



## 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

#### **Summer Brings Exciting Changes to NAICC**

by Grant McMillan

Summer came fast and furious for us Canadians this year. Once spring hit, we have been non-stop ever since. Mother Nature has thrown us several curve balls thus far to navigate, but everyone is optimistic and, we hope to have record yields by the end of the season.

All successful organizations have one thing in common - great skilled staff. Skilled staff are what allows organizations to take on more work and execute goals, thus moving that

organization forward. Skilled staff also help organizations prepare for the future to better anticipate change and position them to race and not chase.

June 1 brought exciting changes to NAICC. With the semi-retirement of Donna Landis, NAICC hired two new people part-time to head up the other administrative duties of NAICC. Donna will stay involved, but on a project by project basis.

NAICC's new Director of Member Services is Chrystal Johnson of Amarillo, TX. Chrystal has volunteered and worked with NAICC in a few different capacities over the last 10 years. She could often be found at the registration desk greeting attendees of the NAICC annual meeting, coordinating the exhibit hall, and aiding early registration of various workshops. Chrystal also serves as President/Archivist at Precision Study Management and has a professional background in business administration, human resources, and bookkeeping. These skills will come in handy as she manages membership processing and the NAICC membership and annual meeting databases. She is also the staff liaison for the NAICC newsletter.

"I would especially love to see the NAICC Academy grow. I believe the academy could be an invaluable toolbox of education for our members. One idea I highly endorse is that of offering an on-demand Basic GLP Training. GLP Training can be a hiccup in the pre-season training for seasonal staff and is very important in the integrity of the work we do," says Chrystal. She has been instrumental in developing the 2022 NAICC Academy (see article below) with NAICC's second contractor From The Hart Management (FTHM).

FTHM provides administration, public relations, event and technology support to associations, foundations, and professional societies, and is headquartered in Delray Beach, FL. Owner and President Emily Hartstone is no stranger to NAICC either. Emily attended the NAICC Annual Meeting in Orlando and helped Landis with the new NAICC promotional video (coming soon). Emily brings her 11 years of meeting planning experience to NAICC and will head up the audio visual, social media, and graphic design for NAICC throughout the year.

According to Emily, "I am excited to work for NAICC and to work with Allison. We met seven years ago at a meeting planning event and have been colleagues ever since. I look forward to expanding NAICC's social media presence and ask that NAICC members contact [allisonjones@naicc.org](mailto:allisonjones@naicc.org) with examples of things you want to see posted on the NAICC Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn pages. I am also extremely excited about the new webinar platform and completing the design."

NAICC is very fortunate to add these two skilled individuals to our team, and I look forward to seeing the great ideas they will bring to the table as we move forward.

## Happenings On The Hill

By Rick Kesler

*This will be Rick's last Happenings on the Hill. After many years of service to NAICC as the Governmental Affairs liaison, Rick is retiring. Thank you, Rick, for your dedication and support of NAICC. We will miss you.*

One of the six position papers that NAICC developed for 2022 explains our position on the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA is an extremely complicated Act and the EPA is years behind in doing its due diligence in regards to its responsibilities under the act. A little background may be useful.

In 1973, Congress passed the ESA. Its objectives are to protect and recover imperiled species and their habitats. The U.S. has approximately 1,600 species that are listed as endangered or threatened. The EPA must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) on ESA when considering the registration of a pesticide. The FWS is responsible for overseeing the protection of terrestrial and freshwater organisms, and the NMFS is responsible for overseeing the protection of marine wildlife. In respect to pesticide registrations, EPA evaluates risk to either endangered or threatened individuals of a species and issues a Biological Evaluation (BE). Consultation is required between EPA, FWS, and NMFS to develop a BE and is a complicated process. FWS and NMFS prepare a Biological Opinion and propose actions to avoid jeopardy to the species. This is all required by the ESA, but the reality is that it has rarely occurred over the forty years that the Act has been in existence.

In the past decades, EPA has met those obligations for less than 5% of the thousands of pesticide actions it completes each year. The interagency ESA reviews is very complex and time consuming. The entire process can take at least four years for a single pesticide (up to 15 years in rare cases). EPA has been unable to keep up with its ESA workload. Now certain interested organizations are starting litigation actions to force EPA to handle its huge backlog. To date there have been more than twenty lawsuits covering over 1,000 pesticide products challenging EPA on its failure to meet its ESA obligations. As a result, EPA's current ESA priorities are driven almost exclusively by litigation settlements and other court-enforceable deadlines.

In May of this year, EPA put out a 72-page workplan on their plan to improve ESA mitigation. In the workplan, EPA is up-front about their shortcomings with their ESA obligations and most of their proposals are surprisingly common sensical. The proof though will be their actions over the coming years as the workplan is implemented. For complete details of the workplan, [click here](#).

