

MCIA Annual Meeting Preview

Virtual Event: January 13, 2021

Please plan to join us the morning of Wednesday, January 13, 2021, for MCIA's 118th Annual Meeting. This year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually, via Zoom. To keep our online time together to a manageable two hours, we have organized a condensed, but informative, meeting program.

During the business meeting segment of the Annual Meeting, we will hear brief organizational and fiscal reports from officers of MCIA's Board of Directors. We will also hold an election for open seats on the board.



Brent Turnipseed

Next, we'll be joined by three seed industry experts. Each will give a 20-minute presentation.

Andy LaVigne, President and CEO of the American Seed Trade Association, will discuss the state of the industry—highlighting the Covid-19 pandemic and changes in the political environment.

Brent Turnipseed, Manager of the South Dakota State University Seed Lab and Assistant Department Head of Agronomy, Horticulture, & Plant Science at SDSU, will address common issues in seed testing.



Andy LaVigne

Denise Thiede will provide an update from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Denise is MDA's Seed, Weed, Hemp, and Biotechnology Section Manager and an MCIA board member.

We'll fill out the program with MCIA's annual award presentations. Don't miss this opportunity to recognize the contributions and achievements of your seed industry colleagues. We will announce the recipients of the Honorary Premier Seedsman, Premier Seedsman, and the Achievement in Crop Improvement awards.

To register for the meeting or to obtain more information, please visit the Annual Meeting page of the MCIA website, www.mncia.org/annual-meeting, or call MCIA at 800-510-6242.



Denise Thiede

Order Foundation Seed Now

The Foundation Seed price list and order form were mailed out to eligible members in early December.

We are accepting orders on a first-come, first-serve basis. So, order now for best availability.

Information on new varieties will be distributed later this winter.

Find Crop Trials Online

The 2020 Minnesota Field Crop Trials from the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station are available online at www.maes.umn.edu/publications/field-crop-trials.

The Field Crop Trials are printed in various publications, including the *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide*, *Agri News*, *Prairie Grains*, and *Soybean Business*.

Seed Testing Tips

MCIA's Seed Laboratory encourages you to send in your carryover seed for updated germination testing. Also, consider preliminary testing of your seed lots as an inexpensive method of establishing seed quality before conditioning. With each sample, send a Sampling Report form. Download the form from the Seed Laboratory list on the Client Resources page of the MCIA website, www.mncia.org/resources.

Position Available

MCIA'S Seed Laboratory is currently seeking candidates for a full-time **Seed Technologist**. This position is located at the MCIA office on the Saint Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. A job description and application instructions may be found on the MCIA website, here: www.mncia.org/job-openings.

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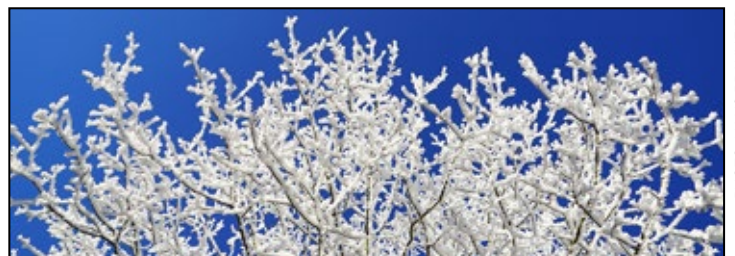


PHOTO: HANS BRAXMEIER

Chairman's View

Kurt Flegel, MCIA Board Chair



With harvest in the bin and members turning to getting the seed crop cleaned and ready for next spring, I hope everyone was able to take some time over Thanksgiving to give thanks for all that we have. Most importantly, I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe and healthy.

I was glad to see a decent year and a bit easier harvest. It was very much needed. On top of that, prices seem to be a bit more encouraging.

MCIA continues to make improvements on behalf of our members: This year, we've fully staffed Field Services by redrawing our districts and hiring two field supervisors to fill the resulting new positions.

The Seed Laboratory also continues to advance. It has now been accredited by the USDA's Accredited Seed Laboratory program. Both members of the staff are now credentialed Registered Seed Technologists. And the lab now offers Canadian seed grading.

Database development has continued, too, as MCIA upgrades its IT capabilities to make information more visible and flow better for our members and for the staff.

