

Roger Wippler Receives Achievement in Crop Improvement Award

Roger Wippler is the 2024 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 121st Annual Meeting, which was held at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Cloud, Minnesota, January 24, 2024.

Roger Wippler grew up on a hobby farm near Randall, Minnesota. His love for agriculture began when he was old enough to help area farmers by picking rocks, stacking hay bales, and milking cows. In high school, he was very involved in FFA. He participated in several judging contests, held various offices in the local and district FFA, and received the State Farmer Degree. He went on to study landscape technology at Brainard Area Vocational and Technical Institute and agriculture education at the University of Minnesota.

After college, Roger worked as an energy auditor, a landscaper, and then, as an ag teacher. When the teaching program was cut, he applied for a position at MCIA. Roger was hired as foundation seed manager on July 5, 1989. For the next 30-plus years, Roger grew and harvested seed increases, including breeder and foundation seed. He’s driven thousands of miles and walked hundreds more to check on each year’s foundation seed production fields.

Roger recently retired as MCIA’s Foundation Seed Services manager. At the beginning of his career, the organization’s sole focus was seed certification. Over the years, Roger was involved in MCIA’s efforts to diversify its programs and services. In particular, he was key to the development of the Variety Licensing Program. He was also instrumental in developing relationships with the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, commodity groups, and industry professionals.

Since 1989, Roger has attended every Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA) Annual Meeting and most



MCIA Board of Directors Chairman Brad Barth congratulates Roger Wippler, retired MCIA Foundation Seed Services manager, upon his receipt of the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award.

of its regional meetings. He served on and was chair and vice-chair for several AOSCA committees. In 2023, AOSCA presented Roger with an Honorary Member Award in recognition of his lifetime achievements.

Roger has been involved with the Minnesota State Fair certified seed booth since 1989. From that platform, Roger has informed thousands of fair attendees about MCIA’s work and Minnesota agriculture. He has also served as a UMN Extension Master Gardener for 24 years, educating gardeners at booths, in seminars, and online.

Roger accepted the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award with gratitude, saying, “I greatly appreciate this honor. It has truly been a privilege to work with members of MCIA and be a part of this great organization.”

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

IN THIS ISSUE:

Seed Grower Awards Presented	2
Official Annual Business Meeting Minutes	5
Board of Directors’ Election Results	6
Cortilet and Hoseth Join Board.....	6
Thank You, Sponsors and Exhibitors!	6
Chairman’s View—Brad Barth	7
President’s Corner—Fawad Shah	7
Field Notes—Kris Folland.....	7
Lab Report—Chase Mowry	8



Speaking at the 121st Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association: Brent Benike, MCIA Board Vice-Chairman; Anthony Cortilet, Plant Protection Section Manager, Minnesota Department of Agriculture; Dr. Fawad Shah, MCIA President/CEO.

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 24, 2024, at the Holiday Inn & Suites in St. Cloud. Scott Lee, Larry Riopelle, and Merle and Roger Schwenzfeier received the Premier Seed Grower Award. Kris Folland and Dr. Eric Watkins were recipients of the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award.

SCOTT LEE, BENSON

Lee's Seed Farm was started in 1969 by Wallace Lee. He raised certified small grains and soybeans and built a seed cleaning plant on his farm northeast of Benson. Scott Lee was born the year his father, Wallace, built the seed cleaning plant, and his handprint was placed in the basement concrete when he was two years old.

Scott was active on the farm and outdoors. Growing up, he enjoyed sports, music, 4-H, and FFA through high school. He graduated from Benson High School in 1986. Scott planned on going back to the farm and continuing the seed business after he completed college.

He earned a degree in crop science and seed conditioning and technology from the University of Minnesota Crookston in 1989. That same year, Scott took over the family business. He also attended the University of Minnesota in St. Paul in 1990 and worked part time in MCIA's seed laboratory, testing seed.

