

MCIA Annual Meeting Preview

One-Day Event in Fergus Falls: January 8, 2020

Whitney Place, Assistant Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, will give the keynote address to the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association’s Annual Meeting on January 8, 2020. MCIA members are encouraged to attend as the meeting addresses issues important to the seed industry and provides an excellent opportunity to visit with other seed professionals.

A program topic that will be of particular interest is a round table discussion addressing issues related to cover crops and legal seed usage. The panel includes Ernest Allen, USDA Seed Regulatory and Testing Division; Mark Henry, Rose Law Firm; Carissa Spencer, USDA-NRCS; Ken Bertsch, North Dakota State Seed Department; Neal Foster, South Dakota Crop Improvement Association; and Denise Thiede, Minnesota Department of Agriculture.



Whitney Place, Assistant Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture. David Bonnet, Lead, BASF Wheat Breeding Program, North America.



Colin Cureton, Supply Chain Development Specialist, Forever Green Initiative, University of Minnesota.

We will also hear from David Bonnet as he provides insight into the BASF hybrid Wheat breeding program and Colin Cureton from the University of Minnesota and the efforts being made to develop the Kernza supply chain.

The luncheon will be an opportunity to recognize recipients of the Premier and Honorary Premier Seed Grower awards

and present the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award. The MCIA annual business meeting and committee meetings will also be held.

Tuesday Evening Reception: For those arriving the evening before the Annual Meeting, the MCIA Board of Directors will host a reception beginning at 7:00 p.m. Plan to arrive early enough to join us at the reception.

To register for the meeting or to obtain more information please call MCIA at 800-510-6242 or visit www.mncia.org/mcia-annual-meeting.

Order Foundation Seed Now

The Foundation Seed price list and order form were mailed out to eligible members in early December.

We are accepting orders on a first-come, first-serve basis. So, order now for best availability.

Information on new varieties will be distributed later this winter.

Find Crop Trials Online

The 2019 Minnesota Field Crop Trials from the Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station are available online at www.maes.umn.edu.

The Field Crop Trials are printed in various publications, including the *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide*, *Agri News*, *Prairie Grains*, and *Soybean Business*.

Seed Testing Tips

MCIA’s Seed Laboratory encourages you to send in your carryover seed for updated germination testing. Also, consider preliminary testing of your seed lots as an inexpensive method of establishing seed quality before conditioning. With each sample, send a Sampling Report form, available at www.mncia.org. Click the *Client Forms/Resources* button on the home page.

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2019 will go down as one of the roughest seasons for agricultural production in some time. Crops in the region were hit at both ends of the season, which will certainly have ramifications for next year's planting season. All supporting industry should be aware and understand that the situation for farmers planning for 2020 is fluid and some tough decisions will need to be made.

The MCIA board of directors and its staff are well aware of the difficult season and are ready to assist as needed. The lab is ready for testing seed and the field staff are available for seed certification and production guidance.

MCIA itself has recently had some staff changes and challenges. I am hoping members in the southern district will continue to

exercise patience and understanding as we work toward finding a new field supervisor to take over that area. We want to give special thanks to Jim Boots for stepping in this fall, during inspection season, and for his continued support.

MCIA's seed lab is working toward accreditation to ensure that clients have the utmost confidence in its procedures and test results. Organic Services continues to grow, adding value to our clients' processes and products.

As farmers work through some very difficult challenges, MCIA will continue to support its members with well-trained staff, striving to constantly improve our services. Be sure to let us know if there is anything we can help you with or if there is anything we can do to improve our services. The MCIA Annual Meeting is an opportunity to gather new information and to share your thoughts with the MCIA board and staff. I hope you will join us on January 8 in Fergus Falls.

With that, I would like to wish everybody a Merry Christmas and the best for the New Year!

Test to Assess Wheat Seed Quality

Wheat seed producers are well aware of the problems last summer's growing season presented. What is not known yet is how those growing and harvest conditions might affect seed quality. Seed producers are advised to consider a preliminary germination test before conditioning. The MCIA Seed Laboratory is ready to conduct the testing you need to assess seed viability.



If you have questions or need sample bags or sampling reports, please contact MCIA at 800-510-6242.

Positions Available

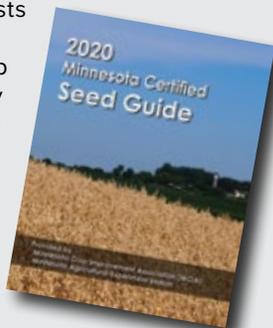
MCIA is currently seeking candidates for two full-time positions: **Field Supervisor** and **Registered Seed Technologist/Quality Coordinator**. The Field Supervisor position is a home office-based position to be located in southern Minnesota. The Seed Technologist position is located at the MCIA office on the Saint Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. Job descriptions and application instructions may be found on the MCIA website, here: <http://www.mncia.org/positions-available>.

Minnesota Seed Guide Published in December

The 2020 *Minnesota Certified Seed Guide* will be published shortly, in print and online. The guide compiles University of Minnesota crop trial results and lists

MCIA members, the crop varieties they produce, and the services they provide.

For more information, visit www.minnesotafarmguide.com.



MAES Publishes Wheat and Oat Promotional Brochures

The Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station has created two new brochures to promote University of Minnesota-developed wheat and oat varieties. The wheat brochure includes MN-Washburn, Lang-MN, Shelly, Bolles, and Linkert. The oat brochure includes MN-Pearl and Deon.



