

Are You Producing Quality Seed?

In early September, MCIA received from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) the news article printed below. It is intended to remind consumers that they are protected by law against fraudulent seed sales. It should also serve as a reminder to seed producers, conditioners and retailers of their responsibility to produce and distribute high quality seed that is properly labeled.

For most in the seed business, providing a quality product to the customer is the number one goal. When meeting that goal they also expect to make a reasonable profit. The consumer is looking for a quality product at a reasonable price. When the seed they purchase does not meet their expectations, no matter the reason, they often go back to the supplier, or worse yet, they don't go back and you lose a customer.

To maintain a reputation as a supplier of quality products it is necessary that everyone involved in your operation knows what needs to be done, how to do it properly and why it is important. Whether it is family or hired employees, take some time to make sure that they understand why it is important to keep accurate records, clean equipment between varieties, store and condition properly, accurately test and correctly label seed you are producing and selling. Taking these steps now will prevent problems and insure that your customers remain satisfied.

MCIA serves as a member on the MDA Seed Program Advisory Group. The group was formed to provide information and advice to the MDA administration of the Minnesota Seed Law and Seed Regulatory Program. It meets three times per year to discuss regulatory issues related to the seed industry. If you have issues or questions you would like MCIA to bring forward to this advisory group, please let us know.

MDA Provides Consumer Protection Against Fraudulent Seed Sales

ST. PAUL, Minn. - The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is reminding consumers to file a complaint if they believe they have purchased seed that does not perform as advertised or labeled. Faulty performance would include things such as the incorrect variety, inferior quality, or the seed simply does not live up to claims made in advertising.

The Minnesota Seed Law protects consumers through truthful labeling of seed in the state and fair marketplace competition by requiring all seed labelers to comply with the same requirements. Violations of the seed law typically involve seed that is sold after the germination test date has expired, is not of the kind, variety, or quality stated on the label, or contains excessive levels of inert matter or weed seed. Violations may also occur when seed has been otherwise misrepresented by false or misleading advertising.

Seed law complaints may be filed with MDA by mail, e-mail, phone, or in person via an MDA Seed and Noxious Weed Unit staff member or a County Agricultural Inspector (CAI). The individual making the complaint will be asked to complete and sign a Seed Inspection Request Form. This form is used to officially initiate a complaint investigation and establish a case file.

In order to accurately investigate a case, MDA must be notified about the complaint before the crop is harvested so inspectors can see the field and gather evidence such as samples, statements from involved parties, and documents related to the sale. The earlier in the growing season that a problem is discovered and reported, the more likely a conclusive investigation can be accomplished.

For more information, visit the MDA website at www.mda.state.mn.us.

MDA's Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is now accepting applications for the Sustainable Agriculture Demonstration Grant Program. Competitive grants for up to \$25,000 will be awarded to individuals or groups for on-farm sustainable agriculture research or demonstration projects in Minnesota.

The purpose of the Grant Program is to fund practices that promote environmental stewardship and conservation of resources as well as improve profitability and quality of life on farms and in rural areas. Proposals are due at the MN Dept. of Agriculture by January 16, 2009. Examples of eligible projects include fruit and vegetable production, conservation tillage and weed management, integrated pest management, livestock production, organic farming, alternative energy crop production, use of cover crops, or other innovative projects. Grant applications are available on the MDA website at www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/grants/demogrant.htm or contact the Agricultural Development and Financial Assistance Division at 651-201-6012.

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 (Marlow Wigen),
Litchfield, MN*

Champion Oats Sample:

*Falk's Seed Farm (Jim Falk),
Murdock, MN*

Champion Wheat Sample:

*Haugrud Seed Plant,
Rothsay, MN*

Champion Soybean Sample:

*Falk's Seed Farm (Jim Falk)
Murdock, MN*

Champion Grass Sample:

*Norfarm Seeds, Inc. (Arlan Dalager)
Roseau, MN*

The MCIA Mission

You may have noted below on this page, that MCIA has recently restated its mission in its Mission Statement. Every organization needs to define its purpose and many accomplish this through the development of a mission statement. A well written mission statement defines a business at its most basic level. It describes what the organization does, whom it serves, and why the organization does what it does.