Today, he raises certified wheat and oats to be conditioned and sold to local farmers. He also raises soybean seed under contract for other companies and corn. The seed plant remains busy with their own cleaning as well as cleaning for other seed growers and area farmers. Scott also custom farms for a couple of producers in his neighborhood. Lee's Seed Farm has been an active seed producer and MCIA member for 54 years.

Scott serves on the board of the Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council, is past president of the Minnesota Seed Producers and Promotion Council, and has been involved in many local, regional, and national agriculture organizations. He has served on the Benson Township board for 32 years and is a past church council member. Scott has been a County



Scott and Catie Lee.

PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT LEE

Line First Responder for 27 years. The farm has also been the location and host of University of Minnesota small grains research plots for many years.

Scott and his wife, Catie, have been married for 30 years and have three adult children who help and work on the farm along with having their own careers. In his spare time, Scott enjoys hunting, fishing, playing guitar and piano, and singing.

Upon learning that he had been chosen to receive the Premier Seed Grower Award, Scott responded, "The past recipient list reads like a who's who of the Minnesota seed industry and I am honored to be added to that list." ■

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.

LARRY RIOPELLE, ARGYLE

Larry Riopelle grew up near Argyle, Minnesota, and at a very young age was working on the farm. He attended school in Argyle and when he wasn't playing football, he was often bagging seed and farming. He graduated in 1981 and was already well seasoned in seed production. He studied farm management at East Grand Forks College for two years while continuing to help on the farm.

The Riopelle Seed Farm was started by his father and uncle. Larry and his cousin were a large part of the farm and within nine years were operating it on their own. During this time, Larry worked with and also for Rivard's Seed in Argyle. In the 1990s, Larry continued producing certified seed along with selling corn and soybean seed. Additions to the farm included bulk seed handling and seed treating, which have continued to grow with the farm and seed business.

Larry and his wife Peggy have been married for 27 years and have worked



Larry and Peggy Riopelle.

PHOTO COURTESY LARRY RIOPELLE

side by side farming, producing seed, and raising their family. They have four children and five grandchildren. Peggy has been busy at home and in the field operating tractors, combine, and anything else needed throughout the growing season. Their son, Josh, started working on the farm in high school. After graduation, he worked a few jobs but was soon back farming with his family.

The farm continues to grow all classes of certified wheat seed including producing foundation seed for MCIA. Other crops grown are soybeans, corn, and sugar beets. Riopelle Seed Co. is now operated by Josh and his business partner, Adam. They have expanded to selling corn, wheat, and sugar beet seed along with seed treatment and seed additives.

Larry has served on many boards including the Argyle Coop Elevator, Argyle Lions, and Farm Service Agency County Committee. He is a member of the Minnesota Wheat and Soybean associations.

Larry and Peggy enjoy fishing on Lake of the Woods, golfing, playing pool, spending winter in Arizona, and their family.

Josh accepted the Premier Seed Grower Award on his father's behalf, thanking MCIA for the honor and recognition. ■

MERLE AND ROGER SCHWENZFEIER, HALLOCK

Brothers Merle and Roger Schwenzfeier grew up near Orleans, Minnesota, raising livestock and producing crops. They often helped their neighbors farm when needed and enjoyed 4-H, school activities, and building projects.

After graduating from Hallock High School, Roger studied agriculture education at the University of Minnesota. He met his wife, Phyllis, and they both taught school for three years. Roger taught agriculture and industrial arts and Phyllis taught elementary. Roger was then offered an opportunity to farm 300 acres near Hallock from their neighbor. Roger started farming with an 806 International and 18' Vibrashank cultivator.

Roger and Phyllis have been married for 50 years and have three children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Their son, Ryan, and his family have farmed their acres alongside Roger and Merle for 23 years.



Josh Kostrzewski of Riopelle Seed Co. accepts the Premier Seed Grower Award on behalf of Larry Riopelle from Brad Barth, Chairman, MCIA Board of Directors.

