

Paul Kjolhaug Receives Achievement in Crop Improvement Award

Paul Kjolhaug is the 2023 recipient of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association's Achievement in Crop Improvement Award. The award is MCIA's highest honor. It recognizes individuals who have contributed to the betterment of agriculture through their work and service to MCIA and the seed industry. The award was presented during MCIA's 120th Annual Meeting, which was held at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, January 12, 2023.

Paul Kjolhaug did not grow up on a farm, but he has spent most of his life involved in agriculture. As a youth, he lived in Springfield, Minnesota, and learned to work hard on area crop and livestock farms. One of those jobs was detasseling corn, his first experience in seed production. Such was the beginning of a lifelong journey in the world of seed.

Paul pursued his interest in agriculture through studies at the University of Minnesota, earning a degree in agronomy. The connections he made there with professors Laddie Elling and Kent Crookston led to his first position in the seed industry. That was at Northern Farm and Garden, the predecessor of Norfarm Seeds, where Paul worked with legumes, grass, and sunflower seed.

The next step was to Interstate Payco where he managed seed production of hybrid corn, sunflowers, and soybean seed. Much of this production was for export to Western Europe. It was then that Paul became very familiar with MCIA, requesting field inspections and seed testing to meet OECD standards for seed export.

Paul understood the value of seed certification and worked closely with MCIA Field Supervisor Ben Lang. As Ben noted, "Paul would come to the field and help me train my staff to do seed corn field inspections. He would explain to them how important their job was."

After a short stint doing environmental consulting, Paul returned to the seed world. For the last 21 years he has been part owner of MayerSeedLine of Willmar. The company is a contract production and seed brokerage firm, working primarily with seed corn and sunflowers, domestically and internationally. Their customers range from small independent companies to large multinational corporations.

Over the years, Paul has been involved in many seed trade organizations. Those include the American Seed Trade Association, Independent Professional Seed Association, and the Canadian Seed Trade Association, as well as several local and regional seed



Kevin Schulz (left), editor of *The Farmer* magazine, presents MCIA's Achievement in Crop Improvement Award to Paul Kjolhaug (right).

PHOTO: CARL ANFINSON, © MCIA

associations. He served six years on the MCIA board of directors, including one term as board chairman.

When Paul became an MCIA board member, Ben Lang, who by then was MCIA President/CEO, was very appreciative of the perspective Paul brought to the board. "He had a great perspective and would look at the big picture, often looking toward the future of MCIA. This approach has served Paul well throughout his career."

With a passion for helping others, Paul has a strong interest in his local church, serving on committees that focus on pastoral care and youth activities. He also is active in the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Family is another passion for Paul. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Jodi, and their four children and nine grandchildren.

Commenting on receiving the award, Paul said, "I have enjoyed my years in the seed industry and being able to work with many great people." Adding, "I am truly humbled and honored to receive this award."

Presented annually since 1972, the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award is sponsored by The Farmer magazine.

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October 22, 2022: An academic delegation from Zimbabwe visits the MCIA office. See President's Corner, page 7, for more.

MCIA Presents Premier and Honorary Premier Seed Grower Awards

The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association presented its Premier Seed Grower awards at the MCIA Annual Meeting on January 12, 2023, at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls. Lon Baldus, Kurt Flegel, and Dean Johnson and Kurt Aakre received the Premier Seed Grower Award. Dave Grafstrom and Denise Thiede were recipients of the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award.

LON BALDUS, GRAND MEADOW

In 1998, instead of growing the new Roundup resistant soybeans, Lon Baldus began growing non-GMO, food-grade soybeans. He reasoned that food-grade soybeans added more value to his crop, and he has been growing them ever since. At first, he grew high protein soybeans for other companies. Eventually, he started his own food-grade soybean export business.

Lon grew up on a livestock and crop farm. Soon after high school he was ready to venture out on his own and bought a farm in Mower County. In addition to farming, he completed the Farm Equipment Mechanics Program at Riverland Technical College and worked at the local implement dealer.

Through the early years of his farming operation, he cooperated with his brother-in-law, sharing equipment and labor. Lon also did off-farm work at Hormel and in construction, building grain elevators and seed conditioning plants. The experience building grain cleaning facilities would come in handy many years down the road.

