



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Orvin Bontrager
NAICC
2010 President

Consulting, Retailers and Government

One of the first presentations I participated in at a NAICC Annual Meeting was a panel discussion about getting along with dealers. Crop consultants and agricultural dealers have the same clients. I will contend it is in the best interest of our farmer clients for us to get along. Is it always easy? No. One can work closely with suppliers who agree with most of your recommendations

and support consultants' efforts with clients. But sometimes with a change of management, a different philosophy emerges, and the supplier can try to discredit the consultant's recommendations and business.

The code of ethics that we sign when we become voting members of NAICC would indicate it is important to get along with other professionals that work with our clients. Under Article III of the code of ethics, it states "A Member shall engage, or advise his employer or clients to engage, and cooperate with, other experts and specialists whenever the employer's or client's interests would be best served by such service". Another line says "A Member shall act fairly and justly toward vendors and contractors, recommending products and/or services on the basis of merit and value".

I recently represented NAICC at the **Ag Retailers Association** Conference at Rancho Mirage, CA in Dec 2010. The retailers and suppliers obviously look at our clients a little differently as a source of product sales.

Differences are bound to exist, but by keeping the lines of communication open, we can both serve our grower clients in a way that will best maintain their profitability.

Government regulations may be getting more difficult to deal with. It remains to be seen how the change in Congress will affect any of the proposed regulations. Potential new regulations on atrazine use, spray drift (what does harm mean?), endangered species, mandated web-distributed labels (WDL), and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program, required for certain pesticide applications, will have to be addressed. Any of these will create new challenges in conventional crop production and independent research work. NAICC, for the most part, has gone on record to support efforts to avoid increasing regulations in these areas.

If more federal regulations are instigated, we will have opportunities to help our clients even more to be productive and profitable.

Valent Joins NAICC in 2011

Valent U.S.A. Corporation has supported NAICC activities and initiatives for many years with a recent focus on quality assurance. The relationship took another step forward in 2011 as Valent committed to support NAICC as a Sustaining Member. This renewed partnership comes on the wake of a joint meeting between Valent and NAICC in October, 2010.

The NAICC Board of Directors visited Valent, headquartered in Walnut Creek, CA, where the parties discussed organizational structure, goals and key initiatives. According to Matt Plitt, senior director of sales for Valent, "It was a great opportunity for Valent and NAICC to compare market assumptions and discuss current trends in agriculture. We discovered that the organizations are aligned and focused on many of the same industry topics such as weed resistance, emerging technologies and regulatory affairs." The October meeting set the foundation for future discussions regarding research efforts and new product training.

Valent, a wholly owned subsidiary of Sumitomo Chemical Company, Limited, is the only manufacturer that provides farming solutions with a focus on both biorational and traditional chemistries. Through its affiliation with brother company, Valent BioSciences Corporation, the global leader in biorational products, Valent supplies the market with a portfolio of plant growth regulators, biological insecticides and more. Many consultants in the specialty markets are familiar with the biorational lineup that includes brands such as ProTone®, Pro-Gibb®, ReTain®, DiPel® and XenTari®.

In row crops, Valent has partnered with Monsanto and Roundup Ready PLUS™ weed management solutions to provide growers with preemergence herbicide choices to aid in weed resistance management. Valor®, Valor XLT or Gangster® Herbicides are recommended for use with Roundup Ready® soybeans to provide alternative modes of action and residual weed control. "The program approach of Valor early fol-

lowed by Roundup in-crop is an economical program to manage herbicide resistance, plus the grower gets the added benefit of time. The residual power of Valor gives the grower a wider window of application for Roundup® due to its long, lasting control of many of the toughest weeds," says Plitt.

Valent is working to help growers mitigate risk in other ways as well. In 2010, Valent introduced INOVATE™ System for soybeans. This new seed protectant combines the insecticide, clothianidin, with a fungicide package to provide excellent protection of the soybean seed and trait investment. INOVATE performed well in its first year of commercial use in 2010. If you are interested in learning more about INOVATE, please contact your local retailer, consultant or Valent representative.

NAICC is pleased to welcome Valent as a Sustaining Member and looks forward to working together on key projects that propel our industry forward. Please stop by the Valent booth at the NAICC Annual Meeting in Fort Worth to learn more about Valent and its growing portfolio.

Annual Meeting Updates

New and exciting changes have been made to the 2011 Annual Meeting. They include:

Keynote Address

The 2011 Richard L. Jensen Memorial Keynote Address will be given by Bruce Vincent of Libby, MT. Dr. Roger Beachy with USDA-NIFA was scheduled to speak but unfortunately had to cancel at the last minute due to USDA business.

