



NAICC NEWS

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN



By
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NAICC
President

Farms Raise People, Too!

Some recent events have caused me to reflect on the years and events of my life in a way I haven't taken the time to do in a long while. I write this with hope that I can prompt you to do likewise without the catalyst that prompted me, and to show your appreciation while you still can.

There is a popular oldie from the sixties by the Zombies called *Time of the Season*. The chorus went like this: "What's your name? Who's your daddy? Is he rich...Is he rich like me? Has he taken...any time...to show...to show you what you need to live?"

I can honestly say that my Daddy did just that to the very best of his ability, and I am very grateful to my "Big Daddy" for allowing my father to be my dad. My father, Alex Sr., passed away July 29th from congestive heart failure. My wife and I – along with Dad's wife Frances and his step-children – were with him when he died.

Most folks think of a farm as a place where crops and livestock are raised. While this is true, farms don't just grow crops and livestock. Farms produce extraordinary people of character, too. The connection to agriculture is a choice to walk closer to nature and its Author, whether a person is conscious of it or not.

If you grew up on a farm you most likely know your grandparents well because of their tie to the land, which has been bequeathed throughout the generations. Farm families readily realize that they (along with everyone else) depend on God, water and good weather for survival.

My father knew a lot of history about his grandparents and of what they did on the same land where he learned his work ethic (thankfully I had the same opportunity). When he reached adulthood he joined the Air Force for a few years and then started his family, supported by a career in the textile industry in a town 14 miles from the farm. His dad died in 1963. I was three years old at the time, so I didn't get to know my granddaddy except through my grandmother.

In 1970 Dad went back to the farm to live there with his mother. He started renting grandmother's land from her in 1977 and got back into farming again as a second job. I was his number one worker as a junior in high school. (I had moved to the farm to live with him and my grandma in '72.)

As many farm families know, there is a propensity to become a workaholic when you earn your living this way. Unlike most jobs in America, on a farm diligence, commitment, long hours and excellent stewardship do not guarantee success. If you make a profit this year you never know how to utilize it because you don't know if next year will also be profitable. And there is always something that needs to be done. Sorting the priorities of faith, family and livelihood is always a tremendous challenge. Faith has to be number one to stay sane, else you'd worry yourself to death!

Paul Harvey said this about a farmer: "During planting time and harvest season, he finishes his 40-hour week by Tuesday noon; then painin' from tractor-back, he puts in another 72 hours.... Yet the only lines on a farmer's face are from grinning.... He plants in hope, cultivates in faith and ends in debt; then starts over with greater hope and stronger faith.... Heaven help the family that depends on a farmer for support. Heaven help the nation that doesn't have him to support it."

Thank God my kids had the opportunity to be with my daddy often on the farm, as I had the opportunity to be with my grandma there. Life gets so fast and hectic for most of us that we forget to reflect on the people, things and places that have shaped

and molded who we are – until we reach the turn that marks history in our lives and changes everything from then forward.

The Averitt family farmhouse, built in the late 1800's, has been our business office for five years now. Ironically, my office is now in the room where my grandfather died of a heart attack. He was watching "professional" wrestling one Saturday, as was the tradition, and got a little too excited. This is also the room in which my father and his four siblings were born. The room at the opposite end of the house is where my grandma died of a heart attack only five months after my daughter was born in '85.

Farmers and people who work for farmers are very lucky people; they are people connected to the real world in places that have roots – generations of roots.

My dad was a great man. To me he was a genius, though he never attended college due to the family's need for farm labor to feed the mules, pigs and chickens and to milk the cow every day, sometimes twice a day, plus sometimes help work the 100-plus acres.

I have heard it said that farming gets into your blood. I truly believe that you and I and the careers we have chosen are proof of that very theory.

I wouldn't trade my experience for anything in this world. People who live on farms or spent their early years on a farm have a unique perspective on life. It seems that those who've been removed from the farm setting love to talk to farmers and people involved in the business every opportunity they have.

Too bad we don't have more farm families and dirt roads.

Paul Harvey said this about dirt roads: "What's mainly wrong with society today is that too many Dirt Roads have been paved.

People who live at the end of Dirt Roads learn early on that life is a bumpy ride.

There was less crime in our streets before they were paved.

Criminals didn't walk two dusty miles to rob or rape, if they knew they'd be welcomed by five barking dogs and a double-barrel shotgun.

And there were no drive-by shootings.

Our values were better when our roads were worse!

