



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF INDEPENDENT CROP CONSULTANTS

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

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Play on Words

by Grant McMillan

In 2009, a very important thing happened in human history. By the middle of that year, a greater portion of the world's population was living in an urban area vs a rural setting. As the world's population approaches 9 billion, the disconnect of how food is produced will continue to grow, threatening the feasibility of the ag community to produce the food required.

As the population becomes disconnected from agriculture, they become susceptible to certain forms of propaganda or misuse of information, mostly around the euphoric picture of how a farm should function or look. Often this idealism is of a farmer with a pitchfork, forking hay to a cow and milking it.

Over the years, we have seen words and terms such as "sustainable" weaponized and used against the farming industry. Over the past year or so, I have seen the term "regenerative agriculture" being used as the wave of the future. But I find that no one can give a solid definition of what that is. Instead, it's used to say that all current farming practices are not sustainable.

As independent researchers and consultants, we provide targeted advice based on the data and facts to help move our industry forward agronomically. But we also play a vital role in providing checks and balances to the industry as well. In my local area, I have seen a greenhouse operation sell their hydroponically grown tomatoes as "Herbicide Free", even though there are no herbicides used in the growing setting. Every summer when blueberries begin to ripen, many small operations will sell fruit from a small roadside stand with a sign stating that the berries are "spray free". When I question this statement, the response is that they stopped spraying pesticides once the fruit started to form after bloom, yet sprayed up to that point. These farmers know marketing well and are taking advantage of the consumers lack of knowledge on the topic to make the sale. They are causing problems by confusing the consumer when they do come across the correct information.

The role of the independent consultant will become more vital as the population grows. We are the individuals that are keeping educated on the new trends. Seeking out the correct information to provide environmentally and economically sound advice. We create and maintain a sustainable regenerative food system that we all can flourish in!

Finally, as this is my last article, I would like to say thanks to the readers and the feedback I have received over the past year. I know the topics have been “outside of the box” and somewhat “taboo”. However, I hope that they have achieved the goal of sparking discussion and interest on different areas within the industry.

HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

OPMP REQUEST NAICC MEMBERS ASSISTANCE

USDA’s Office of Pest Management Policy is requesting NAICC members’ help with their next Farm Bill survey. This survey pertains to the impacts of rodenticide mitigations announced by EPA in their recent proposed interim decisions for these chemicals. The survey impacts two groups of users (orchards and pasture/rangeland). If you work in any of the following crops, please be sure to return the survey:

Apple, Pear, Orchard, Tree Crops, Stone Fruit, Citrus, Nuts, Grapes, Alfalfa, and/or Range and Pasture.

The survey will be distributed sometime in the first or second week of January. This would give USDA time to analyze and incorporate any relevant findings into our public comments that are due February 13. Please help us give this information to USDA so they can in turn help our growers.

OMNIBUS SPENDING PACKAGE

President Joe Biden signed the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 (“Omnibus”) bill into law on Wednesday, December 28. President Biden’s approval of the \$1.7 trillion Omnibus follows passage by the House of Representatives in a 225-201 vote last week and passage by the Senate in a 68-29 vote.

The Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill (one of 12 fiscal year 2023 appropriation bills) was included in the Omnibus bill and provides a discretionary total of \$25.480 billion, a \$355 million increase (1.4 percent) above the FY22 enacted level, and \$2.1 billion below the FY23 President’s budget request.

Among these appropriations were funding for programs supported by NAICC's Governmental Affairs Committee:

Reauthorization of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act, (PRIA) which imposes fees for maintenance and registration of active ingredients. PRIA would boost registration and maintenance fees 30% in 2023 and allow EPA to raise fees 5% in 2024 and 2026. It would require EPA to perform a workforce assessment of the Office of Pesticide Programs. The bill also extends the re-registration deadline for certain chemistries and incorporates a requirement that EPA consult with the Secretary of Agriculture when conducting essential pesticide registration reviews.

Also included in the omnibus was \$140 million in funding for EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs. Though this is not the \$163 million NAICC and other ag groups had requested, this is still the highest funding for the Agency since 2010. The table below shows where the moneys are allocated.

