



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

A Professional Society Representing the Nation's Crop Production and Research Consultants and Quality Assurance Professionals

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2024 NAICC ANNUAL MEETING & AG PRO EXPO



FROM THE PRESIDENT

WHAT MAKES A GREAT ORGANIZATION?

By Clark Poppert

There are many important components that make up a great organization. Some of these are membership numbers, networking, connections, activity, vision/goals, funds and overall structure. In my opinion, there are three that stand above the rest. These three items supply 80% of what an organization needs to survive and grow.

Networking is a huge benefit of organizations. Members need to be open with other members about how they have dealt with or handled issues in the past. I have found members of the NAICC to be the most open and helpful people in the industry. There are no politics, no secrets and no one has an ulterior motive to hide. Networking by itself is why more crop consultants, QAs, and researchers join the ranks of the NAICC. It has helped me immensely in my career as a consultant, and I am sure it would help you also.

The structure of a group might be the second most important attribute. Having high membership numbers is a great asset. Having the members become involved and willing to give their time to better the organization only makes the group stronger. Having strong leaders in a group is a must and ultimately helps keep the structure intact.

Vision and goals are number three on my list. I have always been a believer of goal setting and having a vision. You need to know where you want to go as an organization and how to achieve that focus. When setting goals, I like to set numerous goals and use them as stepping stones to my ultimate goal. Setting

goals gives you little victories along the way and serves as incentive as you go. I have found that if I set a single goal, I struggle less when dealing with setbacks. Once I hit my ultimate goal, I set a new one.

Now don't get me wrong, the number of members is important but if they are not active members are they really an asset to the organization? The high numbers look good on paper but if 15 people are doing the work for the other 700 is it really a productive organization? Connections are important but not essential, at least not in the beginning. Connections can be developed and usually take some time, depending on how deep of a connection you are looking for in each situation.

If you are a member of NAICC, THANK YOU. We are working on committee assignments for 2024 and encourage you to contact us to become more involved. If you are not a member, please look at NAICC as THE professional organization that you should join, and we invite you to become an active member. You will not regret being a part of NAICC as the benefits are plentiful and the members are family.

HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

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By Keith Jones

FARM BILL

In last month's Happenings on the Hill, I speculated that based on my experience with previous Farm Bill's, particularly the 2014 and 2018 versions, consideration of any new legislation could likely move into 2024.

Unfortunately, it only took a few days for my speculation to gain confirmation with both House and Senate Ag Committee members expressing the same opinion. House Ag member Kat Cammack, R-Fla., said earlier this week she

expects Congress to pass an extension of the 2018 farm bill into 2024 and that House consideration of a new bill will be a “dogfight.”

At the same time, Senate Ag Committee member Joni Ernst (R-IA) also said that the farm bill will not be done by the end of September, necessitating an extension, but with likely passage in early 2024.

The reason for saying the quiet part out loud is that August finds little change in the political atmosphere or positions in either House caucus.

In an August 7th, letter, in response to the continuing vocal push by the House Freedom Caucus for new SNAP work requirements, House Ag Committee Ranking Member David Scott reminded Speaker McCarthy of the failures of the 2014 and 2018 House versions of the farm bill. and strongly cautioned against further undermining the bipartisan work of the Committee. Long-time farm bill observers such as former House Ag Chairman Collin Peterson are echoing Scott’s sentiments. In an August 11th interview with Agri-Pulse, he reminded listeners that there are plenty of Democratic votes to pass a farm bill, unless the GOP drives them away with changes forced by hard-line conservatives.

RELATED NEWS

On July 27th, EPA released for a 60-day (9/22/23) public comment period, its [draft herbicide strategy](#) for the protection of endangered species. EPA said the draft strategy is designed to gain feedback on its proposed early mitigations for more than 900 species and critical habitats to reduce the potential impact of herbicides on species while helping to keep the chemistries available to producers.

Coming on the heels of the vulnerable species pilot, the herbicide strategy is sure to generate significant comments like those submitted on the vulnerable species pilot. NAICC will be reviewing the draft herbicide strategy and will be submitting comments.

The draft herbicide strategy can be found here: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OPP-2023->

[0365/document](#). To view the PowerPoint presentation from a grower meeting, [click here](#). To review slides from EPA's recent webinar, [click here](#).

