Youth In Agriculture

I grew up around agriculture from the very beginning. My dad served as an area extension agent and my uncle and grandfather farmed. From an early age, I spent time riding with my dad to visit farmers or helping my uncle and grandad pick sweet corn or pull weeds. At the age of 13, my dad decided it should be my responsibility to scout the family cotton acres. Every Monday he would wake me up at 6 AM, throw my bicycle in the back of his truck, drop me off at the first field with some scouting cards, and say “see you later on”. Keep in mind all of this was before cell phones were widely used. Thus, began the ten-mile bicycle journey of scouting 300 acres of cotton and the reason for the title of this article.

I think back to those days often and although at the time they were not the most enjoyable, they taught me a number of valuable lessons. I learned how to be independent and responsible for myself. I learned cotton physiology and insect/weed identification. But most importantly, I learned about the feeling of satisfaction after a hard day’s work in agriculture. These lessons were the reason I chose a career in agriculture.

I say all this because I want to challenge our NAICC membership. The age of the average person involved in the agricultural industry is well over 50. We need to stimulate our youth to become involved in agriculture on a local and national level. At Tidewater Ag, we post summer job opportunities at all the local high schools and we try to hire 4 to 6 students annually. Often times, some of those students will decide to go to college in an agricultural related field. Many of them have come back to work with our company and others have gone off to work for extension or industry. If hiring students for the summer doesn’t fit with your company, consider supporting local agricultural organizations and programs such as 4-H, FFA and Ag in the Classroom. NAICC’s Foundation For Environmental Agricultural Education, (FEAE) NAICC.org/FEAE has a goal in 2020 to partner with Ag in the Classroom agclassroom.org to reach youth at a younger age. Through the FAEA, there are also scholarships, thefiae.org/jensen-scholarship including one for graduate students that will be available for the first time in 2020. Lastly, if you know a member who is interested in becoming more involved in NAICC, our Leadership Program is a great place to start.

The NAICC is an organization comprised of independent agricultural consultants, researchers, and quality assurance professionals. Coupled with our sustaining membership, I consider our organization to contain the largest wealth of agricultural knowledge in this nation. We have the ability to reach the youth in our communities and give them opportunities that will stimulate them to take interest in agriculture (but I wouldn’t recommend turning them loose to scout cotton on a bicycle).
San Antonio Meeting Checks All Boxes!

By Allison Jones, NAICC Executive Vice President

With everything that is going on in the world today, I can only say, THANK GOODNESS, the NAICC Annual Meeting and AG PRO EXPO was held in January! There is so much uncertainty in the meetings world now and we are blessed that our meeting was a success!

Our attendance continues to soar and we welcomed 741 attendees from the US and 11 other countries. Our success is truly based on our member’s support, outstanding speakers on timely topics and our dedicated sponsors and partners who exhibit at the AG PRO EXPO. Thank you all for your dedication to NAICC!

Vance Crowe with Articulate Ventures, LLC in St Louis, MO, gave the keynote address in San Antonio and explained why humans think in stories, and why most of what we believe is a result of who we spend time with, rather than knowledge of facts. Crowe shared key concepts to help experts, like NACC members, become a more influential and compelling communicators. The audience learned the core principles of storytelling so that they can hold the attention of others, disarm incorrect beliefs and have their expert knowledge spread.

Other sessions were well attended, especially the standing room only session featuring Francis Liem, Director, EPA GLP Program who updated QA members on requirements when a Testing Facility/Archive goes out of business; answered questions from the regulated community and reviewed findings from FY2019 EPA facility inspections. See the QA Corner column of this issue for more information. Other educational offerings were very well received from outstanding speakers whose wisdom will help guide our members through the 2020 growing season. Presentations will be listed on the NAICC website on the 2020 Annual Meeting page for members only.

AWARDS

During the annual President’s Luncheon and Awards Ceremony, NAICC members were honored for their achievements and support of NAICC. The Consultant of the Year Award has been given since 1993 and is generously support by Sustaining Member BASF. The purpose of the award is honor NAICC members who have illustrated leadership within and outside the organization. Award winners must be NAICC members of good standing, they must be nominated by another NAICC member and their application must include career information, involvement in ag-related organizations, honors and awards, community involvement and educational background. This year’s recipients are Loren Seaman and Jake Woltjer.

