

## MCIA Annual Meeting Preview January 24, 2024, in St. Cloud

Please plan to join us on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, for MCIA's 121st Annual Meeting at the Holiday Inn & Suites, St. Cloud. We have organized an informative, 5-hour meeting program. Lunch will be served and there will be opportunities to visit sponsoring exhibitors at a trade show.

We'll begin with a panel discussion on the topic Emerging Leaders in Seed Production. The panelists include **Betsy Jensen**



Kelsey Henke

of Jensen Seed Company, **Jade Estling** of Estling Farms, **Kelsey Henke** of Anderson Seeds of St. Peter, and **Conner Danielson**, FFA member and Ridgewater College student.



Jade Estling

Then, **Anthony Cortilet** of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) will explain MDA's role in cannabis seed labeling and sale. He will also discuss the formation of the Office of Cannabis Management.



Anthony Cortilet

Also, **Roger Wippler**, who recently retired from a lengthy career with MCIA, will rejoin us to reflect on 30 years of change in Minnesota agriculture, the seed industry, and MCIA—with comments on its current state and an assessment of its future prospects.

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 three positions on the board.

We will 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 Seed Grower and Premier Seed Grower awards as well as the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award.

Invitations and registration forms have been mailed to all MCIA members. Please register by January 3, 2024. Meeting documents may also be accessed via the Annual Meeting page of the MCIA website, [www.mncia.org/annual-meeting](http://www.mncia.org/annual-meeting). Please contact Selena Nelson at 800-510-6242 if you have any questions.

## Roger's Farewell

### MCIA Foundation Seed Services Manager Roger Wippler Retires

When I began my tenure at the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association in 1989, I never imagined my time here would span 34 plus years. However, working with good people makes a job much more enjoyable. It did not take very long to realize that I was not just an employee, but I was part of something bigger. It has been a great experience to have been associated with MCIA.



Roger Wippler holding AOSCA's Honorary Member award, which he received at the AOSCA Annual Meeting in Bloomington, June 5, 2023.

One of the most rewarding parts of the job was visiting foundation seed growers and walking fields. My experience with these growers was remarkable. From the very beginning, they were eager to share information about seed production and their operations. Many times, they personally drove me around their farms, poured me a cup of coffee or offered me a meal. To all the growers I worked with, thank you for your cooperation and kindness.

Traveling around the state during the summer and fall gave me a great appreciation for the diverse geography of our state and the varied scope of Minnesota agriculture. From the rolling hills in southeast Minnesota to the flat prairies of the Red River Valley, I've walked shoulder high oats, waving wheat, and fields of soybeans during stunning fall days. All the while weaving my way along a myriad of county and township roads.

Those roads led me to cross paths with a lot of great people, including University of Minnesota plant breeders and their teams, commodity group leaders, and Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff. Thanks also to my fellow foundation seed and certification folks in our neighboring states, you have been great neighbors indeed.

I can't say enough about my coworkers, through the years they have been tremendous. The people at MCIA in my early years were generous in sharing their time and knowledge. I hope that I was able to do that for my fellow employees and in the process help create an atmosphere of "we can do more by working together."

Overall, my experience here at MCIA has been very satisfying. I will certainly miss the MCIA members and people I have gotten to know, some only by their voices on the phone, others through visits to their farms or at meetings. I won't walk away completely, I will still be involved at the Minnesota State Fair, and I will be attending the 2024 MCIA Annual Meeting—I hope to see you there!

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks for the opportunity to serve the MCIA organization for these many years. Best wishes and I hope to see you around.  
—Roger Wippler

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# Chairman's View

Brad Barth, MCIA Board Chair



**H**arvest 2023 is over for me but there are still a few acres of corn and soybeans left to harvest here in northern Minnesota. There was a snow in October that hung around for quite some time. After about three weeks the snow finally melted off the corn and bean fields. The local farmers got busy again and should finish up everything before December is upon us.

Thanksgiving came and went this year and I found myself being thankful for family, friends, nice

weather, and a great crop. A farmer cannot ask for much more than that.

Seed cleaning is underway in Minnesota, and I encourage you to take advantage of the excellent service you can obtain from our lab at MCIA. Chase and the crew work hard to process your samples and get your results back to you as fast as possible.

MCIA will hold its Annual Meeting on January 24, 2024, in St Cloud. This will be a single-day event and will include everything we have done in the past, just in a shortened version. I am excited to hear the panel discussion on the future of the seed industry, the involvement of our youth, and how we are going to attract and keep them in our industry. There will be vendors to visit with, and the MCIA staff will be there also. Please plan to attend as I am sure you will not be disappointed.