Bruce Vincent is a third generation logger and in 2004 he received the inaugural Presidential Preserve America Award from President Bush. His current activities represent a family commitment to responsible environmentalism. Vincent believes that America is ready for a new vision of conservation and environmental stewardship that is based upon hope instead of fear. According to his website, "In order to share this vision we must first reintroduce the American consumer to the processes and the people of production and then lead – not just fight – the discussion over our environment. Those who work at the ground level in implementing society's framework for protecting the environment are positioned at the leading edge of the changes and challenges of this discussion. That edge provides exciting opportunities and hope."

Ultimate Cowboy Tour

The NFL has lowered the rates for the Cowboy Stadium tour! The new rate is \$75 and includes snacks. If you have already signed up for the tour, you will be reimbursed at registration. There are still spots available for the tour so sign up NOW!

Hotel Rooms in FortWorth

The Worthington Renaissance Hotel is SOLD OUT! However, we have signed a contract with the Blackstone Courtyard by Marriott for overflow rooms located at 601 Main St., Fort Worth, TX 76102. Visit www.marriott.com/dfwms to view the hotel or make reservations.

The hotel is 3 blocks from the Worthington and the rate is \$149. Cut off is January 7.

To make your reservations at the Courtyard:

Call 1-800-MARRIOTT or the hotel directly at 817-885-8700
Refer to the "NAICC Room Block" or "NAI"

On-line at www.marriott.com/dfwms
On-line Group Codes are as follows...
NAINAIA for a room with One King Bed
NAINAIB for a room with Two Queen Beds.

Applying GLP Fundamentals for Field Research and Quality Assurance Professionals

Tuesday, January 18
from 7:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

There are still seats available for the 2011 GLP workshop. Fees are \$125 and registration forms can be found at <http://www.naicc.org/Meeting/>. Continental Breakfast is included and certificates of participation will be provided after the training.

Materials beneficial to both types of professionals will be presented through oral presentations and hands-on/practical learning opportunities. Topics will include Study Conduct within the Field, GLP Site Violations, Test Substance Handling and Hands-on/Practical Scenarios.

FEAE Auction and Raffle

NAICC Member **Debra Fitzgerald** and her husband have graciously donated a three-night stay at their bed and breakfast! Be sure to buy a raffle ticket for this exciting offer at the NAICC registration counter or from any FEAE Board Member.

Come and enjoy three weekday nights at Fitzgerald's Irish Bed & Breakfast in the Mayo or Dublin Room where points of light from a Waterford chandelier glint off the stone and brick turret and 200-year-old handpainted shutters of the gracious 16-room French Tudor mansion. As guests are welcomed into the Great Room, a total immersion in all things Irish might begin

with a dram of Jameson's Irish whiskey beside an elaborate 11-foot fireplace. There, a fiddle made in Ireland by the owner's great-great grandfather has a place of honor. Come and admire the stirring architecture of the common areas indoors or lounge on the sun porch while enjoying the park-like yard to watch the migrating birds. Fitzgerald's Irish Bed & Breakfast is distinctive and charming—a slice of Ireland.

This magnificent and recently restored home is a landmark of craftsmanship, from its ornate staircase, hard-wood floors throughout, unusual turret and slate roof, to its elaborate 11 foot fireplace. You will be charmed by its unique castle-like architecture.

Fitzgerald's Irish Bed & Breakfast offers warm Irish hospitality in their B&B voted "most affordable luxury" and one of the top 15 B&Bs in North America. Four large guestrooms each with private bathroom are named after places in Ireland portrayed in artwork throughout the castle-like home.

It is located 30 miles east of Cleveland. Just 3 miles away are some of the most-visited trails and beaches in the Great Lakes region. Also close by are over 25 of Ohio's finest wineries, Holden Arboretum and the Kirtland Mormon Temple.

Ask about their next escorted Ireland tour or see their website at www.FitzgeraldsBnB.com for details!

Total value: \$315.00

Other items being raffled off include a Visa Gift Card and a Missouri hunting trip donated by **Bill Cox** of Coxco Ag Services and **Rick Kesler** of **FMC Corporation!**

Our Sponsors and Exhibitors Ensure Our Continued Success

Thank you, each exhibiting company and sponsor, for your support of our 2011 AG PRO EXPO. With your generosity we are able to increase our visibility in Washington, enhance our growers' profitability and improve our educational programs.

