

MCIA Awarded Value Added Producer Grant

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) was recently notified that it has been awarded a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Value Added Producer Grant (VAPG). In the announcement, Agriculture Secretary Michael Johanns noted only 171 applicants across 42 states were awarded funds. The grant will be used to determine the business dynamics and operating requirements for a producer owned identity preserved (IP) service business in Minnesota, with a primary focus on soybeans.

The grant will give MCIA the opportunity to further explore and develop a business plan for increasing efficiency and profits in the IP industry. MCIA will be working with several other industry allies in looking at the possibilities of such a venture. The Minnesota Soybean Growers, the University of Minnesota, and the Midwest Shippers Association will be project partners. The combined efforts of these organizations will insure consideration of the various aspects of the IP industry.

In a world of seemingly ever decreasing profit margins in production agriculture, segmentation and product differentiation are often used to increase profits. An example of the continuing interest in value added products is the recent Midwest Specialty Grains Conference and Trade Show in Bloomington, Minnesota, where over 350 people, from 22 U.S. states and 11 countries attended. The conference, hosted by the Midwest Shippers' Association, covered numerous topics and issues pertinent to the IP industry, such as, transportation, global implications, traceability, economics of growing IP grain and risk management. Several MCIA members who produce, process and export IP products attended the conference.

MCIA has always had a mission to provide an array of services that will improve the profitability and competitive position of its members. This grant will help define how IP and specialty cropping systems can be effectively served in the future, and to determine what MCIA's role should be in that process.

Foundation Seed

If you are interested in Foundation seed of Winona oats, Glenn wheat, Ulen wheat, MN1009 soybeans, or any other varieties, you can order your Foundation seed for 2006 season now – the early order deadline is December 15. *Contact Craig Thelander at 1-800-510-6242 for more information.*

Specialty Soybean Harvest

Over the past several years, a big part of the fall harvest for the Foundation seed program has been specialty soybeans. MCIA staff members Craig Thelander and Roger Wippler have worked closely with Dr. Jim Orf and Phil Schaus of the University of Minnesota soybean breeding program to increase lines that have traits suitable for making a variety of soy food products. These traits vary from large and small seed size for tofu and natto to high protein and altered fatty acid types for other soy products. In addition to quality traits, each line is also evaluated for yield and agronomic traits.

In an effort to protect the integrity of each line, great care is taken to prevent contamination. Like traditional seed production, each line is rouged for purity and field inspected prior to harvest. The combine is thoroughly cleaned between varieties, at times, it can even take longer to clean the combine than to complete the actual harvest of a small increase. Harvested soybeans are stored in bulk tote bags until conditioning, when similar steps are taken to avoid mixtures. Whether it is a sample used to evaluate the potential as a food product or as seed for another year of increase, these steps ensure a pure quality product.

The distribution and licensing of these new specialty soybeans is handled through the MCIA Technology Marketing Services (TMS) program. MCIA serves as the marketing and licensing agent for the University of Minnesota to find potential producers, processors or exporters interested in specialty varieties. Overall, it has provided a new twist to long standing tradition of increasing new varieties developed at the University of Minnesota.

WANTED!

County Crop Improvement Association Info

MCIA is interested in gathering and publishing a record of Minnesota's county crop improvement associations and has leads on information for Houston, Nicollet, West Polk, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Renville, Wright and Waseca County Associations. If you know where to find information on counties not listed please advise Harlan Stoehr by fax at 651-415-1854, by e-mail at stoe003@umn.edu, or by U.S. mail at 5230 Oxford St. North, Shoreview, MN 55126. Or you can send information to MCIA for pickup.

MCIA Website Revised

The new and improved MCIA website at www.mncia.org is now up and running. The new site is now faster and easier to navigate. Visit MCIA's website to learn about the various programs we offer, view the current MCIA directory or look back at recent editions of the Seed Grower. Let us know if you like the new website or have any suggestions for improvement.