Owning the business allowed him to have more control over the production and marketing of his crop. Over the years he would export soybeans to Japan and other countries in Southeast Asia. He bought a seed conditioning plant in Mapleton and worked with Leo Roth to learn the techniques for proper equipment operation. In addition to processing soybeans for export, he also conditioned small grains and buckwheat seed. Lon was one of the first in Minnesota to clean industrial hemp seed, which was a challenging crop to process.

As a member of MCIA, Lon has participated in the seed certification, identity preserved, and the approved facility programs. Eventually, his conditioning plant was certified organic by MCIA. A regular attendee at MCIA's annual meeting, he enjoys visiting with other

seed producers and learning from them. He is also a member of the Minnesota Corn and Soybean Grower Associations and the American Soybean Association.



Brad Barth presents Premier Seed Grower Award to Lon Baldus.

PHOTO: CARL ANFINSON © MCIA

Upon receiving notice of being selected a Premier Seed Grower, Lon said, "I am very honored," adding "the people I have worked with in the seed industry are very dedicated and sincere and I enjoy working with them."

Lon and his wife Susan have been partners on the farm and in raising four very successful children. They love having grandchildren visit the farm and in their free time enjoy traveling. Lon also enjoys collecting classic albums and attending concerts. ■

KURT FLEGEL, BENSON

Kurt has been in the seed business for 40 years. Currently, he is the plant manager at Syngenta in Danvers. He grew up on a dairy, beef, and small grain farm near Kulm, North Dakota. His father enjoyed growing durum wheat and Kurt recalls asking about the blue Certified tags attached to the bags of seed. With an interest in agriculture, he attended Bismarck Junior College and was one of the first students to study as an "ag transfer student." The transfer led to North Dakota State University, where he obtained a degree in ag economics.

Following graduation, he took a position with Stauffer Seeds in Fargo, and in 1983 he transferred to the Danvers production plant. In those early years he was very involved with the sunflower program, including research, parent seed production, and conditioning. In 1987, Stauffer's merged with Northrup King and added soybeans to the operation. Kurt became familiar with MCIA as his work involved OECD certification of

soybeans and sunflower seed for export to Europe.

OECD varieties were typically very early, and Kurt needed to convince farmers in North Dakota and northern Minnesota

The Premier Seed Grower Award has been presented annually since 1929 to recognize individuals or partners involved in quality seed production, active in the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, and who provide excellent service to the seed industry.

that they could grow soybeans. Through the years, he has developed great relationships with growers, some are into their third generation working with Kurt. Eventually, OECD exports declined, and sunflower production shifted to California. In 2001, as soybeans acres moved north and west, Syngenta switched the facility to a soybean-only plant, to handle the increasing demand for domestic seed production.

Kurt has been an active member of MCIA, serving on various committees. As a director on the MCIA board, he was elected as chair for three terms. During his tenure, he led MCIA's management through a continuity and succession planning process. Commenting after receiving the award, Kurt said, "When I got the call telling me I had been selected I didn't believe it at first. I have had many good experiences working in the seed industry and I am grateful for the honor."

A longtime paramedic for Centra Care, Kurt also teaches Emergency Medical Services classes. Other community activities include past service as a board member for several organizations including his church, the ECFE advisory board, and the hospital foundation.

Kurt enjoys getting together with his son and his daughter and their spouses. He is also a downhill skier and serves on the ski patrol at the local ski slope. Trips to the Boundary Waters and other travel adventures occupy any other spare time. ■

DEAN JOHNSON AND KURT AAKRE, KARLSTAD

Dean Johnson and his brother-in-law, Kurt Aakre, have been farming together since 1989. The Lloyd Johnson farm, in north-west Minnesota, has been in the family since 1887. Their first seed crop was potatoes, which were grown by multiple generations before the transition to only seed grains.

Dean grew up on the home farm, which in the early years had livestock. He attended Evangel University and the University of Minnesota Crookston before returning to farm with his father, Lloyd. In addition to potatoes, he has grown a wide variety of crops throughout the years, including small grains, flax, edible beans, sugar beets, corn, and soybeans.

