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MinnesotaCrop Improvement Association

Presents Achievement in Crop Improvement Award to Wayne Capistran

ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA, January 12, 2022 Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) today presented its highest honor, the Achievement in Crop Improvement Award, to Wayne Capistran, whose family-owned and operated business, Capistran Seed Company, is located in Crookston, Minnesota. The award, presented annually since 1972, recognizes exemplary service to the seed industry as well as outstanding leadership in agriculture and the local community. The award was presented during the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association’s 119th Annual Meeting. The virtual event was hosted at MCIA’s office in St. Paul, Minnesota, January 12, 2022.

Wayne Capistran’s first seed crop, in 1979, was hybrid sunflower seed grown for Dahlgren Seed in Crookston. The following year he began growing wheat seed for Bruce Hamnes at the Stephen Seed House. That was the beginning of a long and noteworthy career of producing and selling certified seed. Through the years, Wayne developed a passion for producing high quality seed. He also became a salesperson for AgriPro. David Boehm, formerly of AgriPro, said, “Wayne had a way of connecting with growers and providing information and advice to help with their success.” Visiting 3–4 farmers a day, Wayne recognized that not all varieties fit on every farm, and he would tell a customer if that was so. His customers came to appreciate his straightforward, honest approach. To learn more about the varieties he sold, he started growing test plots. Test plot tours have become a staple on the farm, always drawing a nice crowd.

Wayne’s success at sales led to a franchise with AgriPro wheat. The opportunity meant a seed conditioning plant was needed. Completed in 1992, the seed plant and storage capacity have been expanded over the years. Wayne enjoys the challenge of taking a tough looking crop and turning it into a high-quality seed or grain product. Wayne and seed plant manager Jeff Nicholson process wheat, barley, oats, soybeans, sunflowers, buckwheat, rye, and peas. A graduate of the University of Minnesota Crookston aviation program, Wayne has maintained his enthusiasm for flying. He flies for pleasure and business, using the plane to scout their fields, get parts and attend meetings.

An active MCIA member, Capistran Seed Company participates in several of MCIA’s certification programs and produces foundation seed for MCIA. Wayne is a member of the Polk County Crop Improvement and the associations for wheat, soybean, and sugar beet growers. Wayne has represented Minnesota agriculture as part of a People-to-People International tour of China. Locally, Wayne has served on his church, belongs to the Knights of Columbus, and volunteers at a homeless shelter. Recognizing the importance of mentoring youth, he has served as a 4-H leader and volunteer.

Their farm has been in the family since 1879. Wayne and his wife, Nancy, have three children and four grandchildren. Nancy is the main bookkeeper. Wayne’s son Kevin manages the crop production and plot work while Kevin’s wife, Lorri, manages communications. Kevin and Lori’s children are already involved, insuring there will be another generation on the family farm.

Wayne has seen a lot of changes on the farm, but one constant remains: His desire to produce the best quality certified seed. Wayne says it is the people that he has worked with over the years that make this business so enjoyable.

Upon receiving the award, Wayne noted the many improvements that have been made in wheat breeding over the years and the support of the MCIA organization. He added, “I am delighted to get this award. Thank you to everybody and thanks to my family. This is a real family operation, and it wouldn’t be what it is without them.”

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.

If you would like more information on this topic, please contact Roger Wippler at 612-625-7766 or wippl002@umn.edu.