitment, Retention and Rules to Annual Meeting Coordination Committee, you'll be sure to find an area of interest that inspires you. And working alongside valued colleagues throughout the

year will make your NAICC experience more rewarding.

So don't wait! Start the new year off by resolving to add a bit more of yourself to the Alliance. Contact NAICC headquarters to sign up or learn more about specific committee opportunities. You won't regret it!

Seeking Nominating Committee Members...

As you consider which committee fits you best, think about the Nominating Committee. Similar to years past, we're currently seeking people to volunteer for this important committee in advance so we can be assured that those on it will have time to fulfill their obligations.

(Naturally we'll still nominate and elect

members from the floor. We're simply also casting a net in advance.)

Per our by-laws, our nominating committee must be made up of the Past President (who will chair the committee), the President-Elect, a minimum of two other prior Alliance Presidents and a minimum of two members from west of the

Mississippi River and two from east of the Mississippi.

If you're interested, please contact NAICC Headquarters prior to the meeting, visit with **Bob Glodt** or contact Allison Jones at JonesNAICC@aol.com.



Come Join Us In Seattle!

2008 NAICC ANNUAL MEETING

January 23-26, 2008

Westin Hotel
Seattle, Washington

For information call:
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