Kurt learned the value of hard work while growing up on a dairy farm near Rollag, Minnesota. After a start in college at Concordia Moorhead and a little work experience, he graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in ag economics. He married



Kurt Flegel

PHOTO: CARL ANFINSON, © MCIA

Dean's sister and, after a five-year stint in the banking industry, he joined the Johnson's family farm.

The duo has shared responsibilities over the years, working together to make the farm and seed business successful. They began growing seed in their own name over thirty years ago. Barley was the primary seed crop before they added wheat. Today, all their acres of wheat and soybeans are for seed production.

Their involvement in the Kittson County Crop Improvement organization allowed them to connect with other seed growers and conditioners. Through the years, they have developed good relationships with several seed conditioners, including the late Ron Peterson, Lake Bronson Elevator, CHS Greenbush, Weinlaeder's, and Capistran's.

Growing seed is a rewarding experience for Dean and Kurt. They recognize the value and importance of high-quality seed in a successful farming operation. Whether it is cleaning planters, trucks, or combines, they are willing to put in the extra effort to ensure the seed they produce is pure and will perform well for the farmers who plant it. As Dean said, "Its enjoyable to grow seed knowing it will benefit others."

Dean and Kurt have been very active in their local community. Both have served on their church and local county crop improvement boards. Kurt has been a Sunday school teacher, youth leader, and a member of the Heritage Christian school board. He is also a member of the Minnesota Wheat and Soybean Growers' organizations and is past chair of the Karlstad Elevator board.

An Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), Dean is also a CPR and EMT instructor. He has been on several medical mission trips as an EMT and conducted optical screening in about a dozen countries. He has also served on the local Health Facilities Board and as a township supervisor.

Upon receiving the honor Kurt said, "We're thankful for the honor," adding, "Growing up, we were taught to do the very best you can in whatever you do because that's what the Bible says, and we carry that on in everyday life."

A fifth generation is now involved. Kurt's son, Adam, and his family are part of the farm and seed operation. Dean, Kurt and his wife, Denise, enjoy having the youngsters around. The future looks bright for this family farm. ■



Brad Barth presents Premier Seed Grower Awards to Dean Johnson (L) and Kurt Aakre (R).

PHOTO: CARL ANFINSON, © MCIA

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AWARDS, CONTINUED

The Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award, presented annually since 1930, recognizes individuals not directly involved in the seed industry but who have actively supported the seed industry, the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, and their local community.

DAVE GRAFSTROM, ROSEAU

Dave is a key member of the University of Minnesota team addressing crop production issues at the Magnusson Research Farm near Roseau. His interest in agriculture began while growing up on a dairy farm in Roseau County. Dave attended the University of Minnesota, first at Crookston and then in St. Paul, where he completed a degree in agronomy. He continued his education at NDSU, obtaining a PhD in weed science.

Dave began his career with BASF Corporation, where he held various positions throughout the Midwest. His work included small plot research, coordinating greenhouse and field trials as a technical services representative, and conducting on-farm demonstration trials. After returning to Minnesota, he was an agronomist for Cenex Harvest States for several years.

Dave had an early connection to MCIA when he worked for Jerry Hermann as a field inspector. Since 2005, Dave has held the position of research agronomist at the Magnusson Research Farm. His work includes all aspects of small plot research trials for a variety of crops including turf grasses, barley, canola, oats, rye, wheat, and soybeans.

On-farm plots are a key part of the Magnusson Farm research efforts. The cooperation from area growers for these on-farm trials has been fantastic. This off-site work

allows more research to be conducted and benefits the entire growing region.

Much of Dave's work involves grass seed production research. For over sixty years, the production of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass seed has been, and continues to be, an important part of the economy in northern Minnesota. Dave created an e-newsletter for grass seed growers, updating them weekly on growing conditions, management practices, and pest issues. He also shares information during summer plot tours, the annual Grass Seed Institute, and the UMN Turf Seed website.

Dave is the secretary of the Turf Seed Council, a group that serves the interests of the grass seed industry. He has served as a member of the Minnesota Wheat Growers On-Farm Research Advisory Committee and aided other ag-related efforts. He has also been involved in his church and local community.

Upon learning of the recognition Dave said, "I enjoy working with the grass seed producers and farmers in the area, we get great cooperation."