People did not worship their cars more than their kids and motorists were more courteous; they didn't tailgate by riding the bumper or the guy in front would choke you with dust and bust your windshield with rocks.

Dirt Roads taught patience.

Dirt Roads were environmentally friendly; you didn't hop in your car for a quart of milk – you walked to the barn for your milk.

What if it rained and the Dirt Road got washed out? That was the best part. Then you stayed home and had some family time, roasted marshmallows and popped popcorn and pony-rode on Daddy's shoulders and learned how to make prettier quilts than anybody.

At the end of Dirt Roads, you soon learned that bad words tasted like soap.

At the end of a Dirt Road, the only time we even locked our car was in August,

because if we didn't some neighbor would fill it with too much zucchini."

At the end of a Dirt Road, there was always extra springtime income, from when city dudes would get stuck, you'd have to hitch up a team and pull them out.

Usually you got a dollar...always you got a new friend...at the end of a Dirt Road!"

Thank you to so many friends in the NAICC and agricultural community who have supported me through prayers and kind words during this time. As I have been saying, the NAICC is truly a close family.

Please feel free to send comments and questions to me at aaveritt@earthlink.net

Annual Meeting Around the Corner

January may seem a ways off, but the reality is we'll soon be celebrating the holidays and starting a new year. And the best way to begin a successful business year in 2003 will be to attend NAICC's Annual Meeting in northern Virginia, January 15-18.

Among the many activities planned for this prestigious convening of the top crop consultants and researchers nationwide is the keynote address by invited speaker Norman Borlaug. Nobel Prize winner and Texas A&M professor, Borlaug will speak on Thursday, January 16, at 10:00 a.m. His speech will center on the future of agriculture and his views on multi-disciplinary agriculture practitioners and developments of the new Norman Borlaug University.

Steve Johnson, Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS), will also speak at the Annual Meeting. He is responsible for implementing FQPA, and was appointed to his position by President Bush last year.

Johnson has held numerous leadership positions with the EPA and has received numerous awards and commendations, among them the Presidential Rank Award for distinguished executives for sustained extraordinary accomplishments.

Another of the meeting highlights will be a session on global biotechnology, wherein product concepts, regulatory acceptance and the benefits of agricultural biotechnology will be discussed. Tom Armstrong, Regulatory Agronomy Manager for **Monsanto**, will lead this discussion. The timely topic of bio-terrorism security issues and prevention will also be addressed, and Jim Moseley, Department Secretary at the USDA and member of the Homeland Security Council, has been invited to speak on this topic. These discussions will also be

held Thursday, January 16.

The ever-popular consultant and researcher breakout sessions are scheduled for late Thursday afternoon and Friday. Attendees are welcome to attend any sessions, and topics will include precision agriculture, Quality Assurance updates and computer technology.



Of special note are the breakout sessions that address nutrient management and laboratory sampling and handling. Steve Hodges of Virginia Tech, a representative from NRCS in Washington, Frank Coale with University of Maryland Extension Service and NAICC member **Gene Gilbert** of Bozeman, MT will be on hand to discuss the former. Those addressing laboratory sample transportation will be **Ken Trammel** with ACDS and **Larissa Schuster** with Central California Research Laboratories, Inc., will address sample handling. Johannes Corley, with Rutgers University will talk about sample analysis and a Study Director's use of data.

A great success last year, Sponsor Interaction Centers (SICs) will be expanded in 2003. These SICs were developed to help ensure our sustaining members had structured,

15-minute meeting intervals in designated areas so they could set up business discussions with research consultants, rather than relying on chance visits in the halls.

At the upcoming Annual Meeting, companies taking advantage of the SICs now have three options: setting up a semi-private area behind or beside their exhibit booths, securing a hospitality suite at the hotel or reserving a small meeting room. To sign up for an SIC, please complete the forms, which are posted at naicc.org, and submit to NAICC headquarters, or contact Allison Jones for more information.

On Tuesday, January 14, a group tour to DuPont's Chesapeake Farm will be offered, and another tour will take place on Saturday, January 18, for those wishing to visit USDA's Beltsville facility. Because Washington, D.C., offers so much to see and do, discount Tourmobile tickets will be available for those wishing to explore the capitol city. Plan to visit the Smithsonian, monuments, Supreme Court Building, Library of Congress, White House, Holocaust Museum or any number of countless other attractions.

Emerging Technologies Session Open to Both Sustaining and Individual NAICC Members

Sustaining members and individual (voting) members alike are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to showcase their new technologies in front of agriculture influencers from across the nation during NAICC's 2003 Annual Meeting.

