



## 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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### Happenings On The Hill

by Allison Jones

### EPA Transparency for Agriculture Products Act

On July 21, 2022, Senator Roger Marshall (R-KS) introduced the EPA Transparency for Agriculture Products Act, legislation focused on EPA regulation of pesticide products. The bill intends to prevent EPA from overregulating essential pesticides that the ag industry heavily depends upon. Specifically, this bill would take steps to ensure transparency and accountability within the EPA's rulemaking process for pesticides. Please see bill language attached, as well as press release below.

<https://www.marshall.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/new-sen-marshall-bill-aims-to-maintain-availability-of-vital-crop-protection-tools/>

## USDA Announces New Opportunities to Improve Nutrient Management

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) welcomed the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, which will deliver \$19.5 billion in new conservation funding to support climate-smart agriculture. This historic funding will bolster the new steps that USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced today to improve opportunities for nutrient management. NRCS will target funding, increasing program flexibilities, launch a new outreach campaign to promote nutrient management's economic benefits, in addition to expanding partnerships to develop nutrient management plans. This is part of USDA's broader effort to address future fertilizer availability and cost challenges for U.S. producers.

"President Biden and Congress have taken an important, historic step towards easing the burden of inflation on the American public and meeting the moment on climate," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "Agriculture has long been at the forefront of our fight against climate change. From climate-smart agriculture, to supporting healthy forests and conservation, to tax credits, to biofuels, infrastructure and beyond, the Inflation Reduction Act provides USDA with significant additional resources to continue to lead the charge."

Through USDA's conservation programs, America's farmers and ranchers will have streamlined opportunities to improve their nutrient management planning. This provides conservation benefits while mitigating the impacts of supply chain disruptions and increased input costs.

"The pandemic and Ukraine invasion have led to supply chain disruptions, higher prices of inputs, and goods shortages in countries across the globe," Vilsack said. "USDA is responding to the needs of U.S. producers and consumers by adding program flexibilities, expanding options and assistance, and investing in nutrient management strategies to help farmers address local resource concerns and global food security while also improving their bottom line."

Specifically, NRCS efforts include:

- **Streamlined Nutrient Management Initiative** – A streamlined initiative will incentivize nutrient management activities through key conservation programs, including the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts, and the Conservation Stewardship Program. The initiative will use a ranking threshold for pre-approval and include a streamlined and expedited application process, targeted outreach to small-scale and historically underserved producers, and coordination with FSA to streamline the program eligibility process for producers new to USDA. In addition to otherwise available funding at the state level, NRCS is targeting

additional FY23 funds for nutrient management. NRCS is also announcing a streamlined funding opportunity for up to \$40 million in nutrient management grant opportunities through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

- **Nutrient Management Economic Benefits Outreach Campaign** – A new outreach campaign will highlight the economic benefits of nutrient management planning for farmers. The potential net savings to farmers who adopt a nutrient management plan is estimated to be an average of \$30 per acre for cropland. It is estimated that there are 89 million acres of cropland (28% of total U.S. cropland) currently exceeding the nitrogen loss threshold; and if all those acres implemented a nutrient management plan, the average net savings would be \$2.6 billion. NRCS staff develop nutrient management plans to help producers use nutrient resources effectively and efficiently to adequately supply soils and plants with necessary nutrients while minimizing transport of nutrients to ground and surface waters.
- **Expanded Nutrient Management Support through Technical Service Providers Streamlining and Pilots** – New agreements with key partners who have existing capacity to support nutrient management planning and technical assistance will expand benefits and serve as a model to continue streamlining the certification process for Technical Service Providers (TSPs). NRCS is also developing new opportunities to support partner training frameworks, nutrient management outreach and education, and new incentive payments through TSP partners for nutrient management planning and implementation.