Loren is an independent Crop Consultant with Seaman Crop Consulting in Hugoton, KS. He has been in business for 42 years and consultants on all crops in southwest Kansas and the panhandle of Oklahoma. Since 1996 Seaman Crop Consulting has taught and provided summer work for 166 college agricultural interns from 8 major universities.

Jake is from Twin Valley, MN where he is an independent crop consultant with Centrol, Inc. For the past 19 years, Jake has specialized in general agronomy on corn, soybeans, wheat, and sugarbeets, resistant weeds, and Precision Ag in Minnesota and North Dakota. According to Dennis Berglund, who nominated him, “Jake is a great crop consultant who truly wants to help his growers and always considers how his actions and decisions will affect them. He really tries to maximize the profitability of each of his growers.”

President Matt Eich speaks on the SWOT process during the plenary session.

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President Matt Eich speaks on the SWOT process during the plenary session.
NAICC is especially grateful for anyone who recruits new members into the Alliance. In 2020 there was a tie for the Top Recruiter Award. Past Presidents Tim Case and Dan Moser were the award winners this year and each will receive complimentary registration to the 2021 Annual Meeting in Monterey, CA. Thank you for your continued support and dedication to NAICC!

The Service To Agriculture Award (somewhere add picture) honors someone for distinguished service within agriculture industry and also in recognition of outstanding contributions and dedicated service to the American farmer and agriculture practitioners. It is given to someone who goes beyond the call of duty to help promote agriculture, and specifically someone who has a direct impact on NAICC.

The 2020 Service Ag Award was awarded to a true friend of NAICC. Keith Jones serves as the Staff Director of the influential House Committee on Agriculture and has worked with our Governmental Affairs Committee on many occasions on issues affecting NAICC and agriculture. He has served as Professional Staff, Subcommittee Staff Director, and Senior Professional Staff during his 13 years as staff for House Ag Committee. In these roles, Keith has provided advice and counsel on issues including food safety; fruit and vegetable programs; agricultural marketing and promotion programs; homeland security and bioterrorism; plant health; pesticide regulation; biotechnology; agricultural research, education and extension; Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards (SPS) in international trade; hemp; and organic agriculture.

Keith was responsible for numerous titles and subtitles of the last three farm bills. In addition, Keith has engaged in the drafting and passage of the following stand-alone bills: The Pesticide Registration Improvement Acts of 2008, 2012 and 2019; the Food Safety Modernization Act and most recently the Bioengineered Food Disclosure Act which establishes national uniformity for marketing claims disclosing the presence of genetically engineered ingredients in food.

Keith’s state level experience includes establishing the Texas Department of Agriculture’s organic certification program and serving as agriculture policy coordinator for the late Texas Governor Ann Richards.

Keith holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University and was raised on the Oklahoma family farm that his great-grandparents homesteaded some 116 years ago.

The Service To NAICC Award is a time honored tradition that is not automatically given each year. It is given when someone who has not only gone above the call of duty but continues to be a champion for NAICC and its members. The award is also usually not given to a member of NAICC, but when someone stands out like this person has; the Executive Board makes an exception.

This year, the Service to NAICC Award goes to Sandy Mackie, an Additional Sustaining Member from BASF (by way of Bayer!). She has been in the ag industry for over 37 and has worked for 5 different companies without ever quitting her job! Sandy has been active in the Alliance since 2000, attending all annual meetings but one for the last 20 years. The only reason she missed that one was due to an EPA audit! When Sandy first joined NAICC she jumped into action from the very start. She got to know many members while handing out t-shirts at the annual meeting when she was with Bayer. She has continued to serve NAICC and in the 18 years that she has been a member, she has served as:

• Executive Board Director for 6 years, being elected to three consecutive terms
• Served as an inaugural Leadership Program participant in 2013. Sandy continues to serve this program by being a member of the committee and the Board liaison.
• Chair of the Allied Industry Committee for three terms and then went on to serve as the Board liaison to that committee for 6 years
• Member of the Governmental Affairs Research Subcommittee and also as the board liaison.
• An active and passionate Board member on the FEAE Board for the past 7 years and is currently the secretary of that organization. She serves on the selection committee for the Richard L Jensen and Foundation scholarships.

Sandy has a BS in Chemistry from the University of Florida and a MS in Plant Pathology from North Carolina State University. Sandy and her husband Eric are avid antiquaries and travel around the Southeast to shows and markets buying and selling antiques.