Award Nominations Open

Do you know someone who should be recognized for his or her outstanding service to MCIA, the seed industry and their community? Nominations are open for the following awards and will be presented at the MCIA annual meeting January 12-13, 2006 in Fergus Falls, MN. The award for Achievement in Crop Improvement acknowledges exemplary service through dedication to and support of the seed industry as well as involvement in the community. Premier Seedsman recognizes individuals or partners active in the production and promotion of quality seed. Honorary Premier Seedsman recognizes specific service to the seed industry by individuals that are not directly involved in a seed business. If you wish to nominate a candidate or would like a copy of the award guidelines please contact the MCIA office at 1-800-510-6242. The deadline is November 15, 2005. The MCIA Member Relations & Communications Committee will select the recipients.

Organic Corner

Mark Bradley has accepted the position of Associate Deputy Administrator for the National Organic Program. Mark has been working in the NOP as accreditation manager for more than a year. Prior to that he was involved with the program through his work with the AMS Livestock and Seed Program. Bradley played a key role in the adoption of the ISO 9000 quality management standards for use in AMS programs.

From the Federal Register

The USDA AMS published notice to inform certified organic producers and handlers of AMS' intention to release the names and addresses of certified operations to the general public. AMS has determined that the Organic Foods Production Act of 1990 authorizes the release of the names and addresses of certified organic producers and handlers under the broad category of information characterized by the OFPA as "certification documents." Therefore, AMS intends to release the names and addresses of certified producers and handlers to the general public in response to requests for such information.

Proposed Amendments to the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances

The NOSB has recommended that the USDA amend the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances. This proposed rule would add fifteen substances, along with any restrictive annotations to the National List. The proposed rule would also amend the mailing address for where to file a Certification or Accreditation appeal. Information on these proposed changes is posted on the National Register; contact the MCIA office at 800-510-6242 for the specific location. Comments on the proposed rule can be emailed to national.list@usda.gov by November 15, 2005.

MN Organic and Grazing Conference

The MN Organic and Grazing Conference will be held in St. Cloud, MN on January 20 - 21, 2006.

Beil's Spiel

HAZARDOPHOBIC is a new word I recently discovered. It means; "The risks of avoiding risks." Everyone involved in production agriculture knows all about taking risks. Farming is a risky business. There are risks related to such things as weather patterns, markets, input costs, etc. that we really have very little control of. In spite of the fact we can't really control them, they still add significant levels of risk to our farming business.

I recently was chatting with a MCIA member who about 10 years ago made the decision to get back into farming after trying his hand at several other activities. He jokingly said that before he began farming again, he would visit the casino from time to time to play a little blackjack. Knowing him as I do, I am certain he was far from being a big time gambler. However, he stated that he kind of liked the risk of playing blackjack and seeing if he could beat the odds. He went on to say that since getting back into farming, he now has all the risks he can handle in farming, and he has no desire to go back to the casino.

In addition to the risks we can't control, there are a lot of risks involved in agricultural businesses that we can manage. Decisions like; should we use a new chemical? Or a new genetically modified variety? Or get involved in a new production practice or regime? All examples of the kinds of decisions we can make, even though making them can add risk to our business enterprise.

But look closely at the definition of hazardophobic. The definition is *the risks of avoiding risks*. I have learned that often times there are greater risks associated with not taking risks than there are by taking the risk itself. Change is constantly around us and our operations, and we are repeatedly challenged to take risks. In this kind of business environment, many times the only way we can cause our businesses to grow is to take risks. To not take these risks, can expose us to the even greater risk of missing an important new opportunity.

In this edition of The Grower is an announcement that MCIA has been awarded a value added producer grant from the USDA. There were risks associated with the grant process. An investment in money and time was involved in preparing the grant. This was done not knowing if we even had a chance of being awarded the grant. Now that we know we have the grant, there will be a lot of risk in finding out where it will lead us in the future. The grant is for a feasibility study to explore where our association should be heading in serving value added agricultural production in Minnesota. We will try to determine what MCIA should look like in the future and how we can make what we may become a profitable enterprise.