PHOTO: ALAN MAKINEN, © MCIA

Roger has served on many boards and committees including the elevator and church board. Phyllis has been active in church and on the food pantry board. Roger has always enjoyed carpentry and projects around the farm and home. They have retired from farming but work daily on the farm and enjoy taking care of the yard, doing projects at their church, and seeing their family.

Merle studied agriculture engineering at the University of Minnesota Crookston. He met Renae; they married and



Merle and Renae Schwenzfeier.

PHOTO COURTESY MERLE SCHWENZFEIER

settled down near Hallock. Merle started farming with his brother, Roger, after college. Renae worked at a local bank for a few years as they started their family and farm. They have been married for 43 years and have four children and eleven grandchildren. They love it when their grandchildren have time to stay and help on the farm.

Merle has enjoyed growing a variety of crops and working on farm projects in the winter. He has served on local boards including the school, church, and two elevators. Merle and Renae continue to actively farm their acres and enjoy spending time at the lake and with their family.

Today the Schwenzfeiers grow wheat, soybeans, and sugar beets. They grow certified wheat seed every year and have been active seed producing members of MCIA for over 40 years. The farm continues to grow, and the next generation is active and enjoys helping on the farm.



Roger Schwenzfeier, accompanied by his wife, Phyllis Schwenzfeier, receives the Premier Seed Grower Award from Brad Barth, Chairman, MCIA Board of Directors.

PHOTO: ALAN MAKINEN, © MCIA

At the ceremony, Roger Schwenzfeier accepted the award on behalf of himself and his brother, expressing his thanks to MCIA for the honor. ■

CONTINUES ON PAGE 4

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.



PHOTO: ALAN MAKINEN, © MCIAC

Kris Folland, accompanied by his wife, Bethany Folland, receives the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award from Brad Barth, Chairman, MCIAC Board of Directors.

KRIS FOLLAND, HALMA

Kris Folland was born and raised in Kittson County, Minnesota, near the towns of Karlstad and Halma. Growing up near the family farm, he was active on the farm, in 4-H, and enjoyed high school football, and all outdoor activities. After graduating from high school, he attended the University of Minnesota Crookston, earning a degree in agronomy.

After college, Kris worked in the grain and elevator business for 5 years. His employment with MCIAC began in 2006 as a field supervisor, managing seed certification and seed production for northern Minnesota. For the past 17 years, he has been busy working with the many programs and services that MCIAC offers. In 2019, he was promoted to manager of Field Services.

While continuing to conduct day-to-day field tasks, he now manages and develops programs and standards, along with his co-workers. During the summer, Kris inspects certified seed fields and manages the part-time field inspection staff. In winter, he is busy inspecting seed conditioning facilities and bulk seed handlers. Kris has worked with all facets of MCIAC's processes and procedures, program reviews and development, and standards. His successful efforts to develop new business relationships have been a key to MCIAC's growth.

Kris and his wife, Bethany, have been married for 21 years and have four children. Kris and Bethany have been farming, ranching, and working side-by-side since they met in college.

Kris is a Certified Crop Advisor. He also serves, or has served, on many local, regional, and state boards and committees, including Kittson County 4-H, Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, Kittson County Extension, Lake Bronson Farmers Union Oil Coop, Northern Crops Institute, Minnesota Turf Seed Council, Kittson County FSA, and others. He is also honored to be a Farm Rescue volunteer many times.

Kris and Bethany have been honored as Minnesota SWCD State Conservationists for Kittson County. They were also selected as Emerging Leaders for Kittson County. Their farm was the first in the area to be certified under the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Program.

Upon receiving the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award, Kris remarked, "It is an honor to be recognized by MCIAC. I have been fortunate to work with outstanding people in the seed industry and especially the seed producers of Minnesota." ■

ERIC WATKINS, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA TWIN CITIES

Dr. Eric Watkins grew up near Sunburg, Minnesota. He enjoyed gardening as a child and was active in the Kandiyohi County 4-H program, where he exhibited vegetables at both the county and state fairs. This led him to think about plant breeding as a possible career. After graduating from Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg High School, he attended the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, where he found a summer job working for Dr. Nancy Ehlike in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics. Through this experience he became very interested in working on turfgrasses and pursued graduate study at Rutgers University, conducting research in their well-known turfgrass breeding program under the direction of Dr. Bill Meyer.