Alongside the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and American Rescue Plan, the Inflation Reduction Act provides once-in-a-generation investment in rural communities and their infrastructure needs, while also responding to the climate crisis. The bill invests \$40 billion into existing USDA programs promoting climate smart agriculture, rural energy efficiency and reliability, forest conservation, and more. Approximately \$20 billion of this investment will support conservation programs that are oversubscribed, meaning that more producers will have access to conservation assistance that will support healthier land and water, improve the resilience of their operations, support their bottom line, and combat climate change. This includes:

- \$8.45 billion for EQIP
- \$4.95 billion for the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)
- \$3.25 billion for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)
- \$1.4 billion for the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

For more information and resources for nutrient management planning, visit

[farmers.gov/global-food-insecurity](https://farmers.gov/global-food-insecurity). Contact NRCS at your local [USDA Service Center](#) to get assistance with a nutrient management plan for your land.

## 2023 Annual Meeting & AG PRO EXPO



### Registration Is NOW Open

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](mailto:allisonjones@naicc.org) for more information.

### 2023 NAICC Meeting Highlights

By Karla R. Jensen

*Purpose is the reason you journey, and passion is the fire that lights your way.* As you set your sights on the 2023 NAICC in Nashville, you're about to intersect with an entire assemblage whose livelihood is based on this premise. Nashville is a destination for those with a purpose and a passion like no other. Likewise, we belong to an industry with talented professionals who are thrilled to share their purpose, passion, expertise, and experiences.

NAICC's *welcome aboard* and *welcome home* attitude towards new and longtime members is just as comforting as Nashville's southern cooking, just as smooth as those barrel-aged spirits, and just as dazzling as the multitude of musicians waiting to be discovered or getting their big break.

The entire week-long experience from January 23-28 will include breakout education sessions, the annual business meeting, AG PRO EXPO, and not to mention fun. It will be music to your ears.

While you've been busy serving customers and fulfilling your purpose, the band's gotten back together for an energizing jam session. Our annual meeting coordination committee (i.e., our band) including lead by President Elect Clark Poppert, Casey Carr, Jennifer Jarrell, Anna Meszaros, Melissa Nelson, Lori Rodaway, and James Todd has been stealthily orchestrating timely topics and an outstanding program schedule for Crop and Research Consultants and Quality Assurance Professionals. This launch party is definitely going to rock!

**The 2023 lead vocalist and our keynote speaker, is Melissa Miller, who is also known as Farm Babe.** After finishing her goal of traveling the world and visiting all seven continents by age 30, (67 countries) Michelle became fascinated with culture and learning where our food comes from. While dating a commercial scale farmer in Iowa for nearly eight years and it was there where her social media advocacy platform, "The Farm Babe", was born in 2014. After learning the real truths of modern agriculture firsthand, Miller began debunking the myths she once believed as a former city girl.

Our deep tracks this year include many relevant break-out sessions for consultants and researchers. Tune in to the Plenary Session and one of the *Emerging and Evolving Technology sessions* on Thursday, January 26<sup>th</sup>. Also, on Thursday rock on with the consultants as they tackle Carbon Credit and Sustainably Grown and Business & People issues. Researchers will shake up the scene by discussing Emerging Issues in Row Crop Research and later that day Soil Biome. Things You Want Your QA to Know and Things to Avoid as an Auditor will be chart busters for the QAs.

On Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, join the Consultant's chorus of learning with sessions including *Losing Chemistry and Applying Thresholds*, *Predictive Analysis*, and *On-Farm Research*. Researchers will be drumming away on topics of *Emerging Issues in Tree Crop Research*, *Spraying*, *AI*, *Sorting*, and *Focus on Communication with New Employees*.

Catch a lively riff from the EPA and USDA representatives and discover pertinent information on industry mergers during the *Regulatory Update and Don't Ask Siri*.



Don't shy away from the QA or Consultant jam sessions (roundtables) on Friday afternoon. Rumor is there will be Broadway Avenue type beverages, but no Honky Tonk music.