NAICC has been closely following developments in the Endangered Species Act for some time now. Thanks to Steve Hoffman for writing the ESA position paper and to him and the NAICC staff for sitting in on many calls and meetings. NAICC also met with EPA in DC during in March and discussed our position on ESA. NAICC has also had multiple calls with the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA) and are in discussion with them about

possibly working together on ESA issues going forward. The National Entomological Society is another group that may be like-minded as we continue to follow and share our views on the Endangered Species Act. A copy of the NAICC position paper on ESA can be found at <https://naicc.org/about-us/2022-naicc-position-papers/>

## Hemp Fiber Research Project Includes NAICC Members

*By Melissa Nelson and Mandi Kerr*

The Global Hemp Association (GHA) is the hemp networking group composed of individuals from all aspects of the industrial hemp community. As its name implies, GHA has a very diverse network including participants from other countries and continents. The goal is to promote the hemp industry and there has been progress. The USDA has recently announced that 54.2 thousand acres were planted in 2021, and the value of that hemp crop totaled \$824 million. Thousands of potential products have emerged that can be created from hemp. These products include paper, packaging, building materials, textiles, animal bedding, grain, and oils. There will be a need for much more acreage in the future, along with reliable tested seed.

Recently, the GHA and its educational/research arm, Friends of Hemp (FOH), took on a major research project to enhance hemp fiber growing across the United States. GHA recognized that there was no national study that would provide growers with comparative information about seed and how it would grow out in various climates and soils across the United States.

Therefore, GHA is conducting a six region, eight state trial including ten seed varieties that are known to produce hemp for such fiber uses. GHA and FOH have contracted variety trials research with Performance Crop Research, LLC, which will coordinate research activities with independent research scientists in six regions in the U.S., these research entities, all of whom are members of the National Association of Independent Crop Consultants (NAICC), will execute the research objectives of this project according to protocol developed by the GHA Research Committee.

When the study is complete the seed study will yield comparative national information about hemp seed quality, performance, and tonnage by area. After the first trial, GHA will go on to study how seed varieties respond in harvest and processing conditions.

Here are some thoughts and pictures from our CRO's working to move hemp forward:

"I have been researching and pursuing the "Hemp Dream" since Pennsylvania legalized the cultivation of industrial hemp in 2016. What I realized is that "hemp" is not just hemp?!

Unlike corn, soybeans, and a myriad of other established commercial agronomic crops - the playbook for hemp is being written as we go - in real time. The multitude of hemp strains and the uses for which it is grown (seed, fiber, oil, cannabinoids (therapeutic & recreational) and so on) boggles the mind. I am enamored with this plant and am excited to be involved in the ongoing processes (research, cultivation, regulation, etc.) to “normalize” hemp in the US.” – Daniel Ramsdell, Odonata 360

“Being able to work with GHA to bring this project to life has been challenging, rewarding and continues to allow me to expand my industry skills and leadership in research. Very rarely are you allowed the chance to chase down dreams with the support of a great organization and with great colleagues alongside you. I don’t take it for granted. Hemp is in the infancy stages and with a data driven approach I know fiber and grain will be a valuable resource to farmers as an alternative cash crop.” – Melissa Nelson, Performance Crop Research

“From our perspective, this project has been a challenge due to the weather but also quite enlightening as to the durability of the hemp plants. We are seeing stark differences in the germination of the seed varieties under some very challenging conditions this season. Directly after planting we had a driving rain that moved seed around in the plots. After that, we shot to 100+ degrees for a few days which caused a crust to form on the surface. We’ve identified 4 varieties that appear to do well in our part of the world and that will be very helpful information as our growers move forward with this cropping system.” – Tim Case, Great Plains Crop Services

If you have any questions please don’t hesitate to reach out to Mandi Kerr, Founder of Global Hemp Association ([mandi@globalhempassociation.org](mailto:mandi@globalhempassociation.org)) or Melissa Nelson, Performance Crop Research ([performancecropresearch@gmail.com](mailto:performancecropresearch@gmail.com))



Seven-day growth comparison at the Kansas Location. Picture submitted by Melissa Nelson



Odonata 360's team prepping ground before drilling hemp varieties in May. Picture submitted by Daniel Ramsdell.



It rained so hard in Texas after the drilling date, the seed was moved out of the row. The challenges of Mother Nature never fail. Picture submitted by Tim Case.



Drone Flight completed by Joseph Hunter at our North Carolina site on June 05, 2022.



Matt Eich checking seed depth on the border rows while down in Kansas. Teamwork makes the dream work. Picture submitted by Melissa Nelson



The feeling of satisfaction when the job was well done, but you know it's just the beginning of the workload. Picture submitted by Melissa Nelson.

