

## MCIA Seed Lab Now Open!

The MCIA seed testing laboratory opened July 1, after an eight year hiatus. Jennifer Pernsteiner, Registered Seed Technologist, will manage the MCIA seed lab. Her background includes experience in testing various annuals and perennials. Pernsteiner has been busy making preparations, checking equipment, and organizing the laboratory.

The lab is ready to receive and test seed samples for certification, including small grains, corn, soybeans, sunflowers, and other annual crops as well as perennial grasses and forages. MCIA will also offer service testing for non-certified samples to help seed companies and producers assess the quality of their seed. A complete list of tests and a fee schedule is available online by visiting [www.mncia.org](http://www.mncia.org).



*Jennifer Pernsteiner, Seed Testing Lab Manager*

Opening of the MCIA seed lab coincides with an upgrade to the MCIA's PureHarvest database. You will notice a new look to your Seed Certification Report and monthly state-

ment. Ongoing changes to the database will eventually improve member interaction by enabling members to apply for field inspections and submit sampling reports online.

As the harvest begins across Minnesota these changes at MCIA will streamline the process for completing seed certification. The laboratory staff is ready to conduct the seed testing you need with the same level of quality, integrity, and exceptional customer service that

you expect from MCIA. Please contact MCIA if you have any questions.

### Oat Electrophoresis Testing

*As of July 1, 2016, all oat seed lots will be required to undergo electrophoresis testing to verify varietal identity prior to final certification. This test will be in addition to the currently required physical purity and germination tests.*

*The electrophoresis test will replace the currently used fluorescence test which can only distinguish between white and yellow oat varieties. The new test procedure will confirm varietal identity and prevent incorrect labeling. Questions regarding oat electrophoresis testing should be directed to the MCIA seed lab.*

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# MCIA Launches Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is pleased to announce that it has launched a Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program. This audit-based, process-verified program is designed to confirm that the processes used for grain production and handling, from planting to final sale, meet customer requirements for non-GMO labeling.

Consumption of non-GMO grain is increasing, resulting in a growing trade of such products in domestic and foreign commerce. Consumers often demand an unbiased process verification of non-GMO grain production and handling. The purpose of the MCIA's Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program is to meet this market demand.

The MCIA program includes a desk audit and an on-site audit. Program standards include land history, seed source, field inspections, grower training, records for agronomic practices, harvest,

transportation, conditioning, storage, grain testing, and labeling. The audit reviews documents supporting compliance to the program standards. MCIA's Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program standards also meet Identity Preserved (IP) standards

of the Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies (AOSCA). AOSCA's IP logo will be included on the MCIA Certificate of Compliance.

This program was developed in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). MCIA will serve as MDA's agent and conduct an audit per program standards. Program participants have an option of receiving a MDA-issued Certificate of Compliance. This government-issued document will help facilitate

grain trade in local and global markets.

To learn more about the Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program, please visit MCIA at [www.mncia.org](http://www.mncia.org) or call toll free 800-510-6242.



## Roger Wippler Recognized for Outstanding Service

Congratulations to Roger Wippler, MCIA's Foundation Seed Services Manager, who was presented the "Outstanding Service Award" by the Minnesota Cultivated Wild Rice Council at their Annual Conference earlier this spring.



## Welcome Rose-Marie Odell!

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes Rose-Marie Odell as Administrative Assistant. Rose-Marie brings over 20 years of experience providing finance and accounting support to managers of the Grain, Fruit & Vegetable, Seed, and Grain Warehouse Audit programs at Washington State Department of Agriculture. Most recently, she served as management support staff in WSDA's Commodity Inspection Division.





## Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Certification Program Manager



It's been a very busy year so far. An amazing number of farmers and businesses have applied for certification for the first time. This matches the trends that we see in the marketplace with more consumers buying organic products. The Organic Trade Association just

reported that the demand for organic produce more or less doubled this past year.

What this means for everyone, however, is that we have had to work closely with our current inspectors to use their time wisely and we have had to find some new inspectors. So, renewing people, you may be seeing some new faces at inspection. Once again, we are trying to get everyone who has new crops and early crops certified first. Please let us know—call or email the office—if you have a crop that needs early certification.

We are working with USDA's Farm Service Agency for the first time. We have worked with crop insurance agents and the National Resources Conservation Service for several years. If you are working with any of these agencies, be aware that they now all seem to have an organic program that requires some documentation from MCIA.

Welcome or welcome back to everyone. Hope for a great crop year.

## In Memoriam

**Dean Wright** of West Concord, age 77, passed away January 10, 2016. Dean owned and operated Wright Seed Service, producing certified oats and soybeans. Active in MCIA for many years, he served as president of the MCIA board of directors. He was named a Premier Seedsman in 1984.