### **Continuing Education Units:**

Musicians longing to hone their craft find a *School of Rock*, but we have our own version of focused continuing education. Multiple opportunities are available for pre-meeting training. NAICC and several faithful Sustaining Members will offer GLP training on Tuesday, Jan. 24<sup>th</sup>. Modules include Basic, Advanced, and Field-Harvesting. Basic GLP is geared towards those with 0-2 years GLP experience, while the Advanced GLP course will refresh and challenge your GLP knowledge. Trainings have limited space. Watch for more information forthcoming on the Field Harvesting module.

With the 2023 CPCC program, consultants will have the opportunity to gain 25 Consultant Education Units through multiple workshops/trainings. NAICC has submitted the preliminary program to various state and national certification programs and associations for CEUs by the Society of Quality Assurance. Check out the CEUs awarded on the NAICC website, in the NAICC News, and at registration.

### **Networking:**

In many industries, it's all about who you know. We're no different. We've thrown down the red carpet for the *New Member and First Timer Reception* set for Wednesday, Jan 25<sup>th</sup> at 5 p.m. It's like the green room back stage at your favorite concert venue. NAICC Executive Board Members, Committee Chairs and Past Presidents remind us that we carry our own classic Hall of Famers (or Hall of *Farmers*?) who are experts in making introductions, giving *sound* advice, and welcoming you to the winner's circle, right where you belong. Some of these kind folks will also be present at the *New Members Boot Camp* at 12:15 p.m. on Thursday. Boot camp offers a crash course about opportunities to serve on the NAICC committees and their importance. This is your chance to get involved from the start!

### **Outgoing President's Reception and Exhibit Hall Extravaganza and Silent Auction:**

A welcome crescendo after a long day of listening and learning is an evening of face-to-face interaction with peers, key industry representatives, and new or beloved colleagues. Make the most of your time exploring new or established relationships and discovering new technologies to help guide or grow your business. Be sure to drop your business card in dozens of designated boxes throughout the day or at the beginning of the

Extravaganza to win one or more coveted prizes. We'll be paying tribute to President Grant McMillan at the reception so don't miss a moment.

To raise this event up an octave, the Foundation's (FEAE) Silent Auction is showcased on Thursday night, the opening evening of the annual meeting. We invite you to bid on one-of-a kind, high-demand, high quality artwork, vacations, spirits, regional food/wine baskets, jewelry, woods, books, fiber arts and more. There's a wonderful eclectic mix of gifts to bid up, bid often and take home, all for a great cause. Proceeds help underwrite *instrumental* (*ahh! We need more cow bells!*) educational programs that benefit our industry.

### **President's Lunch & Awards**

### **Friday Night Networking Dinner: Canadian Tuxedo, Music and Games**

Behind the music, there's always great stories to tell of industrious and quirky band members. Our equivalent features a Friday *President's Lunch and Awards Ceremony* from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., then a Friday evening *Networking Dinner* at 6:30 p.m. Get a peek inside the masterminds and go-getters at the top of our industry. In honor of our 2022 President, Grant McMillan of Abbotsford, British Columbia, the Friday night dinner attire is the well-appointed Canadian Tuxedo (*denim pants, denim shirt and denim vest*). Cowboy hat and boots are optional.

Even if you don't have Friends in Low Places, come chase the winter blues away. It'll be OK. If you've already been everywhere man, crossed the desert bare man, breathed the mountain air man, *Cash* in a few days in Nashville. If because of COVID fears you'd thought we'd never ever ever, be getting back together, here's your chance. Our bet is that registration will fill up in *record* time this year. See you in January!

## **RETIREMENT: CAN YOU EVER REALLY RETIRE?**

by Rachel Lightfoot

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 Sandy Mackie. Sandy is currently a Retired Member of NAICC and previously was an Additional Sustaining Member for 22 years.

Sandy was the 2000 winner of the Service to NAICC Award, This award is given to someone who has not only gone above the call of duty but continues to be a champion for NAICC and its members. She served on the Executive Board Director for 6 years and continues to serve on the FEAE Board. She is currently the secretary of that organization. Sandy also serves on the selection committee for the Richard L. Jensen and Foundation Scholarship.

As an inaugural Leadership Program participant in 2013, Sandy continues to serve this program by being a member of the committee.