Dr. Watkins' research focuses on the development of low-input turfgrass cultivars for use in cold climates. Research includes several species including fine fescues and perennial ryegrass. The turfgrass production in northern Minnesota is very important to the area and is a significant percentage of U.S. production. Seed is grown, conditioned and packaged, and sold all over the country and across the globe.

The recipient of numerous honors and awards, Dr. Watkins has taught several courses at the University of Minnesota related to turfgrass management and plant breeding. In September 2022 he started a new role at the UMN—vice provost for distributed learning. In this new role he provides leadership for online educational programs across the five campuses of the University of Minnesota system. He continues to maintain his research program and looks forward to helping turfgrass seed producers for years to come.

He describes his work eloquently, "I like the diversity of projects I get to work on. Minnesota is rare in that we have the entire supply chain for turfgrass seed, so I get to work with seed producers, sod growers, seed vendors, public agency decision-makers, professional turfgrass managers, and residents with lawns. I also love working at a large university—there are so many interesting, talented people to learn from and work with."

Upon receiving the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award, Dr. Watkins expressed his appreciation to MCIAC for working with him on seed production, quality assurance, and new variety issues. He concluded, "Thank you for this excellent honor." ■



PHOTO: ALAN MAKINEN, © MCIAC

Dr. Eric Watkins receives the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award from Brad Barth, Chairman, MCIAC Board of Directors.

Official Minutes of the 2024 Annual Business Meeting

Meeting Convenes: Chairman Brad Barth called the 121st annual business meeting of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association to order at 1:30 p.m. on January 24, 2024. The meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Saint Cloud, Minnesota, the Chairman and Secretary Duane Dahlman 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 2023 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower*. With more than 25 members in attendance, the Chairman declared that quorum was met. He took roll call of the Board members present.

Secretary's Report: Minutes of the 2023 MCIA Annual Meeting were published in the spring 2023 issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower* and were included in the meeting documents. Duane Dahlman moved to approve the minutes of the 2023 MCIA Annual Meeting. The motion was seconded by Ryan Anderson and passed.

Treasure's Report: The Chairman reported that the Statement of Activities and Financial Position for the fiscal year ending May 31, 2023, was included in the meeting documents. The financial report and an independent audit were successfully completed, presented, and accepted at the November 2023 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. Brent Benike moved to approve the May 31, 2023, financial report. The motion was seconded by Kelsey Henke and passed.

Chairman's Report: The Chairman stated that MCIA is in good financial position. He thanked MCIA's staff for their continued dedication to the organization and the loyalty of its members. MCIA is nearly fully staffed with a need to hire additional Organic Services staff as that department continues to grow. He congratulated Roger Wippler on his recent retirement, welcomed Carl Anfinson in his new role as Foundation Seed Manager, and wished recent hires well as they begin their careers with MCIA.

Board of Directors' Election: The Chairman explained the Board of Directors' election ballot: One Category A director was seeking re-election for District 3. Two other Category A director positions were open, one for District 2, another for Related Industry. One nomination had been received for each position: Kelsey Henke, having completed one three-year term representing District 3, sought a second term. Gabel Hoseth of Waubun, Minnesota, was the District 2 nominee. Anthony B. Cortilet of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, was the Related Industry nominee. The UMN's Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station nominated Nancy Ehlke to serve as Category B director. There were no other nominations. Duane Dahlman moved to cast a unanimous ballot in favor of electing the three Category A nominees and ratifying the one Category B nominee. The motion was seconded by Kelsey Henke and passed.