Finally, on August 8th, USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research Education program (SARE), American Seed Trade Association (ASTA) and Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) released their 2023 cover crop survey. This annual survey is designed to assess the levels of, and challenges to, the adoption of this conservation practice. Cover crops are increasingly seen as an essential component of conservation-oriented production systems (COPS). They are also being viewed with an eye beyond agronomic benefits as we have seen their use encouraged in EPA's vulnerable species pilot and herbicide strategy to mitigate off-site run-off. You can find the full report here: <https://www.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-2023-National-Cover-Crop-Survey-Report.pdf>

EMERGING AND EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY SESSION

NAICC EMERGING & EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY SESSION

The NAICC Emerging & Evolving Technology Session will be held Thursday, January 18, 2024, from 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter. This is a great way to advertise new products and services and is the only session designed specifically for and by NAICC members to showcase new technologies during the NAICC Annual Meeting!

Highlights:

NAICC Sustaining and Voting Members, as well as AG PRO EXPO Exhibitors, have the opportunity to give a brief, energizing synopsis of a product or technology to a full crowd of professional ag consultants, researchers, and industry representatives. Past topics have included new crop protection products under development, new uses of current chemistries, new equipment, and cutting edge software. The technologies presented are developed by Sustaining Members, Exhibitors, or our own NAICC crop

and research consultant members. If it is new, our members want to hear about it!

This is a great opportunity to increase your visibility in a simple and inexpensive way to reach thousands of growers through these professionals. It is also an opportunity to invite interested parties back to your booth for a more in depth look at your product. Yet another way to stretch advertising dollars!

Fees:

- Each NAICC Sustaining or Voting member will be granted one (1) abstract submission at no charge.
- A \$500 fee will be charged for each additional abstract submission.
- A \$500 fee will be charged for ALL abstract submissions made by non-members.

Deadlines:

October 18	100 word abstract due to NAICC
October 23	Committee meeting to select papers
By October 27	Companies notified of acceptance
By December 8	PowerPoint slides due to NAICC

Abstract Submission:

Deadline: October 18, 2023

Abstract Document Specifications: To be eligible for consideration, your abstract must meet the formatting and word count requirements that are specified in the [requirements document](#).

Submit your abstract [here](#).

NAICC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

NAICC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

By Samuel Bledsoe

In July, I had the opportunity to travel to Indiana and Illinois to learn something new from other NAICC members who could offer me a different industry perspective as part of the NAICC Leadership Program Module III. As a study director for field residue studies, I am involved in only one stage in the lengthy pipeline for a pesticide registration and have often wondered how the reports I write are used to register products. I also realized that since I only work on residue studies as part of a contract research organization, I had a narrow view of contract research in general. Within this context, I visited one Sponsor Company and one crop consulting company. Corteva Agriscience and Soil-Right Consulting Services were very kind to invite me to their facilities to let me meet their staff and ask my questions over the course of a few days of intense learning.

My first visit was to Corteva Agriscience. For my entire career as a study director, I did not have a good understanding of what occurred from the time I handed over my final report until the EPA announced a registration approval. This was a “black box” in my understanding. I knew it had to be very complex, and what I learned confirmed that this is definitely true. Over a period of two days, I met with sponsor monitors, subject matter experts, data analysts, regulatory leaders and program managers. Topics discussed included EPA’s organizational structure, applicable laws and regulations, how tolerances or maximum residue levels (MRLs) are calculated, considerations for tolerance petitions, and case studies. The case studies were really useful to me as they went over how decisions are made based on different regulatory objectives. I cannot go into any great depth on these topics within the limitations of this article, but one area I found particularly interesting was how MRLs are calculated and the “compounding conservatism” that results. For

instance, I had attributed an MRL to indicate a toxicity threshold for human health; which is completely wrong. In fact, an MRL is significantly lower than the toxic levels and is a trade standard to indicate that the product was applied following the correct good agricultural practices. As far as human health is concerned, the MRL can easily be more than 10,000 fold lower than the No Observable Adverse Effects Level (NOAEL), which is the highest exposure level in which no adverse effects can be identified with tests. This really highlights the consumer safety of pesticide products produced today. It was commented in one of the meetings that this conservative approach for a pesticide product is very unique when compared to industries such as the pharmaceutical industry in which overdosing even a little can cause real harm to human health. A good example is how taking too many acetaminophen tablets within a 24-hour period can cause liver damage. Applying pesticides that result in residues above the MRL, although illegal, will not be expected to result in a human health risk.

