

MCIA Represented at 50th Anniversary Celebration in Tokyo

Jon Anderson, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, and Dr. Jim Orf, University of Minnesota, recently attended the 50th Anniversary of the opening of the first overseas office of the American Soybean Association (ASA). The event was held at the Imperial Hotel in downtown Tokyo on August 24, 2006.

“The Japanese export market is critical to the health of the US soybean industry. The ASA has been working very hard for 50 years to develop and maintain a market presence in Japan. This was a great opportunity to look back and reflect on the success for both the US and Japan,” stated Anderson.

The 50th Anniversary celebration was held in conjunction with the Annual Food Soybean Conference and Trade Show. Dr Orf spoke at the conference and Jon Anderson represented the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association and MCIA during the trade show. In 2005, Japan purchased more than one billion dollars of U.S. soybeans and soybean products, which included nearly 510,000 metric tons (18.7 million bushels) of high-value Identity Preserved food grade soybeans. MCIA offers several programs that enhance the value of food grade soybeans.

“It was a great opportunity to visit with representatives from the Japanese food grade soybean industry. I really appreciate the chance to meet with the soybean buyers and processors and learn more about their needs. It provides me with helpful information for our soybean breeding program,” stated Dr. Orf.

The event was well attended. Japanese customers were represented by officers and members of the Japanese Oilseed Processors Association (JOPA), Japan Oil & Fat Importers & Exporters Association (JOFIEA), Japan Federation of Miso Manufacturers Cooperative, and Japan Tofu Association.

Minnesota was also well represented. added Anderson. Minnesota companies present were Behm Seed Company, Atwater; Bluestem Farm Supply, Mountain Lake; Grain Millers Specialty Products, Eden Prairie; Knewton Seed Company, Good Thunder; Northland Organic Food Corp., St. Paul; SK Food International, Fargo/Moorhead; and Sunrich LLC, Minnetonka. Jennifer Kocs represented the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. Dr. Orf was sponsored by the ASA and Jon Anderson was sponsored by the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council.

USDA estimates that Japan’s total imports of soybeans for 2006 will be 4.2 million metric tons, and the U.S. share of imports should remain at the 2005 level of roughly 76 percent.

To learn more about the history of U.S. soybean exports to Japan, visit www.soygrowers.com.

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 that will be presented at the MCIA annual meeting January 7-8, 2007 in Morton, 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, 2006. The MCIA Member Relations & Communications Committee will select the recipients.

MCIA Annual Meeting Set for January 7-8, 2007

The MCIA Annual Meeting will be held January 7th & 8th, 2007 at Jackpot Junction Casino, Morton, MN. The 2007 Annual Meeting will be held jointly with Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. Featured speaker will be Gus Schumacher the former Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services at the United States Department of Agriculture. Look for additional registration and program information in the future. Mark your calendar now and plan to attend.

Director Nominations

The MCIA Nominating Committee is seeking candidates for the MCIA Board of Directors. Regular members of the Association are eligible for nomination.

Director nominations are open for District 2, Glenn Rivard, Argyle, MN, and District 7, Tim Backman, Herman, MN. Both are eligible for reelection as they are finishing their first term.

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 Barley Sample:

Wigen Seed Farm, Litchfield, MN

Champion Oats Sample:

*Falk Seed Farm (Ron Thorseth),
Murdock, MN*

Champion Wheat Sample:

*Falk Seed Farm (Ron Thorseth),
Murdock, MN*

Champion Soybean Sample:

*Sawvells Seed Inc. (Jonathon Olson),
Clements, MN*

Champion Showman Award:

*Wigen Seed Farm, Marlow Wigen,
Litchfield MN*

Beil's Spiel

“IT IS USELESS FOR THE SHEEP TO PASS RESOLUTIONS IN FAVOR OF VEGETARIANISM WHILE THE WOLF REMAINS OF A DIFFERENT OPINION!” This quote was the basis for lengthy discussion at a recent meeting where the concerns of agricultural producers were being examined. Those of us in the production end of the food chain often find ourselves like the sheep. Often we are concerned with maintaining our current situation. We lobby, become politically active, and join groups advocating preservation of a way of life or way of operating our business. Then what we view as “the wolf” comes along, and what we have done doesn't seem to make any difference. We begin to fear that the wolf will always get its way.

