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**Minnesota Crop Improvement Association**

**Presents Achievement in Crop Improvement Award to Seed Industry Veteran**

FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA, January 12, 2023  A Willmar, Minnesota, seed business owner has received Minnesota Crop Improvement Association’s (MCIA) highest honor. **Paul Kjolhaug**, part-owner of the MayerSeedLine company, has dedicated forty years to seed production, finding time to give back to the seed industry and his community, bringing a focus on the future, a commitment to upholding high standards, and a passion for helping others.

Paul Kjolhaug did not grow up on a farm, but he has spent most of his life involved in agriculture. As a youth he lived in Springfield, Minnesota, and learned to work hard on area crop and livestock farms. One of those jobs was detasseling corn, his first experience in seed production. Such was the beginning of a lifelong journey in the world of seed.

Paul pursued his interest in agriculture through studies at the University of Minnesota, earning a degree in agronomy. His first position in the seed industry was at Northern Farm and Garden, the predecessor of Norfarm Seeds, where Paul worked with legumes, grass seed, and sunflower seed.

The next step was to Interstate Payco where he managed seed production of hybrid corn, sunflowers, and soybean seed. Much of this production was for export to Western Europe. It was then that Paul became very familiar with MCIA, requesting field inspections and seed testing to meet OECD standards for seed export.

Paul understood the value of seed certification and worked closely with MCIA Field Supervisor, Ben Lang. Ben noted, “Paul would come to the field and help me train my staff to do seed corn field inspections, he would explain to them how important their job was.”

For the last 21 years, Paul has been part owner of MayerSeedLine, a contract production and seed brokerage firm, working primarily with seed corn and sunflowers domestically and internationally. Their customers range from small independent companies to large multinational corporations.

Well respected in the seed world, Paul has been involved in many seed trade organizations—local, regional, and national. He served six years on the MCIA Board of Directors, including one term as board chair.

With a passion for helping others, Paul has a strong interest in his local church, serving on committees that focus on pastoral care and youth activities. He also is active in the local chapter of the American Red Cross. Family is another passion for Paul. He enjoys spending time with his wife, Jodi, and their children and grandchildren.

Commenting on receiving the award Paul said, “I have enjoyed my years in the seed industry and being able to work with many great people,” adding, “I am truly humbled and honored to receive this award.”

The Achievement in Crop Improvement Award was presented during the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association’s 120th Annual Meeting. The event was held at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, January 12, 2023. The award, presented annually since 1972, recognizes an individual who has provided exemplary service to the seed industry and has actively supported MCIA and their local community.

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