FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association
Presents Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award to Denise Thiede

FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA, January 12, 2023  Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) today recognized Denise Thiede, a manager at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), with the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award. The award recognized Denise’s contributions to the seed industry through her work in seed testing and the MDA.

Denise Thiede has worked with seed and plants her entire career. She is currently part of the Plant Protection Division at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, serving as section manager, responsible for seed, noxious weed, hemp, and biotechnology. Her association with MCIA has spanned nearly twenty years.

Denise grew up in the Twin Cities but had ties to her mother’s family farm near Gibbon, Minnesota. Her mother also loved gardening and those connections were the stimulus needed for Denise to develop an interest in agriculture and plants. She earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from St. Olaf College, a master’s degree at the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in plant biology from Michigan State University.

For several years, Denise conducted university research that focused on seed genetics, characteristics, and evolution. In 2002, she joined BioDiagnostics Inc. (BDI), a commercial seed testing lab in River Falls, Wisconsin. There she managed the germination, trait purity, and DNA labs.

She also organized their quality management system, led them through ISO accreditation, and guided BDI to become the first USDA-accredited seed lab. In 2008, Denise became a partner in the BDI business with Quentin Schultz and Craig Nelson.

In 2008, MCIA closed its seed lab and directed members to BDI as a designated seed lab. Denise worked collaboratively with the MCIA staff to ensure that germination, purity, and other tests met the requirements of the seed certification program. It was a valuable experience and she enjoyed interacting with MCIA members.

Denise has been at the MDA since 2017, where she supervises the seed regulatory program. Her responsibilities have expanded over the years to include hemp and Palmer amaranth control. She has worked closely with MCIA on a variety of issues, including the improper sale of PVP Title V varieties.

Denise has served multiple terms on the MCIA Board of Directors. She has also been active in the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists, American Seed Trade Association, and the Association of Seed Control Officials.

Throughout her career, Denise has enjoyed training and working with young people interested in seed technology. She characterizes those working in the seed industry as “great people.” In her spare time, not surprisingly, she enjoys gardening and being outdoors—hiking and taking in the wonders of nature.

MCIA has presented the Honorary Premier Seed Grower Award annually since 1930. The award recognizes individuals not directly involved in seed production but who have actively supported the seed industry, 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.

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