In \$million

| | FY 2022 Final | FY 2023 President's Budget | FY 2023 Coalition Request | FY 2023 House | FY 2023 Senate | FY 2023 Final |
|--|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Science and Technology - Pesticides Licensing | 5.886 | 6.153 | 6.153 | 6.153 | 6.153 | 6.153 |
| Environmental Programs and Management - Pesticides Licensing | 110.196 | 118.161 | 144.000 | 138.495 | 120.661 | 120.277 |
| State and Tribal Assistance Grants - | 13.294 | 14.027 | 14.027 | 14.027 | 14.027 | 14.027 |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Pesticides Program Implementation | | | | | | |
| Total | 129.376 | 138.341 | 164.180 | 158.675 | 140.841 | 140.457 |

The omnibus package includes a revised *Growing Climate Solutions Act*—the bipartisan bill that first cleared the Senate back in June 2021. This legislation establishes a USDA's technical assistance and registration program to assist producers and forest owners seeking to take part in voluntary carbon markets. The premise of the bill is so farmers can voluntarily adopt practices—like cover crops or no till—that pull carbon from the atmosphere and store, or ‘sequester,’ it in the soil. This then helps private companies and governments shrink their carbon footprints.

Additional provisions to the bill include:

- Support for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) agriculture, rural development, conservation programs, and food and drug safety.
- Agricultural research funding would increase by \$175 million to \$3.45 billion in 2023, including monies for Agricultural Research Service, National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, and Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program.
- Provides essential nutrition assistance for children, families, and seniors.
- Does not include limitations on mandatory Farm Bill funding.
- Includes \$348 million for Rural Broadband Pilot (ReConnect), as well as language directing the Department to keep the pilot technology neutral.
- Farm Disaster Assistance: \$3.7 billion to extend USDA's Emergency Relief Program to assist producers who suffered losses due to certain natural disasters in 2022.
- Buildings and Facilities: \$87.7 million is provided for necessary construction, repairs, and maintenance costs for critical Agricultural Research Service and Food Safety and Inspection Service facilities.
- Conservation Programs: \$27 million is provided for the Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP) for non-industrial timber

restoration, and \$925 million is provided for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) for rural watershed recovery.

- Rural Development: \$60 million is provided for Rural Housing Assistance Grants to make essential repairs and improvements to homes that sustained damage due to disasters in 2022.

PRE-REGISTRATION CLOSES JANUARY 19, 2023

Visit with old friends and make new ones as NAICC continues to grow our membership and meeting attendance. Come join our talented ag professionals...our industry's greatest and most influential leaders.

[CLICK HERE](#) for registration, schedules and more information.

Looking for a way to increase you Company's brand awareness? We have several sponsorship opportunities to fit any size budget. [CLICK HERE](#) to see a complete list or email allisonjones@naicc.org for more information.



NASHVILLE

**2023 NAICC
Annual Meeting &
AG PRO EXPO**

January 23-27, 2023

Omni Nashville Hotel

For information visit
www.naicc.org

EXHIBIT HALL EXTRAVAGANZA

Thursday, January 26th at 5:30 pm we will gather in the AG PRO EXPO exhibit hall to pay tribute to NAICC President Grant McMillan, as he wraps up his Presidential year. There will be plenty of time to catch up with peers, check out the many exhibit booths and meet with key industry representatives. There will be multiple opportunities to drop your business card in various boxes at exhibit booths for a chance to win prizes during the evening.

The FEAE Silent Auction will also be underway where you will have the chance to bid on numerous unique items.

FEAE SILENT AUCTION

The mission of the Foundation for Environmental Agriculture Education (FEAE) is to catalyze innovative education and training for current and future professional crop management practitioners, including both researchers and crop consultants. They are able to do this through the generous donations of a large variety of items from NAICC members to The Foundation's Silent Auction held during the Thursday evening Outgoing NAICC President's Reception in the Exhibit Hall. Wooden bowls, handwoven table runners, vintage jewelry, one of a kind artwork, handmade knives and unique food items are great examples of items "fought over" in previous years. A tax-deductible receipt will be provided upon request. The Foundation will also be selling raffle tickets for a few high value items. Please contact Michelle Hoffman via email at michelle.hoffman@indepthagronomy.com with a description of the item that you will donate to the Silent Auction or as a Raffle item. Not able to attend the Outgoing NAICC President's Reception? You can ship your item to Michelle Hoffman. All donations are greatly appreciated.

