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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Bob Glodt
NAICC
President

Martin Schur's Consultant Training

When I went into business in 1980, one of my first customers was a man I've come to admire immensely: Martin Schur. At the time his son, Glenn, was in college at Texas Tech University majoring in Agronomy. Martin has since retired and I now work for Glenn. Martin and Glenn are the kind of clients ag consultants especially enjoy. By this I mean they approach problems in a scientific way, are soft-spoken, eager to adopt sound practices and are good managers and all-around top notch farmers.

One of the first jobs I had while working for Martin was to check peppers on one of his farms. When Martin asked about my experience in peppers, I explained that I

had none; however, I told him that the dominant insect pest in our area in peppers was also the main insect pest that occurs in cotton. I informed him that I knew about the pest, understood its life stages, but I couldn't claim that I had experience with the pest in peppers. I assured him that if he did not want me to check his peppers that would be okay with me.

So Martin hired me to check a 10-acre field of peppers on his farm at a fee of \$4.50 per acre. Upon hiring me he said, "We cannot tolerate any worms in this pepper crop; even a few worms will result in the entire crop being rejected by the vegetable shed." Needless to say, this 10-acre patch of peppers caused me much anxiety during my first summer's work for Martin. I soon learned that the anxiety of worrying about worms in Martin's peppers was worth more than the \$45 fee I received for doing the work.

During that summer, Martin and I spent a lot of time discussing his pepper crop as well as talking about every other technical issue about crop production he could think of. Every time I visited his farm, Martin would wave me down and long discussions about various topics would ensue. One time he asked about cotton production, the next visit he inquired about fertility and so on. We always talked about something a little

different each time I visited his farm. In addition, Martin would take very little of what I said at face value. One question always seemed to lead to another. He could be a little argumentative too. I learned fairly quickly that if I made a point, I darn well better be able to defend what I said. I also remember thinking to myself, "Martin has been farming long enough to know the answer to the question he just asked me." But, I would always give him an answer to the questions he asked.

After about three years of Martin's turn row meetings, he no longer stopped me as I made my rounds to his various farms. I remember passing him one day on the farm and he just waved and drove on by. "HmMMM, Martin must be too busy to talk today," I thought to myself. I thought it was a little strange because in the past, Martin was seldom too busy to visit. The next time I visited his fields, he did the same thing...just a smile and a wave, no stopping to ask questions. About the third time Martin waved me on, I realized that all those years of question answering weren't for Martin's benefit at all...he knew the answers to the questions he was asking. He just wanted to see if I knew the answers.

Oh, by the way, Martin's pepper crop was one of only a few in our area that was not rejected for worm damage in 1980.

EPA Takes into Account NAICC Recommendations for REI Change

Crop consultants will face a minor change to the Worker Protection Standard (WPS) following recent discussions between the NAICC, the CCA and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

With input from NAICC and other ag groups, EPA is revising the re-entry period (REI) for crop advisor employees to 10 minutes per field without the need for personal protective equipment.

Up to this point WPS has allowed crop advisor activities to be conducted during application and the restricted entry interval

(REI) as long as those doing so are trained and equipped as pesticide handlers. (This includes certified or licensed crop advisors and people performing crop advising tasks under their supervision.)

EPA proposed to modify the terms of exemption for employees of crop advisors in an effort to ensure their protection from pesticide exposure. The Agency contends that it is reasonable to allow certified crop advisors to make risk management decisions and assume risks for themselves based on their knowledge and expertise, but that less

informed, uncertified employees may not have the training to determine acceptable risk, appropriate protection, etc. EPA also noted that they may be uncomfortable questioning employer judgment.

Another concern EPA raised was regarding enforcement, noting that with the current exemption it is hard to distinguish certain crop advisor tasks that are allowable during the REI from those prohibited.

In meeting with the EPA, NAICC told agency representatives that it is important to retain the existing WPS exemption for

certified crop advisors and that the Alliance is unaware of problems associated with that exemption.

The NAICC also stated that certified crop advisors and their employees rarely enter treated fields while REIs are in effect, as standard practice is to wait until REIs have expired

before engaging in crop advisor activities. When presented with the 10 minute option, NAICC communicated to the EPA that it would not disrupt practices if employees were prohibited to enter fields during the REI as long as there was a short, time-limited exception to make critical observations.