A hockey player and coach, Dave enjoys spending time with his wife, Sharon, his children, and his grandchildren. They enjoy outdoor activities like camping, hunting, fishing, and travel. ■

DENISE THIEDE, ST. PAUL

Denise has worked with seed and plants her entire career. She is currently part of the Plant Protection Division at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, serving as section manager, responsible for seed, noxious weed, hemp, and biotechnology. Her association with MCIA has spanned nearly twenty years.

Denise grew up in the Twin Cities but had ties to her mother's family farm near Gibbon, Minnesota. Her mother also loved gardening and those connections were the stimulus needed for Denise to develop an interest in agriculture and plants. She earned a bachelor's degree in biology from St. Olaf College, a master's degree at the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in plant biology from Michigan State University.

For several years, Denise conducted university research that focused on seed genetics, characteristics, and evolution. In 2002, she joined BioDiagnostics Inc. (BDI), a commercial seed testing lab in River Falls, Wisconsin. There she managed the germination, trait purity, and DNA labs.

She also organized their quality management system, led them through ISO accreditation, and guided BDI to become



Denise Thiede

the first USDA-accredited seed lab. In 2008, Denise became a partner in the BDI business with Quentin Schultz and Craig Nelson.

In 2008, MCIA closed its seed lab and directed members to BDI as a designated seed lab. Denise worked collaboratively with the MCIA staff to ensure that germination, purity, and other tests met the requirements of the seed certification program. It was a valuable experience and she enjoyed interacting with MCIA members.

Denise has been at the MDA since 2017, where she supervises the seed regulatory program. Her responsibilities have expanded over the years to include hemp and Palmer amaranth control. She has worked closely with MCIA on a variety of issues, including the improper sale of PVP Title V varieties.

Denise has served multiple terms on the MCIA Board of Directors. She has also been active in the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists, American Seed Trade Association, and the Association of Seed Control Officials. Throughout her career, Denise has enjoyed training and working with young people interested in seed technology.

In accepting the Honorary award, Denise noted "I very much appreciate this award," adding, "my involvement with MCIA both at BDI and the Department of Ag has been very rewarding, because of that I was better able to understand the concerns of the seed industry." She characterizes those working in the seed industry as "great people."

In her spare time, not surprisingly, she loves gardening and being outdoors. Denise lives in the St. Croix River Valley area with her spouse, where they enjoy hiking and taking in the natural beauty of Minnesota and Wisconsin. ■



Dave Grafstrom

PHOTO: CARL ANFINSON, © MCIA

PHOTO COURTESY DENISE THIEDE

Official Minutes of the 2023 Annual Business Meeting

Chairman Brad Barth called the 120th annual business meeting of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association to order at 10:50 a.m. on January 12, 2023. The meeting was held at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, the Chairman and Secretary being present. The Chairman confirmed that notice of the meeting was properly mailed ten days prior to the meeting and was published in the winter 2022 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower*. He took roll call of the Board members present. With more than 25 members in attendance, the Chairman declared that quorum was met.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the 2022 MCIA Annual Meeting were published in the spring 2022 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower* and were included in the meeting documents. John Kappahn moved to approve the minutes of the 2022 MCIA Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report: The Chairman reported that the Statement of Activities and Financial Position for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2022, was included in the meeting documents. The financial report and an independent audit were successfully completed, presented, and accepted at the November 2022 Board meeting. Copies can be obtained by contacting the MCIA office. The Chairman stated that financial reports are reviewed by the Treasurer and the Chairman and presented at each meeting to the Board of Directors.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman stated that MCIA is in good financial position. He encouraged producers and members to use and promote MCIA's services. He thanked MCIA's staff members for their continued dedication to the organization.

Board of Directors' Election: The Chairman thanked outgoing directors Darius Thiel and Matt Bohn for their service to the Board. The Chairman explained the Board of Directors' election ballot: Two incumbent Category A directors were seeking re-election. Three other Category A director positions were open. One nomination had been received for each position on the ballot. Brent Benike, District 1, and Grant Mehring, Related Industry, each having completed one three-year term, sought a second term. The nominees for open director positions were Wes Olmschenk, District 2, of Foley, Minnesota; Jake Noll, Related Industry, of Breckenridge, Minnesota; and Ryan Anderson, District 3, of Dunnell, Minnesota. (Anderson was seeking to serve the remaining two years of a three-year term of a vacant District 3 position.) Nancy Ehlke was nominated by the University of Minnesota to serve as Category B director. There were no other nominations. Duane Dahlman moved to cast a unanimous ballot for the election of the nominated slate of Category A directors and ratify the nominated Category B director. The motion was seconded and passed.

Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws: MCIA President/CEO Fawad Shah presented changes to MCIA's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws recommended by the Board of Directors. Duane Dahlman moved to accept the amendments as presented. The motion was seconded and passed. [See the MCIA website for a full description of the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws that were adopted.]

President's Report: The President introduced MCIA's staff members. Next, he reported that fiscal year 2021–2022 was financially successful for MCIA. Organic Services led all departments in revenue generated, showing sustained growth over the past five years. Revenue from the Field Services and Foundation Seed departments increased slightly. Revenue from Certification and Seed Laboratory Services declined slightly. Organic Services expenses showed a slight decrease over five-years, mainly due to staff changes. Field Services expenses also decreased. Foundation Seed Services expenses increased slightly. Seed Laboratory Services expenses increased, mainly due to new staff. The trend for Certification Services expenses remained steady.

MCIA continues to collaborate with the University of Minnesota, acting as licensing agent for its crop varieties, increasing foundation seed, providing seed laboratory services in support of academic research, and developing curriculum for a Seed Science, Technology & Society course.

The President then reported on personnel changes. Since January 2022, those who resigned their positions at MCIA included Tom Keskey, Field Services; Connie McDowell, Seed Laboratory; and Karen Gjelhaug, Cherry Flowers, and Tyler Tisdale, Organic Services. New hires include Keith Marti, in June as District 3 field supervisor; Claire Biel, in October as seed lab technician; and two organic certification specialist/inspectors—Shauna Ilse, in August, and Lauren Martin, in January 2023. One organic certification specialist/inspector position remains open.

MCIA continues to work with University of Minnesota and Farmers Yield Initiative to stop the illegal sale of PVP seed. Recent court judgments were entered against two Minnesota farming operations in a case brought forward by the Regents of the University of Minnesota to stop unauthorized use of PVPA-protected oat varieties. The judgements were in the amounts of \$50,000 and \$150,000.

The President conducted an in-person OECD Seed Schemes roundup at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) office in Pakistan. The participants included staff from the country's Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department, the FAO, and private company representatives. While in Pakistan, the President also gave a presentation on corn seed production at a conference held at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. In October, MCIA hosted a tour of our facilities for a group of professors and university administrators from Zimbabwe.

MCIA's Field Services inspects nearly 180 facilities each year for the Approved Facility Program. In 2022, five facility inspections were completed under the U.S. Identity Preserved Program. Field Services also administers the MnDOT Approved Seed Vendors Program and MCIA representatives serve on the Minnesota Soybean Council and the Minnesota Turf Seed Council.

The MCIA Seed Laboratory is accredited by the USDA's Accredited Seed Laboratory Program through 2025. Thus far, laboratory reports indicate that seed quality is high with some mechanical damage on soybeans. The Seed Laboratory circulated a customer satisfaction survey. Feedback was positive for quality, turnaround time, and customer care.

Foundation Seed Services installed a Meyer M-1 Color and Shape Optical Sorter. It was used to improve the purity of

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MINUTES, CONTINUED

soybean and barley seed lots. Spring Foundation seed sales increased 10.5 percent compared to 2021. Wheat sales were up 31 percent and oat sales were up 6 percent. MCIA prepared new license agreements for one winter barley line and two soybean lines.

Updated Organic Services fee schedules, with changes effective January 1, were recently mailed to clients. Due to personnel changes over the past year, hiring and training of new Organic Services staff members continues.

Certification Services saw a decrease in final certification fees for fiscal year 2021/22 of approximately \$20,000, mainly due to perennial grasses and drought conditions. Compared to last year, in fiscal year 2022/23 there is a decline in hybrid rye, oats, tall fescue, and wheat and an increase in corn and perennial ryegrass.