We are indebted to Sandy for her dedication and commitment to NAICC and appreciate the leadership she has shown for NAICC and its members and staff over the years. Thank you, Sandy, for your service to NAICC.
WORKSHOPS

NAICC is very fortunate to have the opportunity to offer additional educational sessions prior to the Annual Meeting, as well as during the free time during the week. NAICC sponsors three pre-meeting workshops and numerous Sustaining Members offer training and workshops throughout the week. Thank you to our faithful Sustaining Members for partnering with us and also to the members for supporting both the NAICC and our Sustaining Members’ workshops.

The week started off with the second annual Efficacy workshop covering topics on how to conduct good efficacy trials in the areas of Entomology, Weed Science, Plant Pathology and Biotic Stimulants. Speakers from academia and the ag industry presented to over 140 attendees. The workshop was extended to a full day in 2020 and plans for the third annual event are already underway for the 2021 NAICC Annual Meeting, January 19-23 in Monterey, CA.

Tuesday featured the traditional GLP Training workshop sponsored by NAICC, under the leadership of Deb Green and the Researcher’s/QA Education Outreach Committee. NAICC members serve as instructors for the 142 attendees who had a choice of four modules to choose from: Basic, Refresher, Analytical Lab and Practical Field-Application training.

Wednesday’s workshop was co-sponsored by the Global Alliance of independent Crop Consultants (GAICC) and the NAICC International Outreach Committee. Fifty-six people attended this session which featured talks on CRISPR Gene Editing Technology and how it applies to production agriculture. In addition to industry and academia presentations, Dr. Amanda A. Pierce, a Biologist with EPA’s Office of Pesticide Programs—Biopesticides and Pollution Prevention Division in Washington, DC gave EPA’s perspective on gene edited PIPS.

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

We are extremely proud of the members of the 2019 graduating class of the NAICC Leadership Program and welcome our new inductees for the 2020 class. Anna Meszaros, Melissa Nelson and John Gottula completed their year in the program. John was not able to attend the meeting but Anna and Melissa each presented an overview of their year (see presentations on the NAICC website). Each completed the 4 modules of the program which concluded at the Annual Meeting in San Antonio:

Module 1: Each attended the Annual Meeting where they met with their mentor, joined a committee, interacted with new members and Sustaining Members, and assisted the Foundation with their fundraising activities.

Module 2: They attended the Executive Board meeting in Washington, DC, participated in Hill visits and meetings with ag groups, and attended the Crawfish Boil on the Hill.

Module 3: Networking field visits allow participants to visit another NAICC member’s facility who shares the participant’s area of expertise and an NAICC member’s facility that is outside of the applicant’s area of expertise. All three participants travelled individually across the country including visits to Washington state (John), North Dakota (Melissa) and North Carolina (Anna).

Module 4: During the second NAICC Annual Meeting, the participant used their newly learned leadership skills to make a presentation at the Plenary Session, meet with their committees and network with the membership. Participants also wrote an article for the NAICC News, which will appear this Spring.

2020 program participants include Roger Bowman, Derek Potratz, and Summer Theus. All three were active in the January meeting in San Antonio, but unfortunately their trip to DC was cancelled due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are underway to either plan a trip in the fall or include them with the participants in 2021. Field visits are on hold for now, but all participants will be allowed to complete their term on the program.

The NAICC Annual Meeting is always a highlight of the year and the 2020 meeting did not disappoint. Please make plans to join us in 2021 at the Monterey Convention Center, January 19-23 in Monterey, CA.
Continued from page 4.

Vance Crowe, Keynote Speaker

Melissa Nelson, Leadership Program

Anna Meszaros, Leadership Program

Vance Crowe, Keynote Speaker

Congratulations Incoming President Grant McMillan

Our wonderful behind the scenes volunteers folding shirts
NAICC ANNOUNCES NEW GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS LIAISON

With the retirement of Glenn Luedke in February 2020, NAICC’s Executive Board retained Rick Kesler to serve as the NAICC Governmental Affairs Liaison effective March 1. “Rick’s extensive network within the commodity groups is a big advantage for NAICC”, says NAICC President Matt Winslow. “He hit the ground running arranging meetings between NAICC board and GAC members and numerous commodity and ag associations when we were scheduled to be in Washington, DC this month. We are grateful that Rick agreed to come out of retirement and work with us again.”