## 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 first article focuses on Jo Gillilan.

### Taking the Plunge Into Independent Research

*by Ronda Payne, Girl With a Pen*

There are times when life gives you a kick in the pants, but then follows it up with fulfilling your dreams – sometimes ones you weren't even sure you had. These events are seldom expected, but often, they deliver the best outcome possible, as was the case for Jo Gillilan of Gillilan Ag Research.

Agriculture was a natural career path for Jo. She grew up on a tobacco farm in Springfield, Tennessee and after graduating high school, pursued an education in the ag research industry.

Initially, she took a job working in-house for Scotts Miracle Grow and remained for nine years. In 2013, she was hired by Winfield and asked to set up a research station in the south. The right location for her station was obvious.

"I worked in their R&D department," she explains of her job. "They asked me to set up a research station in the south, and that led me to go back to the farm."

She loved being back on the farm with her family. She soaks up a lot of knowledge from her dad.

While she had previously toyed with the idea of becoming self-employed and starting her own research firm, she decided to wait until her kids were a little older. However, God had different ideas for Jo. His plan included that proverbial kick in the pants, followed with dreams coming true.

In 2018, her employer downsized.

"I was naturally devastated," she says.

Not wanting to leave the family farm again, she let this push guide her. She decided to get her business license and take the plunge of starting her own business. It was a little risky because her husband is also self-employed, but she went with it.

"I went to NAICC, no longer as an industry representative, but as a contract researcher," she says. "They really embraced me. It was the greatest thing I've ever done, business-wise."

Jo focuses primarily on the corn and soybean crops so prevalent in her region. While the family farm is still based in tobacco, she doesn't limit herself to the types of research she can do, or the crops she can assist with.

"Some vegetables work. Fertility work, seed treatments or variety testing and any kind of pesticide work," she explains.

Because her work is somewhat seasonal, she says, being self-employed teaches you to squirrel away money for the winter and make hay when the sun shines. She's learned to go with the risks and growing up on a farm has prepared her for that.

The downside? She misses having co-workers to bounce ideas off of. She leans on her dad to help sharpen her mind and challenge her along with a number of on-farm "support" animals.



"I have 15 pets," she says. "It's ridiculous. I have alpacas and donkeys and a horse and goats. I think they calm me down when I'm stressed."

Jo plans to continue the business as long as possible with the hope that maybe one of her kids, or someone else, will want to take over. Until then, she embraces making kids' ball games and dentist appointments. They come and help her at the farm on weekends.

She watches them and is reminded of a fertile mind and how her own expanded depending on work demands.

"I don't ever want to do anything different," she says

## Outdoor Adventures in Nashville in 2023

*By Karla R. Jensen*

Yes, Nashville is the premier hot spot for music. Yes, Nashville has some of the best Barbeque and Hot Chicken restaurants in the country. Yes, Nashville will be a wonderful destination for tourist delights but in the midst of all those excellent adventures, you will still be able to enjoy the beauty and serenity of the great outdoors. Yes, even in winter. Whether you take a drive or take a brisk, refreshing walk, here's some enjoyable scenic interludes before, during or after your visit to Music City for the upcoming 2023 NAICC conference.

### **Places to walk/hike**

**Radnor Lake** - Take a brief excursion to enjoy this little gem, which is a personal favorite of the locals. Very scenic and full of fresh air! Radnor Lake State Park is open year-round from 6 am until 20 minutes after sunset, including all holidays. If the paths are clear, enjoy a 2.7-mile loop near Brentwood. The entire route takes less than an hour. On weekends or busier days, limited parking can be a bit precarious but be patient while vehicles move in and out of the smaller parking lots. The nature preserve was created by the Nashville and Louisville Railroad in 1914 and features hiking trails of multiple levels of difficulty. Stop at the Visitor's Center for a map of the entire lake and to view some wonderful artwork.

**Franklin Parks** – If you'd like to escape just outside the city a bit, you'll find some fabulous municipal parks for walking, especially in the Franklin area. Pinkerton Park is near downtown Franklin, which is a destination all its own. Enjoy the mile-long paved pedestrian track. Jim Warren Park is located nearby some quaint, safe, and friendly neighborhoods. This park features a playground if you brought the kids, a fishing pond

and skate park and trail. If you prefer a river view, set out for Bicentennial Park near the Harpeth River. Don't forget to stop and admire the view from the overlook.

**Shelby Bottoms Greenway and Natural Area** - Nature Preserve just minutes from downtown Nashville. Enjoy the 960-acres with three miles of Cumberland River frontage, hardwood forests, open fields, streams and five miles of paved trails for hiking, biking, or running. Open dawn to dusk daily.

