

## Training - A Key to Success

When MCIA began to diversify from its traditional seed certification program several years ago, training became a key component to providing effective, cost efficient services. Training was essential for MCIA staff to understand and conduct the new programs. However, it also became apparent that the staff would need to be able to train others as well. Over the last 10 years, from the field to the classroom, training has become an important part of the services MCIA has to offer.

Training takes place in many different forms and locations. All part-time field inspectors participate in seasonal training sessions specific to the crops they will be inspecting. This training includes classroom sessions on changes to standards, program updates as well as new report forms. The field component covers crop characteristics and traits as well as common problems that an inspector might encounter in a crop inspection, whether it be corn, small grains or soybeans. Field supervisors also provide individual training to part-time inspectors. Emphasis is placed on providing professional service in a consistent and effective manner, no matter which MCIA staff member is conducting the inspection.

The Quality Assurance and Identity Preserved programs are often specialized to meet the specific needs of a company. Training is provided to those individuals who will be inspecting or working with a particular company. Instruction is given to ensure that the client's requirements are met and they receive the information and documentation needed, as with all MCIA programs, the importance of confidentiality is stressed.

MCIA also provides auditing services to the agricultural industry. Often these programs are coordinated through our national organization, the Association of Official Seed Certification Agencies (AOSCA). The AOSCA office acts as a single contact point for companies needing services across many states. Various state agencies provide the staff to conduct the program and AOSCA coordinates the necessary training sessions via teleconference or online webcasts. Training involves program procedures as well the use of electronics for reporting results.

As part of MCIA's accreditation with the USDA National Organic Program (NOP), staff and independent inspectors



Jody Prudhomme, Certification Specialist at MCIA, recently completed Quality Management System (QMS) Auditor/Lead Auditor training. This training will enable Jody to provide support to the auditing programs MCIA currently conducts.

are required to demonstrate they have appropriate education and training. In addition to knowledge of agronomic, livestock handling, and processing practices, MCIA staff and independent inspectors have all attended International Organic Inspector Association (IOIA) training as well as annual events put on by the NOP and the Accredited Certifiers Association (ACA). Participation at field days, the Midwest organic conferences, and webinars keep staff members updated on a variety of topics.

Training of others has also become a common practice. MCIA staff has set up training for grower groups, helped companies implement quality management programs, and aided companies in educating their new employees about seed certification. Instruction includes the review of standards and requirements as well as proper completion of necessary paperwork.

Program diversity has become an important part of the success of MCIA and it will continue to be a key component of our future as well. Proper staff training and the ability to train others will help us meet the future challenges of an ever changing world of agriculture.

## MCIA Annual Meeting Information

### Annual Meeting Notice

The 2012 Annual Meeting, will take place Tuesday and Wednesday, January 10-11, 2012, at the Shooting Star Casino in Mahanomen, MN. Mark your calendars and plan to attend! Contact Ben Lang at MCIA if you have agenda items that should be addressed at the Annual Meeting.

### Award Nominations Open

Nominations are open for the following awards that will be presented at the MCIA Annual Meeting January 10-11, 2012 in Mahanomen, 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, 2011.

### Board of Directors Nominations

Nominations are open for the MCIA Board of Directors. If you are interested in serving on the Board or would like to nominate someone, please contact MCIA or email Ben Lang at [ben.lang@mncia.org](mailto:ben.lang@mncia.org). The following districts are open - James Hunzeker, District 3; Duane Dahlman, District 3; and Mary Hanks, Related Industry. James and Mary have served two terms and are not eligible for re-election. Send all nominations to: MCIA, 1900 Hendon Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

### Early Call for Resolutions

A draft of any resolution to be considered by the MCIA Legislative and Public Affairs Committee and forwarded to the floor of the annual meeting should be received by MCIA office 14 days prior to the meeting.

## Certified Seed Doesn't Cost... It Pays!

#### ▲ PROVEN QUALITY

- High germination
- Fewer weed seeds
- Less inert matter
- Less seed-borne disease
- Known varieties

#### ▲ SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

- Better plantability
- Rapid stand establishment
- More uniform maturity
- Easier harvest
- Less dockage

#### ▲ GREATER PROFITABILITY

- Newest genetics
- Less weed control costs
- Less disease control costs
- Greater yield per acre
- More return on your investment



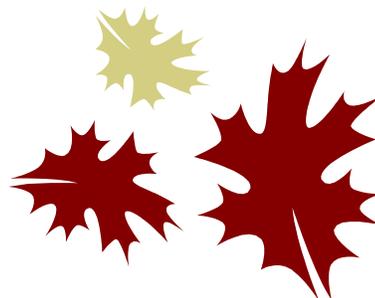
Members of Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies



mncia.org 800.510.6242 ag.montana.edu/msga 406.994.3516 ndseed.com 701.231.5400 ofcica.com 605.688.4606

## New Poster Available

MCIA collaborated with the North Dakota State Seed Department, South Dakota Crop Improvement Association and Montana Seed Growers Association to develop a new poster promoting the use of certified seed. These full color 18" x 24" posters will be distributed this winter by MCIA field staff to approved seed conditioners, bulk seed handlers and certified seed producers. Anyone interested in one of these free posters can call the MCIA office. Watch for our ad in the next issue of the Prairie Grains magazine!





