



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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FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Clark Poppert

As I sit here writing my last article for the NAICC, I cannot help but mention the great camaraderie and excellent work of our 2023 Executive Board. This was very evident at the fall board retreat in Ashland, Nebraska, with all the board members able to attend. The board addressed many issues that affected agriculture and the NAICC during the retreat along with working on the budget and a possible new format for future annual meetings. This group hit the ground running early in 2023 and has done an outstanding job for NAICC and its members.

The 2024 NAICC Annual Meeting is slated for January 18th-20th in beautiful, sunny San Antonio, Texas, at the Marriott Rivercenter. The meeting site is located along the stunning Riverwalk and has been newly remodeled in the

last three years. The agenda is very impressive and appears to be very enlightening for everyone.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the 2025 Annual Meeting in this article. The 2025 NAICC Annual Meeting site is Monterey, California. Although the agenda has not been set, the location is full of gorgeous scenery, and the abundance of sightseeing opportunities is unfathomable.

I want to thank all of you for allowing me to be the president of this great organization this year. It has been one to remember.

HAPPENINGS ON THE HILL

Happenings on the Hill

By Keith Jones - Government Affairs Liaison

With 2023 nearing an end, it might be useful to look back on headlines in U.S. farm country to see how those issues could play out in 2024. With the caveat that the 118th Congress, in only its first session, has a solid track record of making history, I humbly venture into the predictions below.

APPROPRIATIONS - Last month, Congress passed a two-part continuing resolution (CR) funding government through early 2024. Agriculture, Energy and Water, Military-Construction/Veterans, Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development appropriations are funded until January 19, 2024, with the remaining appropriations bills funded through February 4, 2024. Given House Republicans current three-vote margin, one could reasonably assume that further action on government funding with an eye to avoiding a government shutdown would move toward a more bipartisan solution. But with a generally gruff mood in the House, I see a rocky path to resolving appropriations, particularly given that funding for Israel, Taiwan, and Ukraine are caught up in an intractable impasse over border issues and headed toward decisions that, at best, will be addressed in early 2024.

EPA – ESA - As we saw this past July and in the November update of EPA's draft Vulnerable Species Pilot Project, USDA NRCS or similar conservation

practices are increasingly seen as tools for grower mitigation strategies in the protection of endangered species within a profitable and productive U.S. agriculture. Questions surrounding the efficacy of these practices, along with who can attest to their deployment, will have staying power in 2024 and beyond. I predict a more direct engagement of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will also begin to unfold in 2024 as registrants, commodity organizations, and researchers see the need to broaden the conversations beyond EPA and USDA.

FARM BILL – The one-year Farm Bill extension contained within the November CR provided some breathing room for the House and Senate Committee's and their respective staff. But since then, the likelihood of a 2024 Farm Bill making the President's desk before the August '24 recess hasn't gotten any brighter. Just within the last few days, House Freedom Caucus members have renewed their call for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reforms, a key member of the House Ag Committee openly speculated on separating SNAP from the rest of the Farm Bill, Chairman Thompson announced health challenges and funding for increasing commodity reference prices is even less clear than a few months ago. So, I remain in the Farm Bill 202? camp with a 2025 bill not out of the question.

WOTUS. - A May decision by the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) struck down the Biden administration's statutory interpretation on jurisdictional wetlands. SCOTUS held that wetlands are jurisdictional under the Clean Water Act only when they are "as a practical matter indistinguishable from waters of the United States," requiring a "continuous surface connection" between the wetland and the jurisdictional water in question. In September, the Administration announced an amended rule to comply with the SCOTUS decision but several of the lawsuits challenging the initial rule have been rolled up into a new case focusing on both substantive and procedural concerns within the September rule. Thus, while the litigation and uncertainty will likely continue for a little longer, I believe that WOTUS as a seminal issue in farm country may be finally lessening.