EFFICACY WORKSHOP

On Monday, January 23, 2023, NAICC is hosting our 5th Efficacy Research Workshop focusing on how to conduct good efficacy trials. The workshop will

be held between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm, with registration and continental breakfast beginning at 7:15 am.

The morning session will include lectures from our invited speakers whereas the afternoon session will be an interactive workshop. Invited speakers will share their knowledge about insecticide, fungicide, herbicide, and agronomic efficacy trial conduct focusing on row crops. The small group discussions will include research trial problem solving scenarios, as well as a spray booth demonstration.

Attendance certification and CEUs for CPCC-I, CPCC-R, CCA and PCAs will be provided at the end of the workshop.

CONSULTANT'S BIOSTIMULANTS WORKSHOP

Understanding and Assessing the Efficacy of Biological Based Products for Improved Plant, Soil Health and Pest Management

The Global Alliance of Independent Ag Consultants (GAIAC) and NAICC will host their fifth joint consultant's workshop on Tuesday afternoon, January 24, 2023, from 2:00 pm – 7:00 pm.

Agricultural consultants/advisors, industry representatives, academic and independent researchers, and regulatory officials review the increasing number of biological based products being introduced. How do consultants, researchers and regulators assess the validity and efficacy of the claims made? The workshop will explore what does and does not work and other concerns around the evaluation and confirmation of benefit claims.

Attendance certification and CEUs for CPCC-I, CPCC-R, CCA and PCAs will be provided at the end of the workshop.

FALL EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

Crossing the Border and Coming Together

by Ronda Payne

Exploring agri-tech in Western Canada and seeing some long-standing farm operations were part of the late fall 2022 meeting that introduced NAICC to new and potential members.

With our esteemed leader and President, Grant McMillan hailing from Canada, it was only fitting that we held our fall NAICC Board of Directors' meeting outside of the United States for the first time! Mid-November saw seven participants from NAICC cross the border into British Columbia, Canada for a board meeting and view of agricultural advancements in the region. For many, it was the first time they'd been to the Great White North, though fortunately, it was very green and not white, for most of the trip.

"The trip in Vancouver was a great one and there were many memorable moments," says Luke Heim.

Grant recognized some of his contacts would make great touring opportunities – it's one of the benefits of living and working in the area. The starting point of the three-day event was Board Meetings for half of Monday at a downtown Vancouver hotel with great views.

"Grant had us do a brainstorming activity to come up with new ideas to boost revenue for NAICC," says Chrystal Johnson. "Many great ideas were shared and some not-so-great ones."

She joked that the car wash, dog walking, and lemonade stand suggestions would be difficult for the NAICC team to pull off.

After a few good laughs and some positive interactions, the group went to sustainable ag company, Terramera. With both green chemistry and AI solutions, the global firm is transforming how food is grown. They recognized the benefits of an organization like NAICC, became a Sustaining Member and will also have a booth at the 2023 AG PRO EXPO.

"After visiting several innovative agriculture-related Canadian companies during our NAICC Fall Board Meeting, it was very exciting to make strong connections with the possibility of welcoming them to be a part of NAICC," says Laurie Bennett.

In the evening, the group took in sights of snow up on Grouse Mountain, known as the peak of Vancouver. From the gondola the view of the city is impressive.

Starting fresh on Tuesday, NAICC members were able to share benefits of membership and organization goals at their next stop, Semios. As an all-in-one technology-based crop management platform, Semios delivers precision agriculture as a service for tree fruit, nut and vine growers.

There was also a tour of Lucent BioSciences' greenhouse to see new crop nutrient delivery options that are being created and the day rounded out with a visit to Renaissance BioScience to learn about biopesticides, biocontrol and environmental protection through whole-organism and gene-targeted engineering as well as strain development technology.

"The board was able to clearly demonstrate the value that NAICC provides to Ag business who are in the process of developing, testing, and marketing innovative products," says Luke. "We were able to broadly address NAICC benefits by giving specific examples of how Consultants influence how products are used in production and reflect the voice of the customer and how Researchers can help generate data for evaluation and registration of new products. In all cases, companies indicated their understanding of how NAICC could help them be successful and indicated an interest in becoming members."