This could be pretty scary for all of us. We could have been hazardophobic about the whole thing, and just not taken the risk. I am pleased that your board of directors and staff believed that the risks are worth it. We will keep you advised of our progress.

-Gary Beil, President/CEO

MCIA to Co-sponsor IP Workshops

MCIA in cooperation with the Midwest Shippers Association and the Northern Crops Institute will sponsor an Identity Preserved (IP) workshop this winter. Planning is underway on a program that will include recognizing Trends in Today's agriculture, Opportunities in IP and Specialty Grain Markets, Identifying Your Customer and Services to Support Your IP Production System. One of these workshops will be held in conjunction with the MCIA Annual Meeting in Fergus Falls, January 12 - 13, 2006. Other workshop locations have yet to be determined. Watch for more information in the future.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING
FROM THE MCIA STAFF

The MCIA office will be closed November 24 - 25, 2005.

Lab Notes

Completing Certification - Each year we receive questions about completing seed certification. It should be noted that a field inspection alone does not mean your seed has been certified. There are two basic components to certification, field inspection and lab analysis. Therefore **Passed Field Inspection + Passed Lab Analysis = Completed Certification**. Lab samples must be submitted by an MCIA approved conditioner with a completed sampling report. If you are a grower and sell your seed to a conditioner, a "statement of transfer" at the bottom of the sampling report must be completed for you to receive proper credit for completing certification. Please contact your field supervisor or MCIA if you have any questions.

Other Items to Remember:

- When sending in samples for testing, please be sure the information on the sample bag and the sampling report is the same. Also, be sure to note what tests are requested.
- According to official seed testing rules, seed counts can only be completed after a purity test has been conducted. If a seed count is requested on an unconditioned seed lot, we will complete a purity test before doing a seed count.
- Carryover Seed Reports are needed before you can complete certification on any seed produced in 2004 or earlier. A carryover report is only required on seed not previously certified.
- Mixing bagged and bulk lots is not permitted when certifying seed. Each type of storage unit (bag, totes or bulk) must be tested as a separate lot. For example 2000 bushel of wheat handled as 1000-bushel bagged and 1000-bushel bulk must be treated as two separate lots with two samples and sampling reports.

As we prepare to handle another year of testing, please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions on how we can provide better service. Also, please plan to attend MCIA's annual meeting in Fergus Falls, January 12 - 13, 2006. Additional topics related to lab testing, sampling and certification will be addressed.

MCIA Organic Member Grand Prize Winner

A sample of "Camp Aquila Pure Maple Syrup" was named Grand Prize winner in the 2005 competition among producers belonging to the Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association. Placing first in the "Dark Amber" class, the Camp Aquila entry scored higher than the first place finishers in the "Light" and "Medium" classifications. Camp Aquila's entry in the "Light Amber" class placed second in that class.

Syrup entries were judged by a panel of experienced maple syrup producers on the basis of density (correct sugar concentration), flavor, clarity and color. The winning entry from Camp Aquila Pure Maple Syrup, LLC scored a total of 80 on a 90 point scale.

The competition was held at the Wild Mountain Ski Area near North Branch, MN on May 21, 2005 in conjunction with the Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers' Association. The Association has nearly 60 members from all parts of the State of Minnesota. Members are encouraged to enter samples of their new production in the contest at the spring meeting.

Camp Aquila Pure Maple Syrup, LLC produces USDA certified organic maple syrup from its "sugar bush" and production facilities located on Star Lake property near Dent, MN. It is a family operated business owned by Stu and Corinne Peterson, officers. Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is Camp Aquila's organic certification agency.