President's Report: Dr. Fawad S. Shah, MCIA President/CEO, introduced MCIA's staff members present. Next, he reported that fiscal year 2022–23 was another successful year for MCIA. Total revenues were \$3,435,306 while total expenses were \$3,218,024. MCIA has a general investment and a building reserve account. In 2015, the total investment value was approximately \$2.5 million. Strategic Wealth Group has taken a progressive and careful approach to both accounts, which

have almost doubled since that time, with a current value of \$4,865,936. Organic Services led all departments in revenue generated followed by Field Services, Foundation Seed Services, Certification Services, and the Seed Laboratory. Organic Services' revenue continues to steadily grow. Revenues for Certification and Field Services continue to be strong but fluctuate in tandem with the number of acres applied for each year. Major expenses for all departments include salary, benefits, and payroll taxes.

The President then reported on the 2023 AOSCA Annual Meeting hosted by MCIA in Bloomington, Minnesota. MCIA raised over \$16,000 in sponsorships, developed and prepared registration packets, and provided logistical support. MCIA staff along with the board chairman attended and hosted the hospitality suite. Thom Petersen, the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, offered welcoming remarks and Tom Slunicka, CEO of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association, was the guest speaker at the awards banquet. Overall, the meeting was a success and a great opportunity for MCIA to participate in various committees and discussions with AOSCA members.

MCIA was featured in several articles over the past year. In October, *Seed World* reported on MCIA's receipt of AOSCA's Excellence in Innovation Award. In another article, *Seed World* reported on AOSCA's honoring of Roger Wippler with an Honorary Lifetime Membership. *Seed World* also interviewed MCIA's president, which led to the article "Should a State-Level Seed Certification Agency Invest Money Outside their State and Outside of Seed Certification?" In November, MCIA was the topic of a *Star Tribune* article.

The President conducted a talk about seed corn production at the Corn Conference held at the University of Agriculture, Pakistan. The President also presented an overview of MCIA to Delta Theta Sigma fraternity, led tours of the MCIA seed lab and conditioning facility, and he continues to develop curriculum and teach a Seed Science, Technology & Society course at the University of Minnesota.

Staff changes at the organization included the retirement of Foundation Seed Services Manager Roger Wippler and the subsequent promotion of Carl Anfinson as manager of the department. Claire Chapman Biel in the seed lab was promoted to seed technologist. Kate Sinnott was hired in August to fill the seed technologist position vacated by Sam Banks in March. Sarah Lindblom and Tessa Parks joined Organic Services as organic certification specialist/inspectors in June.

MCIA's Field Services inspected roughly 200,000 acres in 2023. Nearly 180 facilities are inspected each year under the Approved Facility Program. Field Services staff also perform organic inspections and administer the MnDOT Approved Seed Vendors Program. Field Services continue to perform third-party audit inspections to facilitate specialty grain movement into international markets.

The MCIA Seed Laboratory tested 2,943 samples in the past year. The top five crops being tested are perennial ryegrass, soybeans, wheat, corn, and oats. Training of new staff continues. Clair Chapman Biel attended a four-day germination workshop at Iowa State University. The seed lab completed proficiency testing for SCST, USDA ASL, and ISTA. A customer survey was circulated and feedback was positive; 97 percent of customers were very satisfied with the service they receive.

Foundation Seed Services hosted an open house for the UMN breeding program staff and graduate students.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 6

MINUTES, CONTINUED

Also, Foundation staff provided an education session to Minnesota Department of Agriculture staff. Foundation seed sales increased by 15 percent compared to year 2022. MCIA prepared six new license agreements for five soybean lines and one winter barley line.

The number of clients served by Organic Services increased from 564 to 585. Organic Services staff participated in IOIA Crop and Processor Training courses. A new NOP rule, Strengthening Organic Enforcement, requires that certificates be issued from the OID, a procedure which MCIA has already implemented. There will be an NOP on-site audit in July of 2024.