Those charged with developing a mission statement are given an important responsibility. A mission that is too narrowly defined can limit the ability of the business to respond to changes in the environment in which it operates and can prevent the organization from making changes needed to survive and prosper. A mission statement that is too broad will give little direction to the organization or its customers on why it exists and what it can potentially become.

MCIA's first mission statement was developed and adopted by the Association leadership in the early 1990's. At that time, MCIA had just completed a decade of rapid growth in seed certification and Minnesota led the nation in the production of certified seed. It would have been easy to forgo adopting a mission statement and to continue to define MCIA in terms of the services that it had always provided – seed certification and foundation seedstocks distribution. Instead, that Board of Directors undertook the task of adopting a mission statement with vision and insight that allowed MCIA to respond to the many changes that would come to the seed industry and agriculture. While they probably couldn't have predicted the changes that were to come, they did understand that MCIA would need to look at itself in a broader context, as a provider of services that enabled its customers to manage the quality of their products in order to profitably market them.

At their June meeting, the MCIA Board of Directors reviewed the Mission Statement to determine whether it still represented the purpose and direction of the Association. With only minor changes, the mission statement was reapproved. In fact, the only change needed was to broaden the description of the products we work with to "agricultural" rather than "plant products" in response to MCIA moving into organic livestock certification. The purpose of this organization continues to be defined by key words contained in the statement: improving, enable and high-quality. I believe this mission statement will continue to provide guidance to our organization as we continue to evolve and grow in response to the changes in agriculture. As long as this organization focuses its energies on fulfilling this mission, MCIA will remain a relevant and important member of the agricultural community in serving "Minnesota, the United States and the World".

Ben Lang
MCIA President/CEO

Chairman's View

Fall is here. Harvest is in full swing. It really is a fun time for all in the business of agriculture or related businesses. It is a time to assess the decisions we made for the '08 year and begin the planning for the '09 season. Maybe saying to begin the planning for the '09 crop seems a little odd, but as many of you know or have experienced, many decisions and purchases have already been made for 2009. How we do business is really on a rapid pace of change. This leads me to invite you to mark your calendar for our annual meeting January 6-7, 2009. Your participation and input in your organization is more important now than ever. Please plan to attend. Have a safe and bountiful harvest.

Tim Backman
MCIA Chairman

MCIA Mission Statement Updated

The MCIA Board of Directors revised the MCIA Mission Statement at their June, 2008 meeting. The update was necessary to reflect the broader array of services offered and products certified by MCIA.

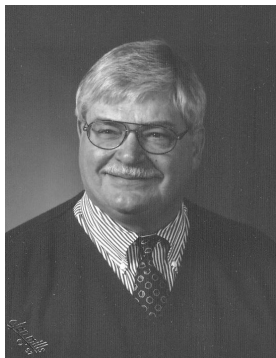
MCIA Mission Statement (revised 6/13/08)

MCIA is an organization dedicated to improving the productivity, profitability and competitive position of producers, processors, and distributors of agricultural products by providing services to enable them to provide high-quality products to Minnesota, the United States and the World.

Reminder: Label Your Seed Bins

Seed Producers and conditioners must properly label all bins containing seed by either a bin number, or variety and a lot number. Corresponding records should include variety, field numbers(s), year grown, seed class and grower or lot number. Seed growers and conditioners who offer cleaned bulk seed for sale from their bins need to display the seed label on the bin as required by the Minnesota Seed Law (Sec. 21.82). Bulk retail facilities must also have their bins clearly marked with the seed label posted on the bin.

Gary Beil Receives AOSCA Honorary Membership



Dr. Gary Beil who served as the President/CEO of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association was presented the Honorary Membership award by the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA). Gary served on a number of AOSCA committees and was instrumental in building relationships that have evolved into a number of new business opportunities being offered through AOSCA. Gary spent his entire

career dedicated to the breeding and improvement of crop varieties. Prior to his service to MCIA Gary worked as a commercial plant breeder and held several management roles in the seed industry. Gary, and his wife, Nell, reside in Bloomington, MN.

Allan Simons who retired from Arizona Crop Improvement also was recognized with AOSCA's Honorary Membership. Allan worked for MCIA from 1985-1987. The awards were presented at the 90th Annual AOSCA meeting in Quebec City, Canada.

