



NAICC NEWS

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Orvin Bontrager
NAICC
2010 President

Interns

Many years ago, my first intern and I rode together and checked fields during the summer in a cramped CJ-7 Jeep with a small motorcycle strapped to the front. It's a wonder we didn't kill each other. It was in Kansas in 1980, the hottest summer I ever hope to experience, many days above 100 degrees.

Our company tends to limit the use of interns to one per day per full-time, experienced employee. With the way we check fields, it is very difficult to supervise more than that. Over the years, I have had about 35 different individuals working as interns and/or new full-time employees without previous consulting experience.

As most NAICC members know, many new interns work out fine, but there are challenges getting them started and oriented to the way we work. We try to inform them of the long days and inclement weather conditions that we work in as we check fields each week. But to some it is still a shock that we are out checking fields instead of sitting in an office waiting for the fields to dry or conditions to improve.

Most interns will readily admit that, at the end of the summer, the learning

experience is the best they experience during their college years. It is hard to argue with the value of being in the field all summer, experiencing numerous different farms and management styles.

Some return as full-time employees. Many decide that this is not for them as a vocation. Crop consultants and NAICC members have trained hundreds of young people who, over the years, have become leaders in the production ag, seed, chemical, research and university environments.

We should feel a great sense of accomplishment in the part we play in training and molding interns into consultants with a respectable level of skills. Even if they didn't stay or return to field consulting or research, those experiences allowed them to be better professionals in their agricultural and other vocational fields.

The following article is reprinted with permission from Farm Press Publications. Go to <http://deltafarmpress.com/legislative/crawfish-naicc-talk-dc-0602/index.html> to see the photo gallery from the past NAICC Crawfish Boils on the Hill.

Crawfish, NAICC — talk of D.C.

By Elton Robinson, Farm Press Editorial Staff

Washington politicians can usually get to the meat of a matter pretty quickly — whether it's a complex political issue or the writing of a piece of proposed legislation. But when the National Alliance of Independent Crop Consultants is in town, the task takes a decidedly delicious turn.

The action begins promptly at 6 p.m. in the basement cafeteria of the Longworth House Office Building in Washington, D.C., where the kitchen air runs thick with irresistible Cajun accents. Washingtonians enter the dining hall, roll back their sleeves and with napkins in place, get down to business.

Soon, heads start to roll and tails get pinched, and the unique flavor of Louisiana crawfish rushes over palates. The NAICC's 13th annual Crawfish Boil on the Hill dinner is officially under way.

By the end of the two-hour event, 150 pounds of boiled crawfish, 40 pounds of crawfish tails and 30 pounds of alligator meat will have been consumed by several hundred lawmakers, staffers, aides, and USDA and EPA staff.

The crawfish boil, organized by the NAICC, is part social extravaganza, part dining experience, but either way, it helps nourish the relationship between agricultural producers and those who make the rules in Washington.

"It is not who you know in Washington that counts," said NAICC member and Louisiana crop consultant Ray Young. "It is who knows you that makes a difference."

"The Crawfish Boil on the Hill allows NAICC to have name recognition in D.C.," added Roger Carter, NAICC member from Louisiana and one of the founders of the event. "Many recognize us as the 'go to' source for independent ideas on products, rules, and regulations involving consultants and the tools we recommend to our clients for production agriculture."

The crawfish boil is usually held in late March to early April, depending on when Congress is in session. "There are no speeches, no program, and no agenda at the crawfish boil other than to let every attendee know that we are there if they have any questions about agriculture," Carter said.

The crawfish boil was the brainchild of Carter and fellow NAICC member Phil Cochran of Illinois. In the spring of 1997, Carter and other NAICC board members were on Capitol Hill waiting to see Hunt Shipman, then Mississippi Sen. Thad Cochran's chief of staff.

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Mindy Buchanan, one of Shipman's office staff, walked into the waiting area and asked Carter where she could obtain crawfish for a party for another staffer who was leaving. Perhaps a bit under the spell of Washington politics, Carter asked how much she needed and when she wanted them, "not knowing at the time if I could even deliver."

Several days later, Carter followed through on his promise, and shipped 40 pounds of crawfish from Baton Rouge to Washington, D.C. "At the time crawfish and shipping were both cheap compared to now, and it cost only about \$120," Carter said.

Within 10 days, Carter received a thank you note signed by over 40 legislative staffers. From there, the idea of an annual crawfish boil on the Hill began to take shape.