MCIA will host AOSCA's 2023 international annual meeting in June. In conclusion, the President stated that MCIA will continue to work on database improvements, fill vacant positions, and train newly hired staff. MCIA looks forward to ongoing collaboration with SSGA, the University of Minnesota, MDA, MnDOT, and other state and federal agencies throughout the year to increase its visibility, market its services, and engage in capacity building.

The Chairman then called for other business. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.

Board of Directors Election Results

At the 120th MCIA Annual Meeting, held in Fergus Falls on January 12, 2023, a board of directors' election was conducted. Wes Olmschenk, of Foley, was elected to an open director position for District 2. Ryan Anderson, of Jackson, was elected to an open director position for District 3. Jake Noll, of Breckenridge, was elected to an open Related Industry director position. Two incumbent directors were re-elected: Brent Benike, District 1, and Grant Mehring, Related Industry. Members also ratified Nancy Ehlke's nomination to the board, by the UMN, as a Category B director. Subsequently, the board directors re-elected Brad Barth as chair and elected Brent Benike as vice chair. A full list of the current members of the MCIA Board of Directors follows:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brad Barth, Thief River Falls, Chair
Brent Benike, Baudette, Vice Chair
Duane Dahlman, Cokato, Secretary
Grant Mehring, Fargo, ND, Treasurer
Kelsey Henke, St. Peter

DIRECTORS

Ryan Anderson, Jackson; Nancy Jo Ehlke, UMN Twin Cities;
John Kapphahn, Elbow Lake; Jake Noll, Breckenridge; Wes
Olmschenk, Foley, Denise Thiede, St. Paul

The MCIA Board of Directors will next meet on March 21, 2023, at the MCIA office in Saint Paul.

Anderson, Noll, and Olmschenk Join Board

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes Ryan Anderson (District 3), Jake Noll (Related Industry), and Wes Olmschenk (District 2) to MCIA's Board of Directors. They were elected to the Board at the MCIA Annual Meeting on January 12, 2023.

Ryan Anderson grew up on a dairy farm in southwest Minnesota, where they also raised corn, soybeans, and alfalfa. For the past 21 years he has worked for Corteva/Pioneer at the Jackson, Minnesota, location. He has held roles in Seed Production Operations, Field Operations, and Agronomy.

In addition to having a bachelor's degree in business management, he is a Certified Crop Adviser and an FAA-licensed UAV Pilot. A graduate of the Dale Carnegie course, Ryan has also completed training in the Six Sigma and Lean Practitioner programs, which center around workplace organization and efficiency. He and his wife have two daughters, a high school senior and a junior in college.

Jake Noll grew up in St. Paul, Minnesota, and spent the summers helping his grandfather on the family farm and seed business in Foxhome, Minnesota. The family seed business dates to 1889; Jake represents the fifth generation. After college, Jake became involved with managing and owning a home construction business with his brother and pursued that for several years. In 2008, Jake had the opportunity to join the family seed business (Friederichs Seed) as an owner and managing president.

Over the next several years, Jake was able to facilitate a major expansion and transition of the business from certified farmer seeds to a high-quality dedicated food-grade soybean custom processing company. During this period, Friederichs Seed became a trusted co-packer to Richland IFC, amongst others. In 2021, Jake accepted the offer to join Richland IFC as general manager, overseeing company operations, crop production, logistics, and general customer support.

Wes Olmschenk grew up on and is still actively part of a family farm in central Minnesota. Wes earned a BA in economics from St. John's University and an MBA from Drake University. His professional experience includes work with Land O'Lakes and 1-800-GOT-JUNK. He currently serves as director of products for MNL Inc. In that role, Wes is involved with day-to-day operations management of all native seed and plant products, from production to sales.

Wes lives near St. Joseph, Minnesota, with his wife and their three children. Outside of work, he enjoys anything outdoors, from hunting and fishing to travel, hiking, and landscaping.

Thank You, Sponsors and Exhibitors!

MCIA thanks the following sponsors and exhibitors who helped make the 2023 MCIA Annual Meeting a success: Agassiz Seed & Supply, Albert Lea Seed, AMVT LLC, Bjerke Brothers Inc, Brad Barth Farms, Bratney, The Farmer magazine, Grain Millers, Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council, Northern Excellence Seed, Richland IFC, Soyko International, Strategic Wealth Group and Strategic Tax Group, SDSU Seed Testing Laboratory.