The Emerging Technology Session, which will take place January 16, will give participants an opportunity to briefly introduce their product or technology and to direct attendees to visit their poster or exhibit booth for more detailed information. The



best presentation and poster will be chosen, and winners will receive awards as well as recognition during the Exhibit Hall Extravaganza and in the NAICC newsletter. Topics not previously presented at NAICC meetings are welcome and should have broad appeal to research and crop consultants as well as industry representatives.

To participate, sustaining or voting NAICC members should submit their poster abstracts via mail or email to NAICC headquarters. Submissions must consist of an abstract of 100 words or less, and may contain any supporting documentation the author wishes to include.

Each poster submission will be reviewed by the Allied Industry Working Group for

innovation, uniqueness and general interest. In the event that there are more papers submitted than space permits, preference may be given on a first come, first served basis. Applicants with multiple submissions will be accommodated based on available space. Final decisions will be subject to Executive Board approval, and submitting members will be notified of the final decision by November 1, 2002.

Bring on Your Auction Items!

Work has begun on the development of an even more memorable live auction for the 2003 NAICC Annual Meeting than in past years! For that to happen, we need your support. We encourage all members

to send auction items as soon as possible – the earlier the better. (Soon we'll all be busy with the holidays and winding the year down, so take care of this item now!)

The live auction will take place at 7:00 p.m. on January 16, immediately following the close of the silent auction. The auction hosts are again the NAICC and the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education.

To donate or to learn more about the auction, please contact the NAICC headquarters at (901) 861-0511 or JonesNAICC@aol.com. You can also complete and return the below form, again to NAICC headquarters.

Name: _____

Auction Item: _____

Brief Description: _____

Estimated Value: \$ _____

Members Can Benefit from Infotrac's Emergency Response System

NAICC is pleased to announce that, through a special agreement with Infotrac Chemical Monitoring System, members can get discounted rates for the company's chemical emergency response system.

Infotrac provides current information and assistance in emergency situations that involve hazardous materials and wastes. Trained emergency response technicians take emergency calls and evaluate emergencies immediately, disseminating information pertinent to response (i.e. evacuation radius, fire-fighting procedures, incompatibility with other materials involved, etc.). If the situation requires it, they can

interlink with the Poison Control Center for immediate first aid information.

Infotrac operators then notify Infotrac members of the emergency, interlinking them to the site location if requested. All emergency calls and response information are recorded and logged for future evaluation by Infotrac and the member involved. Tapes and written reports are kept on file and made available to member companies, as well.

Hazardous Materials Compliance (HMC) is a division of Infotrac that offers a complete line of customized compliance products, consulting services, training packages,

MSDS automation and a network of companies that can assist with any hazardous materials or waste problems.

Infotrac is accessible throughout the world and available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. For more information about Infotrac, visit the company's Web site, infotrac.net. For a catalog of supplies that HMC can provide, call 1-800-468-1263. If you wish to sign up for the service and receive the special rate for NAICC members, simply fill out the Infotrac form posted at naicc.org and submit to NAICC headquarters (please do not send money; you will be billed by Infotrac).

Three to be Named Consultant of the Year

In every industry there are outstanding leaders, people who use their time and talent to make a measurable difference. While it's hard to narrow down the list of "movers and shakers" in our business, we have the opportunity to honor three people who've been exemplary in their leadership this past year.

Our 2003 Crop Consultant of the Year awards, sponsored by NAICC and BASF, will honor three outstanding crop consultants representing different geographic areas.

Rewards for the three Consultants of the Year will include a plaque and special recognition during the BASF Consultant of the Year Alumni dinner and during the

NAICC's President's Lunch and Awards Ceremony (both events held in conjunction with the NAICC Annual Meeting). The winners will also receive editorial recognition in *Crop Decisions* magazine and in *NAICC News*. As part of the award, meeting travel, hotel, meal and registration costs for the 2003 annual meeting will be covered for the winners and their spouses.

"There is no doubt that the independent crop consultant industry is an increasingly invaluable business, and an increasingly challenging one. Through the Consultant of the Year program, we have the opportunity to express our appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our top consul-

tants," said NAICC President Al Averitt. "We're proud of these individuals, and proud of the accomplishments they've made this past year."

Applications for the Crop Consultant of the Year will be solicited by NAICC from its membership (applicants can nominate themselves). Applications can be downloaded from the NAICC Web site or obtained from NAICC headquarters.