*How did you get your start in this industry?* I was finishing up my degree in Chemistry and conducting medical research at the University of Florida. My lab mate was retiring, so I asked her if she had any advice for me since I was just starting out. She advised me to go into industry (instead of working for the state or federal government). I landed a job with Union Carbide in Woodbine, Georgia, as a quality control technician for Temik products. After 10 years there, I relocated to Research Triangle Park where I began working in Regulatory Science.

*Notable Accomplishments/achievements:* I think it is notable that I worked for 38 years for 5 different companies but never quit my job (Union Carbide to Rhone-Poulenc to Aventis to Bayer to BASF). Although I never really planned to work in agriculture, that is where life's path took me. I feel blessed to have had a part in providing new tools for farmers so they can more efficiently produce food, feed, fuel, and fiber. I conducted studies in many aspects of Regulatory Science including Metabolism and Environmental Fate, Residue Chemistry, and BioTechnology. By far, my favorite part of my career was as a Study Director when I could travel out to the research farms and see the businesses you researchers have built and watch you conduct your portion of the study. Along with getting to know a bunch of great people, there was always something new to learn and I thrived on the challenges. I eventually ended up managing a team of study directors conducting Biotech field trials and got to organize many training events for my company with the researchers at NAICC. My last years were spent managing overarching responsibilities for all safety studies conducted for canola biotech products.

*Contributions to NAICC and how many years were you a member?* I have been a member for over 20 years, (and am still a member in the "Retired" category). At my first NAICC meeting, I was elected Chair of the Allied Industry Committee (thanks Daryl). I am proud to say I was the first graduate of the NAICC Leadership Program (The two other LP candidates were unable to complete that inaugural year.) I had to get special permission from the Executive Board, since it wasn't clear if members from industry could participate. I had an experience I will never forget, from my trip to Washington DC and the Crawfish Boil on the Hill, to my summer visits hosted by Blaine Viator, Grady Coburn, and Denise Wright in Louisiana. I like to think that I did take my Leadership Program experience and



"Pay it Forward". Soon after my "graduation", I joined the FEAE Board. I continue to serve on that Board as secretary and also organize the sub-committee for the annual review of scholarship applicants. I was also blessed to serve on the NAICC Executive Board as the Industry Director for seven years, a responsibility which was another highlight of my career. In 2020, I was honored to receive the "Service to NAICC" award which I will always cherish. Currently, I am the chair of the Leadership Committee.

*Plans for retirement:* My plans for retirement have already come to fruition. My husband and I are living the dream on the St. John's River in Astor, Florida (Astor: a quaint little drinking village with a big fishing problem). We make day trips to the beach once a week, and like to take longer vacations camping in our vintage 1963 Airstream Bambi. We have 5 grand-kids and 11 great-grand kids who need visiting often. We dabble in buying and selling antiques, something that we have been doing for many years now. We also like to keep fit by taking our two yorkies for walks on the Florida trails that are close by and bicycling from time to time. I am also going to be doing some consulting, as well as keeping active with the FEAE. I look forward to seeing everyone in Nashville in 2023!

## 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 second article focuses on Sue Bellman.

### Blazing the Research Trail

*by Ronda Payne*

Sue Bellman is something of a reluctant role model for women who are interested in the ag research industry. With decades of experience behind her, she truly blazed a trail that showed women they could indeed work in a field previously exclusive to men.

"I guess I'm a role model for young women," she says. "It wasn't my plan to be that."

At a very young 70 years of age, she has decades of experience. The last 35 in her own company, Great Lakes Agricultural Research Service in south eastern Wisconsin.

"I'm supposed to be retired at this point," she laughs. With a great team of four full time employees, she adds, jokingly, that she sticks around mostly to pay bills and cash checks. "They are pretty much managing all the trials themselves."

Her early career was spent working for ag chemical organizations like Monsanto, Rhone-Poulenc and FMC. Sue spent a combined decade-plus with these companies, the longest stretch with FMC. There was a lot of "garbage" to put up with as a woman in those early days, but ultimately, she realized she didn't want to travel so much and started her own company in 1987.