2005 was a difficult season for producers throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. For the 2005 season Camp Aquila processed 2,700 gallons of sap gathered from 725 "taps" in their sugar bush, producing over 80 gallons of syrup. Peterson indicated that production was down by more than half compared to 2004 and 2003. Sap production is largely a function of freezing and thawing cycles in late March and early April. The most recent season was characterized by a lack of such cycles.

For information contact Stu Peterson, Camp Aquila Pure Maple Syrup at 218-758-2796.

MCIA Annual Meeting Set for January 12-13, 2006

Please make plans to attend the MCIA Annual Meeting at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls on January 12-13, 2006. An informational meeting is being planned which will include an Identity Preserved workshop and a member and Approved Conditioners update with a session on intellectual property. This will be a good opportunity for plant managers/operators and approved samplers to review the requirements for Approved plants. The meeting will also provide an opportunity to recognize award recipients, conduct committee meetings and elect directors during the annual business meeting. Put it on your schedule today!

Director Nominations

The MCIA Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the MCIA Board of Directors. Regular members of the Association are eligible for nomination. Contact the office if you would like to serve on the Board of Directors or would like to nominate someone.

The term of John Angell in District 7, Southeast Minnesota, and Quentin Schultz, Related Industry, Statewide, will expire in January. Both have served two terms and are not eligible for re-election. Director nominations are also open for District 5, South Central, Minnesota. Neal Anderson, St. Peter, has served one term and is eligible for re-election. Send nominations to the MCIA office and they will be forwarded to the nomination committee.

Minnesota State Fair Certified Seed Show Results

Thank you to all of those who entered this year's MN State Fair.

The champion results are as follows:

Champion Oats Sample:

Falk Seed Farm, Murdock, MN

Champion Wheat Sample:

Krabbenhoft Seed & Supply, Sabin, MN

Champion Soybean Sample:

Circle C Seeds, Gary, MN

Champion Legume or Grass Sample:

Norfarm Seeds Inc. (Buddy Farms), Bemidji, MN

Champion Showman Award:

Wigen Seed Farm, Marlow Wigen, Litchfield MN



MCIA Annual Meeting: January 12-13, 2006
Best Western Bigwood Event Center
in Fergus Falls, MN

The Minnesota Seed Grower

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PERIODICAL

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MISSION STATEMENT

MCIA is an organization dedicated to improving the productivity, profitability and the competitive position of MCIA members by providing services to producers, conditioners, and distributors of plant products enabling them to provide high quality plant products to Minnesota, the U.S. and the World.

Calendar

November 5-8..... ASTA Farm & Lawn Seed Conference, Kansas City, MO
 November 18..... MCIA Board of Directors Meeting, St. Paul
 December 7-9..... ASTA Corn & Soybean Research Conference, Chicago, IL
 December 7-8..... Prairie Grains Conference, Grand Forks, North Dakota
 January 12-13, 2006..... MCIA Annual Meeting, Fergus Falls
 January 20-21, 2006..... MN Organic and Grazing Conference, St. Cloud
 January 23-24, 2006..... MN Soybean Growers Assn. Annual Meeting, Morton, MN
 January 24-25, 2006..... MN Corn Growers Assn. Annual Meeting, Morton, MN

New MCIA Staff

Anne Costello began working as the Organic Program Specialist in September. She recently graduated from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York with a degree in Environmental Studies. After spending four years living in New York, she was ready to move back to her home state this past June. At MCIA, she monitors the progress of organic applications and serves on the committees that oversee organic certification. If you are applying for organic certification this year, you will have the opportunity to work with her.

Durgan Accepts New Appointment

Dr. Beverly Durgan who serves on the MCIA Board of Directors has been appointed as the new Dean and Director of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Previously, Durgan served as Associate dean for research and outreach in the College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences (COAFES), since 2000. Durgan replaces Charles Casey who was appointed chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC). Casey served as dean and director of Extension for the past six-and-one-half years.

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 I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. *-Alana Rogers*