Sponsors (as of 12/26/10)

BASF
Consultant of the Year Award

Bayer CropScience
Convention T-Shirts
Continental Breakfast
Co-sponsor of Bruce Vincent, Jensen Memorial Keynote Address

Coastal Research Services
Name Badge Lanyards

Cochran Agronomics
Audio Visual Support

Coxco Ag Services, Inc.
Executive Board Breakfast
Audio Visual Support

EPL Bio-Analytical
Refreshment Break

FEAE
Co-sponsor of Bruce Vincent, Jensen Memorial Keynote Address

GfK Kynetec
Audio Visual Support

Dow AgroSciences
New Members' &
First Timers' Reception
Executive Board Breakfast
Audio Visual Support

DuPont Agriculture and Nutrition/Pioneer
Hi-Bred Int'l
President's Luncheon and Awards Ceremony

FMC Corporation
Friday Night "Bubba Ball" /
Networking Dinner

GOWAN Company
Refreshment Break

Helena Chemical
Committee Chair Luncheon

Landis International
NAICC Water Bottles

MapShots
Audio Visual Support

Monsanto Company
New Members' Boot Camp

Mosaic Crop Nutrition, LLC
Refreshment Break

Syngenta Crop Protection
Emerging Technology
Flash Drives

Young and Young Consultants
LCD Projector and Laptop

Exhibitors (as of 12/26/10)

ABC Laboratories, Inc.
Ag Leader Technology
ADPEN Laboratories
AG Professional Magazine
Ag Renaissance Software
Ag Research Associates
Ag Software Design
AgQuest, Inc.
Agrian
Agrium Advanced Technologies
AGVISE Laboratories
ALMACO
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Balboa Maps
Bayer CropScience
Buckeye Ag Testing LLC
Critical Path Services
DOW AgroSciences
DuPont Ag and Nutrition
EPL Bio-Analytical Services
Eurofins Agrosience Services
Farm Press Publications
FMC Corporation
GLOBAL AG Services
Global Alliance of Independent
Ag Consultants
Golden Pacific Labs

Great Lakes Ag-Research Service, Inc.
Gylling Data Management
Helena Chemical Company
Harsco Minerals
ICMS, Inc.
IR-4 Project
JRF America
Juniper Systems, Inc.
LABServices
Landis International
Maxxam Analytics
Real Farm Research
Ricerca
Seed Research Equipment Solutions
SFP
SGS North America
Spectrum Technologies
SST Software
Syngenta Crop Protection
SynTech Research, Inc.
U of ID Center for Food Technology
US Farm Data
Valent USA Corporation
Vaughn Ag Research
Vortex Services, LLC
Winfield Solutions
World Courier

QA Corner

Meet the Member – Valen Straub

By Jim Steffel
LABServices

When QA membership was added to NAICC bylaws in 2003, **Valen Straub** became actively involved in building a Quality Assurance Program at the Annual Meeting. For the 2012 meeting in Reno she will be the Annual Meeting Coordination Committee QA Subcommittee Chair responsible for developing the QA program. I am sure it will be an interesting and informative lineup of presentations addressing the most contemporary issues in agricultural Quality Assurance with something of interest to all NAICC members in an increasingly complex regulatory environment surrounding the development and implementation of today's emerging agricultural technologies.

Valen is a native of Southeastern Pennsylvania receiving her BS in Geology/Environmental Science from Shippensburg University and an MS in Environmental Management/Natural Resources from the University of Texas – San Antonio. She began her career in the oil drilling industry monitoring site data for regulatory compliance with groundwater and environmental regulations and later joined a firm preparing EPA Modules compliant with state and federal Sewage Enforcement strategies.

In 1996 Valen joined LABServices as Information Specialist and spent one year in training to assume in-house QA responsibilities. She obtained her Pesticide Applicator's License and from the beginning was involved in field efficacy studies for all crops and disciplines designing trial layouts, making applications, collecting and summarizing data. Valen spent her share of time wearing a backpack sprayer and was instrumental in building LABServices Turf and Ornamental efficacy program. Currently she oversees T&O insect, weed and disease control studies and also specializes in tree fruit and vegetable. Accomplished in the use of ARM, Valen's data management skills are an integral part of LABServices field efficacy program.

While developing expertise for the many crops and pests offered in LABServices efficacy testing portfolio, Valen also expanded her in-house QA role beyond GLP studies to working with third party clients and adding USDA Performance Standards to her basket of talents. Her experience in dealing with the fickle nature of efficacy studies allows Valen to be an exceptionally skilled auditor of regulatory studies bringing

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NAICC and FEAE Elect New Leaders

Newly elected members of the NAICC Executive Board are **Amy Beth Dowdy**, owner of ABD Crop Consulting and **Rick Kesler with FMC Corporation**. They will be joining re-elected officers and directors **Blaine Viator, Ph.D.**, President Elect; **Donna Landis**, Secretary; and **Gary Coukell**, Director.

