

MCIA Annual Meeting Preview

One-Day Event in Fergus Falls: January 10, 2018



Among the speakers scheduled for MCIA's 2018 Annual Meeting: Elizabeth Dunbar, Minnesota Public Radio; Dr. Greg Cuomo, University of Minnesota; Dr. David Mulla, University of Minnesota; and Dr. Dennis Thompson, University of Illinois.

The 2018 MCIA Annual Meeting will once again be held in a one-day format. The business meeting, education program, and awards luncheon will all take place on Wednesday, January 10, at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls. Every MCIA member is encouraged to attend as the meeting will address issues important to the seed industry and will provide an excellent opportunity for attendees to visit with other seed professionals.

Program topics include Opportunities in Agricultural Development, presented by Dr. Dennis Thompson, Soybean Innovation Lab, University of Illinois and Site-Specific Nitrogen Management in Corn, presented by Dr. David Mulla, University of Minnesota, Soil and Water Resources. Representatives of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Plant Protection Division and the University of Minnesota, CFANS & MAES will provide updates. Mark Murphey Henry

of the Farmers Yield Initiative will also address the group. A trade show will fill out the day.

The luncheon keynote speaker, Elizabeth Dunbar of Minnesota Public Radio, will discuss "Feeding the Future: Bridging Divides between Farmers and Foodies." We will also recognize recipients of the Premier and Honorary Premier Seed Grower awards and present the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award.

Wednesday Evening Reception: Those arriving the day before the Annual Meeting are invited to a reception, beginning at 7 o'clock Tuesday evening, hosted by the MCIA Board of Directors. Plan to arrive early enough to join us.

To register for the meeting or to obtain more information please contact MCIA at 1-800-510-6242 or visit www.mncia.org.

Order Foundation Seed Now

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

Currently 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 2018 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 Seed Guide*, *Agri News*, *Prairie Grains*, and *Soybean Business*. The Field Crop Trials can also be accessed through the MCIA website, www.mncia.org.

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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I don't gamble. And over the years, I've found that many crop producers are similarly averse to seeking the thrill and excitement of the casino. If you were to ask them, "Why?" you would likely hear the retort, "Farming is already a big enough gamble!"

With so many factors beyond their control, farmers often are left to wonder about their crops until the harvest is over and in the bin. This year has been no exception. By now, most producers are probably

finished with their harvest, and for many the harvest has brought a pleasant surprise—a larger than expected yield. Although commodity prices continue to languish, the additional yield is beneficial to the bottom line.

MCIA is not a crop producer per se, but in recent years this organization has planted a crop of new employees. Just like in farming, MCIA has been successful because of the dedicated, high-performing personnel who have chosen to stay with the organization over the years. But, like in farming, nothing is forever. Staff turnover is inevitable. Just like when our favorite variety or hybrid is no longer available, some exemplary employees eventually retire, which present us with the challenge of having to find capable and qualified replacements. Not an easy task!

MCIA continues to work on succession planning—mostly to address the issue of staff attrition—even as our client-base is growing and we add services. For example, Organic Services has grown exponentially since we launched it, not so many years ago, and we have reactivated the seed laboratory.

During my tenure on the MCIA Board of Directors, I have been privileged to participate in the selection process of our current CEO, Fawad Shah. And while the former CEO left some rather large shoes to fill (both literally and figuratively!), I believe Dr. Shah has performed even beyond expectations in his leadership role.

Serving as a board member, I have had the pleasure of meeting all of MCIA's employees, including the most recent hires. Perhaps more importantly though, as a member who uses MCIA's services, I have noticed that this organization continues to excel in the service it provides.