As expected, two days was not enough to discuss these topics in great detail, but this visit has helped clear up many of my basic questions and provided additional resources for me to focus my continued learning. I am very thankful to the staff at Corteva for their hospitality and eagerness to share their insights and experiences with me.

My second trip was to Soil-Right Consulting Services. In planning for this visit, I imagined that I would be mostly outside as I equated crop consulting with field scouting and concluded that I would be spending most of the time walking fields. Randy Darr, the president and founder of Soil-Right, quickly set me straight explaining that Soil Right is more of an independent soil science company and are data and technology driven. Whereas there is a fair amount of time spent collecting soil samples in the fields they service, a lot of their time is spent analyzing soil data to make recommendations to their clients. I would not be walking fields all day during my visit; however, I did get the opportunity to see a horseradish field which I had never seen before. Soil-Right's mission is to offer their clients a balanced approach to soil health and economic good sense. Their goal is "to create smarter, economically wise, environmentally sound programs". They help their clients maximize yield and profit potential while improving the soil health to ensure future success.

Soil-Right had a humble beginning in 1986 when Randy, through a series of unlikely events, met a person who was looking for someone to take over his crop consulting business. Through an unpaid apprenticeship and training through an affiliation with Brookside Laboratory, he was able to start his crop consulting business. At first it was a part-time job working out of his garage and it was a lot more labor intensive than it is today. This was before detailed topographical maps were available and the contour lines had to be hand drawn from aerial photographs and countless hours walking the fields to manually figure the placement of each contour line. The business slowly grew and in 2005 Randy purchased a building with the space he needed to take his business to the next level. Today he and his team (Boone, Seth, and Brandon) service over 80,000 acres in multiple states using advanced software and available data to provide high-resolution maps and modelling. I asked Randy how he was able to convince farmers that they need his services when suppliers offer free consulting. He replied: "Get the clients to understand that free is not free. You don't go to a car dealer and ask what car you should buy. Why then would you get your soil recommendations from the seller?" Randy explained that education has been the key to changing farmers' opinions. When Soil-Right starts with a new client they follow a three-year strategy. The first year is spent learning how the farmer farms. The second year they may start giving some exploratory recommendations based on the previous year's data. By year three, they use the historical data to start implementing new practices to improve the soil health.

I am grateful to Randy and his staff for showing me their business and entertaining all my questions. If you ever have a chance to meet Randy, know that he makes the best pork chops I have ever eaten, and he loves to cater as a side hobby.

ART IN AGRICULTURE

Part Two

Bringing the Outside In

By Karla R. Jensen

Etsy, an online art store by artists, offers 5,000+ results if you search for agricultural wall art as the theme. You can buy personalized metalwork representing your farm, antique farm posters from yesteryear, canvases of sunrises and sunsets with or without frames, triptychs (artwork in 3 parts) of fields or pastures to position just right over your couch, postcards, wooden signs, paintings of old barns, and even the Evolution of Farming Tools.

Images galore bombard shoppers, from the popular Scottish Highland cows, to pigs, alpacas and multiple other farm animals. You can select wall stickers of John Deere tractors, crop dusting planes, fertility goddesses, along with farmhouse collections of this and that, and of course, agriculture-related t-shirts, sweatshirts, caps and gifts for farmers along with satellite images of your farm, wherever that may be.

Agriculture appears to be big business for artists. Even Amazon Prime Day is full of agricultural art for sale. What's our compulsion to bring the outdoors inside and surround ourselves like a cozy blanket with these works? BlendRadioandTV.com featured Ag as an art subject recently. "Historically, we see most art as an agricultural subject during times when people are the most in control of their own lives," says artist Victoria Chick. "The first artist to record agricultural activity were painters. Their subject were the first domesticated animals. Cattle and goats were depicted alone or something with herdsman."

Chick also researched ag in art throughout the centuries, "From 8000 to 3000 B.C. a transition occurred from people living nomadic lives as hunter-gatherers to setting in communities to raise crops and livestock. This was a time when agriculture also influenced design. The practice of growing crops in rows, as well as regular patterns in weaving wool and flax for cloth, influenced the repetitive decoration of pottery, plastered walls, and jewelry making."

Look around your own home or office, The land and crops surely have had an impact on how we decorate, what calendar and artwork we display, what we wear, and patterns we choose in flooring, décor, clothing and jewelry. Most of us would say we have a great amount of control over our own lives as well because we have the limitless choices.