All applications will be reviewed by the NAICC awards committee, and five finalists will be selected. A committee of NAICC members and representatives from BASF and *Crop Decisions* magazine will then select the three winners.

Abel Wurmnest Awarded FEAE Scholarship

The Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education and the NAICC are pleased to announce they've chosen a well-deserved applicant to receive the Richard L. Jensen Memorial scholarship: Abel Wurmnest.

A junior at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Wurmnest is studying agricultural education, and he expects to graduate in May, 2004. He's a Dean's List student who was also salutatorian and outstanding agriculture student of his high school class. Among leadership positions he's held in ag-related organizations, Wurmnest served as Illinois FFA state vice-president and he earned the American FFA

Degree, the highest award bestowed upon an FFA member.

Wurmnest has worked for the past six years at Boehle Consulting Services in Melvin, IL, where he's a field supervisor, overseeing soil sampling, preparing soil maps and performing scouting and other duties as necessary. He's also active in community service through leadership roles in his fraternity, the Illinois Student Alumni Association and as an emergency medical tech and firefighter for two volunteer fire departments.

Raised on a corn and soybean farm, Abel says that's where he learned the extreme

importance of agriculture and crop production/protection in today's society. His goal is to "give back to farmers and those in this industry through the independent crop consulting profession."

"Abel is an exemplary student, a well-rounded leader and a young man who's not afraid of hard work and of doing good for others," said Don Jameson, chair of the 2002 Scholarship Committee. "We are proud to honor this young man and to encourage his interest in a career in crop consulting through the FEAE scholarship."

The scholarship, in the amount of \$1000, will apply to current the school year.

Change is Good

By Wendy Shoffner, Shoffner Farm Research, Inc., Newport, AR

Back in the winter, I read a book by Dr. Spencer Johnson entitled "Who Moved My Cheese?" It is subtitled, "An Amazing Way to Deal with Change In Your Work and In Your Life." As we wind up another season, I am constantly reminded of the message behind this book.

The story begins with two mice, "Sniff" and "Scurry", and two 'littlepeople,' "Hem" and "Haw." Each day they go into a maze to find their favorite cheese. They don't know where it comes from; it's just always in the same place. The two mice get up early every day and hurry to find the cheese but the 'littlepeople' know the cheese is there so they become lackadaisical about getting to the cheese. Hem and Haw are so sure the cheese will always be there that they do not notice the supply is depleting.

One day, Sniff and Scurry arrive at the place where their favorite cheese usually is but find it gone. The mice, not being thinkers, weren't surprised. They didn't stop to analyze the problem. They just went off in search of another corridor in the maze that might contain their favorite cheese.

When Hem and Haw discover their cheese is gone, they are surprised. They didn't see the change coming. Since the littlepeople think they need cheese to be happy, they become depressed and discouraged. Haw suggests they go find new cheese but Hem feels they're entitled to their cheese right where they are. Meanwhile, the two mice had already found new cheese.

Every time Haw suggests looking for new cheese, Hem talks him out of it. They are afraid of failure. Still, everyday the little-

people return to the same place to look for the cheese, thinking it has to be there someplace. As a matter of fact, they work really hard to find their cheese, but it still isn't there. They keep plugging away but the situation never improves.

Finally, Haw accepts the fact that the old cheese is gone forever and it's time to do something different. Hem refuses, worrying that no other cheese exists and that, even if he found new cheese, he might not like it. Haw deals with his fears the best he can and forges ahead in his new search. At times, he gets discouraged and loses his way but he is able to find a little cheese here and there. He decides a little cheese is better than none at all and continues. In looking back, Haw realizes he should have seen the change coming in time to do something about it, but at the time he hadn't wanted to see it.

Haw found that what slowed him down the most in his search for new cheese was fear — fear that he may never find enough

cheese and that the new cheese wouldn't be any good. Finally, Haw overcame his fears and felt freer. He realized that what he was afraid of was not nearly as bad as he thought. He began to focus more on what could go right than on what could go wrong. He let go of the past and began to concentrate on the future.

Haw found his new cheese and learned some valuable lessons. Change is going to happen so anticipate it, monitor it, adapt to it and, best of all, enjoy change. There will always be new cheese out there. You just have to find it!



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Pay Dues On-Line

It's that time again! Please don't forget to pay your membership dues and your certification renewal fees (you now have the option of paying online at our Web site, naicc.org). This is an important investment in the future of your business and in your credibility as a consultant, researcher or sustaining member. NAICC appreciates your support!