New Certification Specialist



Jennifer Pernsteiner joined the MCIA staff in August as Certification Specialist/Technical Lead. She will provide technical support for certification, outsourced testing services and to the Native Seed Program activities. This will include overseeing outsourced product testing activities, defining and evaluating testing protocols and

reviewing test results to determine product conformance to certification requirements. In addition, she will be managing documentation required for the certification programs including OECD, working with the variety files and conducting field inspections.

Jennifer comes to MCIA from BioDiagnostics, Inc. where she served as Supervisor of the Grass and Small Seed Lab. Jennifer is a Registered Seed Technologist and has experience working within an ISO quality management system. Jennifer resides in Spring Valley, Wisconsin with her husband Steve.

Seed Certification Standards Revised

The MCIA Board of Directors has approved changes to the MCIA Agronomic Seed Certification Standards. The standards changes were necessary to make limits on the presence of restricted weed seeds in certified seed more consistent with standards for certified seed in other states. The revised standards are now in effect and may be downloaded from the MCIA website at http://www.mncia.org/program_seedcert.html or you may call MCIA to request a copy.

Director Nominations

MCIA members may nominate candidates for the Board of Directors. Nominations are open for the following: Neal Anderson, District 5, Mary Hanks, Related Industry and James Hunzeker, District 7. Neal has served two terms and is not eligible for re-election. Mary and James are eligible for re-election as they are finishing their first term. Contact the MCIA office or send nominations to: MCIA, 1900 Hendon Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108. All nominations will be forwarded to the nomination committee.

Organic Corner

We are currently finishing up the producer inspections. This summer has been a bit of a scramble since Ben Lang, our organic inspector in the Central Minnesota region, assumed his new role as President/CEO of MCIA. We have, however, found two well qualified inspectors to fill that vacancy.

We have also seen an increase in the number of vegetable producers we certify. They are primarily operating around the Twin Cities and St. Cloud area. Our plan going forward is to handle these inspections early in the season. So be warned, vegetable growers, your renewal packets may be showing up a month earlier next year. This will enable us to set up inspections as soon as possible in the growing season.

The NOP auditors have required us to provide applicants with an estimate of the total cost of being certified. You will therefore be getting an Organic Certification Cost Estimate with your renewal packages. It will provide our estimate of the total cost of certification of your operation for the year. It will include the membership/application fee, the base fee, our estimate of the inspection fee based on your previous years' inspections, and our estimate of the final fees based on the estimate you provided on the previous annual agreement form. This is all information that can be found on our fee schedule, but it will be detailed to your operation.

You should be getting a brochure in the mail to subscribe to OMRI. OMRI is the Organic Materials Review Institute. Products that have been reviewed and approved by OMRI can be used in organic production and processing. OMRI also provides an on-line searchable website at <http://www.omri.org>.

The Minnesota Seed Grower

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Minnesota Seed Grower, 1900 Hendon Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108.

Ben Lang..... President & CEO
 Tim Backman Chairman
 James Hunzeker..... Vice Chairman
 Neal Anderson..... Treasurer
 John Lundquist..... Secretary
 Brent Benike Director
 David Boehm..... Director
 Rick Brandenburger..... Director
 Nancy Ehlke Director
 Mary Hanks Director
 Glenn Rivard Director
 Cal Spronk Director

MISSION STATEMENT

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MCIA Annual Meeting Set for January 6-7, 2009

The MCIA Annual Meeting will be held at Jackpot Junction Hotel, in Morton, MN. Our meeting will be held jointly with the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. More information to come.

The Minnesota Seed Grower

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Calendar

October 31 High Tunnel Production for Commerical Growers, UW Riverfalls
 November 2-3 ASTA Farm & Lawn Seed Conference, Kansas City, MO
 November 14 MCIA Board of Directors Meeting, St. Paul, MN
 November 27-28 Thanksgiving - MCIA Office Closed
 December 9-12 ASTA Corn & Soybean Expo, Chicago, IL
 December 10-11 Prairie Grains Conference, Grand Forks, ND
 January 6-7, 2009 MCIA Annual Meeting, Morton, MN
 January 7, 2009 MN Soybean Growers Assn. Annual Meeting, Morton, MN

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 6-7, 2009 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 7, 2008.

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I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete. - Janet Daninger