Another significant AG in Art movement occurred in the 17th century, writes Victoria. "Dutch painters were the first to develop purely agricultural subjects in their paintings. Prosperous tradesmen and farmers became the new consumers of art. Paintings were commissioned of prized livestock. Artists also began to paint for their own pleasure and many landscapes were produced which included farmland." In the years following, religious images and royalty were soon replaced by a more prevalent presence of farm scenes and agricultural settings.

"In a way, the reasons people desire and even need art have not changed. The size and cost of the art changes but, from the first Mesolithic herdsmen to the Dutch farmers, English city dwellers, and down to calendars on the walls of farmhouses, the impulse of those who produce food to have art reflecting the agricultural lifestyle and the appreciation of that lifestyle by the average person have been important driving forces in its enduring use as a subject."

From Amazon to Etsy online and in hometowns across the world, Ag in art is everywhere. There's loads of agricultural motif art and decor in store browsing at Home Goods, Hobby Lobby, Michael's Crafts, department stores and even Mom and Pop locally owned shops that may take you by surprise. The timeline of how Agriculture in Art has evolved is fascinating. No matter what is going on in the world, what art is the most popular, or who is producing it, agriculture continues to dominate our choices, whether we live a rural life or not.

An obvious overarching theme of Ag in Art over the centuries appears to be the notion or awareness of peace and peacefulness. Perhaps that's why this kind of art captivates the soul and spirit of humanity in so many ways. That cozy blanket of tranquility could be a photograph, a painting or a sculpture a few feet away. In a world with so much going on, why would we ever give that feeling up? Thus far, in the history of our world, it appears as if we haven't.

Read Victoria Chick's full article at <https://blendradioandtv.com/listing/agriculture-as-an-art-subject>. *Watch for future articles on Ag in Art in your NAICC newsletter*



NAICC ACADEMY WEBINARS

Click on the links below or go to <https://naicc.org/naicc-academy> to sign up!

2022 On-Demand Webinars

[Basic GLP Training](#) – \$125

[Carbon Markets 101](#) – \$75

[Inside Out – What Goes on Inside the Mind of an Auditor?](#) – \$75

[New Technologies in Agriculture](#) – \$75

Free Videos

Worker Protection Standards:

[How to Comply](#)

[WPS Training Videos](#)

2021 On-Demand Webinars

[2021 Hot Topics in Midsouth Ag](#) – \$25

[2021 Hot Topics in Midwest Ag](#) - \$25

[Efficacy Research Workshop](#) – \$100

GAIAC Presents: Fall Armyworm/Precision Ag/Business Management – \$75

Nutrient and Carbon Trading – \$25

Virtual Auditing – Sponsor and CRO Perspective – \$50

What's the Deal with GLP Equipment? – \$50

Become an NAICC Academy Sponsor

NAICC is looking for 2022 Academy Sponsors. Gain exposure for your business by having the opportunity to showcase your Company's name and products/services in front of over 700 independent crop, researcher, and quality assurance consultants. This is a great way to make the most of your advertising dollars while giving back to our organization and allowing members alike to further educate themselves on our great industry other professional development topics.

Sponsorship Information



A graphic titled "THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS" featuring the NAICC Academy logo and a grid of sponsor logos. The NAICC Academy logo is a green shield with a leaf and the text "NAICC ACADEMY". The grid includes logos for Bayer CropScience, eKonomics (The Business of Crop Nutrition), LANGE Research + Consulting, SGS, Tidewater Agronomics, Inc., Great Lakes Agricultural Research Service, Inc., servi tech, Agrauxine by Lesaffre, Ag Services, BELCHIM Crop Protection, and I-State Agricultural Research.

TRIVIA QUESTION

Answer the following question for a chance to win a \$50 Visa Gift Card:

80% of the sugar produced in the world is from sugarcane, with most of the rest being produced from the "sugar" variety of what root vegetable?



Submit your answer [HERE](#)

Last Month's Answer:

Rocky



Congratulations

Corey Rozenboom

You are the winner of a \$50 VISA Gift Card!

Thank you to the Newsletter Committee for putting this issue together:

Karla Jensen, *Chair*, Jo Gillilan, *Co-Chair*,

Laurie Bennett, Amalia Easton, Rachel Lighfoot, Walter Albeldano

If you would like to submit an article or have a suggestion for the *NAICC News*, please contact [Karla Jensen](#) or [Allison Jones](#).

NAICC

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