I could not write this without talking a little about Roger Wippler. Roger retired this fall and has left some big shoes to fill. Roger was the face of the foundation seed department for many years and his name will be forever synonymous with that department. A few years back, my daughter and her husband went to the State Fair, I told them to stop by the MCIA building and check it out. She told me later that she met the nicest man there and had an excellent time visiting with him. Roger made that impression on everyone he met. MCIA board meetings will be a little different now as we will not have that familiar voice and wisdom at the board table. Congratulations to you, Roger, and I hope retirement treats you well!

Roger may be gone but he has left MCIA with a very well trained and super talented replacement in Carl Anfinson. Carl has trained with Roger for quite some time now and will surely be a huge asset for MCIA. Welcome aboard Carl!

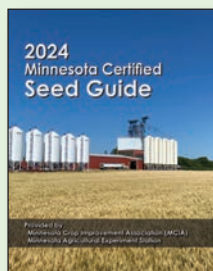
In closing, I sincerely hope that all of you had a great year and can take some time during these holidays to enjoy your family and friends.

## Minnesota Certified Seed Guide Published in January

The 2024 *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide* will be published mid-January, in print and online. The guide compiles UMN 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](http://www.agupdate.com/minnesotafarmguide/special_section/seed_guide)



# Field Notes

Kris Folland, Field Services Manager



"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds that you plant."

—Robert Louis Stevenson

**F**or those of us who work in the seed, certification, and identity preserved business that quote certainly rings true. Even though the dust is still settling on harvest, the seed sources for next spring

need to be conditioned, tested, and pass the standards for the appropriate seed class. Make plans now for the varieties you intend to plant and be certain you have the seed source needed. Foundation and registered seed class produce certified eligible seed. Certified seed does not produce certified seed.

MCIA's Field Services staff is always busy with programs outside of certification. The winter season is a great time to discuss the Field Inspect Only Program, which continues to grow and evolve as MCIA inspects fields to company standards. These field inspections may be reported on your company iPad or phone apps, on paper reports, or any other method that works for you, along with an MCIA field inspection report.

As your company continues to look for improvements in quality and efficiency in your seed production, MCIA is here to help. Feel free to give the MCIA staff a call anytime to discuss how we can meet your needs.

# Lab Report

Chase Mowry, Seed Laboratory Manager



**C**an you believe that it is December already? It feels as though the days are passing by faster than ever. This is perhaps a direct reflection of the work being done out in the field.

Samples submitted for testing have continued to stay steady through the months, with numbers ahead of last year. This is due, in part, to an increase in service samples being tested. Overall, germs have been good, apart from a few beans

impacted by stressful field conditions last growing season.

When possible, during what little down-time there has been between samples, we have continued to work on accreditation items. We recently completed our first round of proficiency tests, with more to come in the next several months.

We have been fortunate to have some additional help in the Seed Laboratory thanks to the arrival of Gil Waibel. Gil brings more than 40 years of experience in seed testing, has served AOSA and SCST in many, many capacities, and offers great insight from his life experiences. Gil is very passionate about agriculture and the seed industry. Welcome Gil!



# President's Corner

Fawad S. Shah, MCIA President/CEO



## MCIA Adding Value in a Value-Added World

Every company wants to be more visible, especially within its industry, in order to be competitive in a market that is always changing, to inform customers about its goods and services, and to maintain or grow its market share. A firm depends on several methods of communication, including print, electronic, and social media, to attract clients and increase sales. The non-profit Minnesota Crop Improvement Association works hard to stay in the minds and eyes of both its present and future clients. MCIA is dedicated to giving its customers high-caliber services and outstanding customer support.

MCIA met the milestone of increasing its visibility in many ways during 2023. First, MCIA successfully hosted the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) conference at the Hyatt Regency in Bloomington, Minnesota. MCIA was honored with AOSCA's first 'Excellence in Innovation' award. This is testament to MCIA's diverse array of services of seed certification, third-party inspection and audit services, and its Capacity Building Initiative to educate and train seed professionals in other nations. Through the University of Minnesota's Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics, MCIA is the only seed certification agency that offers formal in-class instruction for undergraduate students. In addition, AOSCA recognized MCIA Administrative and Certification Manager Jody Prudhomme

with an award for 25 years of service for her contributions to seed certification. Finally, yet importantly, AOSCA recognized MCIA Foundation Seed Services Manager Roger Wippler with an honorary membership. Recognition at an international forum like AOSCA's meeting is clearly an achievement for MCIA.