The Governmental Affairs Liaison is a part-time position and entails maintaining relationships with government and commodity contacts in Washington, as well as representing NAICC on the Pesticide Policy Committee. This committee consists of a variety of public and private sector organizations, including agriculture producer groups and suppliers, as well as non-agricultural users of pesticides. Rick will also be responsible for identifying potential legislative issues that affect the membership of NAICC, and will contribute to the Happenings on the Hill in the NAICC News and News Shorts.

Rick is no stranger to NAICC having served on the Executive Board for two terms from 2011-2014, as well as the Sustaining Member representative for FMC for 12 years. In 2017, Rick received the NAICC Service to Ag Award just prior to his retirement from FMC.

Rick was also instrumental in developing the NAICC Leadership Program, not only through securing the initial funding, but also developing the criteria, modules and continues to support and recruit for the program. He chaired the Allied Industry Committee and is a huge champion for the Crawfish Boil on the Hill.

Personally, I am very excited to work with Rick again. His experience and expertise are a huge plus for NAICC.

Rick Kesler receives the 2017 Service to Agriculture Award.

NAICC MEMBERS CLASSIFIED AS ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS

During these uncertain times, NAICC maintains it purpose to educate and support our crop consultants, research consultants and quality assurance professionals. In doing so, we received confirmation from USDA that crop and research consultants, including QA’s are classified as Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers.

The Department of Homeland Security’s Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued the GUIDANCE ON THE ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKFORCE that states: “If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule.”

Further, USDA responded to NAICC’s request for clarification stating, “Based on our inputs and feedback to the production of this document, we understand the following to encompass your members:

Farm workers and support service workers to include those who field crops; commodity inspection; fuel ethanol facilities; storage facilities; and other agricultural inputs.”

This can be found in the above document: Food and Agriculture Section; bullet #5.

However, the document clearly states that state and local government have primary responsibility to implement response activities and that this guidance does not preempt or override those decisions. It merely is a means to inform and help ensure consistency as local governments implement their response plans.

NAICC has created several documents that members and their employees can keep with you to assist with any movement restrictions you may encounter.

Documents available for download include:

1. Overview of Designated Essential Critical Workers on NAICC Letterhead
2. Employee Travel Form
3. Vehicle Travel Form for Shipment of Supplies

www.naicc.org

March 2020
QA Corner

A review of the EPA presentation at NAICC 2020

NAICC and QAEC were pleased to have Francisca E. Liem, Director of the Good Laboratory Practice Standards (GLP) Program at United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA), attend the 2020 NAICC Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX. She presented an EPA perspective on mergers and acquisitions in the agrichemical industry titled “The Only Thing Constant is Change: EPA Perspective.”

The highlights from this presentation are that the EPA must be notified in writing when a Testing Facility/Archive goes out of business, relocates to a new physical address, or assumes work under a new name or ownership, as per 40 CFR 160.195(3)(g). It is the Testing Facility’s responsibility that all raw data, documentation and other material shall be transferred to the archives of the Sponsor of the study; and EPA shall be notified in writing of such transfer. Testing Facility and archive locations need to notify the EPA the reason for closing/goiNG out of business, or if no longer conducting GLP studies, or new company name/owners/locations. Ms. Liem reiterated that management must ensure that all pertinent information is conveyed in the letter to EPA, including updated information of the new contact name and information, such as email, physical address, and phone numbers, if the business is sold or acquired as part of a merger. The bottom line is to ensure that EPA is aware of any testing facility or archive that is going out of business (closing, bought by another company or merging), no longer conducting GLP studies, and/or if moving to a new physical location.

Such facilities should also inform all their Sponsors either with closing date or, if starting a new location/company, provide the new company name, date of the change, address and contact person details. EPA recommends for Testing Facilities and Archives to inventory all studies during the timeframe in which GLP studies were performed or stored in the archives. This inventory should include all study data associated for each Sponsor, also collect/inventory all pertinent facility data and equipment logs to include as a certified copy in each study data package.

Sponsor’s responsibilities when a testing facility or archive experiences changes would be maintaining and retaining study and facility raw data, records and other documentations in a GLP compliant archive. It was also recommended that Sponsor conduct an accountability check on items transferred.

EPA’s responsibilities would be to identify in their records the status of the testing facility and archive as inactive/out of business, which is important for any future EPA inspections, should they be necessary. Additionally, the EPA will maintain copies of all historical inspections of the business in accordance with federal law and regulations, which would be retained for historical reviews and/or potential use in the future. Ensuring the EPA database is updated with all pertinent information of closures, changes to the physical addresses, and/or new contact information is critical for future GLP inspection purposes. If the incorrect information is available, EPA cannot efficiently conduct future facility and study inspections and audits that may be requested by the EPA or foreign regulatory agencies.