All of this adds to the confidence members can have in the integrity and quality of the work performed by MCIA. Bottom line, MCIA continues to improve services and capabilities for our members and customers.

I want to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and the best for 2021!

Lab Report

Chase Mowry, Seed Laboratory Manager



As for many, this year has presented the Seed Laboratory with new challenges and opportunities. Since re-opening in 2016, one of our goals has been to obtain accreditation. After much hard work, I am pleased to say that we are now accredited through the USDA Accredited Seed Laboratory (ASL) program.

This program, administered by the USDA Seed Regulatory Test-

ing Division, aims to provide uniformity and methodology in seed testing. Our participation in the program will benefit MCIA members as it ensures the continual improvement of laboratory processes and procedures.

Another benefit to come from laboratory accreditation is our ability to participate in the USDA Canadian Seed Grader Program. This program helps improve the efficiency of seed trade between the United States and Canada. As an accredited seed grader, I will have the ability to assign a pedigreed name to eligible varieties for crop kinds specified in the Grade Tables of Schedule I of the Seeds Regulations. A Canadian Seed Grading Report, to accompany your Seed Certification Report, can be requested in the

remarks section of the Sampling Report when you submit your sample for testing.

It is also notable that Sam Banks has recently received his Registered Seed Technologist (RST) certification. This is a great accomplishment and should provide clients with increased confidence in the accuracy of our services.

With the onset of the busy testing season and the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, we continue to aspire to meet your needs in an efficient manner.

Field Notes

Kris Folland, Field Services Manager



The winter seed conditioning season sets the stage for the spring planting and summer inspection seasons. Field inspections start as early as May and end in late October, as the last soybean seed production or forage and mulch fields are harvested—right before the snow flies. However, as soon as the first perennial grass seed is harvested in late June, members start conditioning seed and sending in samples to the laboratory to be tested; the next season has already begun.

This past spring season, MCIA made significant organizational investments on behalf of our members. The addition of Dan Krenz and Tom Keskey as field supervisors for southern Minnesota was necessary to meet the needs of the area's diverse geography, crops, and member businesses. Equally diverse are the different programs MCIA offers.

The MCIA Field staff will work within our existing programs or create new ones to meet your seed and seed technology needs. This year, our new initiatives included a 99.0% Non-GMO Corn Seed Program and, the streamlining of our Herbicide Post-spray Soybean Program to better meet herbicide-tolerant seed technology needs.

A review and update of MCIA's certification information and the seed certification standards is also underway. As MCIA members produce new crop species in Minnesota, the MCIA staff, in cooperation with our members, other certification agencies, and AOSCA, develops corresponding agronomic seed certification standards.

The 2021 *Directory* was published in November. It contains MCIA member listings of seed, products, and services. The 2020–21 Certified Noxious Weed Seed-Free Forage and Mulch Availability Survey Results have also been published. You can find these member resources on the MCIA website.

This winter, as the Covid-19 pandemic continues, you can expect that our staff will observe all prescribed safety and health precautions while conducting approved facility inspections and visits.

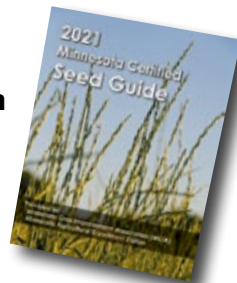
MCIA's Field Services is your independent, third-party inspection and audit solution for all seasons.

Dan, Kris, Seth, and Tom look forward to seeing each of you in person or over the phone, as needed, and visiting your businesses. We are here to serve our members! Call, text, or email your field supervisor any time if you have questions or needs this winter season.

Minnesota Seed Guide Published in December

The 2021 *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide* will be published shortly, in print and online. The guide compiles University of Minnesota crop trial results and lists MCIA members, the crop varieties they produce, and the services they provide.

For more information, visit: www.agupdate.com/minnesotafarmguide/special_section/seed_guide/





President's Corner

Fawad S. Shah, MCIA President/CEO

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is fortunate to have skilled and trained staff members who are dedicated to their work and committed to providing accurate and timely services to our customers. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused a lot of hardship for the seed industry. MCIA's

response to the pandemic has given our business operations the needed flexibility to continue to serve our customers: We have conducted inspections, performed laboratory tests, produced foundation seed, and certified organic operations. Following guidance from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, MCIA adopted a hybrid approach to office staffing, whereby less than half of the staff work on-site while other staff members work remotely.

