

Palmer Amaranth Alert

Aggressive Weed Found in Minnesota

Palmer amaranth has been recently found in Minnesota. University of Minnesota integrated pest management specialist Bruce Potter investigated after a crop consultant spotted suspected Palmer amaranth in a field in Yellow Medicine County. State and university officials have confirmed the identification.



PHOTO: Bruce Potter/
University of Minnesota Extension

The surprising part of this discovery is that it was found in a newly established pollinator conservation planting. The spread of Palmer amaranth has been documented to happen through feed products that are shipped from the South as well as through dirty tillage and harvest equipment. For instance, Ohio State University Extension reported this summer that a combine purchased from Georgia was the source of a new infestation in Ohio.

The Minnesota discovery is consistent with findings in Iowa in which numerous infestations have been identified in conservation plantings. The Minnesota Department

of Agriculture (MDA) is investigating how the weed may have been introduced to the state.

Palmer amaranth is on the state's Prohibited Noxious Weed List and must be eradicated. It is an aggressive weed that can grow over 6 feet tall and produce thousands of seeds. It is difficult to control and has caused serious production problems in the southern U.S. The weed is already present in Iowa, Wisconsin, and South Dakota.

This story has two key takeaways:

- First, heed the recommendation of Extension experts to farmers and landowners. Check your fields for the presence of Palmer amaranth. Possible infestations should be reported by contacting the MDA's Arrest the Pest phone line, 1-888-545-6684, or by e-mail, arrest.the.pest@state.mn.us.
- Second, recognize the importance of knowing the source of the seed you are planting or selling. No matter the purpose of the seed—cash crop, cover crop, or pollinator habitat—planting high-quality seed that has been tested and properly labeled is a key to future success.

For information on Palmer amaranth visit the University of Minnesota Extension website at www.extension.umn.edu/news.

Welcome Chase Mowry!

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes Chase Mowry as a new seed analyst in the seed testing laboratory. Chase is certified in viability and is working towards his Registered Seed Technologist certification. Formerly with SGS in Brookings, South Dakota, Chase brings experience with a wide range of crops and testing methods. You will also find Chase out inspecting fields this fall.



In this issue:

Annual Meeting News	2
Chairman's Report—Paul Kjolhaug.....	2
President's Corner—Fawad Shah	3
Organic Corner—Michelle Menken	3



Chairman's Report

Paul Kjolhaug, Board Chair

Staying Connected

It's been a wild ride. . . . Yup, that's the story in the past year. There's been big news in agriculture—ChemChina acquires Syngenta, DuPont and Dow merge, John Deere acquires Precision Planting, Agrium and Potash merge, and, most recently, Bayer acquires Monsanto. These are all recent announcements and, as of this writing, the combinations have yet to clear the regulatory process. We are in a changing world; it's unpredictable and volatile. Changes are happening not only internationally and nationally, but also locally. It's difficult to stay current and to understand how these changes will impact your business.

I think that all businesses experience the same issues in today's environment, and concerns and answers are not clear to most of us. But it is legitimate and critical to ask questions: In these changing times what can I do to support my farming operation or my ag business and the community that I am part of?

Personally, I do not believe that there are any absolute answers to these questions. What I do believe is that we should all keep ourselves educated to the events and stay connected. Read, read, read . . . and stay networked with your ag suppliers, service suppliers, university staff, and fellow seed folks. Communication with your "community" will help keep you current and will help you generate new ideas for your business. It will also help you be more effective in managing your business and marketing your services and products.

Please know that MCIA is one of your supporters and service suppliers. We want to stay connected with you. We want to support your business and help you be more successful. Please keep us connected with your business and share your ideas. We can and will help you, but we can only do that if we know your needs and understand your business. Your field service staff of Seth and Kris, led by Jim, and the MCIA leadership team of Fawad, Cindy, Roger, and Michelle would welcome a call or conversation to better understand your business and ideas. This is your association and we are here to support you.

I'm sure that when you receive this fall edition of the *Minnesota Seed Grower* you will be well into harvest—perhaps you are finished. We trust that it was a successful and, more important, a safe season for you. We look forward to seeing you at the annual meeting.

Recognize a Deserving MCIA Member!

MCIA members are encouraged to submit nominations for the Honorary Premier Seedsman, Premier Seedsman, and Achievement in Crop Improvement awards, which will be presented at the MCIA Annual Meeting in January.

Please call the office at 800-510-6242 to request copies of the requirements. Nominations may be submitted to our office by telephone, mail, or e-mail: wippl002@umn.edu.

ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

The MCIA Annual Meeting is changing to a one-day format. It will be held January 5, 2017 at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls. The business meeting, informational presentations, trade show, and awards luncheon will begin in the morning and conclude late in the afternoon.

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 14 days prior to the meeting.

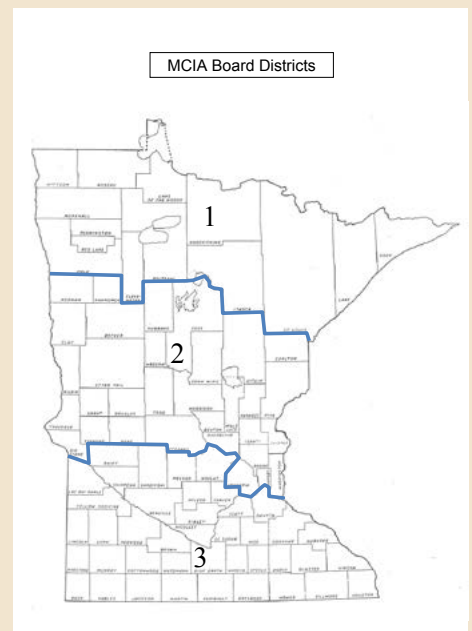
MCIA BOARD POSITIONS OPEN

MCIA is seeking candidates for positions on the MCIA Board of Directors. The

following seats are open: Scott Habstritt, District 1; Darius Thiel, District 2; Paul Kjolhaug, Related Industry; Mory Rugg, Related Industry.