Ms. Liem also presented a FAQ about harmonization among OECD Mutual Acceptance of Data (MAD) countries, along with other recently submitted questions from the regulated communities. The first question was “What are the responsibilities of test facilities with regard to third party suppliers (e.g., IT services, eArchives, metrology and computer system validation)?” EPA’s response was that test facility management shall assure that for each study — personnel, resources, facilities, equipment and methodologies (including third party contractors and electronic services) are available as scheduled per 40 CFR 160.31(e) and OECD Principles of GLP. Assure that those personnel clearly understand the functions they are to perform including IT services, eArchives, metrologies, per 40 CFR 160.31(f); OECD Principles of GLP. This also applies to the Study Director of each affected GLP study. The Study Director shall assure all data are recorded and verified, and applicable GLPs are followed (including electronic support and systems) (40 CFR 160.33(e); OECD Principles of GLP) and the statement of compliance will be signed in the final report. (40 CFR 160.33(b), (e); 40 CFR 12; OECD Principles of GLP).

The second question was “Why are there still inconsistencies in the way different countries’ GLP compliance monitoring programs inspect multi-site studies?” When inconsistencies arise, these may be the result of that country’s specific regulatory requirements. These should be discussed with the Compliance Monitoring Authority in question. Any questions on harmonization on GLP may be raised to US (SQA and CLA) representative of the OECD Discussion Group.

The third question raised, was “How should the frequency of QA inspections/audits be determined?” Simply put, the EPA GLPS state “inspected at intervals adequate to ensure the integrity of the study”, “determine no deviations from approved protocol and SOPs were made without proper authorization and documentation” and review the final study report that it adequately reflects the methods, SOPs and results of the raw data. It is the responsibility of the individual QAUs to select the phase or segment of each study to be reviewed. EPA’s response was that the frequency of inspections and audits is complicated as it depends on the complexity of the study, which applies to EPA and OECD MAD countries. The QA inspections should be in writing.

The fourth question presented was “What is a physical /chemical test system?” It is the equipment or apparatus to which the test or reference substance is applied during the conduct of the study. Some examples provided to this specific question were pH meters, spectrophotometers and other analytical equipment, and complex equipment such as gas chromatograph–mass spectrometry, or equipment which utilizes amplification and analysis of genetic material.

Fifth question was “Can GLP studies be done in facilities that utilize other quality standards (GMP, GCP, ISO, etc..)” Ms. Liem

Continued on page 8.
noted that this one is asked frequently. The basic answer is if the study is conducted in the United States, the implementation of the other standards within a facility (cGMP, GCP, etc.) should not preclude the use of the EPA GLP regulations. Testing Facility Management must ensure that any GLP studies conducted will be fully compliant with US EPA GLPS. Also, Sponsors who commission the study with the CRO, should also be aware of their role in ensuring that the facility complies with US EPA GLPS. Simply put, wherever the portion of the study is conducted, those personnel should follow their country’s GLP regulation.

The sixth question was “Following the early termination of a GLP study is there a requirement to produce a final report?” The EPA position is “Yes.” Simply, the early termination of a study may occur prior to, or after the completion of the experimental phase of the study, but before the data has been assessed or incorporated in a final report. With both instances, a protocol amendment should be written to provide explanation for both EPA and OECD GLP. Both EPA and OECD MAD countries require that the key findings up to the point of termination are summarized and that summary report is subject to QA audit. (40 CFR 160.185 (a) & (b))

Seventh question presented was “Should method validation be completed prior to the initiation of the GLP study?” There is no requirement to finalize the validation of all methods before the initiation of the GLP study. There is an expectation that the methods are fully validated before the study results are considered valid. This is an agreed expectation with both the EPA and OECD MAD countries.

The final question discussed was “How can the GLP compliance status of a test facility or test site be checked?” Ms. Liem indicated that this information is available for US GLP studies on the EPA website. And that many Compliance Monitoring Authorities (CMAs) including EPA have publicly available information on GLP facilities on their respective websites.