Administration and Certification staff worked closely with AOSCA to host their annual meeting event in June. Staff worked together to organize a new venue and program for the MCIA Annual Meeting. MCIA conducted an RFP process and contracted with a new managed IT services provider. There will be an on-site AOSCA certification audit in the spring or summer of 2024.

The President explained how MCIA communicates with members. Its publications include an annual *Directory*, a quarterly newsletter, the *Minnesota Seed Guide*, and a monthly bulletin, *Samplings*, as well as the annual *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide*. MCIA's website has a blog, press releases, and article links that provide even more information.

Meeting Adjourns: The Chairman then called for other business. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

Board of Directors Election Results

At the 121st MCIA Annual Meeting, held in St. Cloud on January 24, 2024, the association conducted a board of directors' election. Members elected Gabel Hoseth, of Ulen, to an open director position for District 2 and Anthony B. Cortilet, of St. Paul, to an open Related Industry director position. Members re-elected one incumbent director: Kelsey Henke, District 3. Members also ratified Nancy Ehlke's nomination to the board, by the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station, as a Category B director. Subsequently, the board directors elected officers and Executive Committee members.

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
Anthony B. Cortilet, St. Paul
Nancy Jo Ehlke, UMN Twin Cities
Gabel Hoseth, Ulen
John Kapphahn, Elbow Lake
Jake Noll, Breckenridge

The MCIA Board of Directors will next meet on March 28, 2024, at the MCIA Office in St. Paul.

Cortilet and Hoseth Join Board

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes Anthony B. Cortilet (Related Industry) and Gabel Hoseth (District 2) to MCIA's Board of Directors. Members elected them to the Board of Directors at the MCIA Annual Meeting on January 24, 2024.

Anthony B. Cortilet is the manager of the Seed, Weed, Hemp, and Biotechnology Section of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Division. He has oversight of all four programs but focuses on Noxious Weed and Industrial Hemp. Recently, he has been very busy helping establish the Office of Cannabis Management.

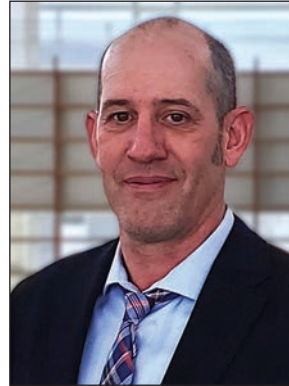


PHOTO COURTESY MDA

Anthony B. Cortilet

Gabel Hoseth is a young farmer in the Waubun area who owns and operates the seed business Spring Creek Seed LLC. He works alongside his grandfather John Pazdernik of Pazdernik Farms Inc. This is a fifth-generation family

farm. As a graduate of North Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in agricultural systems management, he is passionate about the future of farming. Along with raising seed and serving customers, Gabel enjoys sharing his passion for farming with his wife and two young daughters on their small farmstead near Flom. He foresees serving on the MCIA Board or Directors as a great way to learn and give back to the seed industry in Minnesota.



PHOTO COURTESY GABEL HOSETH

Gabel Hoseth

Thank You, Sponsors and Exhibitors!

MCIA thanks the following sponsors and exhibitors who helped make the 2024 MCIA Annual Meeting a success. **Premier Sponsor:** Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council. **Foundation Sponsor:** Strategic Wealth Group and Strategic Tax Group. **Certified Sponsors:** Albert Lea Seed, Bjerke Brothers Inc, Minnesota Corn. **Achievement in Crop Improvement Award Sponsor:** *The Farmer* magazine. **Door Prize Sponsor:** Northern Excellence Seed. **Exhibitors:** AMVT LLC, Bratney, Grain Millers, Minnesota FFA Foundation, Profile Industries, SDSU Seed Testing Lab.



PHOTOS: ALAN MAKINEN, © MCIA

Trade Show: Tyler Hirth and Jack Garrison of Strategic Wealth Group; Tommy Saatzer, Profile Industries; Kathy Mathiason and Brent Turnipseed, SDSU Seed Testing Lab, with Kevin Schulz, *The Farmer* magazine; Craig Tomera, Grain Millers.