In Memoriam

Anna Mae Wigen, of Litchfield, Minnesota, died on Sunday, January 29, 2023. She was 83 years old. Anna Mae and her husband, Marlo, owned Wigen Seed Farm. They were longtime MCIA members.

REMINDER: When purchasing Foundation or Registered seed, save your bulk certificates and seed tags as proof of seed source, which is needed for your field inspection application.

Chairman's View

Brad Barth
BOARD CHAIRMAN

Happy “almost the end of winter” to you. As I write this, it is mid-February in Minnesota and we have had almost two weeks of above freezing weather. This is a little unusual for this time of year in northern Minnesota, but I will take it. As Minnesotans, we are a weird bunch. We put on a jacket in July when the temperature at the lake dips to a cool 65 degrees in the evening, but we will go outside in mid-February and celebrate a balmy 35 degrees wearing just a T-shirt. Go figure.

On January 12, 2023, MCIA held its 120th Annual Meeting in Fergus Falls. It was an excellent gathering with outstanding speakers, great sponsors, and wonderful time to network with our fellow seed professionals. It was great to have the meeting in person again and to visit with those who attended.

I would like to thank Fawad Shah and the great staff at MCIA for organizing such an excellent event, especially the speaker lineup, which was beyond fantastic. Special thanks to Seth Dagoberg, Kris Folland, and Michelle Menken for their great presentations about the MCIA services they manage. Please make plans now to attend next year's annual meeting. You will be glad you did.

During my Chairman's Report at the meeting, I spoke for the Board of Directors and wanted all members to know that MCIA is in a sound financial position and has a bright future. How bright? That will depend on the extent to which members participate in MCIA's services: acres certified and use of our seed lab. With your continued support, MCIA will be here to serve its members for years to come.

Over the past few years, almost all our businesses have dealt with staffing problems. Correct? Well, MCIA has experienced staff turnover as well. Fawad and all involved have somehow managed to attract not just people, but absolutely *great* people, to fill vacated positions. The new staff I have met have impressed me immensely. They are going to be wonderful additions to our organization.

Again, thank you to all who attended our annual meeting: You, the members, along with the best staff in the industry, are what makes our organization great.

Have a great and prosperous 2023! ■

President's Corner

Fawad Shah
PRESIDENT/CEO

Focus on Education and Outreach

With respect to the number of acres we inspect and certify, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association ranks as one of the top seed certification agencies in the United States. Additionally, MCIA offers a uniquely diversified portfolio of services: seed testing, foundation seed development, native seed certification, weed seed-free forage and mulch certification, organic certification, and the MnDOT Approved Seed Vendor Program, among others.

For the past few years, MCIA has also increased its education and outreach efforts. For example, MCIA put its expertise to use in the development of an undergraduate course for the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. The course, Seed Science, Technology and Society, provides a gateway to the understanding of seed production, conditioning, quality, testing, certification, and marketing; state and federal seed laws and regulations; and basic botany. Included in the semester-long course is a tour of the MCIA facility, allowing students to observe various aspects of seed testing (purity, germination, TZ testing, and the like), seed conditioning, and cold storage. The UMN first asked MCIA to provide course instruction in fall 2018. Since then, the course has gained in popularity. In fall 2022, twenty-four students signed up for the course, the highest enrollment yet.

MCIA has great working relations with sister seed certifying agencies, state and federal seed regulatory authorities, and academia. In October, at the request of the Office of the Vice President for Research at Iowa State University, MCIA provided a comprehensive overview of germplasm licensing of agronomic varieties released by the University of Minnesota to eighteen university educators, researchers, and administrators visiting from Zimbabwe. This group also toured the seed lab, seed conditioning plant, and cold storage, where germplasm of various varieties and breeding lines are kept under conditions that are ideal to maintain viability and quality.

Earlier in the year, at the request of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, MCIA held a roundtable discussion on ways for Pakistan to join the OECD

Seed Schemes. Participants included staff members of Pakistan's Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department and key members of that country's seed industry.