The final day was an excellent mix of activities starting with a trip to the Abbotsford EcoDairy with a number of other organizations. Another new member was gained through this interaction. NAICC members were then able to stand at the US/Canada border to see berry and other crops on the shared terrain. Grant also took participants to his lab to learn more about his facility and how his operation supports others in the industry.

The last evening was spent dining with NAICC members in the area as well as several vendors from the Vancouver area. Yours truly attended and I was so glad I got to meet Allison and Chrystal in person. Steve Beekman from Beekman Auctions also joined the group for dinner. Steve is helping NAICC put together an online auction for equipment. Stay tuned for details.

Adding new members to the roster was certainly a highlight of the touring as was learning about the advancements in agriculture north of the 49th parallel. It

was a positive, fun event and we're grateful to Grant for spearheading these opportunities.

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Women in Agriculture is a new series in the NAICC News, spotlighting female NAICC members who have contributed to NAICC and US agriculture. Our fifth article focuses on NAICC Secretary Laurie Bennett.

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Teacher to Researcher

by Ronda Payne



A move and change of lifestyle in the 90s led Laurie Bennett to her current career in contract agricultural research.

With four small children, when David Bennett lost his agronomist job at a private research firm, he and wife Laurie took a risk and moved to southeast Iowa. Two things drew the family of six there: Laurie's parents' farm and their impending retirement and the void that existed in contract agricultural research.

“We decided to step out on a limb,” says Laurie. “And I knew to be successful this needed to be a joint effort.”

Although her career previously had been as a school teacher, she doffed that hat and donned a different one. That of an integral player in a new family business known as Bennett Ag Research. The teacher became a student again and quickly learned the importance of NAICC in her new role.

“It really went well, considering I knew nothing about it,” she says. “We learned a lot. We were willing to go into some research avenues that were non-traditional at the time.”

Since 1997, Bennett Ag Research has been taking on different and interesting projects. They were one of the first contract research companies to do self-pollination corn trials. At another point, they even took on a peanut trial which, even now, is very uncommon for their region.

On the family Nordyke-Bennett Heritage Farm, where the business is located, there are soybeans, corn, small grains, grasses, cattle and vegetables. The amount of vegetable trials the company takes on continues to add to its uniqueness in the area.

With nine full-time employees and a high of 20 employees in busy summer months Laurie recognizes that the people who have joined the business have contributed greatly to its success. But that growth and success also came with a significant learning curve in the early years.

“I credit so much of what I’ve learned to the wonderful people in the organization,” she says of NAICC. “They took me under their wings and said, ‘okay, this is what you need to learn and this is what you need to do’. You have such a strong friendship and bond with others within the organization.”

As a result, she continuously gives back to young women in the field. She experienced being seen as support staff instead of as the integral part of the business she was. She wants to ensure young women have opportunities in the industry to ensure it keeps pace with overall need.

“I know that’s the backbone of our industry,” she says. “Things have changed drastically in the last 25 years in terms of the number of women.”

Like any new business, Bennett Ag Research started out small and grew as the opportunities presented themselves.

“It was a really great way to raise our kids,” she says. “They’d go to the fields with us, we’d spend a lot of time together.”

Now, none of the four boys are interested in taking the business on as they have moved into their own careers. Although three of them work in agriculture-related occupations, Laurie explains it’s no longer a case of handing over a small business – it’s a much bigger enterprise. She and David are transitioning towards retirement and it’s going to take time to make the necessary steps.

“Maybe it wouldn’t have been so daunting for our kids if we’d stayed family-focused,” she says.

At the end of the day, she has loved every bit of it.

“I love the variety, I’m learning every day,” she says. “I also have great value in the fact that what we’re doing will help feed our ever-growing society. We are providing a service that has great merit in agriculture.”

Motivational Coach Kacee Bohle



Kacee Bohle, Founder of Corn Belt Cadence, brings her involvement of growing up on the family farm in Indiana, experience working for corporate agriculture, and intertwines it with being a wife and mother with a passion for personal and professional growth. Kacee has completed various leadership and coaching programs and prides herself in being a lifetime learner. She is excited to share practical and actionable tips and tools with others through coaching and training to those in the agriculture industry. Come hear Kacee present at our annual meeting, Thursday January 26th, during our *Business and People* Session.