## MCIA Grow Outs

Ben Lang, President/CEO

Growing out seed to observe varietal characteristics is a commonly used tool of seed regulators and certifiers to evaluate whether seed has been properly identified and labeled. Each year, MCIA grows out seed drawn from samples of seed lots that were certified during the previous year. The seed is grown in plots at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul campus where samples from seed lots of the same variety and crop are placed adjacent to one another allowing direct comparison between lots for trueness to type. The plots are evaluated by University of Minnesota plant breeders or MCIA personnel at the growth stage when varietal differences are most evident. Samples that appear to be mislabeled are investigated further to determine the source of the problem.

Results of grow out tests may indicate the need to modify seed certification processes to include improved field inspection techniques or new seed testing methods. Grow out testing provides an important means for MCIA to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the seed certification program in accomplishing its purpose of ensuring that properly labeled pure seed is provided to certified seed buyers.

*University of Minnesota Wheat Breeder, Dr. Jim Anderson, (at right), evaluated the 2011 wheat grow out*



## Seed Testing Can Reveal Seed Quality

Jennifer Pernsteiner, Certification Specialist

2011 may go down in the books as “A Year of Seed Production Challenges.” Not only did many areas contend with a late planting season and wet field conditions, some areas had the double-whammy of a late season drought and an early frost. This year’s growing conditions have the potential to cause seed quality issues.

Those of you hit with the September 15th killing frost may have experienced yield and/or germination loss in soybeans. You can recognize severely frost-damaged beans by their greenish color, smaller-than-normal size, oblong shape, and a waxy look to the cotyledons. Moderately damaged beans

will also appear slightly green and may dry down with a wrinkled seed coat. Germination percentages are reduced in frost-damaged seed.

SDSU Seed Testing Lab has noticed visible scab damage in over 50% of the winter wheat samples they have received, and anticipate that the same will be true of the spring wheat samples. According to Dr. Brent Turnipseed, Manager of the SDSU Seed Testing Lab, “usually scab-infected wheat kernels are shriveled, discolored with a white, pink, or light brown scaly appearance. These kernels are often referred to as ‘tombstones.’ Scab-infected seed, if not dead, will have lower vigor and be

more susceptible to other field fungi when the seeds germinate in the soil, and plants will remain vulnerable to infections in the seedling stage.”

Another consideration is seed moisture during harvest in soybeans. If seed is on the dry side during harvest, mechanical damage to the embryo may be severe enough to affect germination.

A germination test runs under \$20, which is a small price to pay for the information it provides on your seed lot quality. Preliminary testing now will help you make decisions about conditioning and/or treatments to bring germination up to an acceptable level.

## Facing the Challenges of our Industry



2011 has been a year that challenged Minnesota crop producers like few before. An exceptionally wet spring delayed planting statewide. Hot weather in July advanced crops quickly but stressed small grain and corn during critical stages of development resulting in reduced yields. The southern half of the state turned very dry in August placing drought stress on fields that had been overly wet. As I write this, we are evaluating the effects of an early frost that ended the growing season in most of the state. Through all the weather difficulties, the MCIA members I have spoken with, remain optimistic, showing a positive attitude and willingness to look for opportunities in this challenging environment.

The year has also presented challenges and opportunities to the MCIA staff, as we strive to serve the needs of agriculture. In addition to providing certification and quality assurance field inspection services for field crops, turf grasses, native seeds and sod, the MCIA field staff is performing inspection and assessment services. This is the sixth year that MCIA has performed on-farm Bt corn refuge assessments in support of AOSCA's Insect Refuge Management (IRM) program. AOSCA provides a nationwide IRM program to the four major corn trait providers to help them evaluate how well corn growers comply with mandated Bt corn

refuge requirements. In 2011, MCIA staff visited over 500 farms to conduct assessments – a very large and challenging undertaking. The assessments help reinforce the message that refuges are critical to preventing the development of Bt resistant insect populations.

MCIA is also providing third party inspection and audit services to the sugar beet industry. Earlier this year, the USDA partially deregulated Roundup Ready sugar beets. The new USDA regulations for sugar beet growers include requirements for third party field inspections and audits to prevent the unintended movement of the regulated trait into related crop species. MCIA field personnel completed USDA/APHIS training and were approved to perform the required third party inspections and audits. The USDA regulations will remain in effect until an Environmental Impact Statement can be completed (scheduled for completion in 2012) and the USDA acts to remove production restrictions. Until that time, MCIA will support the industry by providing inspection services for the nearly half million acres of sugar beets grown in the state.