The updated REI regulation – a re-entry interval of 10 minutes per field for crop advisor employees without the need for personal protective equipment – will go into effect in 2008.

Poppert, Olson, Connell Named Consultants of the Year

It's an honor to congratulate the cream of the crop each year; please join us in celebrating the efforts of our 2007 Consultants of the Year! Throughout their careers these three people have dedicated themselves to their clients, the consulting industry, agriculture at large, their communities and their families. We all benefit from their leadership and the strong example they set daily.

Many thanks, **Clark Poppert**, **Matt Olson** and **Will Connell**. And many thanks also to the NAICC and to **BASF** for sponsoring these prestigious awards, which were distributed at the 2007 Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

Clark Poppert, an independent crop consultant for 16 years, is employed by Servi-Tech, Inc., in Geneva, NE. A leader in

GPS/grid soil sampling and precision ag, gray leaf spot disease management and more, he consults on more than 12,000 acres and supervises several full-time consultants.

With both CPCC-I and CCA certifications, Clark has been a member of the NAICC for many years, currently serving on the Ethics and Grievance Committee. He is active in the Nebraska Independent Crop Consultants Association and the American Soybean Association. Clark will be awarded the Servi-Tech 200,000 Acre Award next year, 10 years after the company named him Servi-Tech Employee of the Year.

Matt Olson, employed by CENTROL, Inc., in Valley City, ND, has been a consultant for 10 years. He performs variety management, strip till, no till and pest management ser-

VICES on wheat, corn, soybeans, sunflowers and more.

Also a long-time NAICC member, Matt is involved in CCA and the North Dakota Independent Crop Consultants Association. In 2000 and 2005 he was awarded CENTROL's maximum individual retention award.

A crop consultant for more than 25 years, Will Connell owns Will Connell Ag Consultant, Inc., in Stokes, NC. A member of NAICC for most of his career, Connell is active in the North Carolina Agricultural Consultants Association. He performs a wide range of agronomic services for numerous crops, including cotton, peanuts, corn, tobacco, sweet potatoes, soybeans and wheat.

Seattle Beckons in '08 - Mark Your Calendar!

First things first, NAICC's 2008 annual meeting is back to its original dates in the country's coffee capitol – January 23-26, 2008. Plan to join us in Seattle, WA, for what promises to be a meeting rich in information, training, networking, sightseeing and just plain fun.

From Safeco Field to the Olympic rainforest, jet engines to orcas, Seattle offers a wide spectrum of experiences, people and events. Your focus, naturally, will be on NAICC and maximizing the opportunities the meeting provides each year to help ensure your continued success and that of the industry.

But in your spare time, Seattle's gems shouldn't be missed...

The Space Needle offers a 520-foot observation deck. You can dine at the top as the restaurant revolves over the city.

Pike Place Market is the granddaddy of farmers markets. With 200 businesses operating year-round, 190 craftspeople and 120 farmer booths, street performers and musicians, you don't have to be a shopper to be entertained. (But if you are, you'll be



thrilled by flying fish, fresh pastries, handmade cheeses, local honey, wines and so much more.)

Ferries – Washington's ferry system takes passengers and their vehicles from Seattle and nearby departure points to Vashon Island, the Kitsap Peninsula, the San Juan Islands and Canada. Hop aboard to view the Olympic and Cascade mountains, the Seattle cityscape, green shorelines and more!

Seattle Aquarium – A world treasure, you'll walk under water as blunt nose sixgill

sharks, among other creatures, swim around you. You can learn about salmon at the world's first aquarium-based salmon ladder, touch a sea anemone, gaze at bright-colored coral reef fish, view a giant Pacific octopus, the list goes on...

The Seattle Waterfront – Whether you're seeking a great meal, entertainment or shopping, you'll find it all here. Stroll by the fountains on the wooden piers of Waterfront Park, admire the view, seek out souvenirs or hop a ferry! (The Waterfront

hosts starting points for ferries, cruise ships, the Victoria Clipper and Argosy boat tours.)