At the next NAICC executive board meeting, Carter and Co-chran "talked about how arduous it was to trek from office to office around Capitol Hill and that if we could gather some of the key folks at an event it would be much easier and give NAICC more exposure in D.C.," Carter noted.

The Crawfish Boil on the Hill was born.

The first year, over 60 people came for dinner including legislative staffers, aides and representatives from USDA and EPA. Since then, it has grown to an annual event attended by over 200 people.

In the early years, the event was called Dads in D.C. ("dads" is a shortened form of crawdads, a term used by many Southerners for crawfish). "But many folks thought the event was about a group of fathers (dads), so the name was changed to Crawfish Boil on the Hill," Carter said.

The crawfish are prepared by Jim Braucht, who Carter has nicknamed "de Chef." But Braucht, a salesman for Terral Seed Co. in Ferriday, La., and an honorary member of NAICC, prefers a more humble moniker. "It's actually more like 'de Cook,'" he laughs. "A cook will share his recipe. A chef will not."

Boiled Crawfish (Trenasse... Cajun for Crawfish)

On the day of the crawfish boil, Braucht arranges for the live crawfish to be delivered to the airport at 4:30 a.m., in order to make a 6 a.m. flight to Dulles Airport in Virginia. Braucht hasn't been able to fly the crawfish into Reagan National Airport since Sept. 11, due to tightened security. So at Dulles, he rents a van and hauls the crawfish to Washington.

He'll go through a series of checkpoints before getting the mudbugs to the kitchen. "You just don't back a van up to the House of Representatives and start unloading seafood," said Braucht.

There's nearly always an adventure between the airport and the boiling pot. Once, a bomb-detection dog had a close encounter with a live crawfish when the dog stuck his nose into one of Braucht's containers.

The menu has varied some over the years, but the primary staples are boiled crawfish, crawfish étouffée over rice, boiled corn on the cob and potatoes, cole slaw, French bread and desserts.

Dorothy Young, wife of NAICC member Ray Young, and Cheryl Braucht, Jim's wife, help out in the kitchen.

The crawfish étouffée recipe

Ned Darbonne's Crawfish Étouffée

was obtained from Ned Darbonne (a misplaced Cajun in Mississippi) and has been the biggest hit. For the last three years, Braucht has added alligator sauce piquant to the menu.

Jim-beau's (Jimbo) Alligator Sauce Piquant

Carter notes that "nawtherners" are frequently in need of instruction of the art of pinching tails, er, the technique used to coax a morsel of crawfish meat from its shell. Luckily, the event is attended by several avid crawfish-eating aficionados, including Louisiana natives Grady and Barbara Coburn, Denise Wright, Harold Lambert, Ray and Dorothy Young and Blaine Viator. Carter, surprisingly, is allergic to the critters.

How to eat a crawfish

Braucht says the NAICC "has done a wonderful job up there and have done a tremendous amount of good for the American farmer, from the Carolinas to California. I'm glad to be a part of it."

NAICC president-elect Dennis Hattermann from Valdosta, Ga., noted that the crawfish boil is "a culmination of a day the NAICC board spends visiting legislators and government employees in other branches of government who impact agriculture.

"Our goal is to meet with them earlier in the day in a more formal setting of information exchange, and then in a more relaxed informal setting later at the crawfish boil," Hattermann said.

NAICC executive vice president Allison Jones said the crawfish boil and brainstorming work well together. She recounts a conversation she had with veteran Washington lobbyist Macon Edwards, who at first had his doubts about the event.

"I asked his opinion about cost benefit of having this boil. He said staffers are invited to many events on and off the Hill so he couldn't guarantee that we'd get our money's worth. After he attended the first two crawfish boils, he told me that this was the best idea he'd ever seen."

Carter praised the NAICC for money-raising events at the organization's annual meeting which go to the Crawfish Boil on the Hill fund. "Ray Young has been instrumental in helping me raise the money the past years."

This spring, in addition to the numerous USDA, EPA and congressional staffers attending, eight members of the House were present, an all-time high: Reps. Rodney Alexander, La.; Jack Kingston, Ga.; Jeff Fortenberry, Neb.; Dean Heller, Nev.; Robert Latta, Ohio; Earl Pomeroy, N.D.; Walt Minnick, Idaho; and Bob Etheridge, N.C.

Alexander and his staff are regular attendees, as is former EPA Administrator Steve Johnson.

That the dignitaries "could be attending many other similar functions with food attests to the excellence of the food prepared by Jim and the warm hospitality offered by our NAICC family," Carter said.