Kjolhaug is not eligible to serve another term. Habstritt, Rugg, and Thiel are eligible for re-election. The MCIA board districts are shown here. Related Industry is a state-wide position. Directors are elected by and from the members at the annual meeting to a three-year term of office.

To propose agenda items or resolutions for the annual meeting, or to nominate someone to serve on the MCIA Board of Directors, or to inquire about serving on the board yourself, please contact Fawad Shah at fawad.shah@mncia.org.





Growth is the most suitable word to describe the MCIA Organic Certification Program in the recent past. According to the Organic Trade Association's 2016 Organic Industry Survey, total organic product sales hit \$43.3 billion in 2015, up 11 percent from the previous year's record level. MCIA's Organic Certification Program is not insulated from this uptick. Our program currently operates in nine Mid-

western states, and the number of new clients has already surpassed our estimate for this year, making MCIA one of the leading organic certifiers in the Midwest.

The growth in the MCIA Organic Certification Program is not by accident, it's been achieved through the hard work and dedication of its staff who take special pride in providing exemplary customer care. This growth comes with great responsibility. We pay close attention to both field and office work. Striking a balance between the workload and having adequate workforce can be a challenge at times. MCIA is not the only organic certifier working in the state of Minnesota, but what sets MCIA apart is that our staff goes the extra mile in assisting existing and new customers.

Training is another front MCIA is focused on. Field inspection supervisors keep their knowledge base sharp by regularly participating in industry-wide trainings. Training part-time inspectors has become a yearly ritual. Prior to the start of the inspection season, field supervisors conduct a session to train their seasonal inspectors. Often times, many of those inspectors rejoin MCIA to work during the summer.

Just before the soybean inspection started this year, I participated in one of these trainings, hosted by Jim Boots at his farm. The first part of the training was focused on reviewing the applications, mapping out the fields, inspector safety, sensitivity to the confidentiality of company information, and being cognizant of the surroundings before, during, and after the inspection work. The most valuable part of the training was getting in the field and applying the lessons learned: identifying off-types and weeds, checking isolation distances, and asking questions.

Three representatives of a large seed company, whose fields were being used during this training, joined us for the field evaluation. I was particularly impressed by Jim's vast field inspection experience and his ability to explain different aspects of the inspection process; thus maintaining MCIA's sound relationship with our stakeholders in and around his area.



Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Certification Program Manager



It has been a crazy summer for us and it's not over yet. With almost 200 new applicants this year, we've had to focus first on getting everyone inspected. We have done pretty well, but right now inspectors are telling us, "No more!" So, we are scrambling to finish up the last few farms. MCIA staff should be free by mid-October, when we will be able to get everyone inspected who has applied.

We have also made a good start on reviewing inspections and issuing certificates. Once the last inspections are done, everyone here will turn to final reviews so we can get all the certificates out. Remember, if you are certified already, your current certificate is still valid. You can use it to make 2016 sales. If your buyer wants a letter of good standing or a transaction certificate, please let us know and we will do that for you.

You should all have received the Cost Share Program information for your state. This is a voluntary, federally funded program that offers a 75 percent rebate of certification costs up to \$750.

Each state has its own application form and its own deadline.

I've been hearing that crops are pretty good this year with the exception of some flooded-out or hail-damaged fields. For those of you with internet access, the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service is now publishing the biweekly grain and feedstuff price list at www.ams.usda.gov/mnreports/lbncor.pdf. It doesn't have the three-year historical data that the old price list had, but it does give current price data.

Conference season is around the corner. I highly recommend attending one or more of the conferences. There are always good speakers and it is a great way to meet other organic producers, as well as those who supply inputs and buy your products. MCIA will have booths at all the organic conferences listed in the calendar. The first two events are the South Dakota Local Foods Conference November 3-5 in Mitchell. This is not an organic conference but will have sessions on local and specialty foods. The Iowa Organic Conference will be November 13-14 in Iowa City. I will announce the events in January and February in the next issue of the *Minnesota Seed Grower*.



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

In Memoriam

Helen Ann Haugrud of Haugrud Seed, Rothsay, passed away August 29. The Haugruds, longtime MCIA members, have produced Foundation seed for many years. Helen Ann was usually the first person you spoke with when calling about Foundation seed pickup. In 2009, Helen Ann was presented a Premier Seedsman award.

CALENDAR

November

- 4–5 South Dakota Local Foods Conference, Mitchell
- 5–8 Western Seed Assoc. Conference, Kansas City, Mo.
- 10 AgriGrowth Meeting & Conference, Saint Paul
- 13–14 Iowa Organic Conference, Iowa City
- 17 MCIA Board Meeting, Saint Paul
- 24–25 MCIA Office Closed

December

- 5–9 ASTA Corn, Sorghum & Soybean Seed Research Conference, Chicago, Ill.
- 7–8 Prairie Grains Conference, Grand Forks, N.D.
- 23–26 MCIA Office Closed

January

- 2 MCIA Office Closed
- 5 MCIA Annual Meeting, Fergus Falls
- 12–13 Minnesota Organic Conference, Saint Cloud
- 16 MCIA Office Closed
- 25–26 MN Ag Expo, Mankato
- 26–28 NPSAS Winter Conference, Aberdeen, S.D.

For more information go to www.mncia.org.