**Kenneth Olson** of Cottonwood, age 82, passed away January 22, 2016. A longtime member of MCIA, Olson produced certified seed of soybeans, oats, and wheat. He was named a Premier Seedsman in 1989.

**Marlow Wigen** of Litchfield, age 81, passed away March 4, 2016. Marlow was in the seed business since 1950. He was active in processing and conditioning seed on the Wigen Seed Farm. He served on the MCIA board of directors and was named a Premier Seedsman in 1985.

## Seed Certification: More Than a Field Inspection

The field inspection season is in full swing, but that is just one step in the seed certification process.

By now, MCIA trained inspectors may have checked your field to determine if it meets the standards for varietal identity, purity, isolation, and the presence of weeds and other crops.

Congratulations! Your field inspection is complete and you received a report that shows your field passed this first step. Now what?

**Harvest, Handling, And Storage:** Proper cleaning of harvesting and handling equipment as well as storage bins is essential to maintaining varietal purity. Also, seed is a living organism and proper storage is very important, as high moisture or heating can cause reduced germination.

**Seed Conditioning:** In most cases, certified seed must be conditioned at an MCIA-approved seed conditioning facility. When you deliver your seed to the approved seed conditioner, bring along a copy of your field inspection report.

**Seed Sampling:** Once the seed is conditioned, a sample must be taken by approved personnel at the

seed conditioning facility, or, if necessary, an MCIA representative will pull the sample.

**Seed Testing:** The official seed sample must be sent to the MCIA seed laboratory for testing. Once testing is completed you will receive a Seed Certification Report indicating if your seed lot passed or failed.

**Labeling Certified Seed:** Whether you sell the seed yourself or the approved facility is selling the seed, all seed sold must be properly labeled. Certified seed can be sold using a blue tag or a Bulk Certificate.

**More to Remember—**Most small grain or soybean varieties are protected by the Plant Variety Protection Act or through license agreements, meaning that seed sold of those varieties must be certified or sold only with the permission of the variety owner.

**Royalties and/or Fees** are assessed on most crops produced as seed. Be sure you understand what your obligations are regarding royalties or fees.

These are key steps in completing seed certification. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your area field supervisors or call the MCIA office. Remember seed certification is more than just a field inspection.

# Chairman's Report

Paul Kjolhaug, Board Chair

## Member Participation Keeps MCIA Strong



When Roger asked me to write a short article I asked him for ideas. He suggested that I write about the lab opening at MCIA—a great idea. You've all seen that MCIA is re-opening the lab. The main reason is to provide a more comprehensive service to the membership. This will provide a great addition to the certification services that MCIA is already providing.

I noodled on it a bit more and then it struck me . . . I thought it was important for me to share my ideas on participation in MCIA as a service organization. I recall almost six years ago when the then-MCIA board chair asked me to run (volunteer) for a seat on the board. I reluctantly agreed. For several years my direct involvement with MCIA had been very limited. Among my "excuses" was that I did not have relevancy for MCIA with my job. I was wrong.

We have a very strong and experienced board coming from several aspects of agribusiness—and they are all volunteer. They are providing great support to MCIA for the new direction that broader agriculture is taking. We have a new CEO who has

experience at the local, national, and international levels; plus, an extremely strong and talented staff who have a passion for serving the expanded needs of the membership.

These needs have expanded from the original certification process. Today they include the licensing and distribution of university developed varieties, forage and mulch certification, a broad range of organic crop and livestock certification, non-GMO process verification, and the list continues. And, equally important, the needs have shifted from a local and state level to include national and international dynamics.

Chances are, if you are getting this publication you are an MCIA member. This is your association—it is our association. The real question is, What are *we* going to do? This organization has great potential, what it needs is your broader input and direction to keep it strong and valid. I invite and encourage you to participate—get involved and help your association as it continues to identify and meet the changing needs of agriculture.

Risa DeMasi, 2015–16 ASTA Chair, recently cited a quote from Teddy Roosevelt that read, "Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry to which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve the conditions within his sphere." It's a good challenge for all of us in agriculture.

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The MCIA Board of Directors met June 23, 2016 at the Dassel History Center in Dassel, Minnesota. Among the many items on the agenda, Mac Ehrhardt of Albert Lea Seed House made a presentation to the Board on "Organic and Non-GMO Consumer Trends." Craig Damstrom and his wife Kathy were present to accept the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award.



Back row (left to right): Fawad Shah, Roger Wippler, Scott Habstritt, Craig Damstrom, Mac Ehrhardt, Kurt Flegel, Mike Zabel, Cindy Wippler, Paul Kjolhaug.  
Front row (left to right): Jay Miller, Nancy Ehle, Darius Thiel, Bob Ehlers, Duane Dahlman.

