



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
Al Averitt
NAICC
President

D.C. Double Teamed

Let me fill you in on what has happened with the NAICC and our relationships in Washington, D.C., since my last update.

My earlier article expressed anxiety and nervousness associated with Washington visits has almost completely diminished. I have returned to D.C. twice since I last wrote to you and a couple of times via teleconference.

But on this recent visit I was accompanied by an excellent team member — our own resident D.C. expert. You guessed it! Our EVP, Allison Jones. I couldn't have been more confident. I wish I could find the words to describe what a superb asset Allison is to our organization. I wish that you could have the opportunity to see her in action in Washington!

This trip yielded benefits for both the agricultural and research consultant segments of our membership. You might ask how important is our presence in the nation's capitol?

As I see it, it's sort of analogous to that one farm that our company services in the extreme northeast corner of our work area. It is the northeast corner at just under 100 miles from our office. I don't know why, unless it's Murphy's Law, but I personally set foot on those eight fields (out of 1600) as often as I do the fields that surround our office in Lumber Bridge.

It just seems to be a fact of life that those issues lying on the edge or peripheries of our world are the ones that can "make or break" us or our clients. For us, Washington represents those key peripheries, so our

presence there is increasingly important to our business as a whole.

As almost every trip to Washington is, this, too, was another educational effort in the best interest of our industry. We have to maintain an aggressive promotional policy to continue reminding the USDA and EPA leadership about the nobility of our work and who we are amongst the "advisor" grouping. We have to continue to convey the things that separate us from the crowd: college education, high ethical standards and independence from product sales.

NRCS

On June 18, we met with Deputy Under Secretary Mack Gray and Conservation Operations Director Mark Berklund to discuss the Third Party Vendor issue. They assured us that the NRCS is very serious about making the TPV program a success and that TPVs would be absolutely necessary to carry out the expanded conservation title of the Farm Bill.

The Office of Management and Budget indicates a need for 5000 or more new employees if the NRCS has to do the job themselves. The NRCS plans to add very few, if any, new employees.

As part of our continuing education effort, Allison and I distributed information about the NAICC and who we represent, as well as handouts illustrating the differences in various crop consulting certifications.

We specifically addressed the "independence" issue that came up in the NRCS Listening Session held in May (see my article in the May 2002 issue). They indicated that the Office of General Council would need to make a determination on that issue.

The NRCS is still considering the use of a voucher system or direct payment to the grower or both. They even talked favorably about a system whereby the farmer produces a paid invoice for reimbursement of services rendered.

Currently, the plan is to publish a list of qualified TPVs in each county office who are willing to work in that county. The grower can use this list to choose the vendor that he or she prefers. They do not plan to use a

competitive bidding system to fix prices for services, instead letting the market sort out the price issues. If a particular vendor's fees exceed the subsidy or incentive dollars, the grower will have to pay the additional amount if he chooses that vendor.

On June 19, Allison and I met with NRCS' Melissa Hammond, who heads up the TPV issue for the NRCS, and the Chair of the TPV Steering Committee, Rick Swenson. The pricing of the components is a tremendous hurdle as they view it. They do have data from evaluations about the cost for NRCS employees to perform certain services and asked if we could provide them with data from our membership. Soon, you will be asked to complete such a survey, enabling us to provide this input to NRCS.

At this point, the plan is for the USDA-NRCS to publish an interim rule by August 5 that would go into effect October 1, 2002, and continue through September 30, 2003. In spring, 2004, the plan is to publish the final rule. We have asked them to keep the public comment period open as long as possible to provide hands-on, experienced feedback. They were open to the idea.

On June 25 the Coalition for Third Party Vendors met again and it was gratifying to discover that we, the NAICC, were ahead of the curve because of our visits.

EPA

Allison and I met with Kevin Keaney and Richard Pont at EPA on June 19. They really helped us reach the next rung on the ladder with our EPA issues.

Crop Monitoring Profiles. The EPA has located the funding for Crop Monitoring Profiles, a compilation of data concerning survey techniques, scout contact with crop foliage times and the like, specific to each major crop. They asked that we **submit a proposal** as soon as possible so we can begin to develop these profiles immediately.