I am not suggesting that producers are always like sheep and totally subject to the whim of the wolf. Unfortunately, producers, whether in groups or acting alone, often have lacked the supporting organization or resources to get in and do battle with the wolf. I often use the “Spiel” to talk about how things in agriculture are always in a state of change—new technologies, market forces, opportunities, etc. One thing however that has not changed over the years is that those at the start of the food chain, such as the producers who provide raw product, have had little control of what happens as the products they produce proceed up the food chain. In addition, producers have been dependent on those “up the chain” for resources, new products and end-user markets to stay in business. As a result, those “up-the-chain” folks appear as “wolves” to the “sheep” that are engaged in producing raw product.

Fortunately, it is not simply a matter of the wolf dictating how things will be done by the sheep. MCIA members have discovered they really are an integral part of the food chain, and partnerships and strong business relationships have emerged. The sheep and the wolf have discovered they need each other to survive, and this has caused the emergence of more efficient product delivery. MCIA's certification, traceability, and other 3rd party verification programs have connected the points along the food chain, resulting in safer and more efficiently produced food supplies. These programs literally assure the viability of the relationship between the sheep and the wolf.

Recently, several new opportunities have begun to assume a large role in the businesses of MCIA's members. Bio-fuels are perhaps the most stunning example. In the case of products like bio-diesel and ethanol, producers are not part of a long chain required to get a product to the end-user. Cooperative styles of business structures engage producers in the whole process. Now they do not just identify themselves with sheep providing raw product, they are also interested in the success of the wolf.

There will always be sheep and there will always be wolves. Even though their dietary preferences will be different, in the end they need each to survive. MCIA is here to make sure that happens.

-Gary Beil, President/CEO

Organic Corner

From the Federal Register

The USDA recently published the final rule for the National List of Allowed and Prohibited Substances to reflect recommendations submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture by the National Organic Standards Board from November 15, 2000 through March 3, 2005.

Consistent with the recommendations from the NOSB, this final rule adds thirteen substances to the National List. This final rule also amends the mailing address where Certification or Accreditation appeals should be filed. The effective date for this ruling was September 12, 2006.

The notice in the federal register can be found at: http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/Newsroom/FedReg09_11_06TM-04-01.pdf

IFOAM International Conference on Animals in Organic Production

From August 23rd to 25th, over 250 of the world's leading organic livestock experts from 24 countries attended the 1st IFOAM International Conference on Animals in Organic Production at the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education and Conference Center in St. Paul, MN. MCIA staff members Cindy Wippler, Brenda Rogers, and Anne Costello attended the conference.

Presentations that covered topics such as antibiotic resistance, humane treatment of animals, and homeopathic medicines were given by researchers and livestock producers from all over the world.

Jim Riddle, the University of Minnesota's Organic Outreach Coordinator and conference coordinator, said, “The University of Minnesota was honored to host this historic event, which brought together top organic livestock researchers and producers from around the world. The exchange of information was incredible, and the impacts of this conference will be felt for years to come.”

IFOAM is the international umbrella organization of Organic Agriculture movements worldwide.

Seed Lab Notes

It's the beginning of the seed testing season. During this busy time it is important that the information submitted to the laboratory is complete and accurate. Following are some tips to help get this season off to a good start, as we want to provide the best service possible and prevent testing delays.

Declare your carryover seed! Do you intend to complete certification on any seed produced in 2005 or earlier? Now is the time to submit your Declaration of Carryover Seed forms. All carryover seed for which certification has not been completed should be reported. If you need a form, please contact the MCIA office.

Send your seed samples now! Send in your seed samples early and beat the rush. Preliminary testing for germination and purity can help determine the quality of your seed prior to conditioning. When sending in samples for testing please be sure the information on the sample bag and the sampling report is consistent and complete. Also, be sure to note what tests you are requesting.

Variety Check on Service Samples: Keep in mind that a variety check is not completed on a service sample. If there are any discrepancies, they won't be reported. Requesting a variety check, may detect a problem early and prevent future complications.

AOSA Rules on Seed Counts: Please be sure to request a purity test when requesting a seed count. Seed testing rules require that the seed count be based on a pure seed sample. Seed counts may vary considerably between unconditioned seed and conditioned seed.

Treated Seed: If you are completing certification on a treated seed lot, please submit an untreated sample for a variety check. A variety check can not be determined on treated seed which is required for certification. Also, please do not place the Sampling Report in the treated seed bag.