The October 2023 edition of *Seed World*, a prestigious seed industry magazine offering seed related content for over 100 years, published an article about MCIA's receipt of the AOSCA award. In a follow-up article published in the *Seed World*, I explain how international outreach and capacity building efforts benefit MCIA as the seed market globalizes. I also talk about how service diversification can improve the financial stability of state seed certification agencies, as demand for their traditional services is on the decline. MCIA strives for and leads the way in its capacity building and diversification of services such as Identity Preserved (IP) third-party inspection and audit programs. Seed certifying agencies have an important role to play in showcasing the integrity of products verified through IP programs. Through our print and on-line publications, social media, and by invited speaking assignments, MCIA continues to engage with the agricultural community and increase our visibility.

As we do each year, MCIA is putting together an informative program for its annual meeting. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 24, 2024, at the Holiday Inn & Suites, in St. Cloud. Topics include a panel discussion on challenges and opportunities for young seed producers, Minnesota Department of Agriculture's involvement in cannabis seed labeling and sale, and ways to achieve success in the seed industry in a challenging and changing seed world. This annual event is an opportunity to recognize individuals in our industry in the way of awards for Honorary Premier Seed Grower and Premier Seed Grower, and the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award. Plan to attend this important event; learn and network with others from the seed and agricultural industry.

# Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Services Manager



This has been a busy year for us. We still have a few files to get out to inspectors. We are working with a couple of new inspectors, so we hope next year we will have enough inspectors to get the work out earlier in the year. We have hired new staff here as well and have worked hard to get them trained. They may be doing some inspections for us next year.

Everyone is now working on final reviews and certificates. We have more than 260 certificates done,

which means we have a lot left to complete. The certificates this year are being generated out of the USDA's Organic Integrity Database (OID). They look very different from our old certificates. The list of organic products will be printed on the reverse side, as will the Canadian Equivalency statement. All certifiers will be required to use the OID to generate certificates starting next year. If you need a Letter of Good Standing to make a sale, please contact us.

The conference season will be beginning soon. We will be at the Minnesota Organic Conference in St. Cloud, Minnesota, January

11-12, 2024. We will have a booth at the Northern Plains Sustainable Ag conference January 25-27, 2024, in Aberdeen, South Dakota, and then we will have a booth at the Marbleseed Organic Farm Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin, February 22-24, 2024. Please stop by our booths and meet our new staff members.

We will be mailing out calendars and information about some rule changes soon.

# Staff News

**RETIREMENT:** In November, **Roger Wippler**, longtime manager of Foundation Seed Services, retired. Roger had a role in many other aspects of our work, including editing this newsletter, emceeding our annual awards ceremony, and staffing the certified seed booth at the Minnesota State Fair. *Be sure to attend the MCIA Annual Meeting, January 24, 2024, to express your appreciation of Roger and his service to MCIA.*

**PROMOTIONS:** Following Roger's retirement, **Carl Anfinson** was promoted to the position of manager of Foundation Seed Services. Since joining MCIA in 2020, Carl has worked closely with Roger as the department's seed production coordinator. Carl has prior work experience in both industry and government. He earned a B.S. degree in agricultural economics and an M.S. in international agribusiness and applied economics from North Dakota State University. In June, **Claire Chapman Biel** was promoted to the position of seed technologist. She joined the MCIA Seed Laboratory in October 2022 as a lab technician. A recent graduate of the University of Minnesota, Claire holds a B.S. degree in plant science with an emphasis in agroecology.



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**MCIA**  
**Annual Meeting**  
JANUARY 24, 2024  
ST. CLOUD

**Holiday Inn**  
**& Suites**

[www.mncia.org/annual-meeting](http://www.mncia.org/annual-meeting)

PERIODICAL

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

**CALENDAR**

**DECEMBER**

- 13–14 Prairie Grains Conference, Fargo, ND
- 25–26 MCIA Office Closed: Christmas
- 29 MCIA Office Closed: New Year’s Holiday

**JANUARY**

- 1 MCIA Office Closed: New Year’s Holiday
- 9–12 Small Grains Update Meetings, Various Locations
- 11–12 Minnesota Organic Conference, St. Cloud
- 15 MCIA Office Closed: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 15 Small Grain Workshop, Morris
- 17–18 MN Ag Expo, Mankato
- 24 MCIA Annual Meeting, St. Cloud**
- 25–27 Northern Plains Food & Farming Conf. Aberdeen, SD

**FEBRUARY**

- 2–3 Organic Vegetable Production Conf., Madison, WI
- 10 SFA Annual Conference, St. Joseph
- 19–26 Small Grains Workshops, Various Locations
- 22–24 Marbleseed Organic Farming Conf., La Crosse, WI

**For more event information visit [www.mncia.org](http://www.mncia.org).**