CPCC-R, Researcher Certification. We expect a letter within the next several weeks saying that the EPA approves our researcher certification program as an addition to the CPCC program. This is great news for Research Consultant members, and we

should be able to promote it in the fall. I hope this will also generate more interest from non-members.

CTAG vs. WPS. EPA's Certification and Training office, the state lead agencies and Extension are still drafting white papers and tentative plans to move handlers, applicators, consultants, etc., out of the WPS and into a certification and training program.

They are planning to "tier" the products and then parallel certifications to that "tier." Keaney stated that wherever possible they plan to recognize existing qualifications so as not to cause individuals to jump through the testing and re-certification hoops again.

The EPA expects to have more details available to the public in August.

NAICC Survey. We reported to the EPA that Doane is currently in the process of tallying our member survey completed in the spring. They also told us that the use of an audit system for these profiles will validate the accuracy of the system. (By this they're referring to actual scouting data generated on a small percentage of the whole that would indicate time spent scouting or surveying and the type of field activity.)

If you would like to share some scouting records that we could send to the EPA, validating the question on the survey that

talked about how long you are in the fields and what you are doing, that would be very helpful. The EPA is looking for validation of our data and said that reviewing the weekly reports provided to growers would be perfect.

I think we can all see that the agricultural and research consultants need representation amongst the leaders of the nation's agricultural and environmental departments. I hope you feel like the NAICC is doing just that for you. Value your membership and encourage others to come aboard. Soon we may need a permanent and constant presence in Washington, D.C.

DEADLINE FOR RICHARD JENSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP EXTENDED

Please take time to encourage worthy students to apply for the Richard Jenson Memorial Scholarship. Applications will now be taken up to August 1 for this \$1,000 award, which is provided to an individual pursuing a four-year degree in a discipline closely aligned to Crop Production, Contract Ag Research or studies in a degree of plant health.

The scholarship, which is sponsored by the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education, will be awarded in January,

2003, for the 2003-04 school year.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- completion of a minimum of two years toward a four-year degree and current enrollment in a discipline related to crop production, contract ag research or studies in a degree of plant health
- at least one summer internship or job with a crop consulting or Ag contract research firm (with preference to an NAICC member company).

Applicants should submit an application, transcripts, work history, reason scholarship is desired, résumé, proof of enrollment in college/university and letters of reference (either attached or mailed separately) to:

NAICC, Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education
349 East Nolley Drive
Collierville, TN 38017
Phone: (901) 861-0511
Fax: (901) 861-0512
www.naicc.org

SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

NAICC Offers Member Websites

NAICC's web site, which receives hundreds of hits each month from members, federal and state agency employees, growers and others across the nation, now offers members an opportunity to have visibility on the site.

Through this membership service, individual members and state associations can gain more visibility with the inclusion of their web information on NAICC.org.

The following options are available to members:

Option A. By purchasing this package, the member or association's home page with introduction, contact information and a membership list or a company roster will appear on NAICC.org. Cost is \$250 per year.

Option B. With this option, additional features are added to the above package, including a searchable membership function, members-only section (discussion board, news, targeted email) and up to five other pages defined by the state association. Individuals can customize these pages to promote their businesses.

The NAICC's user-friendly web site is

maintained by the Center for IPM at North Carolina State University.

Join NAICC's Growing List of Service Providers

NAICC Sustaining and individual members can also offer membership services through NAICC. If you have a program, software or gadget that you would like to offer to NAICC members at a discount, please contact the NAICC headquarters. You could be featured in our next Spotlight on Membership Services.

NAICC - A Handsome Family

By Denise Wright (with Roger Carter's help)

In the Plenary Session at the 2002 Annual Meeting of the NAICC, Allison Jones quoted Roger Carter as describing the NAICC membership as "a handsome family".

Roger had given his take on the Alliance membership during a strategic planning session held in Albuquerque some years ago when the moderator of the session had asked all present to briefly describe the NAICC. This is probably the best description of our organization I have ever heard.

According to Roger, "handsome" not only implies "good looks" but also denotes strength, character and spirit, as well as other virtues. Roger says he's always considered NAICC a family, and this being my fourth year as a member, I totally agree and understand where he's coming from. To quote Roger, "We can have disagreements, but we always come back together for a common goal. And, NAICC is a warm bunch of folks - huggy types." Even though

we may not see each other but once a year, we keep up with each other via e-mail, phone calls, etc.