Certification Update

NAICC welcomes six new members to the CPCC family! Please join in congratulating:

Orvin Bontrager, CPCC-I
Brandon Englund, CPCC-I
Tim Moline, CPCC-I
Kevin Otte, CPCC-I
Blaine Viator, Ph.D., CPCC-I and CPCC-R
Matt Winslow, CPCC-I and CPCC-R

The Certification Board made recent changes to the CPCC experience criteria and clarified information regarding the exam requirement:

Experience: An applicant must have a minimum three (3) years of experience with a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctorate degree. Two or more years of farming, scouting or other agricultural experience may substitute for no more than one year of consulting experience.

Exam Requirements: Passing a state licensing exam or a state/regional CCA or CPAg exam is required. In states where no state or regional exam is offered, the national CCA exam will be accepted. A category 10 license or its research and demonstration certification equivalent is acceptable for researchers.

Update on Status of the EPA NPDES General Permit

A draft of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit was issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on June 2 and the 45-day public comment period has commenced.

A number of organizations that will be directly affected by the permit have begun reviewing and meeting about the draft, including the Pesticide Policy Coalition of which NAICC is a member. By mid-June the group intends to analyze, develop comments and begin aggressive advocacy.

Similarly, CropLife America is working closely with stakeholders and the agricultural community before submitting comments to EPA. Jay Vroom, president and CEO of CLA, noted that upon initial review EPA has "remained faithful to its initial timetable and promise to keep the NPDES permit focused on a narrow set of applications." He expressed concern about the limited time for review and eventual implementation of the permit and about the "many unanswered questions pertaining to agricultural applications which CLA would like clarified before implementation."

The current draft permit specifically addresses four unique situations that call for the application of crop and health protection products to water:

- mosquito and other flying insect pest control
- aquatic weed and algae control
- aquatic nuisance animal control
- forest canopy pest control

A main concern is inadequate mention of U.S. agricultural exemptions. This could open the door for varying interpretation by environmental and conservation organizations and potentially allows farmers to fall victim to costly lawsuits and litigation.

EPA plans to finalize the permit in December, 2010, and it is to take effect on April 9, 2011. The general permit will be used in states where EPA is the authorized permitting authority, leaving 44 remaining states to issue and implement their own NPDES permits.

More information about the NPDES issue, public meetings, fact sheets and background information can be found on EPA's website, <http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/>. We encourage NAICC members to keep abreast of this issue and send comments to EPA and the NAICC headquarters.

More about the NPDES General Permit (PGP)

On June 2, 2010, EPA announced the public availability of a draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for point source discharges from pesticide application to U.S. waters.

This permit, also known as the Pesticides General Permit (PGP), was developed in response to a decision by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals (National Cotton Council, et al. v. EPA).

The court vacated EPA's 2006 rule that said NPDES permits were not required for applications of pesticides to U.S. waters. As a result, when the court's mandate takes effect April 9, 2011, NPDES permits will be required for these applications.

Any use patterns not covered by this proposed draft permit would need to obtain coverage under an individual permit or alternative general permit if they involve pesticide applications that result in point source discharges to U.S. waters.

This general permit will provide coverage for discharges where EPA is the NPDES permitting authority. For discharges in NPDES authorized states, state NPDES authorities will be issuing permits.

EPA estimates that the Sixth Circuit's ruling will affect approximately 365,000 pesticide applicators performing 5.6 million pesticide applications annually nationwide.

EPA's PGP regulates discharges to U.W. waters from the application of biological pesticides and chemical pesticides that leave a residue.

The PGP does not authorize coverage for discharges of pesticides or their degradates to waters already impaired by either, nor does it authorize discharges to outstanding national resource waters (also known as Tier 3 waters).

These discharges will require coverage under individual NPDES permits. Also outside the scope of this permit are terrestrial applications to control pests on agricultural crops or forest floors.

Q & A Corner

by Deb Green

The 2010 NAICC meeting was held in Orlando, Florida, in late January. For those of us who specialize in field QA, January is a perfect time to step away from our normal routine to learn or refresh ourselves about the application of the GLP regulations at field sites. The training sessions were set up to provide perspectives from sponsors, CROs and independent consultants. Sessions included: "Audit Process for Trials with USDA-APHIS Regulated Material," "Effectively Preparing & Presenting QA Inspection Findings" and "Special Issues Faced by a Sponsor QA." There was also a practical session held outdoors that allowed auditors to find problem areas during a mock field inspection.