Woodland Park Zoo – With 1,000 animals of 300 different species, this spectacular zoo features delightful naturalistic exhibits.

Bill Speidel's Underground Tour – A blast from the past, this tour takes you back to the city before the Great Seattle Fire of 1889, after which the city was rebuilt upon its ruins. Visitors travel through hidden subterranean passages that were once main roadways and storefronts in downtown Seattle.

Winery and Brewery tours and tastings – For a taste of Washington, you don't have to travel far from Seattle. Woodinville, 35 minutes from the city, boasts Chateau Ste. Michelle Winery, Columbia Winery and Redhook Ale Brewery, among others.

Bringing the kids? Seattle Center – a 74-acre urban park – beckons, as does the Amusement Park, Children's Museum,

Pacific Science Center (with more than 80 hands-on exhibits), the Museum of Flight, Steven Spielberg's Gameworks, a wide array of major league sports, festivals and celebrations will keep the whole family entertained.

And there's more – so much more – go whale watching, view Snoqualmie Falls, check out the Seattle Public Library with its award-winning glass and steel structure,

learn about the Native American way of life at Tillicum Village, travel by vintage rail car on the Spirit of Washington Dinner Train...

Come see for yourself January 23-26 – we'll be at the Westin Seattle! A great pot of coffee, great company in a great city – what better way to start the new year?

NAICC Welcomes Tim Dozier!

New to the NAICC is owner and manager of Dozier Ag Research Services, L.L.C., **Tim Dozier**.

Tim offers services such as GLP Testing, yield evaluation, herbicide efficacy/tolerance and more on corn, soybeans, wheat, sorghum and vegetables. He said he expects to expand into biotechnology and crop test-

ing within the next five to 10 years.

Previously a GLP Biologist for 16 years with **Bayer CropScience**, Tim said he joined NAICC largely for the networking opportunities it presents. To ensure that he and other independent crop consultants remain on top within the industry, Tim said he values NAICC's ability to provide

hands-on-training of the latest techniques used in conducting research. "New ideas come from people outside the box rethinking techniques," he noted.

Tim holds a Bachelor's degree in International Business Management.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STATES

by Steve Hoffman, NAICC Member and WAPAC President

We are all leaders. Matt Millen, General Manager of the Detroit Lions is a leader. There is an expectation that a leader has insight and wisdom. Unfortunately, being in a leadership position does not bestow insight or wisdom on the leader. (Sorry Matt!)

What kind of leaders are we as individuals or as an industry? Are we delivering the level of leadership our clients want and deserve? These are questions that came to mind after I attended Ag Pro Expo in Atlanta this past February. Ag Pro Expo was the combined annual meeting of the National Association of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) and American Society of Agricultural Consultants (ASAC).

Participating in meetings and discus-

sions with some of the most respected leaders in the agricultural consulting industry was a great wake-up call for me. I was reminded that leadership is not just jumping on the band wagon of the latest technology and becoming proficient so that I might gain an edge on my competition. These leaders I am thinking of could be described as "tough customers" by vendors of new technology. They are among the first to become educated on a new technology to determine if it fits their clients' needs, but they also ask the deep, tough questions that make people feel uncomfortable.

I was struck with the notion that my leadership ability was improved by interacting with other leaders. I came away from Ag Pro Expo feeling that my time and

money were well spent. I also realized how valuable it has been for me to interact at the state level with the members of the **Wisconsin Association of Professional Agricultural Consultants (WAPAC)** at seminars and board meetings.

While just being a member of a professional organization such as NAICC or WAPAC has some benefits, the greatest benefit to us, our industry and our clients is the interaction between leaders which results in true leadership. What kind of leadership do your clients deserve?

Steve Hoffman, CPAG is a member of NAICC and President of the Wisconsin Association of Professional Agricultural Consultants (WAPAC). He owns and operates Hoffman Crop Consulting in Manitowoc, WI.

Spotlight on NAICC Members

Many NAICC Members are leaders in their state associations. Thanks for those who serve NAICC and their state associations!

(NAICC members are indicated in bold.)

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Loarn Bucl, Legislative Director 2007

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