Chairman's View

Brad Barth
BOARD CHAIRMAN

Hello everyone, it is close to the end of the winter here in Minnesota and I am just wondering, has anyone seen winter? It seems to have missed us. Usually, we are all either ice fishing, snowmobiling, skiing, or shoveling and cursing. Not so much in the winter of 23/24. No matter what type of winter you've had, I am sure we all are looking forward to spring.

On January 24, 2024, MCIA held its 121st Annual Meeting in St Cloud. It was an excellent gathering with great sponsors, outstanding speakers, and wonderful times networking with our fellow seed professionals. I would like to recognize Fawad and the great staff at MCIA and thank them for organizing such an excellent event. A special thanks to all the sponsors and the members who attended.

On behalf of the Board of Directors I am pleased to report that MCIA is in good financial standing and looks poised to stay strong for the near and distant future. As with all companies there are times when it appears that the year may not meet expectations. Revenues could be down and expenses soaring, but the company and employees dig deep and right the ship as it sails into a prosperous end to the year. Well, MCIA has had those times too, but the hard work of the excellent staff and the loyalty of the members seems to always bring this organization out on top with a little profit to spare.

MCIA has been blessed to acquire some excellent staff members in the past year or two and is currently fully staffed. Few organizations can make that claim. That being said, the organic department is growing every year and will soon need to add staff.

I am sure you have all heard that Roger Wippler has retired. I was very happy to see him there for another yearly meeting, allowing us all a chance to visit with him one last time. I heard from the staff that it has taken quite some time to clean out Roger's office as there were 34-plus years of memories in there. Truly, Roger, I tip my hat to you and your excellent career here at MCIA. You will forever be in our hearts and thoughts.

Roger has left us with an excellently trained, hardworking, and resourceful young man by the name of Carl Anfinson. I have had many conversations with Carl

and can tell you that he will do an excellent job for MCIA. If you have any questions about foundation seed in the future, well, Carl is your man.

2024 is almost a quarter gone and I am still writing 2023 on my checks. As surely as time flies, MCIA we will always have personnel transitions, such as retirements, relocations, and family changes, but we always find new employees to keep the organization running smoothly. I want to welcome all the staff members who joined MCIA over the past year. I hope they can make MCIA their career. You'll only need to work here 35 years to beat Mr. Wippler!

I wish you all have a safe and prosperous 2024. ■

President's Corner

Fawad Shah
PRESIDENT/CEO

Engage Youth in Agricultural Goals

Youth participation in agriculture and crop production is critical to the long-term viability of local communities and the world food chain. Food security and environmental stewardship are crucially dependent on the agricultural sector as we navigate complex issues such as resource depletion and population growth. Academically, delving into the field of seed production exposes students to vital knowledge about plant genetics, breeding techniques, and crop improvement. Thus, laying the foundation for progress and innovation in agriculture. Through active participation in crop production, young people gain invaluable skills in problem-solving, teamwork, and leadership, equipping them with the tools necessary to address the evolving needs of our planet.

Moreover, the integration of youth into agriculture presents an opportunity to revitalize rural economies and mitigate the exodus of talent from farming communities. By giving young people opportunities for agricultural education, training, and entrepreneurship, we enable them to become change agents in their communities, promoting social and economic advancement.

MCIA held a panel discussion, Emerging Leaders in Seed Production, at our recent Annual Meeting. The panelists discussed their seed and crop production journeys. To gain guidance, do research, and share information, they emphasized the need to build alliances as well as using social

media. Other topics addressed included the importance of networking in your local area to gain advice on how to navigate situations such as difficult weather, understanding and preparing to meet market demand for commodities and, most importantly for operational sustainability, identifying and developing a parallel and reliable source of income to meet cash flow needs when farm income falls short.

