



# NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By  
*James E. Todd*  
NAICC  
2013 President

## Bill Sachs Retires After Years of Service to NAICC

As of March 1st, Bill Sachs our accountant of 17 years retired. It was a difficult decision for him to retire from the organization he has grown to love. However, we persuaded him to continue to handle the NAICC investment portfolio. He will work with the NAICC Treasurer and the new CPA on the CDs and other investments. Bill will be missed tremendously personally and professionally.

As the Executive Board searched for a new CPA, Debra Keenan, NAICC treasurer stepped up and entered deposits and checks into the NAICC accounting

software. There was a check system in place and Debra would enter the information and Allison Jones would pay the bills from the NAICC headquarters.

Eight requests for proposals were sent out and the field was narrowed down to two finalists. Debra and I flew to Collierville to meet with Allison Jones and interviewed the two firms. Later that week, the Executive Board on our recommendation hired Mark Patterson with MAP CPAs, LLP, Colorado Springs, CO, as the new CPA.

Mark has already begun working on our account and is in the process of streamlining some of our procedures. He has reviewed and validated all transactions made since Bill's retirement. Mark was chosen because he did his homework and became familiar not only with NAICC but our member's professions as well. He also made us feel that we will remain a top priority to him.

In other Executive Board news, NAICC leadership traveled to DC to meet with Sarah Bittleman, newly appointed Agricultural Counselor to the EPA Administrator. According to an interview in an April issue of AGWEEK, Bittleman's

goals at EPA are to increase economic opportunity, make sure rural Americans "know what is coming down the pike," and to create jobs. In the article, she stated, "My job is to help keep agriculture informed about what EPA is up to, and [tell EPA] how agriculture is going to respond to what EPA is going to do."

After having met Ray Young during a trip to Louisiana, she invited NAICC representatives to come to Washington, DC to meet with her personally and tell her about NAICC and our members. Gary Coukell, Jim Steffel, Ray Young, Allison Jones and I are headed to DC to attend the meeting as this newsletter goes to press.

I encourage members of NAICC to complete an application for the NAICC Leadership Program. The deadline is June 15. All members of NAICC are invited to apply. We have three outstanding modules designed to prepare leaders to promote the crop and research consulting and quality assurance professions through networking, meetings with government officials and by taking an active part in the NAICC Annual Meeting. (See article on page 2.)



Bill Sachs receives the Service to NAICC Award



Allison Jones, James Todd and Debra Keenan at the NAICC headquarters.

# Develop Your Leadership Skills through NAICC

With its mission statement, “To help ensure agricultural sustainability by facilitating the growth of new leaders within NAICC”, the NAICC Leadership Program (NAICCLP) is designed to develop aspiring leaders like you! The program has very clear objectives:

- Enhance leadership skills and personal development to promote NAICC and agriculture
- Encourage networking and rapport among agricultural professionals
- Prepare leaders to be an effective resource for policy-makers and enforcement agencies in relation to agriculture.

This exciting program consists of three modules that begin in summer/fall months and continue through March of the following year. If chosen to participate, you will progress through a series of modules that include visiting another NAICC member’s facility, attending the NAICC Annual Meeting, and traveling to Washington, D.C. to promote NAICC with policy-makers!

Four NAICC members will be selected for each leadership class with consideration given to the person’s area of knowledge/

expertise. All applicants must be a NAICC member in good standing. Find the complete details on the program including participant responsibilities, criteria for selection/participation, and the application form at <http://naicc.org/2013/05/naicc-leadership-program/>. A copy also follows this newsletter.

The NAICCLP is sponsored in part by the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education, FMC Corporation, and AMVAC Chemical Company. We are looking for additional corporate sponsors to sustain the program. Please contact Allison Jones for more information.

**Want to participate in the program?**

**You have three options:**

- 1. Sign up for the program**
- 2. Host a participant at your office/facility**
- 3. Donate \$25-\$500 towards the scholarship fund for participants**

## Weather: The British Obsession

*Andrew Watson  
Watson Agronomy Ltd  
Norfolk, UK*

Start a conversation with a British person and I guarantee you that the weather will come up within a few sentences. The UK is a tiny island, about 700 miles long and 200 miles wide, which has its weather imposed on it by the surrounding seas, particularly the Atlantic. In the eastern UK, where I am based, annual temperatures typically vary between 25–75 F with about 24–28 inches of rain each year. Rainfall doesn’t generally change month to month with roughly 2 inches a month in summer and winter. As a result, the weather changes every few days from sunny to rain, which explains our obsession with tomorrow’s weather!