I know I personally feel this way and have heard several other members say that attending the annual meeting each year is like going back home for a huge family reunion. There are hugs, hugs and more hugs, and even some tears when it's all over and we leave to go home to our respective lives.

It gives me a warm, fuzzy feelin' to know that I am as close or closer to some fellow NAICC members as I am to some blood relatives. I feel as though we are in the Alliance to support each other, especially in these hard economic times in agriculture, and attending the annual meeting or family reunion, is our retreat (in the sense of shelter or refuge).

I always feel a renewed "strength" after seeing old friends and fellow researchers, and talking over the past year's successes,

as well as trying times. The majority of us have had our fair share of challenges over the past few years, but coming together with our NAICC family seems to lighten the load a bit.

Webster defines "handsome" as "well formed; having a certain share of beauty along with dignity; ample; generous." "Generous" stands out foremost in this definition, in my opinion. I know I can always call on "members of the family" for their prolific knowledge, opinions and support,

and they always give generously.

If you're a member of NAICC, and you haven't been attending our "family reunion" each January, please try to make it to D.C. in 2003. Instead of bringing a covered dish or ice chest of cold drinks, please bring your hugs, your support, your expertise, your concerns and whatever else you think your family might enjoy or be able to help you with. We'll do the same and what a grand time we'll have! See you in DC in 2003!

A Little Humor Afield...

We all recognize that a little humor can go a long way in the work day, and no doubt all of us have experienced some amusing moments on the job. In this column we'll share your amusing stories, so look for it in every issue of the NAICC News.

The following anecdotes were provided by Roger Carter, CPCC-I.

Crew Chief Son Finds a Wife

My son, Anthony, worked as a crew chief of a four- or five-member crew for several years. He had the honor of working with two of the best scouts that we ever had – Jessica and Jana Boyette. Jessica was the oldest and the same age as Anthony.

The first two summers they worked together, Anthony was dating a girl who lived within a mile of Jessica. Their relationship floundered late in the growing season. When Anthony returned to college, I asked if he was dating anyone. He said no. I suggested he ask Jessica out. He did and about two months later he informed me that he was going to propose to Jessica. She accepted.

The next summer Anthony and Jessica both worked while on a break from college. Since Anthony had been Jessica's crew chief for several years, I decided to show him how things would be after marriage and appointed Jessica to be the crew chief and Anthony to be the scout. It didn't matter; she hooked him anyway and they are expecting their second child.

Hurricane and the Chocolate Pie

Louisiana is famous for its hurricanes. They usually occur in August when we are in high gear, scouting cotton and soybeans. Most of the cotton fields have adequate turn-rows around them to allow us to scout them properly, but soybean fields can be somewhat different. Many fields have unkempt turn-rows with deep ruts.

One particular soybean field was very difficult to scout even when it was very dry, but darned near impossible if it was wet. (Take into consideration that this was in the days prior to ATV's.)

I asked one associate consultant in our company to take the Ford Bronco and scout the field, but to avoid getting stuck in any of the deep ruts on the farm. Meanwhile, a hurricane was on its way and rain (up to 12 inches) expected the next day.

Within 30 minutes I heard the associate call for help from any of our other trucks. He had high-centered on some of the deepest ruts imaginable. Within another few minutes he had another one of our trucks stuck. He then borrowed a neighboring

farmer's tractor and got it stuck. It was beginning to rain by then, and he borrowed a second tractor. It also got stuck.

I had been listening to all of this on the radio while dropping off reports and scouting other fields. Becoming more and more depressed about him doing what I had told him to avoid and facing a foot of rainfall that would perhaps "drown" our trucks, not to mention the farmer's tractors, I stopped at the local grocery store and bought an anti-depressant – one large 14-inch chocolate pie with meringue. I promptly drove home, ate the pie, pulled the covers over my head and waited out the storm and the fate of the "stuck" tractors and trucks.

The anti-depressant didn't work and I was a pound or two heavier. Several days later we were able to retrieve all of the stuck units, but not without a log skidder (a large-tired, four-wheel drive unit).