Starting a business certainly wasn't a cake walk. At the time, the chemical companies were just beginning to see the benefits of using contractors to do studies.

"The first couple of years were a little slow," she explains. "There were just a few of us that were really doing this."

She also had to learn the business side of things and that was one of her biggest challenges. Researchers working for companies like FMC don't need to know how to run a business or learn accounting, so Sue got a crash course. The highlight was that every work day was at the family farm.

"We have 330 acres," she says. "When I started the business, my dad bought me a sign that went out front. He was so proud of me."

One hundred years ago, her great grandfather farmed horses on the site, then her grandfather was a dairy farmer, followed by her father who had corn, soybeans and beef cattle. She has continued with the cattle on 125 acres, while also managing the business and continues to live on the farm where she grew up.

The work she started with in 1987 has changed and evolved over the decades as the needs of her clients have changed. But, she found freedom and the absence of sexism and other issues in running her own firm.

"I think women who came from industry found it more comfortable to be their own boss," she says.

For those looking to follow in her footsteps, or a modified version, Sue stresses the importance of learning. She has a bachelor's degree in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin and a masters in Weed Science from Colorado State.

"Get your bachelor's degree, your masters degree. Get your training," she says. "It's a wonderful career. I've totally enjoyed being an ag researcher."

She credits NAICC in helping women, particularly create strong businesses and connections in the industry.

As for the future, Sue's concerns are similar to many others; the lack of youth prepared to take on the work and the effects of climate change on farming. "The whole climate change thing is really changing our industry," she says. "That's what I think is going to be our biggest challenge in the future."



## NAICC ACADEMY Adds New Webinars

In addition to the four 2022 Webinars, the NAICC ACADEMY now has seven webinars from 2021 available for viewing. 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

[GAIAAC 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.

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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

## New Member Spotlight

*This month's New Member Corner spotlights **Luna Lama** of Pest Management Enterprises, in Cheneyville, LA.*

When passion and work ethic go hand in hand, you're going to have a successful career. That's how Luna Lama approaches her work at Pest Management Enterprises in Cheneyville, Louisiana. Recently, Luna attended her first NAICC in Florida this past January. As a new member, she was thrilled to be a part of this larger organization not to mention the opportunity for learning and personal growth.

"I get to work in a very diverse research environment," shared Luna, "Including work with herbicides, fungicides and insecticide trials. I also serve as a research associate for GLP work. I truly love to work with data analysis and have a high interest in learning more about it." She also definitely would be lost without ARM to assist her in her day-to-day trial work.

Lama completed her undergraduate work in Agricultural Science abroad. She then arrived in the U.S. to pursue her master's degree in Entomology at Louisiana State University. As a researcher, her hope back then was to find the perfect employer who would offer ample

opportunities to gain valuable experience with multiple crops and pests. Although the work fit the bill, what she didn't bargain for was weather challenges along the way.

"Weather is one of the most challenging aspects of my job and for my research projects," said Luna. "I've had to deal with hurricanes, flooding, destroyed crops, especially when I would need to gather more data to complete a research project."

At the last NAICC, Luna made the bold decision to attend the Research Education Committee meeting. She found the information very useful. As she continues to pursue her career in agriculture, she is taking her own advice. "As long as someone is passionate about the work and surrounds themselves with nice people in their circle, they should be fine," says Lama. When she's not working, she would love vacationing in the mountains. Her favorite quote is, "If you are not the smartest person in the room, try being the hardest working person in the room." We hope to see Luna at next year's NAICC in Nashville.

### TRIVIA QUESTION

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

What year was NAICC founded and what year anniversary are we celebrating in Nashville?



Submit your answer [HERE](#)

**Last Month's Winner**





**Congratulations**  
**Tom Rountree**  
**Dragon Run Ag Services**

for knowing the answer to July's trivia question. The answer is: Chickens

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](#).



**FEAE**



### **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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