2011 NAICC Executive Board

Dennis Hattermann, Ph.D.
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Director

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Director

FEAE welcomes **James Todd** to the FEAE Board of Directors. Re-appointed returning Directors are **Hylon Kaufmann** and **Lee West**.

2011 FEAE Board of Directors

Bill Peele, CPCC

Tim Case, CPCC-I, CPCC-R

Hylon Kaufmann

Glenn Luedke

Kathy Richards

James Todd

Lee West

USDA NRCS Technical Service Provider Program Due for Renewal to Engage More Consultants

By Thomas Green, PhD, CCA, TSP

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) needs you! There is simply too much work to be done to address pressing conservation needs for NRCS to do it all by itself. Private sector consultants are key to addressing the many challenges we face, illustrated most recently in the Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) reports for the Upper Mississippi River Basin. This comprehensive evaluation indicated that over 60% of our cropland could benefit from additional conservation measures to prevent nutrient losses.

Fifteen percent of cropland was lacking even basic conservation practices proven to reduce the impacts of agricultural production without compromising long-term profitability. On the upside, the CEAP report detailed substantial improvements in soil, water and air quality from conservation practices successfully implemented on the large majority of our agricultural acres. To meet the remaining challenges, NRCS really, truly needs you! Changes being implemented this year in the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program are clear evidence of NRCS's desire to engage more private-sector consultants. The changes are extensive and responsive to the concerns expressed by the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants (NA-ICC), the Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) program and other organizations that have established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with NRCS, recognizing their role in certifying competent professionals. The improvements aim to help NRCS meet increased workloads and acquire special skills and expertise that county NRCS offices may lack, including planning and implementing conservation on farms.

NRCS is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, formed in 1935 as the Soil Conservation Service. The NRCS name reflects the Service's broader mission to protect all of our natural resources, including soil, water, air, plants and animals that contribute to productive lands and healthy ecosystems. NRCS accomplishes its mission in large part through technical and financial assistance to private landowners valued at more than \$1 billion per year. To ensure competent delivery of technical assistance and good use of taxpayer dollars, NRCS created the TSP program. Farmers contract directly with the agency to implement conservation. As part of the contract, NRCS may require farmers to hire a qualified TSP to provide the expertise, assistance and verification of conservation practices.

www.naicc.org

When the TSP program was rolled out, many consultants saw TSP status as a good opportunity to meet the needs of clients, potential clients and our natural resources. At peak, participation exceeded 3000 consultants. Enrollment declined however, and stands at less than 1500 today.

In 2009, a working group was created to identify barriers to the TSP process and make recommendations for improvement. All TSP processes were inventoried and evaluated by the team, and opportunities for streamlining were identified through focus groups and one-on-one consultation with partners. The team also requested input from TSPs, TSP State Coordinators, NRCS field staff and outside agencies and organizations.

Barriers included a difficult, time-consuming registration and certification process. The NRCS training module, AgLearn, could be difficult to navigate and the content is sometimes elementary, falling short on skills already certified by credible programs, including CCA and Certified Professional Crop Consultant (CPCC) credentials. Payment rates sometimes failed to provide sufficient dollars to adequately compensate consultants for the time required to complete contracted services. Administration of the TSP program was variable geographically, with some county NRCS offices welcoming consultants with open arms and others not at all familiar with how the TSP program was supposed to work. Farmers were even less familiar, making for weak demand. According to the NRCS May 2010 TSP Express newsletter, the 2009 streamlining survey conducted by NRCS indicated more than two thirds of all TSPs viewed the qualification process as overly difficult and nearly 60% rated payment rates inadequate.

"We have had years with big TSP workloads and years with nearly none," reported Stan Winslow, a TSP with thirty years experience serving producers, "I can't justify days or weeks of training for myself and my crew on a program with inconsistent work and which could go away with the next farm bill." Stan has been an NAICC member since 1995, and holds state certifications in nutrient and pest management in North Carolina and Virginia. Luther Smith, director of certification programs at the American Society of Agronomy, related that "our CCA's initial enthusiasm was dampened by lack of demand and bureaucratic hurdles. The frustrations translated into declining participation." NRCS actively engaged Winslow, Smith and others to pro-

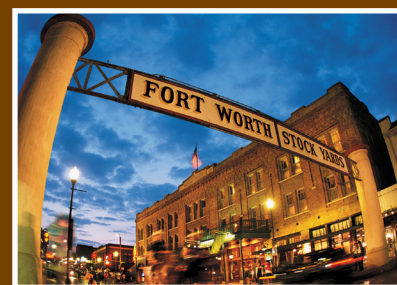
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hands on knowledge of application equipment, calibrations, plot layout and the host of outside factors and pest that enter into growing the test crop. This combination of skills provides a valuable mix of regulatory compliance and the practical knowledge needed to successfully complete any biological field study. The result is critical phase or facility audits that are not only thorough and constructive but always make sense to the Principal Investigator.