**The Parthenon** – Make a quick escape to ancient Greece while enjoying the beautiful outdoors at Nashville's replica of the original Parthenon of ancient Athens. The Parthenon of Nashville was built in 1897 as part of the Tennessee Centennial Exposition and today, truly serves as the city's art museum. This is the centerpiece of Nashville's premier urban park called Centennial Park. The building is surrounded by glorious green space. It's located only two miles west of downtown Nashville and you'll enjoy the one-mile walking trail, but you'll be hard pressed not to want to take a peek inside the Parthenon with its exhibits and sculptures. Admission is just \$10, but the park is free.



### **NAICC Academy's New On-Demand Webinars**

Starting in June 2022, four new on-demand webinars will be available to members and non-members on the NAICC Academy at <https://naicc.org/NAICC-academy/>. The new offerings include:

Basic GLP Training

Inside Out: What Goes on in the Head of an Auditor?

Carbon Markets 101

## Retirement: Can You Ever Really Retire?

The NAICC Newsletter Committee has a series of articles on members who have recently retired from contract research or consulting. This month's article features **Gaylen Jones**. Gaylen worked for Stone Environmental, Inc., where he was involved in Project Management, Terrestrial Field Dissipation, Crop Residue, and GLP studies.

### **How did you get your start in this industry?**

I did not plan to invade this industry; Rather, I had initially intended to work in academics because of my love for teaching and research into insect physiology. However, that changed with a chance meeting of an old college friend while at an Entomological Society Meeting in 1986. He asked me if I had ever considered a career in project management within a small company. "Perhaps" I said. With that, my friend arranged an interview with the President and Vice President of his current employer. The work sounded interesting, and they made a good case for needing another project manager. Therefore, we ended up moving from Texas to Georgia, where I went to work for one of the first Ag Project Management companies.

### **What are some of your notable accomplishments and achievements?**

At the time, no one was performing radiolabeled metabolism studies in the field to any extent. I was able to acquire a radioactive materials license for the company so we could conduct confined plant metabolism studies in the field as well as in the lab. We were very successful with these studies. We also helped develop a bioassay procedure for BT concentrations using small caterpillars because genetic analysis was not yet available.

During this time, I helped a large pharma firm obtain a radioactive materials license so they could use a modified machine containing a radioactive source as a quality control measure. That was very cool. Worked with Japanese and American companies.

I was also in charge of three field sites, two in GA and a mobile one in the Northwestern US. A partner and I were able to establish a successful CRO in GA that we eventually expanded to IA. At the GA site, we performed the first radiolabeled soil dissipation study that was very successful. We worked with several agchem company field reps in the area and aided them with their efficacy work. Performed at least three ground water studies for a famous environmental firm based in VT. Developed new techniques to improve sampling efficiency.

### **What contributions to NAICC have you made and how many years were you a member?**

I have been a member of NAICC for approximately 4-5 years. Before that, my companies with were often exhibitors, but I was not a member. I have given several presentations at NAICC meetings.

### **What are your plans for retirement?**

I want to stay busy, but not too busy. We still want to enjoy kayaking, insect collecting, fly-fishing, biking, hiking, golf and renovating houses on occasion. I am in discussions with a couple of local lawn services about adding pest management as a service. With a pesticide applicators license, employees could operate under my license. I also want to get back into RC planes and drones. The controllers are more advanced than in the old days. I can also teach biology again. That was always fun. I still think about the control of insect metamorphosis, but my lab does not exist. I will still pick up a fossil if I see one. We will also travel some, as there are still places that need exploring.

## **Nominate a Member for the Consultant of the Year (COTY) Award**

Beginning in 2022, the COTY will expand to also include the Research Consultants and Quality Assurance Professionals. There will be one award for each of the three categories: a CCOTY (Crop Consultant of the Year), a QAPOTY (Quality Assurance Professional of the Year) and a RCOTY (Research Consultant of the Year). NAICC is excited to recognize each of the main membership groups that contribute to our great organization.

The award winners must be NAICC members of good standing who are nominated by another NAICC member. Their applications are evaluated based on career information, involvement in ag-related organizations, honors and awards, and also community involvement and educational background.

The recipient of each of the awards will receive a complimentary registration package to the next annual meeting. This will include meeting registration, convention meals, a plaque, and recognition in the NAICC News and The Scoop magazine.

To nominate a NAICC member, [click here](#) to access both an online application and a form to print.

## **TRIVIA QUESTION**

**Last Month's Winner**

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

Who allegedly wrote the song "Golden Years" for Elvis Presley, but ended up recording it himself?



Submit your answer [HERE](#)



**Congratulations**

**Amber Percell**

Mid-South Ag  
Consultants, Inc.

for knowing the answer to May's trivia question. The answer is: Beanie Babies!

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

Click the [AmazonSmile](#) image for a direct link to support the FEAE from your mobile device or computer.

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**

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