In addition, there were valuable presentations from EPA representatives Francisca Liem and Mark Lehr that gave insight into preparing for an agency inspection and listed findings from inspections at field sites.

Slides from most of the presentations are available on the NAICC website. If you haven't already done so, a quick review of the slides at this time of year will help keep you on track for the busy field season. In addition, a review of the SOPs for your site(s) will have you prepared for your upcoming QA inspections.

Looking forward, the QA program for the 2011 meeting in Fort Worth promises to provide more learning and networking opportunities for field QA professionals. Make plans now to attend!

DID YOU KNOW?

Did You Know that the NAICC membership database is fully searchable by crop, region, certified professional crop consultant designation, state, GLP cropping trial region and membership category?!

How is that for easily accessible information at your fingertips?

So come on, take a fresh look at www.naicc.org! We promise you'll get something out of it every time you visit.

On the Job with NAICC

To help share professional insight, NAICC's Newsletter is periodically featuring "snippets" about various members and the regions in which they work. This month our "from the field" installments feature **John Hecht, Kevin Hollands and Harold Lambert.**

First, John Hecht's insights from Colwich, KS:

Q Is the season progressing at a normal pace for you so far this year?

A It started out a little cool, but is coming around now about normal, wheat harvest will begin in the Wichita, Kansas, area in the next few days. Corn will tassel in 2 weeks or so.

Q If it's ahead or behind, what is the reason for it?

A In this area, it's just overly wet right now. Soybeans need spraying, grain sorghum needs planting, could make for a late sorghum harvest. Could have a lot of disease pressure in corn if this continues.

Q What crops are you looking at in your area, and how do they look at this time?

A Wheat is ok. Yields will be average. Corn looks good if it got planted on time. Soybeans are a little late getting started, but are ok.

Q Have you had any "surprise" issues so far this year? If so, what are they? (insects, weed resistance, etc.)

A Had to move into a new house in a 30 day period during planting season (surprise!)

Q What fun thoughts do you think about when the days get a little rough?

A I think about air conditioning in the house in the evening and sitting in a quiet office for an hour or so—ALL BY MYSELF!!

Kevin Hollands' perspective from Fisher, MN

Q Is the season progressing at a normal pace for you so far this year and why or why not?

A Way ahead of schedule because of early planting!

Q What crops are you looking at in your area, and how do they look at this time?

A Wheat, Sugar beets, Soybeans, Dry Beans, Corn, Field Peas. All look good except Dry Beans, because they were drowned out, and it hailed on fields!

Q Have you had any "surprise" issues so far this year? If so, what are they? (insects, weed resistance, etc.)

A Surprise issue is that 42% of my growers have had hail damage already!

Q What fun thoughts do you think about when the days get a little rough?

A That guy from across the pond with his swimming attire and the surf board at the banquet in Orlando...Hilarious! Hope he won some sort of prize!

Harold Lambert's insights from Ventress, LA:

Q Is the season progressing at a normal pace for you so far this year?

A Yes, except that as I do more work with rice and with soybean weed management the hectic pace comes earlier in the crop than "the old days".

Q If it's ahead or behind, what is the reason for it?

A We're running behind due to a two month drought this spring... and now its dry again (and hot!) after a short spell of much-needed moisture.

Q What crops are you looking at in your area, and how do they look at this time?

A Wheat, corn, grain sorghum, rice, cotton, soybeans, sugarcane. All were affected by the drought to some extent, except rice, obviously.

Q Have you had any "surprise" issues so far this year? If so, what are they? (insects, weed resistance, etc.)

A Near zero southern green stinkbugs in corn during earshoot formation (very cold winter!), thrips very light in seedling cotton, one field of seedling cotton attacked by crickets, some local retail sales reps are now calling themselves 'crop consultants' (well, maybe I'm not surprised on that one).

Q What fun thoughts do you think about when the days get a little rough?

A Cameron Diaz?! No, seriously, I think about Finn Clark, first-born of Abby and Fred Clark, 3/9/10 -- my first grandchild!!

Save the Dates

2011 NAICC Annual Meeting and AG PRO EXPO

January 19-22 - FORT WORTH, TEXAS
Renaissance Worthington Hotel
200 Main Street
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-870-1000

2012 NAICC Annual Meeting and AG PRO EXPO

January 18-22 - RENO, NEVADA
Peppermill Resort Spa Casino
2707 South Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89502
866-821-9996



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