

2026 Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award

Ken Graeve



Ken Graeve grew up in Council Bluffs, Iowa and always enjoyed agriculture, fishing, and being outdoors at a young age. After High School, Ken graduated college from St. John's University in Minnesota with a degree in biology.

Ken started his career with two different Minnesota native seed companies working with Conservation Reserve Program lands, native species plantings, and all aspects of seed production and conditioning. He enjoyed and appreciated growing the different species in the summer months, harvesting, and then conditioning in the winter. He viewed conditioning as trouble shooting until the machines were set just right and the clean seeds rolled off the seed mills. Every species is handled and conditioned differently and clean seeds free of noxious weeds and unwanted material were the goal. Ken gained great experience in ecological restoration and botany and then began his career with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT).

Ken has worked closely with the MCIA Approved Seed Vendor program throughout his MnDOT career. This program was designed to ensure that roadside seeding and revegetation projects meet the specifications set forth by MnDOT with the goal of successful roadside revegetation establishment. This is important for the integrity of the roads, ditches, and surrounding environment for all motorists and the area. Ken states, "The program began with MnDOT employees Bob Jacobson and Dwayne Stenlund and MCIA staff developing and administering the program that has successfully improved roadside seeding and species establishment for over 20 years. Warren Tuel and I, along with MCIA staff and Approved Seed Vendors, have continued this successful program." Today Ken supervises MnDOT Erosion and Stormwater management, roadside vegetation establishment, and tracking environmental commitments.

Ken and his wife, Catherine, have three children. They enjoy hiking, biking, camping, and many different outdoor activities. They enjoy trips around Minnesota and Iowa along with keeping up with all their children's activities.

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Craig Tomera



Craig Tomera is an Illinois native, beginning his agricultural career in 1978 as a General Manager/Agronomist for a major Central Illinois fertilizer company and then as an Independent Crop Consultant. After receiving his M.S. degree in Agronomy/Weed Science from the University of Illinois in 1993, Craig and his family moved to Minnesota where he began a career in soybean seed production for Pioneer Hybrids in Jackson, MN.

In 1998, Craig became General Manager and Agronomist for Precision Soya/Remington Seed in Olivia, MN and in 2005, Craig started working with Non-GMO and organic soybean seed production with Northland Organic Foods in St. Paul, MN. He has been employed by Grain Millers since 2011 as their Identity Preserved Crop Specialist and just recently has also become the General Manager of their St. Peter, MN Export Facility.

Craig holds a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) and Sustainability Specialist (SSp) Certification with the American Society of Agronomy. Craig's wife LeAnne is employed by the State of Minnesota at Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. They have 3 grown children, Katherine, Christopher, and Randy who are all married and living in Central Illinois. Craig and LeAnne are also proud grandparents to 3 grandchildren, Wyatt, Jameson and Madison.

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Sharon Bring



Sharon Bring grew up near Newfolden, MN in Marshall County on her family's farm. She was active in school and on the farm driving a John Deere Model D as soon as she was old enough to reach the hand clutch. She worked around the farm and two of her main jobs were raking hay and milking the families Hereford milk cow. "Yes, it was a Hereford," she says with a smile. Sharon was very active in 4-H and school activities. After graduation from Newfolden High School she attended college in Thief River Falls for Secretarial and soon started working at a local bank. She quickly learned about banking, finance, and bookkeeping skills that served her well throughout her career.

She married Wesley Bring and they raised 5 kids, farmed, and milked cows. During this time, they were very active in the community in many areas. Sharon was also a 4-H leader and trips to the MN State Fair showing cattle were an annual highlight. Sharon and Wesley grew seed as often as they could in their crop rotation. Barley, oats, and wheat were grown for certified seed with Lacey and Stander barley being the "prized" seed crop for many years. They sold seed and worked with local MCIA seed conditioners in the area. "The years were busy but flew by fast," says Sharon. Unfortunately, Wesley passed away in the year 2000. The family milked cows for 3 more months and the next chapter on the Bring Farm began.

Sharon and her son, Jeff, continued crop production and Jeff took over the livestock side raising beef cattle to this day. For the past 25 years Sharon and Jeff have continued farming together but each maintains their separate operations. Sharon has continued producing small grains for seed and mostly U of MN wheat varieties that she says, "stand well, yield well, and have good disease packages and work well in this area." Sharon thanks her children for the help over the years and said she really must thank Jeff for, "all the mechanic work over the years, he can fix anything and that's the one thing on the farm I cannot do." Her favorite farm activities are tillage, harvest, and watching things grow. "I really love all aspects of farming including the planning, office work, and marketing."

Sharon is equally well known in a wide area for her contributions away from the farm. She has been a Marshall County commissioner for 29 years, serves on the board for many organizations including MN Rural Counties board, Markit Landfill, Area Transportation Partnership, Marshall County Florian Park, along with serving as a 4-H leader and many other area groups. She also has operated "Sharon's Tax Service" for decades in the off season and winter months.

Sharon enjoys keeping up with her 5 children and 14 grandchildren at all their many activities. She also enjoys bike riding, snowmobiling, and the outdoors.

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Milo Ravndalen



Milo Ravndalen grew up north of Roosevelt, MN. He attended school in Roosevelt until the first grade and then attended Warroad School. Located on the south shores of Lake of the Woods, the area is well known for diverse crop farming, fishing, and hockey. Growing up farming with his parents and having close relatives farming in the area, there was no shortage of farm work. Milo laughs and says, “when we were done with our work I went from uncle to uncle helping them on their farms.” At a young age Milo said he loved the smell of the fresh soil being turned over and told the family and uncles he would rather farm than raise cattle.

Milo stayed active in school and loved playing hockey, football and baseball. After graduation from Warroad High School, he enrolled at the University of Minnesota-Crookston playing center in hockey and graduating with a degree in Agronomy. Milo then attended NDSU while keeping up with the farm back home and soon started his career back home farming in Lake of the Woods and Roseau counties. Milo bought his first 200 acres at the age of 18 and spent the next 46 years growing the farm.

The earliest seed production for Milo was Kentucky bluegrass, and he always looks for ways to add value to their crop production. Crops grown on the farm today include Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, soybeans, wheat, barley, oats, canola, and corn. Crops for seed production include small grains, soybeans for private seed companies, food grade soybeans, and perennial turf seed. Seed from their farm has traveled locally and throughout the region; and turf seed even across the country and world. The climate and remote location can be seen as a challenge, but Milo and area growers use it to their advantage to continue to innovate in crop and seed production. Turf and forage seed has always been important to this area and Milo was a founding board member of Northern Excellence Seed in Williams, MN, a farmer owned cooperative that conditions and markets turf seed, small grains, and food grade soybeans. Milo is proud of the value they add to their farm and for area growers.

Today the Ravndalen farm has grown many times over and Milo and his wife, Karleen, are excited that two of their sons, Bryce and Garrett, have joined the operation adding much needed help and growth for the future. Milo has been very active serving on the local Northern Excellence and Northern Farmers Cooperative board and coaching hockey for many years. Milo and Karleen have four sons and eight grandchildren that they love to spend time with. They also enjoy traveling in the off season and all outdoor activities, especially in the Lake of the Woods area.