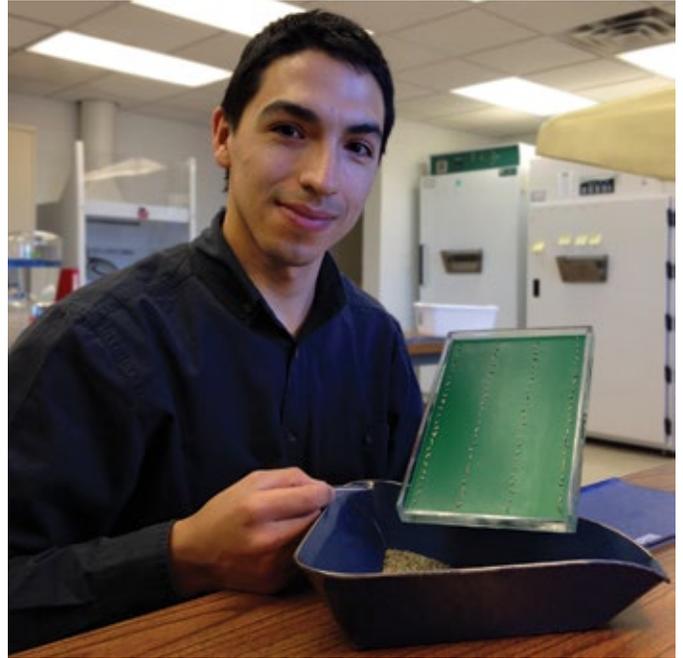
The new crop of eager, excited, and talented employees are poised to grow and expand our organization. MCIA continues to thrive, in no small part because of the leadership and careful and nurturing guidance provided by our veteran staff. If this transitional period has given us any indication of what to expect, I believe we can consider MCIA's future success to be less of a gamble and more of a sure bet.

Minnesota Seed Guide Published in December

The 2018 *Minnesota Seed Guide* will appear 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. Visit www.minnesota-farmguide.com for more information.

Welcome Juan Aguilera Lobos!

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association welcomes Juan Aguilera Lobos as a new seed analyst in our seed testing laboratory. Juan brings with him valuable experience as a field quality inspector for Monsanto in Chile. During seed production, he was involved in the evaluation of genetic quality and phytosanitary conditions, both in the field as well as in the lab. Juan's background also includes work as a lab assistant in the mycology department of Chile's Department of Agriculture. Juan completed his bachelor of science in agronomy with an emphasis in crop science from the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile in 2016.



Farmers Fined for Illegal Linkert Wheat Seed Transfer

The North Dakota State Seed Department (NDSSD) has fined two Minto farmers a total of \$12,500 for an illegal farmer-to-farmer transfer of Linkert spring wheat, a Plant Variety Protected (PVP) variety released by the University of Minnesota and licensed through the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association.

Linkert is protected under PVP Title V of the Federal Seed Act, which requires the seed to be sold as a class of certified seed. PVP law allows a farmer to replant a protected variety on their farm but prohibits transfer to another farmer. In this case, the seed was purchased legally by one of the producers, but commercial grain was transferred illegally to the second grower for planting purposes, violating state and federal seed laws.

The illegal transfer was discovered during a routine seed regulatory audit by officials of NDSSD, which is designated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as the state's authority for seed certification and seed regulatory activities.

The seller of the noncertified grain paid \$8,000 in fines, while the receiver paid \$4,500 in penalties. Ken Bertsch, North Dakota's state seed commissioner states, "The takeaway message is that grain exchanged between farmers, and used for planting purposes with the intent of circumventing variety protection laws, comes with great risk."

President's Corner

Fawad S. Shah, President/CEO



With the 2017 crop production year at an end, it's time for us to gather and consider pertinent information, such as production and weather challenges, variety performance and yield, to name a few. Historically, wintertime is used to review the preceding year's activities and capitalize on lessons learned. Winter is an opportune season for meetings and conferences with our colleagues to seek insights, share scientific information and market trends, and to gather knowledge about

successes as well as ways to overcome challenges. One such conference is the American Seed Trade Association CSS 2017 & Seed Expo, held annually in early December. Key Minnesota Crop Improvement Association staff will be there to represent MCIA, gain and share knowledge, network with other seed industry professionals, and explore licensing of University of Minnesota-released crop varieties with interested parties.

As it does each year, Minnesota Crop Improvement Association is putting together an informative program for its own annual meeting. The meeting will be held on January 10, 2018 at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Keynote

speaker Elizabeth Dunbar will discuss her work on Minnesota Public Radio's Feeding the Future project, which seeks to envision the future of our region's food system. Additional program topics include the importance of protecting intellectual property rights in variety development, opportunities in agricultural development, and site-specific nitrogen management in corn. In addition, officials from the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will provide academic research and legislative and regulatory updates, respectively. This gathering also offers us an opportunity to recognize the achievements and contributions made by individuals to our industry and communities. Awards for Achievement in Crop Improvement, Premier Seedsman, and Honorary Premier Seedsman will be presented. Plan to attend this important event—learn and network with others from the seed and agricultural industry!