We don’t generally have dramatic weather like hurricanes or cyclones. It’s more Goldilocks weather – “not too cold and not too hot.” Most of the time, the weather could be seen as “just right,” particularly for farmers, if not for the sun-loving general public. However, in the last few years, we have tended to have extended periods of the same weather, such as too little or too much rain.

In 2011, my region experienced the driest year since 1929 and the sunniest

April since 1910. This led to fantastic crop growth in spring but eventual severe drought effects on yields of most crops by harvest time in August and September. The drought continued until April 6, 2012, when the heavens opened. You may ask why I remember the date; the 6th of April was also the day that nationwide government public water restrictions came into force in England.

Noah had to deal with 40 days of rain but in England it feels like the rain hasn’t stopped and it’s still raining. We had over 40 inches of rain between April and December 2012 and we had the wettest June in England since 1766. This rain has continued into 2013 and groundwater is at surface levels in many areas, with field flooding commonplace.

As a consequence, large areas across England, particularly in a north–south spine of middle England, the fall harvest has been disastrous with many wheat crops never harvested. Autumn drilling has also been dramatically curtailed. Winter wheat normally accounts for about 50% of the arable land in England but, in some regions, only about half of this crop has been

successfully drilled. Consultants estimate that, in some areas, up to 25% of land will not be cropped at all in the 2012/13 season.

This really is a “once in a farmer’s lifetime” event. UK farmers are set up for rain. They know that every few days it is likely to rain and work round this inevitability. However, we are not used to long periods of the same weather such as weeks and weeks of rain.

We are told in the UK media that the ice packs melting cause movements in the high altitude ribbon of strong winds coming across the Atlantic and the UK. If this jetstream travels north of the UK, we get warmer, drier weather; conversely, if it passes south of us, we get wet, cold weather. Apparently, it has been stuck in the south, leading to a long period of “Noah” weather.

Frankly, I don’t care whether it is global warming or not, I just want it to stop raining or I will soon need to build my own personal ark.

# Spring Consulting on the High Plains

Bryan Boroughs  
Servi-Tech, Inc.  
Cimarron, KS

As I was riding my ATV across dormant alfalfa, semi-dormant wheat, and unplanted strip-tilled row crop fields in mid-February, I contemplated the changing nature of crop consulting on the High Plains of western Kansas since the turn of the 21st century. The need to be flexible and adaptive to the changing needs of our customers and their cropping patterns is a hallmark of our profession.

A few years ago, when our fieldwork season began in late March to early April, a customer may have greeted us with the comment, "I haven't seen you in a while." With the widespread adoption of strip-till and no-till planting systems, the rise of glyphosate resistant kochia, and the third year of intense drought on the high plains, a customer's response to my first field report in mid-February might often be, "Good to see you but do we have to start this early?"

In late winter, the high plains consultant's days are filled with continuing education meetings and scouting dormant alfalfa for army cutworm and aphids, while making dormant herbicide recommendations. It is also the season for weed scouting and making herbicide and nitrogen top-dress recommendations on winter wheat, along with fine tuning the

plans for summer row crops. The territory's planting season will kick off in earnest by mid-April.

One traditional service of the high plains consultant is the "prewater check." In this semi-arid climate, the need to check irrigated ground for soil profile moisture in mid-winter to early spring is based primarily on the amount of fall/winter precipitation received and the irrigation well capacity to deliver water in season. We set a soil profile moisture benchmark before the season begins with the traditional tools of the trade, an Oakfield soil probe or a steel rod penetrometer. A few more electronic-based soil moisture probes are showing up in the country but it is a good idea to ground truth those early in the season.

With the drought entering the third season on the high plains, one of the biggest revelations to me is that I do not know what I thought I knew about how much water it takes to refill a given soil profile compared to my previous 30+ years of irrigation work. The facts are that the soils are much drier than my ability to estimate by feel and it takes much more water to refill the profiles in the absence of general rain and snowfall.

In the "good old days" when conventional tillage ruled, a preemergence herbicide was the standard. In this day of glyphosate resistant kochia and the advent of strip and no-till cropping systems, consultants have adapted by starting the weed scouting season two months earlier than in the past. On the fall applied strip till, we attempt to apply a combination of residual herbicides with activation by center pivot irrigation to control the kochia before it emerges. Complications arise when corn stalks are being grazed in the spring or in the sandy soils where our strip-till nitrogen applications are generally made later in the spring after the weeds begin to emerge. That usually means a few more trips across those fields to evaluate what weeds are emerging and adjusting the final herbicide recommendations for preplant or preemergence applications.