These are just a few high-profile examples of how MCIA is not only sharing its expertise in seed certification, germplasm licensing, and seed testing, but is also increasing the organization's visibility on domestic and international stages. ■

Organic Corner

Michelle Menken
ORGANIC SERVICES MANAGER

We have sent out crop and livestock renewal packets. They are due back March 15 for produce growers and April 1 for crop and livestock operations. We had a booth at the Marbleseed (formerly MOSES) Organic Farming Conference at the end of February. Now everyone is back here working on final reviews to get 2022 finished up.

We are looking for another organic certification specialist/inspector. Interested? We have posted the job announcement on our website: www.mncia.org/job-openings.

This week, the NOP presented a training video on the Strengthening Organic Enforcement (SOE), which is a big rule change that will go into effect in 2024. It will require all brokers to be certified as well as several other parties who are now exempt. Audits will be more important, so expect the inspectors this year to be spending more time reviewing harvest and sales records.

Remember, after April 5, 2023, certified organic dairies can no longer purchase or sell as organic dairy animals that were transitioned. Livestock Lists will have to be updated this year to clearly identify all animals on each farm that were transitioned. They can still be used for organic milk production on your own farm, but cannot be sold as organic animals to another organic farm. ■

Lab Report

Chase Mowry
SEED LABORATORY MANAGER

Noxious Weed Seed Examinations

Noxious weed seed examinations are one type of test that analysts in seed labs routinely perform. The objective of this test is to identify noxious weed seeds present in a sample and determine the estimated rate of occurrence of said species in the seed lot. This information is to be used for labeling purposes for selling seed

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PERIODICAL

LAB REPORT, CONTINUED

as required by seed law. Depending on the needs of a seller, different types of noxious weed seed examinations can be conducted.

Each state has defined noxious weed seed species and an allowable rate of occurrence in their seed law. As well, the Federal Seed Act includes a list of noxious weed seed species. If seed is to be sold within the state, only that state's noxious species are in effect. When shipping seed across state lines, the federal and receiving state's noxious weed seed species come into effect. It is the responsibility of seed dealers to know the requirements of state laws and the changes in those laws.

If selling seed out of state, one should request a noxious exam that covers the receiving state's noxious weed seeds, or request an All States noxious exam. If purchasing seed from another state, one should ask to be provided with documentation that clearly indicates the exam type conducted, prior to making a purchase.

The Seed Regulatory and Testing Division (SRTD), USDA AMS, issues the *Noxious-Weed Seed Requirements Recognized in the Administration of the Federal Seed Act* publication, which lists the noxious weed seeds in each state and summarizes the states' requirements. The SRTD

updates the publication when informed of changes to state seed laws (the most recent revision was February 2022). This publication, as well as the Federal Seed Act, is available at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/fsa>. One footnote of particular interest, listed under prohibited weed seed species for Minnesota, states that genetic testing must be conducted of any *Amaranthus* contaminant to determine if the species is Palmer amaranth (*Amaranthus palmeri*).

When exporting seed out of the country, specific noxious examinations based on the destination of the seed lot are also required. The MCIA Seed Laboratory routinely performs Canadian Noxious Weed Seed Exams and EC Other Plant Species Exams on submitted samples as well. As with domestic testing, the results obtained provide necessary seed contaminant information required for labeling exported seed. ■

Staff News

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes **Lauren Martin** to our staff! Lauren joined the Organic Services department on January 3 as a full-time Organic Certification Specialist/Inspector. Previously, she had worked for MCIA as a contract inspector. She has performed more than 700 inspections of organic row

crop, flower, fruit, produce, and livestock operations as well as organic processors and handlers.

Lauren is a graduate of Winona State University where she earned a BS degree in biology with an emphasis in environmental science and a minor in geoscience and course work focusing on agroecology. She has a farming background and currently lives on a small hobby farm in southwest Wisconsin. There, Lauren grows flowers, herbs, and vegetables, and raises hogs and chickens, along with a couple of horses. ■

**AOSCA to Meet
in Minnesota
June 3-7**

MCIA will host the Annual Meeting of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA), June 3-7, in Bloomington, Minnesota. Representatives of seed certification offices from across the US, as well as agencies from abroad, will be in attendance. The meeting provides an opportunity to review and update certification standards and procedures. In addition, attendees will discuss current issues affecting the seed industry. **Save the date!** ■