An SQA member since 1997, Valen joined NAICC in 2000 and has attended every Annual Meeting since. NAICC was the perfect fit, a venue that offered the most relevant Quality Assurance agricultural information and education programs focused on EPA FIFRA and USDA regulatory compliance.

The NAICC venue also provided exposure to the operational issues contract researchers deal with daily in conducting field studies and the valuable perspective of crop consultants working at the interface of product performance trials and implementing those new technologies at the grower level. It is sort of a smorgasbord of the practical information needed to comprehend the goals and processes involved in each step of bringing successful new technologies into the Plant Protection Marketplace. Since 2002 Valen has formatted and assembled the Emerging Technologies Presentations for the Annual Meeting, often involving the same products for which she conducted efficacy trials or audited regulatory studies needed to satisfy EPA or USDA data requirements.



**2011 NAICC
ANNUAL MEETING
& AG PRO EXPO
January 19-22, 2011**

**The Worthington
Renaissance**

Fort Worth, Texas

DECEMBER 2010

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vide feedback and develop solutions now being rolled out.

Mark Parson, NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program Manager, reports, "As a result of the survey, the agency is implementing changes to some of the qualifications required of TSPs and other improvements to the process for certification." According to Barbara Eggers, NRCS Acting National TSP Team Leader, "By summer of 2011, TSPs and those interested in becoming TSPs will see substantial improvements. Steps to be taken include moving TSP certification to the national TSP Team to improve consistency, reduce training requirements for MOU organizations and improve the quality of training offered. The required on-line TSP training for MOU-organization members will be streamlined to focus on NRCS program expectations. Credit will be given for expertise already demonstrated by MOU Organizations. TSP rates have been revised to allow states the flexibility to modify rates to meet local market rates."

The National TSP Team will be adding additional staff to handle the increased workload. Tim Pilkowski, formerly TSP Coordinator for Maryland, accepted a position with the Team in November. "One of our goals is to move some of the TSP training to the TechReg website in order to give us the ability to manage content in a timely fashion. NRCS has also entered into an agreement with GeoAgro to offer a tool to assist TSPs with conservation planning. The CPlanner tool allows TSPs, with landowner permission, to access conservation plans electronically. CPlanner also provides GIS and GPS tools to develop the conservation practices. CPlanner is flexible, supporting different types of plans and local needs, while complying with NRCS national program standards".

One of those very much looking forward to greater private-sector consultant participation in the TSP program is Dan Meyerhoff, Assistant State Conservationist for Kansas NRCS. Dan has been on detail at the national office to assist with the TSP streamlining process. Dan is looking for additional TSPs because current demand in his state for conservation plans exceeds what NRCS staff can deliver.

Resources

Visit the home page for the Technical Service Provider (TSP) program at <http://techreg.usda.gov/> to learn more. Includes tutorials for getting started.

GeoAgro CPlanner: <http://www.cplanner.com>

For Conservation Effects Assessment Program (CEAP) reports on the benefits delivered by proven conservation practices, and challenges yet to be met, see www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/nri/ceap/. For information on the role of conservation practices and IPM in reducing pesticide risks, see pages 27-28, 38-40, and 78-84, 94 and 136 in the Upper Mississippi River Basin report at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/NRI/ceap/umrb/index.html>

The North Central Region NRCS and IPM Working Group, supported by the North Central Region IPM Center, maintains a website with information about NRCS programs that protect natural resources through Integrated Pest Management (IPM). See <http://nrcs.ipm.msu.edu/>

Dr. Green is president of IPM Works LLC and serves as board president of the IPM Institute of North America, member of the US EPA Pesticide Policy Dialogue Committee, director of the Entomological Foundation and co-chair of the NRCS and IPM Working Group. He can be reached at ipmworks@ipmworks.com.

New Directories Coming

For those of you attending the 2011 Annual Meeting, you'll leave with a new NAICC directory in hand. And for those who aren't able to join look for your 2011 directory to arrive in February via mail.



Certification Reminder

CPCC certification fees and 36 CEUs are due to the NAICC headquarters by March 1. You may mail your check or credit card information to the NAICC headquarters or go to <http://www.naicc.org/join/certifyonline.cfm> to renew and report your CEUs on-line.



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