

Lang-MN Wheat Is Latest University of Minnesota Release

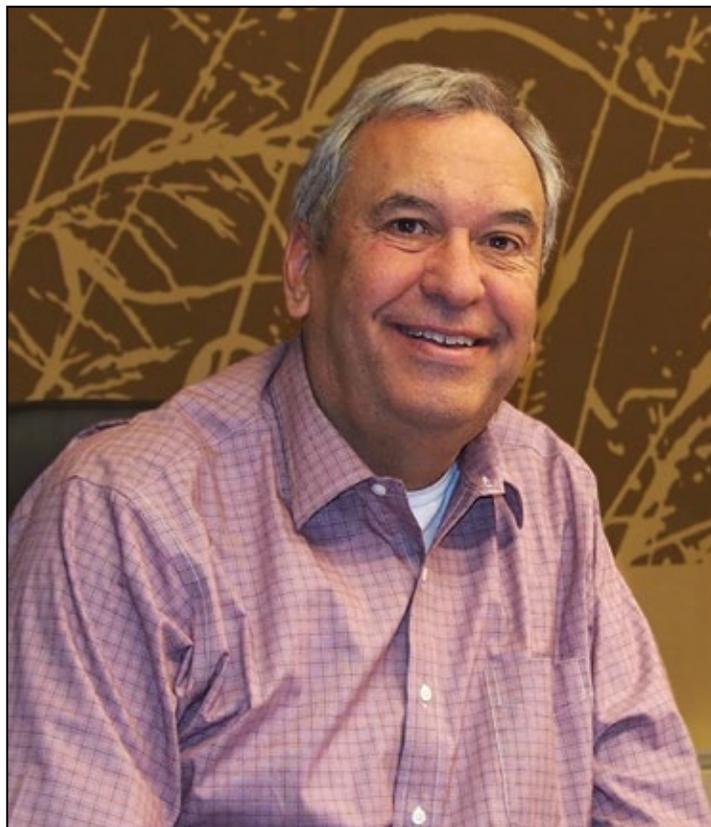
The latest University of Minnesota–developed hard red spring wheat variety, called ‘Lang-MN,’ is named in honor of Ben Lang, past president and chief executive officer of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association. Released in January 2017, Lang-MN is a well-balanced, high-yielding spring wheat variety, well suited for much of the spring wheat-growing region.

Jim Anderson, University of Minnesota wheat breeder, says, “In state trials, Lang-MN yielded equal to the popular varieties Faller and Prosper, but with higher protein. The heading date of Lang-MN is similar to Faller. It possesses a good disease resistance package with an excellent rating for resistance to scab, stripe, and stem rust. Plus it has moderate resistance to leaf rust and bacterial leaf streak.” Anderson added, “Lang-MN is about an inch taller than Faller with similar straw strength. It has good test weight and pre-harvest sprouting resistance. Overall it is a well-balanced variety that has exhibited good end-use quality characteristics.”

The new release is named in recognition of Ben Lang and his long history with MCIA. Before becoming president of MCIA, Lang had worked as a field supervisor for over 25 years, originally joining the organization as a seed analyst and field inspector. During his career, he served the Association in several senior management positions, culminating in his leadership of the organization from 2008 until his retirement in 2015.

Roger Wippler, MCIA, says, “Wheat seed certification has been a key part of MCIA for over 100 years and Ben strongly believed in the benefits certified seed provides to farmers. He truly enjoyed working with seed producers from around the state and was very humbled when notified that the variety would be named Lang-MN.”

The new variety Lang-MN can be previewed during various field days and plot tours around the state. The University’s Northwest Research and Outreach Center (NWROC), Crookston will host a Crops and Soils day July 19. University of Minnesota experts will provide information relevant to the current growing season and answer questions. Dates and locations for other plot tours and on-farm trials can be found on the MCIA website, www.mncia.org.



Retired former MCIA president and CEO Ben Lang.

Lang-MN joins several other recent University of Minnesota spring wheat varieties; Shelly (2016), Bolles (2015), Linkert (2013), and Rollag (2011). These varieties offer growers a good combination of strong characteristics and perform well across the Upper Midwest.