This approach has resulted in one of the most productive years in the history of MCIA! Thanks to the planning and forward thinking of the staff, crop inspections were completed efficiently, the foundation seed harvest was completed before the unusually heavy snow in October, the seed laboratory tested more samples than the previous year, and growth in Organic Services continued—all pointing to the competence and hard work of the staff. Accurate and timely service delivery, coupled with MCIA's signature customer care, has ensured the success of MCIA and our customers.

This year, in addition to its routine work, the seed laboratory staff focused on implementing a Quality Management System.

After a virtual audit, the lab was accredited by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Accredited Seed Lab program—yet another reason to celebrate MCIA's success in 2020. And, now that Seed Laboratory Manager Chase Mowry has been approved by the USDA as a Canadian Seed Grader, seed graded in our lab can be exported to Canada without the need for further testing. As a result, our customers who export seed to Canada will enjoy lower fees and saved time. Seed Technologist Sam Banks also recently completed the requirements to be credentialled as a Registered Seed Technologist. With these recent achievements, MCIA has positioned itself to become one of the premier seed certification agencies in the nation.

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Due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the MCIA Board of Directors decided to hold the MCIA Annual Meeting virtually. The meeting date is set for Wednesday, January 13, 2021. We have organized a brief but informative meeting program. Our invited seed industry experts will share insights regarding the state of the industry—highlighting the Covid-19 environment, address common issues in seed testing, and provide an update from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. In addition, the Annual Meeting is an opportunity to recognize individuals in our industry. We will announce the recipients of the Honorary Premier Seedsman, Premier Seedsman, and the Achievement in Crop Improvement awards. We hope you will take time to join us. Please keep a close watch for registration and attendance information. Your participation will determine the success of this event!



Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Services Manager

This has been a challenging year for most of us. The organic certification staff has mostly worked from home. Some of our inspections, especially our unannounced inspections, have been virtual—by phone or by Zoom. This method has worked fairly well for handlers, so we plan to continue with the virtual platform

for unannounced handler inspections next year. We are required to conduct unannounced inspections of 5 percent of our client base each year (30 in 2020).

Everyone here is working on final reviews and certificates. Remember that your current certificate is still valid. Organic certificates are good until they are surrendered, suspended, or revoked, but if you need a Letter of Good Standing to make a sale, let us know. We are working to get the certification of all paid-up clients finished by the end of the year. Then, we will start working on final reviews of those clients who have yet to complete payments. If you are one of those clients, please send

in payment now or contact us if you need to make payment arrangements.

We mailed out 2021 calendars to all our clients last week. In early February, we will be sending out renewal applications for 2021 to all crops and livestock operations. If you are not planning to certify next year, please contact us now and let us know.

We are still sponsoring several organic conferences, though they will all be virtual this year. Please consider attending one or more of the following:

Minnesota Organic Conference, January 7, 14, 21, and 28
<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/environment-sustainability/minnesota-organic-conference>

Northern Plains Food & Farming Conference, January 21–23
www.npsas.org

Emerging Farmers Conference, January 29–30
<https://bigriverfarms.thefoodgroupmn.org/about-efc/>

MOSES Organic Farm Conference, February 22–27
<https://mosesorganic.org/conference/>



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MCIA
Annual Meeting
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www.mncia.org

See page 1 for
details about speakers,
elections, registration,
and other meeting
information.

PERIODICAL

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I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete. —Alan Makinen

CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 1 MCIA Office Closed: New Year's Day
- 12 Small Grains Update Meetings, Virtual
- 13 MCIA Annual Meeting, Virtual
- 7–28 Minnesota Organic Conference, Virtual, Sessions held each Thursday
- 18 MCIA Office Closed: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 20–21 MN Ag Expo, Virtual
- 21–23 NPSAS Food & Farming Conference, Virtual
- 29–30 Emerging Farmers Conference, Virtual

FEBRUARY

- 8–13 SFA Annual Conference, Virtual
- 22–27 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, Virtual
- 22–27 Organic Vegetable Production Conference, Virtual

For more event information visit www.mncia.org.