Field Scout Humor will appear regularly in NAICC News. Please submit your humorous ag-related stories to NAICC Headquarters, 349 East Nolley Drive, Collierville, TN 38017, phone (901) 861-0511 or fax (901) 861-0512.

NEW MEMBER PROFILES



NAICC is proud to welcome new member **Katy Watts** of Rocky Mountain Research & Consulting in Center, Colorado. As the owner and principal investigator of Rocky Mountain, Katy and

her colleagues provide GLP and efficacy studies in potatoes, small grains, spinach, alfalfa and pasture grass, as well as consulting in potatoes.

Katy recently received funding from the

Animal Health Foundation, and cooperation from USDA Forage and Rangeland Research Lab to quantify and characterize carbohydrate levels in various pasture grasses. She is heavily involved in investigating the conditions and components of forage grasses that lead to grass founder in horses.

In the process of 'improving' pasture and hay grasses for increased milk and meat production, the grass has changed so that it's too rich for horses. Katy's work involves dealing with the increasing problems with grass founder and colic.

"Crop Consultants need to know that a

need exists for consulting with horse farms that graze or produce their own hay. Many horse owners do not operate under the same constraints of cost effectiveness that other livestock producers must adhere to", says Katy. Balancing fertility programs to optimize mineral nutrition, choosing forage species better suited to the requirements of horses and ponies, identifying and controlling poisonous plants, are all aspects of forage production that could be part of a consulting package directed towards horse farms.

Katy holds a Bachelor of Science degree in crop/soil science from Michigan State

University, and conducts research trials in EPA Region IX.

A self-proclaimed "stay at home kinda girl," Katy is a former employee of West Consulting, located in the San Luis Valley, with 70,000 acres of concentrated potato production. She was a summer intern for Elanco and has been doing GLP work since 1988.

The NAICC is also pleased to welcome as a new member **Scott Stephen**, a soil scientist with Agrimanagement, Inc., in Yakima, WA.

Scott provides recommendations for soil fertility services and soil water management, integrated pest management and precision agriculture, as well as soil and petiole/tissue sampling. He is a graduate of

Washington State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in soil science. Scott was raised on a cattle and apple farm in eastern Washington.

Through his membership in the NAICC, Scott's desire is to be associated with and gain benefits from an organization that understands and promotes the role of the independent crop consultant.

NAICC/FEAE Auction Set for 2003

by Tim Case

Each year, at the NAICC Annual Meeting, we host an auction to support the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education (FEAE). We thought that this would be a good time to give you a little insight into what their hard earned dollars are supporting.

The FEAE was established by NAICC to serve the educational needs of the organization, both present and future.

Currently, the FEAE is assisting in the production of NAICC regional meetings in conjunction with state organizations. This is putting information into the hands of consultants that is specific to a geographic region.

Also, proceeds from last year's auction are being used to fund speakers for this year's Annual Meeting. NAICC has always had excellent keynote speakers, and it is made possible through the assistance of the FEAE.

The FEAE also sponsors the Richard L. Jensen Memorial Scholarship that is given to college students who have worked in the field of crop consulting or contract research.

The NAICC places a booth at the National FFA convention each year, which is partially

funded by the FEAE. The information about the consulting profession is being presented to thousands of young men and women through this venture.

Finally, a college degree program to prepare students for a career in crop consulting was implemented at the University of Florida. This program was developed largely by the FEAE. Approximately 20 students from this program have traveled to the NAICC Annual Meetings with the help of the FEAE.

These programs are made available by the support the FEAE receives from the members of the NAICC and this support comes primarily from the auction.

We want to thank everyone for past donations and encourage new support for the

annual meeting auction in Washington D.C.

The NAICC and Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education will again be hosting an auction at our Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. on January 16, 2003.

This year we will have the silent auction and, also, immediately following the close of the silent auction, there will be a live auction. The live auction is scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. will continue until 7:30 p.m.

We would like to encourage all members to donate items to include in the auction.

Please contact the NAICC headquarters at (901) 861-0511 or JonesNAICC@aol.com or complete and return the following form. While it may seem early, it would help if you could let us know of your donation as soon as possible.

Name: _____
Auction Item: _____
Brief Description: _____
Estimated Value: \$ _____



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