Even though the workload for today's consultants has increased, it gives us a chance to elevate our profession to a higher level with more intense planning and precise recommendations to meet the needs of our customers. As customers focus more on the bigger management picture of the family farm business, the need for our services is more critical than ever.

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## A Tale of Two Reefers (The Mechanical Kind!)

Ken Trammel  
ACDS, Inc.  
Phelps, NY

In the early years of developing freezer-transport service for residue samples, we dealt with many frustrations and "near misses." I always worried about a reefer malfunction with a load of frozen samples. This concern became reality when our freezer unit died on a trip in the Chicago area. The drivers located and headed straight for the nearest repair shop (and this was before cell phones and GPS!). It was determined the entire unit would need replacement ... a two-day job! Fortunately, the facility was doing a test run on a new installation and we were able to off-load the frozen samples into that trailer while awaiting repairs on our truck. All samples remained well-frozen during the ordeal. Thankfully, this was still in the pre-GLP era.

After that experience, I began having a recurring nightmare of a driver calling in at 10:00 on a Saturday evening reporting a freezer breakdown; he's 100 miles from the nearest repair shop that is closed until Monday morning; he's somewhere in west Texas; it's July and the nighttime temperature is still in the 80's. Talk about waking up in a cold sweat!

This prompted us to develop the dual reefer system that we now use. I still have that nightmare occasionally ... but then wake up and realize it's only a dream. The driver simply switches over to the second unit before going to the repair shop on Monday. While this doesn't alleviate all over-the-road trucking concerns – DOT inspections, tornadoes, icy roads, parking space, etc. – it sure is nice to get a good night's sleep!

## QA Corner:

### EPA Regulatory Updates & GLP Alerts

Dr. Stu Mertz

PEAK Quality Consulting, Inc.  
Cary, NC

The next time you visit [www.naicc.org](http://www.naicc.org), look for 22 excellent presentations from the 2013 NAICC Annual Meeting. You will find them most useful for QA training with new or experienced field and laboratory QA staff on subjects like GLP/GMO regulatory activities, trial design, and data analysis. A BIG THANKS to all speakers for making their presentations available!

At the January President's Luncheon, NAICC presented Francisca Liem, the EPA's Director of GLP Program, the 2013 Service to Agriculture Award for her years of dedicated service (see photo in April 2013 newsletter). The next day, Francisca shared an EPA Regulatory Update. Although her presentation is not available on the web site, highlights for FY2012 are summarized below with emphasis on Field Sites, Analytical Labs and Biotech.

#### Totals

- 99 site inspections
- 245 data audits including focused areas of human (3) and biotech (7) studies.
- Totals are up from FY2011 (64, 164) and average FY2008-10 (84, 228) because of increased productivity using new inspection procedures, and despite the fact that there were about 50% fewer inspectors in 2012.

#### No. Inspections (% Total)

- 24 (24%) Field Sites
- 14 (14%) Analytical Chemistry
- 7 (7%) Biotech
- 28 (28%) Product Chemistry
- 3 (3%) Antimicrobial Efficacy
- 5 (5%) Insecticide/Rodenticide Efficacy
- 13 (13%) Toxicology
- 5 (5%) Others

#### Findings: Field Sites (FS) had an excellent rate of compliance!

- 100% of Field Sites had no Findings (24 sites)
- 86% of Analytical Chemistry Labs had no Findings (12 sites)
- 43% of Biotech labs had no Findings (3 sites)

#### Enforcement Actions (FY2012 finalized)

- 22 studies were rejected – Product Chemistry 15 & Insecticide Efficacy 7
- Three studies were voluntarily withdrawn and replaced after inspection (from 1 Product Chemistry lab)
- Registrants voluntarily canceled three and suspended one pesticide registrations

(Due to time limitation, reasons were not presented at NAICC but Francisca presented them at the SQA's annual meeting on May 2nd.

#### Foreign Governments Regulatory Actions of US Testing Facilities

- Seven studies were rejected from four facilities representing field site, analytical chemistry and toxicology

#### GLP Alerts

- Retention of raw data or true copies of original raw data are now acceptable to EPA
- 40 CFR160.83 requirements for labeling of reagents (ICES) shall now apply for all reagents and solutions including any tank mix additives
- Study GLP Compliance Statement must be signed by Study Director, Sponsor and Submitter

If you have questions about a GLP Alert or regulatory action, please contact [Liem.francisca@epa.gov](mailto:Liem.francisca@epa.gov) and look for more information in upcoming newsletters. For further EPA regulatory updates, be sure to attend the 2014 NAICC Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA!



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