It was reiterated to use these databases. 2018 Reauthorization of PRIA resulted in $500,000/year for GLP support, which will be used to recruit 3 GLP inspectors and to advance GLP compliance monitoring program. It was also noted that preliminary findings must be submitted to GLP test facility within 60 days after an inspection is completed. EPA is 100% compliant as the test facility receives a copy of the inspection observations at the conclusion of the inspection.

Ms. Liem indicated that the Enforcement Compliance History Online (ECHO) will have GLP inspection histories for the last 5 years online (https://www.epa.gov/compliance/epa-goodlaboratory-practices-inspections-0). EPA is planning to provide a webinar (https://echo.epa.gov/help/training#upcoming) on February 18, 2020, 1:30 to 2:30 pm. It was stated that there was some difficulties experienced navigating the database.

In concluding her presentations to a packed room, Ms. Liem provided the preliminary FY2019 GLP Field inspections metrics: 20 field sites inspected with 17 having no findings, 3 had findings (temperature monitoring device was not calibrated, final report not supported by raw data, final report was not reviewed by QA). It was unclear if any fines had been (or will be) imposed on the facilities for these infractions.

Leadership Is Influence

“Nothing More, Nothing Less”

Randy Darr
President of Soil-Right Consulting Services, Inc.
Vice-President of Raney Day Solutions, Inc. a certified John Maxwell Leadership Trainer

As agriculturalist, we tend to make the act of farming very complicated. In most cases for good reason. We look at the science of growing crops, but in order to help our clients, we must look at the ROI of every activity and advise accordingly, in the effort of helping our client produce profit. However, in its purist form, all you absolutely must use is seed, soil and water. There must be the seed of what you wish to grow. Soil is generally some configuration of sand, silt and clay or it may be a hydroponic type of system. Then there is water. Some crops require a substantial amount of water and some do not. Yes, we build upon those three with genetics for the seed, fertilizers of various kinds for the soil and we either hope it rains enough, not too much or we control the water it gets.

Leadership in its purest form is very similar. The seed is the ideas and plans that we have in our business. In this case, the soil represents the resources that we have at our disposal that are required to make our ideas and plans move into action. It is our time, talent and treasure in many cases that is required to make our ideas and plans move into reality. The final component acting as the water is influence. Ideas and resources will not be enough without influence. Influence is that which encourages others to join in with their own time, talent and treasure that waters the seed of ideas and enhances our resources.

Every worthwhile endeavor succeeds or fails on leadership. I remember about 25 years ago there was a very large agricultural company that attempted to get into the consulting business on a national basis. I personally received several phone calls, as I know others did also, of them wanting to hire many of us to come to work for them. Within just a couple of years the attempt was abandoned and never heard from again. The leadership failed to see that the agricultural consulting business is very dependent upon relationships, which is a whole article in itself. None the less, this organization was likely very capable of providing agronomic advice, however, they failed to understand the personal component of our type of business.

What is stopping you as a leader? Is your personal growth hindering the development of your organization? There is a rule that always applies. You can only grow others as far as you have grown yourself. In order to grow others, you must grow yourself. Even if you are a one-person organization, personal growth will aid in your growth as a company. Continuously growing personally will allow you to grow your relationships both personally and professionally. Find a plan that works for you and stick with it day by day.
In January, Bree and I had the opportunity to travel to the UK on behalf of NAICC to attend the Association of Independent Crop Consultants (AICC) Annual Meeting. AICC is an organization founded in 1981 that is very similar in scope and purpose to NAICC. Nearly every year since 2002, NAICC has sent a delegate to their annual meeting. This has provided for invaluable exchange of information, and the opportunity for continued collaboration is great! Their annual meeting is very organized with excellent speakers and presentation topics that are applicable to all their members. They have worked hard to make it that way and have something to be proud of!

There are many similarities between our organizations, including the issues facing our members and clients. Weed and insect resistance management, government regulations, and public perception of farming practices were all topics of discussion during their 2020 meeting sessions attended by 340 independent crop consultants, guests, and exhibitors. We learned about their AICC Trials Team who design and conduct experiments aimed at comparing the performance of current and near-market agricultural products. This program is funded through AICC and has spent more than a decade compiling a database of performance-based data for products being recommended by crop consultants and used by the growers. Other trials are designed and conducted based on input from member consultants and target issues currently being faced in the field. Truly independent research! AICC members consult on just over half of the arable (row crop) acres in the UK.

