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**Contact:** Kris Folland, MCIA  
**Telephone:** 218-791-2156  
**Email:** kris.folland@mncia.org

**Minnesota Crop Improvement Association  
Presents Premier Seed Grower Award to Scott Lee**

**ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA, January 24, 2024** The Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) today recognized Scott Lee, of Benson, with the Premier Seed Grower Award. The award, presented annually since 1928, recognizes individuals or partners involved in quality seed production, active in MCIA, and who provide excellent service to the seed industry.

Scott Lee was honored, along with fellow Premier Seed Grower awardees, Larry Riopelle, Merle Schwenzfeier, and Roger Schwenzfeier, during the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association's 121st Annual Meeting. The event was hosted at the Holiday Inn and Suites in St. Cloud, Minnesota, January 24, 2024.

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Lee's Seed Farm was started in 1969 by Wallace Lee. He raised certified small grains and soybeans and built a seed cleaning plant on his farm northeast of Benson. Scott Lee was born the year his father, Wallace, built the seed cleaning plant, and his handprint was placed in the basement concrete when he was two years old.

Scott was active on the farm and outdoors. Growing up, he enjoyed sports, music, 4-H, and FFA through high school. He graduated from Benson High School in 1986. Scott planned on going back to the farm and continuing the seed business after he completed college.

He earned a degree in crop science and seed conditioning and technology from the University of Minnesota Crookston in 1989. That same year, Scott took over the family business. He also attended the University of Minnesota in St. Paul in 1990 and worked part time in MCIA's seed laboratory, testing seed.

Today, he raises certified wheat and oats to be conditioned and sold to local farmers. He also raises soybean seed under contract for other companies and corn. The seed plant remains busy with their own cleaning as well as cleaning for other seed growers and area farmers. Scott also custom farms for a couple of producers in his neighborhood. Lee's Seed Farm has been an active seed producer and MCIA member for 54 years.

Scott serves on the board of the Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council, is past president of the Minnesota Seed Producers and Promotion Council, and has been involved in many local, regional, and national agriculture organizations. He has served on the Benson Township board for 32 years and is a past church council member. Scott has been a County Line First Responder for 27 years. The farm has also been the location and host of University of Minnesota small grains research plots for many years.

Scott and his wife, Catie, have been married for 30 years and have three adult children who help and work on the farm along with having their own careers. In his spare time, Scott enjoys hunting, fishing, playing guitar and piano, and singing.

Upon learning that he had been chosen to receive the Premier Seed Grower Award, Scott responded, "The past recipient list reads like a who's who of the Minnesota seed industry and I am honored to be added to that list."

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Since 1903, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) has provided programs and services to meet the needs of an ever-changing agricultural world. These services include seed certification, organic certification, foundation seed production, and a variety of customized third-party verification programs for seed and identity-preserved grains. MCIA operates from facilities on the University of Minnesota's St. Paul campus with field staff located throughout Minnesota.

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If you would like more information on this topic, please contact Kris Folland at 218-791-2156 or kris.folland@mncia.org.