The year 2017 saw Minnesota Crop Improvement Association identifying critical information and processes in support of succession planning. Employees worked hard to share information during the year, as three of MCIA's seasoned employees reached their well-deserved retirement. Succession planning in support of continuity of operations had been well underway, and MCIA continued its hiring initiative, performed talent searches, and hired quality candidates to fill each one of the positions. I look forward to working with our enthusiastic and talented teammates to create new growth opportunities for MCIA members.



Organic Corner

Michelle Menken, Organic Services Manager

There is a **big change** in place for all who import to or export from the European Union. All shipments must now be processed electronically in the European Commission's online certification management tool called TRACES (Trade Control and Expert System). MCIA has signed up and is

a recognized certification body. Now, each importer/exporter must sign up to become a recognized user. The registration page is <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/tracesnt/login>. (We recommend viewing the "COI Quick Reference Guides" training module first. In the top menu bar, click on *Documentation*, then *COI*, and then *Quick Reference Guides* for a downloadable PDF.) It may take three weeks for TRACES to process your application, recognize you as a valid user, and issue you a password. So, do it now, before you want to send products to the EU. This will replace the EU import certificates we formerly issued.

Conference season is coming up. January 11–12 we have the Minnesota Organic Conference in Saint Cloud. MCIA will host

an Organic Committee meeting there on Thursday evening. A calendar listing of other conferences is printed on page 4. We plan to be at all of the posted events. Please come and meet us.

Organic production in the United States grew about 23 percent last year; MCIA's organic clientele increased by about the same percentage.

We have finished crop inspections for 2017. Now we are working on issuing crop certificates, and we are also setting up many processor inspections. If you need a certificate to make a sale, please let us know. Clients who have paid their inspection fees are being completed first, so please send in your payments or set up a payment arrangement if you need one.

We completed 20 random pesticide residue tests in 2017. I am happy to report they all came back negative. We have found a lab that can test for the presence of pesticide residues in soil. So, next year some of our test samples may be of soil. We may also test some crops for the presence of GMOs, since our seed laboratory is adding the capability of GMO testing. National Organic Program regulations require us to test at least 5 percent of our clients each year.



THE MINNESOTA SEED GROWER Vol. 89 No. 4 Winter 2017 (Pub# 352240) is published quarterly by MCIA, 1900 Hendon Ave, Saint Paul MN 55108. Periodical postage paid at Saint Paul, MN and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THE MINNESOTA SEED GROWER 1900 HENDON AVE SAINT PAUL MN 55108



PERIODICAL

In Memoriam

James Miller, of Dassel, died August 17, 2017 at the age of 76. Jim was an MCIA member for over 30 years. He produced certified seed of oats, wheat, and soybeans. He enjoyed the seed business and attending MCIA's annual meetings.

Marlin Gehring, of Waseca, died September 7, 2017 at the age of 89. Marly served as the MCIA field supervisor in southeastern Minnesota from 1975 until his retirement in 1993. Prior to his employment with MCIA, he worked 24 years at the Waseca Experiment Station.

The Minnesota Seed Grower
quarterly newsletter of the
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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

JANUARY

- 1 MCIA Office Closed
- 10 MCIA Annual Meeting, Fergus Falls
- 11–12 Minnesota Organic Conference, St. Cloud
- 15 MCIA Office Closed
- 15–19 Small Grains Update Meetings, multiple locations
- 18–19 Upper Midwest Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference, St. Cloud
- 24–25 MN Ag Expo, Mankato
- 25–27 NPSAS Winter Conference, Aberdeen, SD
- 26–27 Emerging Farmers Conference, St. Paul

FEBRUARY

- 2–3 Organic Vegetable Production Conference, Madison, WI
- 10 SFA Annual Conference, Saint Joseph
- 14–15 SFA Midwest Soil Health Summit, Fergus Falls
- 19 MCIA Office Closed
- 22–24 MOSES Organic Farming Conference, La Crosse, WI

For more event information visit www.mncia.org.