NRCS TOOLKIT

Farm Bill and Inflation Reduction Act Opportunities for Fiscal Year 2024

Article 1: Funding Opportunities

Producers Encouraged to Apply Now for USDA Conservation Programs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is encouraging agricultural producers and forest landowners to participate in voluntary conservation programs and adopt climate-smart practices in fiscal year 2024 as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), which help a wide variety of producers, including urban and organic producers.

For fiscal year 2024, NRCS has \$3 billion in Inflation Reduction Act funds to invest in [climate-smart mitigation activities](#). This year, NRCS expanded the list of those activities as well as expanded priority areas for ACEP for grasslands, wetlands, and farmlands at risk of conversion. Learn more about those expansions in our [Sept. 28, 2023, news release](#).

Additionally, for the fiscal year 2024, NRCS has over \$2 billion in Farm Bill funding available to producers for priorities like organic and urban agriculture, soil health, water quality and quantity, and wildlife habitat development. This extensive amount of funding will be used to meet producer demand for our oversubscribed programs, maximize climate benefits, and help producers address their natural resource challenges.

NRCS accepts producer applications for its conservation programs year-round. To apply for fiscal year 2024 funding, apply by your [state's ranking date](#) by contacting your [local NRCS office](#).

NAICC ANNUAL MEETING KEYNOTE SPEAKER RAY STARLING

Ray Starling is an attorney, speaker, law professor, and public policy professional who has focused much of his career on agriculture law and policy

in the public and private sectors. After growing up on a diversified Century Farm in Southeast North Carolina, he studied Agricultural Education at NC State University of North Carolina School of Law, graduating with honors. He has counseled State Supreme Court Justices, a Commissioner of Agriculture, a North Carolina Speaker of the House, a United States Senator who sat on the Senate Agriculture Committee, and the United States Secretary of Agriculture. He also staffed the National Economic Council at the White House, serving as the Special Assistant to the President for Agriculture, Agriculture Trade, and Food Assistance. He now serves as the General Counsel of the NC Chamber and President of the NC Chamber's Legal Institute in Raleigh.

We look forward to hearing from Ray in San Antonio!

2024 ANNUAL MEETING EVENTS

Giving Back

Thursday, January 18, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm

Each year, the NAICC spouses and guests give back to the convention city community by donating needed items to charity. This year, we have the wonderful opportunity not only to collect items but also to work hands-on with the charity. We will spend two hours cataloging and sorting inventory for [SAM Ministries](#). Then, it's off to lunch at the top of the Tower of Americas to enjoy good food and terrific views of San Antonio. After lunch, we will travel to La Villita, San Antonio's first neighborhood. Originally a settlement of primitive huts for the Spanish soldiers, now this 27-building complex, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is home to historical boutiques, galleries, and restaurants featuring local artisans. Buses will return to the Marriott Rivercenter by 3:00 pm.

NAICC First Lady Valerie Poppert has chosen the [SAM Ministries](#) as the NAICC Community Service Project for 2024. This year, we are collecting

items for families in need. This can be anything from a one-pot meal kit to small items that fit in your suitcase, or you can choose from their wishlist on Amazon. [Click HERE](#) for more details on items needed. Please bring your items to the registration desk in San Antonio. Our spouses/guests will take these items to SAM Ministries as well as help them inventory 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.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all our annual meeting sponsors and exhibitors. We are looking forward to an exceptional 2024 annual meeting!

Click [here](#) to see a list of sponsors and exhibitors.

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT LUNCH SESSION

Bayer Sponsored Lunch Session 12:30-2:00 pm Thursday, January 18th, 2024.

Lunch provided to the first 100 people in attendance.

