FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association
Presents Premier Seed Grower Award to Lon Baldus

FERGUS FALLS, MINNESOTA, January 12, 2023  Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) today recognized Lon Baldus, of Grand Meadow, with the Premier Seed Grower Award. The award, presented annually since 1928, recognized Lon for his dedication to the production and distribution of quality seed and food grade soybeans.

In 1998, instead of growing the new Roundup resistant soybeans, Lon began growing non-GMO, food-grade soybeans. He reasoned that food-grade soybeans added more value to his crop, and he has been growing them ever since. At first, he grew high protein soybeans for other companies. Eventually, he started his own food-grade soybean export business.

Lon grew up on a livestock and crop farm. Soon after high school he was ready to venture out on his own and bought a farm in Mower County. In addition to farming, he completed the Farm Equipment mechanics program at Riverland Technical school and worked at the local implement dealer.

Through the early years of his farming operation, he cooperated with his brother-in-law, sharing equipment and labor. Lon also did off-farm work at Hormel and in construction, building grain elevators and seed conditioning plants. The experience building grain cleaning facilities would come in handy many years down the road.

Owning the business allowed him to have more control over the production and marketing of his crop. Over the years he would export soybeans to Japan and other countries in Southeast Asia. He bought a seed conditioning plant in Mapleton and worked with Leo Roth to learn the techniques for proper equipment operation. In addition to processing soybeans for export, he also conditioned small grains and buckwheat. Lon was one of the first in Minnesota to clean industrial hemp seed, which was a challenging crop to process.

As a member of MCIA, Lon has participated in the seed certification, identity preserved, and the approved facility programs. Eventually, his conditioning plant was certified organic by MCIA. A regular attendee at MCIA’s annual meeting, he enjoys visiting with other seed producers and learning from them. He is also a member of the Minnesota Corn and Soybean Grower Associations and the American Soybean Association.

Lon and his wife Susan have been partners on the farm and in raising four very successful children. They love having grandchildren visit the farm and in their free time enjoy traveling. Lon also enjoys collecting classic albums and attending concerts.

Lon received the award, along with fellow Premier Seedsman awardees Kurt Flegel, and Dean Johnson and Kurt Aakre, during the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association’s 120th Annual Meeting. The event was hosted at the Bigwood Event Center in Fergus Falls, Minnesota, January 12, 2023.

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 wippi002@umn.edu.