FOCUS ON CONSULTING



Focus on Consulting
February 21-22, 2023

Hilton Minneapolis, St. Paul Airport
3800 American Boulevard East
Bloomington, MN 55425

More information and to register:
<https://bit.ly/FocusOnConsulting>

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TOPICS INCLUDE:

Advancements in Plant Pathology Soil Grid Sampling
Current Imagery Options
How to Facilitate Continued Use of Precision Ag
Biological Nitrogen Sources
Fertilizer and Grain Market Update
Nitrogen Models: What's New and Why Have Old Models Failed?
Workforce Management

Synergizing with Retailers
Industry Updates from Exhibitors and Industry Partners
Potassium Management Strategies
Artificial Intelligence

To register, go to: <https://naicc.wildapricot.org/event-5066639>

Book Your Hotel Rooms in the MNICCA/NAICC Block at:

<https://bit.ly/FocusRoomsAtHilton>

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

NAICC New Member Profile Trevor Wood

by Hope Jones

NAICC would like to welcome Trevor Wood with G2 Ag Research as a new member.

Trevor joined NAICC as a first-time member at the 2022 Annual Meeting which was held in Orlando last January. He is from Idaho Falls, Idaho. He first got into the industry in 2017, working a summer job.

He explained that he enjoyed the work so much he decided to make a career out of it. He saw that he had the potential to grow in life as well as in the industry and decided to take the opportunity. When asked what his favorite quote was, he said that it was a quote by Steve Prefontaine. "If you do anything less than your best, you sacrifice a gift."

We look forward to watching Trevor Wood's agriculture experience and relationships grow through being a NAICC member with all the networking and learning opportunities NAICC provides!

UKRAINE FROM ALLEN SCOBIE

Ukraine

I have had a hectic year which kicked off big style when I woke up in my hotel room in Kiev at 5:00 am on 24th February to the sound of shelling. I watched the Russian tanks roll over the border from Belarus on the TV screen and, when I stood out on my balcony, I could see and hear the shelling on the other side of the city.

I got out of Ukraine with the help of friends and business partners. It took us 8 days to get across the border to Romania.

I am still visiting my friends and farmers in Ukraine and sometimes it is more eventful than others. On 10th October I was sitting in my hotel room on 7th floor at 8:15 in morning when I saw two cruise missiles fly past the window. They landed a few blocks away with the biggest bang I have ever heard in my life. Sadly 7 people were killed and 49 were injured.

Last month (November) there was also shelling in Kiev when I was there. Sometimes we had warm coffee and food but talked by candle light. Sometimes we had no heat to make coffee or food but we still had meetings with candles and we drank water. Ukrainians are so strong, so brave, so noble. They will never be defeated. But they desperately need our help.

I attached a video and a PDF which explains what my friend Kateryna Konechuk is trying to do. Many Ukrainian farmers have no money for seeds, fertilisers, or fuel to establish 2023 crops. Any contributions from American farmers will be eligible for 50% tax relief.

To view the video and find out more, visit the links below. Please consider supporting this cause.

https://naicc.org/fh_offer-and-business-model_29nov22/

<https://youtu.be/pgpXiZdFsfq>

Allen Scobie



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 to further educate themselves on our great industry and other professional development topics.

Sponsorship Information



TRIVIA QUESTION

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

When did the New Year's Eve Ball first drop in Times Square?

Last Month's Answer:

Sperm Whale



Submit your answer [HERE](#)



Congratulations
Tim McDonald

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

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FEAE provides five scholarships each year to deserving students with a major in Agriculture. To learn more and to apply, visit the [FEAE Scholarship page](#).

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Buy and Sell Equipment on the NAICC Website

Have something to sell? Looking for a specific piece of equipment? Check out the [NAICC Member Marketplace](#). Log in to [Members Only](#) portal on the NAICC website and scroll down to the NAICC Member Marketplace. Choose **Items for Sale** or **Items Wanted**. It is just that easy.

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

Rachel Lightfoot, *Chair*, Amalia Easton, *Co-Chair*,
Laurie Bennett, Jo Gillilan, Karla Jensen, Renee Minion

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

NAICC

**Your professional society representing the nation's crop production,
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