MCIA members planted Foundation seed of Lang-MN this spring and field inspections will begin in July. Once certification has been completed, seed will be available for planting in spring 2018. A list of certified seed producers will be available in September. Visit the MCIA website, www.mncia.org, or contact MCIA at 1-800-510-6242.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Chairman’s View— <i>Mike Zabel</i>	2
Collins, Schumacher, and Wertish Join MCIA Staff	2
President’s Corner— <i>Fawad Shah</i>	3
Organic Corner— <i>Michelle Menken</i>	3





During World War II, my grandparents were in their forties and my parents were children. History tells us of the magnanimous efforts made by those who served and sacrificed in the armed services. To support the war effort, industry redirected its efforts toward weaponry and supplies, and civilians conserved.

People who lived through those times developed values of conservation and thrift. These people

had a strong impact in shaping my own values. My grandparents, great aunts and uncles, along with my uncle have long since passed on, and my parents are now either on the verge of becoming, or are, full-fledged octogenarians. Still, the effects of that period of great personal sacrifice linger with me.

Growing up, I don't remember us purchasing anything new for our seed business. I was always being reminded that we couldn't justify the cost, and that we could fix what we had for much less than buying new. Nevertheless, we were always able to produce quality seed.

As I've tallied the years behind me, I've discovered that value is in the eye of the beholder. Value is perceived and defined

by the individual making an investment. For some, the adage, "Time is money," is quite literal. For others, value is synonymous with cheap. For many, the idea of obtaining the best possible product or service that meets a specific need, no matter the cost, is money well spent.

Investing in the services of MCIA is a great value. In my own experience, there have been cases in which questions on applications or reports, if left unresolved, could have resulted in lost productivity, or even worse, loss of certification. But thanks to MCIA's experienced, knowledgeable, and detail-oriented staff, these issues were rectified in a timely fashion.

Organic certification is MCIA's strongest growth area—and for good reason. Some clients transfer from other agencies, other clients are just beginning the organic certification journey. Whatever their history, people who certify with MCIA soon discover that we value people and take the time to work with them to achieve their goals.

There may be certifying agencies and labs with similar functions that offer cut-rate fees, but do they really offer the highest level of service at the best value? I believe that the services of Minnesota Crop Improvement Association provide excellent value to our members. Each one of MCIA's staff is experienced, committed, driven, and, I suspect, has at least some of those values passed down from the Greatest Generation.

Collins, Schumacher, and Wertish Join MCIA Staff

Diane Collins has joined the staff of MCIA's Organic Services as a certification specialist. Diane's diverse work history includes 18 years in the organic industry. Over that time, she has gained a deep knowledge of organic agriculture and has become a well-known and trusted figure in the organic community. What does she enjoy most about her organic career? "The producers and their families. That is what puts the 'pep in my step' after many miles and hours in a day," she replies. She is excited to see second-generation organic farmers certifying, with the third generation close behind.

Anthony Schumacher is MCIA's new Foundation Seed production coordinator. Anthony's rich background includes crop increase and research experience in Minnesota, Hawaii, and Maryland. In addition, he has been involved in organic farming, orchards, and native prairie restorations. Anthony graduated from the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities, with a bachelor of science degree in applied plant science with an emphasis



Anthony Schumacher

in agroecology and a minor in sustainable agriculture. He looks forward to applying his knowledge of data collection, quality management, and safety to his work at MCIA.

Lucas Wertish is MCIA's new field supervisor for southern Minnesota. Lucas recently graduated from North Dakota State University with a bachelor's degree in crop and weed science. He performed a summer internship with Precision Soya and scouted soybean fields in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. During his internship at Dow AgroSciences, Lucas managed a crew of up to 60 field workers, performed sampling, and organized research plots. He also worked as a technician at the NDSU Plant Pathology lab where he collected tissue samples and completed DNA extractions. This growing season, Lucas will be working with Jim Boots, outgoing field supervisor for southern Minnesota. Jim's employment with MCIA will continue, but he will transition to part-time status next year.



Lucas Wertish



Capacity building is an overarching process that involves a variety of actions and objectives. Simply stated, it's an effort to prepare for the future, including technical and operational training as well as informed policy development. Capacity building may involve public-private partnerships to support the strengthening of institutions, the private sector, and individuals.

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association was founded in 1903 at

a meeting organized by University of Minnesota plant breeders Willet M. Hayes and Coates P. Bull. In attendance were several farmers interested in improved field crop varieties. For over a century, MCIA has played a vital role in ensuring the genetic purity and identity of crop varieties through its seed certification systems. That exemplary tradition of service led to my capacity-building mission to Pakistan this spring.