The message for all of us in agriculture is to seek opportunities among the challenges that our fast moving industry presents. As MCIA evolves and grows to meet the needs of new clients, we will continue to prepare to face the challenges our industry presents. We trust that you will continue to call on MCIA to help you, our client members, meet those challenges as we have for over 100 years.

## Enestvedts Honored

Bert and Verne Enestvedt were honored by State Fair officials last month with the 75-year Award and for their Foundation contributions to restore the historic towers on the Agriculture Horticulture Building and on the 4-H Building. These towers are architectural icons for fairground facilities used for youth development and educational competitions in agriculture, horticulture and more.

Enestvedt Seed Co. of Sacred Heart is one of the oldest seed company's in Minnesota. They are long-time Minnesota State Fair exhibitors and founding members of MCIA.





## Chairman's View

James Hunzeker, Board Chair

### In a Nutshell

MCIA held their Summer Meetings in Lanesboro, MN on June 23rd & 24th. President/CEO Benjamin Lang presented the Board with an excellent draft financial report for the year ending May 31, 2011. The final audited report will be presented to the Board at their fall meeting, upon approval the information will be presented to the Membership at the Annual Meeting. Congratulations to Ben and his Staff.

In a nutshell, the outcome of the Long Term Planning session was to continue doing what MCIA has been successful at in recent years. This includes diversifying into new markets while continuing to service the core membership with traditional services. The Board agreed that no one knows what the future will bring for MCIA. The Board was also in agreement that our Staff and their abilities to meet new challenges is MCIA's greatest resource, and that resource will transport MCIA down the road into the future.

At the time of this writing, it appears production of grains, particularly small grains is going to be somewhat less than expected. Time will tell. For those in the small grains seed business, it might be a good idea to apply for Certification tests ASAP as demand for seed will likely be earlier and greater than last year.

Be safe this harvest season and take time for your family and loved ones.



## Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Coordinator



### OSP Compliance

We have sent out invoices for the USDA cost-share reimbursement program. If you are currently certified with MCIA, but have not received this year's certificate, you can use this invoice together with a copy of your 2010 certificate to apply. MDA will contact us to verify you are in good standing.

This summer we had a couple of incidents where input products were noted by the inspector, which were not on the growers' application forms. Please remember that all input products used for organic production (including inoculants, fertilizers, herbicides, microbial products, bio-controls, etc.) must be part of your Organic System Plan (OSP). If you want to add a product at any time, please contact MCIA by phone or email, so that a review can be done to be sure the product is allowed in organic production. If you are found to be using a prohibited product, there is a risk that you will not be able to sell your crop as organic and you will have to re-transition the land for 36 months. It is a noncompliance to use a product which is not in your OSP.

On August 23rd, NPSAS and SDSU had a field day at the Beresford Experiment station in South Dakota. Interesting data was presented from some trials using flaming for weed control. If you are interested in flaming for weed control or insect control, some of their data is presented on the following websites: <http://cropwatch.unl.edu/web/cropwatch/archive?articleID=4153939> and <http://organic.unl.edu/wdflm.shtml>. They will be presenting their data at the Western Corn Belt Conference for Organic Growers in Sioux Falls, December 5 and 6.

## 2011 MN State Fair Certified Seed Show Results

Thank you to all of those who entered this year's Minnesota State Fair. The champion results are as follows:

**Champion Oat Sample:** Sawvell's Seed, Inc., Clements (Grower - Vilo Dahmes)

**Champion Wheat Sample:** Sawvell's Seed, Inc., Clements (Grower - Jonathan Olson)

**Champion Soybean Sample:** Falk's Seed Farm, Murdock (Grower - Jim Falk)

**Champion Grass Sample:** Norfarm Seeds Inc., Roseau (Grower - Richard Engelstad)





**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**MCIA Annual Meeting ~ January, 10-11, 2012**  
**Shooting Star Casino Hotel, Mahnomen**

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



Since 1903

## CALENDAR

### October

28..... Harvest of Knowledge Agri Womens Conference, Grand Forks, ND

### November

6-7 ..... ASTA Farm & Lawn Conference, Kansas City, MO  
 16..... Agri-Growth Council Annual Mtg, Minneapolis  
 18..... MCIA Board Mtg, St. Paul  
 20-21 ..... Iowa Organic Conf., Ames, IA  
 24-25 ..... MCIA Office Closed for Holiday

### December

5-6 ..... Western Corn Belt Conf. (Organic), Sioux Falls, SD  
 6-9 ..... ASTA Conference & Expo, Chicago, IL  
 8..... Prairie Grains Conf, Grand Forks, ND  
 26-27 ..... MCIA Office Closed for Holiday

### January

2..... MCIA Office Closed for Holiday  
 10-11 ..... MCIA Annual Mtg, Shooting Star Casino, Mahnomen  
 13-14 ..... MN Dept. of Ag Organic Conference., St. Cloud