## Building Partnerships



Minnesota Crop Improvement Association has enjoyed decades old partnerships with key stakeholders both in and outside the state borders. With the help of its dedicated staff and supportive board, MCIA is strengthening its relationship with one goal in mind; to better serve its members.

The newly established Non-GMO Grain Traceability Program is such an example. This process-verified

program confirms the processes used to produce grain and its handling from planting to final sale, thus meeting customer requirements for non-GMO labeling. This program has been developed in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). MCIA and the MDA worked together to develop a program that meets the needs of grain suppliers and their customers.

Another key partner that MCIA is solidifying its relationship with is the University of Minnesota. MCIA plays an important role in the The Forever Green Initiative, a University of Minnesota and USDA Agriculture Research Service program to develop new crops and high-efficiency cropping systems. MCIA has developed Identity Preserved (IP) standards for Kernza (intermediate wheatgrass), and conducts Kernza IP Program services. In addition, MCIA has conditioned Kernza seed and grain produced on campus and at the university experiment station.

Dr. Donald Wyse asked MCIA to condition field pennycress and Camelina seed, another two important crops of this initiative. Kernza, field pennycress and Camelina are being evaluated for their potential use in food products and as oil seed crops.

Furthermore, as an agent for the university, MCIA facilitates the licensing of university-released varieties to interested companies, irrespective of their location. MCIA is conveniently located on the St. Paul campus, which provides easy and direct access to university researchers, breeders, and students.

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), MCIA developed and administers the MnDOT Approved Vendor Program. Through this program, MCIA monitors, evaluates, and approves seed and seed vendors. Additionally, MCIA certifies mulch used in MnDOT projects under the Noxious Weed Seed Free Mulch Program. MCIA also offers a Quality Assured Sod Program, to verify that salt tolerant sod used by MnDOT meets contract specifications.

With the opening of the seed lab on July 1, MCIA is yet again demonstrating its commitment to its members by providing additional services that are of great value to its customers. On behalf of the MCIA staff and board of directors, I would like to express my appreciation for the continued support of our members, who have helped make MCIA one of the most diversified organizations of its kind in the nation.

### Moving Ahead

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is planting the seeds for its continued growth. No organization can survive without trained and skilled staff committed to its success. MCIA is no different!

We are pleased to announce that Rose-Marie Odell joined MCIA's staff as an Administrative Assistant on July 1, 2016. Rose-Marie served as management support staff in the Commodity Inspection Division of Washington State Department of Agriculture for over 20 years, providing finance and accounting support to managers of the Grain, Fruit & Vegetable, Seed, and Grain Warehouse Audit programs.

Most recently she served Washington as a Program Specialist 3, and has also served interim roles as a Division Coordinator and Grain Inspection Program Operations Manager. Her credentials include vocational certification from the Lake Washington Institute of Technology, studies in Lean, information technology, and project management. In addition to civil service, Rose-Marie has worked in the private sector for ranching, communications, and construction entities. An avid outdoor enthusiast, she is looking forward to the many outdoor activities offered in Minnesota.

As we open the seed lab, we are proud to announce the hiring of Chase Mowry to join MCIA as its next seed technologist. Chase is a Certified Viability Technologist. Most recently, he worked as a seed technologist at the SGS, North America Inc. He is proficient in germination and seed dormancy testing and regularly conducts seed purity and identification on a variety of species.

Prior to joining SGS, Chase worked as a research assistant at South Dakota State University on seed dormancy and grain color in rice. His research was published in the December edition of the journal *Genetics*. Chase holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology with a minor in chemistry from South Dakota State University.

We are excited to have Chase and Rose-Marie join the MCIA team, and look forward to providing exceptional services to our members.



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612-625-7766 Fax: 612-625-3748

- Fawad Shah ..... President & CEO
- Paul Kjolhaug ..... Chairman
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#### Mission Statement

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association 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.

*Enhancing Value, Improving Marketability*



Since 1903

### CALENDAR

#### July

*Field School for Ag Professionals:* University of Minnesota, Saint Paul; July 26–27

#### July–August

*Seed Conditioning Workshops:* Iowa State University, Ames

#### August

*Minnesota Farmfest:* Redwood Falls; August 2–4

*Organic Dairy Day at WCROC:* Morris, Minnesota; August 9

#### August–September

*Minnesota State Fair:* Saint Paul; August 25–September 5

*Midwest Specialty Grains Conference and Trade Show:* Indianapolis, Indiana; August 30–September 1

#### September

MCIA office closed: September 5

*Transitioning to Organic Dairy* (Organic Valley, sponsor): Goodhue, Minnesota; September 8

*Organic Crops on a Large Scale* (MOSES, sponsor): Jonathan & Caroline Olson farm, Cottonwood, Minnesota; September 15

**For more information on these and other events go to [www.mncia.org](http://www.mncia.org).**