MCIA was invited to four major Pakistani universities that provide education in the discipline of seed science and technology, cultivate awareness among growers of the importance of a viable seed system and quality seed, and help support the country's evolving seed industry. A recap of my activities in Pakistan follows:

- At the Muhammad Nawaz Shareef University of Agriculture, Multan, approximately 1,000 participants including faculty, students, representatives from the seed industry, and a large group of growers gathered to learn new ideas and practices to improve the current seed structure in Pakistan.

- The certified seed system and agribusiness development in dairy were among the topics discussed at the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Participants of the Executive Certificate in Agribusiness Management Program were keen to learn the importance of seed to grow better-yielding forage crops. Use of quality seed is the first step toward producing quality fodder, ensuring adequate nutrition and overall animal health, as well as ultimately enhancing milk production.
- During the recent past, education in the area of seed science and technology has gotten much attention at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF). Undergraduate and graduate Seed Science and Technology programs were recently developed at UAF. A one-day International Symposium on Seed Quality and Certification was organized at the College of Agriculture, University of Sargodha. Students, faculty, and industry engaged in learning the importance and use of certified seed to enhance crop yields and boost economic growth.
- At the request of the Director General of Research, Ayub Agricultural Research Institute, seed certification and quality were among the major topics discussed at the research directors' annual retreat. Agricultural research stations are strategically located throughout the province of Punjab, a major agricultural area of the country.

MCIA is delivering on its efforts in building capacity and strong partnerships. It maintains a close relationship with the University of Minnesota and is engaged with academic networks internationally. In addition, MCIA participates in the USAID Feed the Future Soybean Innovation Lab, Managed Research Area 10—"Seed Systems," and continues to strengthen its relationship with the University of Illinois. These connections enable MCIA to identify new opportunities for growth within the U.S. and abroad.



Organic Corner

Michelle Menken,
Organic Services Manager

We have just completed our USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) reaccreditation audit. Three auditors from USDA's National Organic Program and Agricultural Marketing Service were here for three days—in the office and witnessing two on-site inspections. They left us with

eight *findings*, mostly for not following our own procedures (for example, not informing clients of pesticide residue results timely, not doing five percent unannounced inspections), for label review issues, and for certificate requirements. The confirmed audit results should be back to us in about 40 days; they will also be published on USDA's website.

A change to the wording on 2017 certificates will be implemented immediately. Certificates will now state, "certified to 7CFR205;" will more clearly state that the certificate is valid until

surrendered, suspended, or revoked; and will now include an anniversary date, which will be the date your next application is due. The crop producer certificate will now say "crops" instead of "producer." For those of you who have already received a 2017 certificate, we will issue revised certificates.

To fully implement our pesticide residue sampling and unannounced inspection programs, we must do five percent of our client base: 20 samples and 20 unannounced inspections this year. These are both required by the National Organic Program.

Pesticide residue tests conducted in 2016 all came back clean again except for 5 samples we sent to the lab at the end of the year. Those samples all tested positive for insecticides, which seemed very strange. We determined that our sample bags had been inadvertently contaminated while in storage at our building, which had been sprayed by an exterminator. So, we will resample those five clients and we will be using new sample bags this year.

I want to let you know about a new organization for organic farmers: Organic Farmers Association (OFA). Rodale Institute publishes a nice magazine for the organization. MCIA has become a member. MCIA members who are interested in joining OFA as individuals are eligible for a \$25 discount. Visit <http://rodaleinstitute.org/ofadiscout> for more information.



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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.

Improving your process • Enhancing your products • Increasing your profits

CALENDAR

JULY

- 12 Organic Field Day at SWROC: Lamberton
- 17 UMN Extension, Small Grain Field Days: Fergus Falls
- 19–21 Northern Seed Trade Association Annual Meeting: Sioux Falls, SD
- 24 UMN Extension, Small Grain Field Days: Oklee
- 25 UMN Extension, Small Grain Field Days: Humboldt and Strathcona

JULY–AUGUST

Seed Conditioning Workshops: Iowa State Univ., Ames

AUGUST

- 1–3 Minnesota Farmfest: Morgan
- 15 Organic Dairy Day at WCROC: Morris
- 15–17 Global Trade Exchange & Midwest Specialty Grains Conference and Trade Show: Omaha, NE

AUGUST–SEPTEMBER

Minnesota State Fair: St Paul, August 24–September 4

For more event information visit www.mncia.org.