Completing Certification – Remember there are two basic components to certification, field inspection and lab analysis. So, 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.

Seed Certification Handbook – The answers to many questions you may have in regards to seed certification such as sampling procedures, test requirements, labeling requirements or completing certification, can be found in the Seed Certification Handbook. The handbook is available online at www.mncia.org or you may request a copy by contacting the MCIA office or your field supervisor.

Chairman's View

Yogi Berra once said; “Baseball is different today... but it isn't”. Berra's quote rings true for agriculture, as well. Agriculture is different today... but it isn't.

This year was hot and dry early but timely rains fell to generally produce a decent crop. Most years our crops are threatened at some point, but in the end, production comes through. Each year is different, but really a lot the same.

MCIA is also different today...but it isn't. MCIA is in the process of reinventing itself. Field certification is still a key part of our business, but a variety of new programs, such as Organic, IP, QA and Tech-Marketing Services, are adding new revenue streams. MCIA is changing from a focus on seed production to a focus on customer's needs and demands. Many of our customers operate in a global agri-food industry, so MCIA must be able to provide certain services worldwide.

MCIA is different today, a lot different, but it still maintains a very talented and dedicated staff that are working diligently to fulfill our mission statement which is “to improve 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 United States and all the world”.

Agriculture is different today, but it isn't. A century ago farms were generally self-sufficient. Very little of what was needed for production had to be purchased. Manure from the farm's livestock was the principal fertilizer. Hay from the farm produced the energy for the horses to provide power. Windmills produced electricity and pumped water. Now, we are coming full circle. Corn based ethanol production has become a major industry. Biodiesel is a rapidly growing energy component. Cellulosic ethanol production, the conversion of cellulose to ethanol, is being done on the experimental level. Two pilot projects are underway in Minnesota and North Dakota to demonstrate the commercial viability of producing nitrogen fertilizers from wind-generated hydrogen.

Currently, it is possible for our tractors to run on diesel produced from the soybeans we grow, and our vehicles can run on ethanol produced from the corn we grow. The windmill on the south 40 can produce the electricity to light our farms and power much of our equipment. Perhaps in the not to distant future that same windmill will be producing anhydrous ammonia for our fertilizer needs.

Could it be possible for agriculture to step back to the future and not only produce the energy needs for our farms but a major portion of the needs of this country and free ourselves from dependence on foreign oil? Agriculture may in the future fuel the world as well as feed the world.

Agriculture is different today... but it isn't.

-Steve Helmstetter

The Minnesota Seed Grower

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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.



HAPPY THANKSGIVING FROM THE MCIA STAFF

The MCIA office will be closed November 23 - 24, 2006.

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In Memorium

Tom Szczepanski, 69 of Stephen, MN passed away on July 24, 2006. Tom was a certified seed producer for over 30 years prior to his retirement in 2000. He enjoyed the seed business and earned many awards for the seed he produced. He received the MCIA Premier Seedsman Award in 1991. Tom was active member in many Stephen area organizations. He is survived by his wife Eileen and six children.

Edward Zabel, age 52 of Plainview, MN passed away August 30, 2006. He operated Zabel Seeds and an extensive agri-dairy business. He was an active MCIA member; producing Foundation seed and serving on various committees. He was recognized with the MCIA Premier Seedsman award in 1986. He also was a top dairy herdsman and was active in the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. In addition, Ed was active in his local church and community.

MCIA extends its condolences to the families of these long time seed producers.

Calendar

November 4-7 ASTA Farm & Lawn Seed Conference, Kansas City, MO
 November 10 MCIA Board of Directors Meeting, St. Paul, MN
 December 6-8 ASTA Corn & Soybean Research Conference, Chicago, IL
 December 13-14 Prairie Grains Conference, Grand Forks, ND
 January 7-8, 2007 MCIA Annual Meeting, Morton, MN
 January 7-8, 2007 MN Soybean Growers Assn. Annual Meeting, Morton, MN
 January 19-20, 2007 MN Organic and Grazing Conference, St. Cloud, MN

MCIA Board Member Recognized

Congratulations to MCIA Board Member Mary Hanks who recently received the Sustainable Farming Association Distinguished Service Award. Mary is the sustainable agriculture director at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Mary has been an active supporter of sustainable agriculture and has provided critical leadership throughout her tenure at MDA.

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