These brochures include a brief variety description and include yield, agronomic, and disease information. Visit the MCIA website, www.mncia.org, to download digital versions, or contact the MCIA office at 800-510-6242 to request printed copies (supplies are limited).



Minnesota Crop Improvement Association has consistently created opportunities for its members by making new seed varieties available to growers in the state and the region through our Foundation Seed Program. MCIA members have come to expect not just the seed of newly released varieties, but also relevant information and guidance that may lead to the success of their operations. The Foundation Seed Program works closely with University of Minnesota breeders

and researchers and supports efforts toward the development of new and improved crop varieties. The University of Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station recently released a new hard red spring wheat variety called MN-Washburn. This new variety offers excellent straw strength and good overall disease resistance as it contains the Bdv2 gene for resistance to barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV). Just as in the past, MCIA is involved in the distribution as well as seed increase of MN-Washburn wheat.

As it does each year, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is putting together an informative program for our Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held on January 8, 2020 at the Bigwood

Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. We have invited Whitney Place, Assistant Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, to give the keynote address. Other topics that will be addressed include Developing a Kernza Supply Chain and Breeding Hybrid Spring Wheat. In addition, MCIA has invited a group of experts, from governmental and other organizations, for a roundtable discussion on legal use of cover crop seed and ways to protect intellectual property through state and federal laws.

The MCIA Annual Meeting is also an opportunity to recognize outstanding individuals in our industry. During our awards luncheon, we will present the Honorary Premier Seedsman, Premier Seedsman, and the Achievement in Crop Improvement awards. Plan to attend this important event—learn and network with others from the seed and agricultural industry!

The well-earned retirement of our general manager, Cindy Wippler, on August 15, made the year 2019 an especially memorable one for MCIA. We took time on several occasions to celebrate her 34 years of dedicated service to our association's members and to the seed industry. In anticipation of Cindy's retirement, Jody Prudhomme was promoted to administrative and certification manager. We also filled a vacancy in the certification department. Training of newly hired and promoted staff is ongoing, including during those numerous, impromptu teachable moments that occur during the course of our work. While our staff refine their knowledge and skills, MCIA continues to create new opportunities for our members.



Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Services Manager

It has been another busy year. We started with 528 certified operations and are now at 574. With the late start to the season—for farmers as well as for us, since we didn't start inspecting until there were crops in the ground—it has been challenging. There are still a handful of farms to inspect. We are working with

the inspectors to make sure everyone is covered. If you have not heard from an inspector, please contact the office.

It's been a hard year for inspectors, too. Several indicated they had more work than they could handle. We are working now to have additional inspectors next year. We do want to note that there were many cancellations of scheduled inspections this year, some with very little advance notice. Please make every effort to keep your scheduled inspection date.

Currently, we are working hard on final reviews and certificates, and we're making plans to attend winter conferences. We will be at the Minnesota Organic Conference in St. Cloud, the Emerging Farmer Conference in St. Paul, the Bauer Schuhl Conference in Loganville, Wisconsin, the NPSAS Conference in Fargo, North Dakota, and the MOSES Organic Farm Conference in La Crosse, Wisconsin. See the Calendar on page 4 for dates. I highly recom-

mend attending the organic conferences. It's always great to meet other organic farmers and hear what's new in crops, tools, research, and marketing. Please stop and visit with us at any of these meetings.

In September, we had our midterm NOP audit. Two USDA auditors were here for a week reviewing our files (from 2017 to 2019) and systems and following two inspectors doing on-site inspections. They let us know we will be receiving five noncompliances. We felt all of the issues they raised were justified and we have already been working on corrections.

In summary: In 2017, we fell one short of completing the required number (5 percent of clients) of unannounced inspections and of pesticide residue samples. We were okay in 2018 and 2019. In our Pesticide Residue Results Letter, we informed clients of the results, but didn't include the statement, "you can sell the crops as Organic," when no pesticide residues are detected. The standard letter has been corrected. The last two issues were related to timeliness in issuing noncompliances when they are identified and accepting Organic System Plans that were not complete enough and then having the inspector do updates at the inspection. This is not the inspectors' job, it is ours. We are still waiting for official results of the audit. The final summary will be available on the NOP website.

2020 calendars will be mailed soon to Organic Services clients.



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I certify that the statements made above are correct and complete. —Alan Makinen

CALENDAR

JANUARY

- 1 MCIA Office Closed: New Year's Day
- 7–10 Small Grains Update Meetings, multiple locations
- 8 MCIA Annual Meeting, Fergus Falls
- 9–10 Minnesota Organic Conference, St. Cloud
- 16–17 Northern Growers and Marketers Conference St. Cloud
- 20 MCIA Office Closed: Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 22–23 MN Ag Expo, Mankato
- 23–26 NPSAS Food & Farming Conference, Fargo, ND
- 24–25 Emerging Farmers Conference, St. Paul
- 31 Organic Vegetable Production Conference, Madison, WI (through February 1)

FEBRUARY

- 8 SFA Annual Conference, St. Joseph
- 21–23 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, La Crosse, WI

MARCH

- 5–6 Bauer Schuhl Conference, Loganville, WI

For more event information visit www.mncia.org.