The AICC Academy or AICCA is another very interesting component of this organization. This program was started 4 years ago to assist members in growing their business by enhancing the level of expertise of new employees entering the career field. Providing young people with a sound technical platform will undoubtedly allow for the continued growth of independent crop consultants in the UK. There are currently 53 participants enrolled in the Academy, all of whom are working with established AICC members. There are typically 8-10 training opportunities offered each year in the off-season, which helps ensure that more individuals can attend. Some of the training opportunities are in the classroom, while others are in the field. All of this is offered at no charge to AICC members or Academy members and is funded through membership and outside contracts. Those trainers who are experts in their field are paid by AICC for conducting the training sessions.

The Academy was something that I was instantly interested in and wondered if something akin could be implemented within NAICC. The entire UK (England, Scotland, Whales, and Northern Ireland) is roughly the size of Minnesota which reveals one of the reasons they can make this program successful and an obstacle NAICC would have to contend with. We just need to figure out how to overcome the distance issue!

Not only were we able to attend the AICC meeting, but also had the chance to spend some time in England with Patrick and Nicky Stephenson seeing the sights, visiting the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) at Cambridge, a farm tour with one of Patrick’s farm families, the northern coastal town of Whitby (best fish and chips ever!), and many other opportunities too numerous to mention here. The experience was outstanding, and I am thankful to both NAICC and AICC for the opportunity!

Our hosts and AICC were extremely welcoming and gracious, and we are grateful for their hospitality.

I encourage you to learn more about AICC by visiting their website at https://aicc.org.uk/. Also find the time to visit with Patrick and any other international folks who attend our annual meeting. The opportunity is excellent to increase agricultural knowledge and understanding from our colleagues around the world!

www.naicc.org
2019 NAICC Leadership Program Module III

By Anna Meszaros

This summer, I completed Module III of the NAICC Leadership Program. During this module, I had the opportunity to travel to a different region to visit NAICC members with the same area of expertise as mine. I worked as a research associate in the Department of Entomology at Louisiana State University before joining a crop consulting company 8 years ago. Since, I have conducted multidisciplinary research on a variety of crops, first in Louisiana, with Grady Coburn and Denise Wright at Pest Management Enterprises, and then in south Florida, with Madeline and Charlie Mellinger at Glades Crop Care, Inc.

I chose to visit Tidewater Agronomics, which is Stan and Matt Winslow’s operation in North Carolina. Similarities between Louisiana and North Carolina agricultural systems and the fact that Tidewater Agronomics is doing both research and consulting helped with my choice. In addition, by going to North Carolina, I could interact with personnel of agrochemical companies in Research Triangle Park and meet with leaders of the NCSU extension service.

Tidewater Agronomics is a family business where modern and traditional concepts meet. Stan Winslow (2009 president of NAICC and 2014 consultant of the year) was working with the NCSU extension service as a county agent before he started providing consulting services in the Elizabeth City region. Matt, after finishing his studies at NCSU, worked several years with Syngenta, and subsequently joined the family business.

Today, Stan runs the consulting part of the company and Matt takes care of the contract research unit. They consult and conduct research on cotton, soybean, corn, peanut, wheat, and some vegetables. The contract research unit has the capability to run on- and off-site trials. Whereas efficacy trials represent the majority of their research activities, a large number of USDA regulated and residue trials are also conducted. I had a chance to scout some cotton, peanuts, and gigantic soybeans. I forgot how difficult it is to walk and sweep 4.5ft tall soybean plants when you are only 5ft “short”. We walked among those huge wind turbines; it was quite impressive. I had a chance to meet with Matt’s scouting crew and had dinner with his beautiful family. The Winslows are well respected in their agricultural community. Tidewater Agronomics is built on trust among its employees and on its good reputation with its clients. People with years and years of experience run the company and their operation seemed like a well-oiled machine. Even if Matt kept saying about everything: “nothing fancy”, they can be proud their business.
Amber Parcell – WINNER OF PHOTO CONTEST
Always log onto smile.amazon.com for your purchases to qualify

The correct answer from the February newsletter was Hocus Pocus.

Congratulations to Debbie Fuhler for winning the gift card!

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

Can you name this character from Forbes’ list of richest fictional characters? Character name only please, not actor name!

Submit your answer here: https://forms.gle/UtgP1RQUcqvWuCYj9

One winner will be randomly selected from the correct answers and announced in the next newsletter.

Quote to Ponder:

“Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.”

–Anaïs Nin

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.

FOR SALE

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