MCIA has taken the initiative to engage youth in both formal and informal ways. Since 2018, I have taught the Seed Science, Technology, and Society course at the University of Minnesota, encouraging students to learn about the science behind seed production, quality assurance, regulatory affairs, and the marketing aspects of producing seed. For all students, an important part of this class is a tour of MCIA's facility, including a demonstration of seed testing and seed conditioning. Students also learn about the importance of temperature and humidity-controlled seed storage.

Engaging youth in agriculture is a shared responsibility of educational institutions, agricultural businesses, government, and organizations like the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association. Through the aforementioned efforts, MCIA is committed to its role in developing and building interest in the next generation for seed production, in particular, and agriculture, in general, but there is still much work ahead of us. ■

Field Notes

Kris Folland
SEED LABORATORY MANAGER

Almost every grain elevator has the following quote posted on the wall, "Quality is like buying oats. If you want nice, clean, fresh oats, you must pay a fair price. However, if you can be satisfied with oats that have already been through the horse . . . that comes a little cheaper."

While that adage holds true, there are many instances in which certified seed is of the same or lower cost than low-quality seed, because the grower is assured of pure live seed, the absence of noxious weed seed and excess inert material, and payback at harvest. In the case of cover crops, the seeding rate of certified seed is lower, and therefore less costly, than low-quality seed, which may spread weeds, not grow as well, and otherwise cause problems in your fields.

Certified seed and related programs that assure buyers of the quality and identity

CONTINUES ON PAGE 8



THE MINNESOTA SEED GROWER Vol. 96 No.1 Spring 2024 (Pub# 352240) is published quarterly by MCIA, 1900 Hendon Ave, Saint Paul MN 55108. Periodical postage paid at Saint Paul, MN and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE MINNESOTA SEED GROWER 1900 HENDON AVE SAINT PAUL MN 55108

NEED FOUNDATION SEED?

Contact Carl to order:
612-625-7766
carl.anfinson@mncia.org

PERIODICAL

FIELD NOTES, CONTINUED

of seed or grain purchased continue to be of great value. MCIA certification programs, along with our partnerships with organizations such as the Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance and the Minnesota Department of Transportation, are meeting important needs in the seed and grain industries. Demand for these services remains strong.

It is well known that seed of known genetics, tested to certification standards, and accurately labeled is valued favorably in the marketplace. Unfortunately, every year companies ask us *after* the inspection season if their seed can still be certified. We must tell them that after harvest is too late. Make plans *now* to have your seed sources identified, tested, approved for planting, and have your fields inspected to certification standards.

Our Field Inspect Only Program works well for private company genetics and standards because we can customize inspections and an entire seed production program to your needs.

Spring will soon be sprung. MCIA Field Services is here to work alongside you and start the growing season on the right track. ■

Lab Report

Chase Mowry
SEED LABORATORY MANAGER

And so, it began. . . .

With spring comes a daunting workload for a seed analyst. As one expects, samples have started to roll in for testing. Because of this, I will keep the lab update short and sweet so that I can get back to testing and stay afloat.

In terms of samples received, we are two to three weeks ahead of where we were at this time last year. Overall, purities and germination tests have continued to be of high quality, except, perhaps, for some drought-stressed soybeans. Diseased seed has also continued to be minimal.

Except for a written SCST proficiency test due in May, we have submitted all other tests for the year. The lab recently received a new microscope and magnifying lens with light for conducting purity and noxious exams. We are still awaiting a new germination chamber.

As no two days are the same in the lab, we hope sample throughput remains high to provide you with results in a timely manner. ■

CALENDAR

MARCH

- 13-14** Midwest Soil Health Summit, Mankato
- 28** MCIA Board of Directors Meeting, St. Paul
- 29** MCIA Office Closed

APRIL

- 8-10** AOSCA North & West Regional Meeting, Custer, SD
- 29-5/1** National Organic Standards Board Meeting, Milwaukee, WI

MAY

- 27** MCIA Office Closed

For more event information visit www.mncia.org/events