Title: Navigating the Changing Landscape of Pesticide Regulation
Considering the Endangered Species Act

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a role in implementing the Endangered Species Act (ESA) by ensuring that the use of pesticides is not likely to jeopardize listed species or destroy or adversely modify their critical habitat. EPA may require restrictions on pesticide use as part of ESA compliance. In an effort to provide efficiency and reduce the risk of litigation, EPA released a workplan outlining how they planned to fully comply with the ESA prior to registering any new conventional pesticide. Since the release of the workplan in April 2022, EPA has released an update to the workplan, a draft Vulnerable Species Pilot Project, a draft Herbicide Strategy framework, a draft Rodenticide Strategy, along with a number of pesticide related decisions and documents that start to incorporate portions of EPA's workplan. EPA's efforts to reduce pesticide exposure to nontarget species, including ESA-listed species, will directly impact how, where, and when pesticides can be applied. To help inform this process, there are many groups exploring the intersection of pesticides and ESA through various projects, pilots, workgroups, feedback to EPA, and research. This session will include presentations providing an overview of several proactive efforts in this area with examples of opportunities for collaboration with crop consultants and contract researchers. Time for discussion will follow the presentation to further explore ESA related topics.

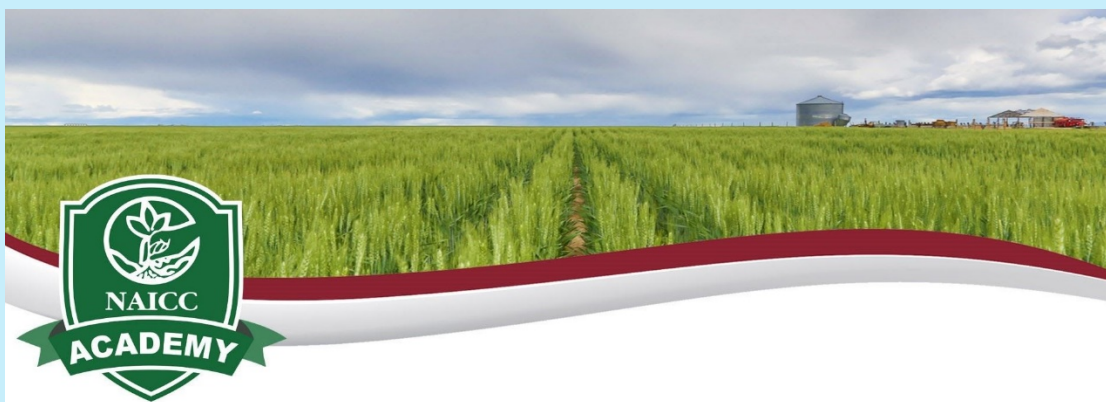
NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet New Sustaining Member Agmatix

Actionable data is critical to agribusiness success. Agmatix empowers businesses, CROs, and universities to achieve breakthrough results from field trials. The [platform](#) allows its users to easily harness the power of their data, significantly improving its interoperability to connect insights across your organization. Better connectivity means your teams can [work smarter](#), collaborate better, and speed time from trial to results. This includes:

- **Real-time Insights and Collaboration:** Agmatix enables real-time data collection and validation, supporting accurate evaluation of product performance under real farm conditions. The platform fosters [seamless data interconnectivity](#) across locations, teams, and trials, facilitating rapid decision-making for enterprises.
- **Simplified Processes and Compliance:** The platform's user-friendly interface centralizes trial operations, ensuring robust data security, customizable collection aligned with protocols, and simplified execution. This minimizes errors, enhances regulatory compliance, and [accelerates reporting and analysis](#).
- **Actionable Analytics and Future-Forward Focus:** Agmatix distills volumes of trial data into clear, actionable insights, empowering faster, smarter, and more interconnected trials. Additionally, through the "[Agmatix for Students](#)" program, the platform invests in nurturing the next generation of agronomists for data-driven field trial success.

Curious to explore more? Visit our booth at the upcoming NAICC annual conference, or connect with us on [LinkedIn](#).



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



TRIVIA QUESTION

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

What city boasts the Great Tide Pool (also known as the Point Pinos), which is not one pool as the name implies, but a network of pools chained together around a peninsula?



Submit your answer [HERE](#)

Last Month's Winner

Answer: California



Congratulations

Valen Straub

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

**Your professional society representing the nation's crop production,
research consultants and quality assurance professionals.**

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