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Snyder’s Segment
by Mitch Snyder, ICIA President

Just like the NCAA tournament, you never know what surprises the growing season will produce! As I write this the sun is shining and there is hope for a great start to planting season.

The 2015 ICIA Corn Belt Seed Conference was a great success. Attendance was up and a record number of exhibitors participated, including 12 new exhibitors. There were also a record number of attendees at the Illinois-Indiana Seed Conditioning Workshop.

One of the goals of ICIA is to provide timely and appropriate education and training that helps members enhance their efficiency and quality of work, and improve plant/employee safety and stewardship. Our feedback indicated attendees felt the presenters were excellent and the topics were of great value; contributing to their ability to condition a top quality seed product.

For me, the conference is one of the highlights of the year; a great gathering of seed industry professionals, a unique and very tight knit group, and unlike any other industry I know. We share a bond; the mutual respect and appreciation for the seed and its potential. We all work together to promote, protect and improve our industry. We are passionate about bringing farmers quality seed and improving their production and quality of life. I am proud of what we represent, achieve and aspire to.

In the ICIA Lab, with an extremely large 2013 seed crop, the 2014 seed crop saw decreased acres and thus, field inspections were down accordingly. However, new customers were added in 2014. Lab testing was on or above target with retest and new crop samples. Also, look for improvements to LabLink to better serve members’ needs.

As a board and staff, we will continue to implement, review and measure the strategic plan that was adopted this past year. It is refreshing to see a strategic plan that truly is a living document. It has resulted in activity that enhances the services and visibility of ICIA, and helps prepare for continued growth and success. Watch for some exciting things in the coming year to help improve ICIA visibility in the industry; ICIA will host a three day open house in August.

Please remember to take time for safety this spring!
Steve Houghton is an individual who has served ICIA and the Indiana Seed Industry spanning decades of volunteering his time and talents in support of the industry.

Steve has had a long and storied career in the seed industry, having started working for a seed company right out of high school. He enrolled in Indiana University, in “Pre Professional Studies” in 1973. It didn’t take long for him to realize that perhaps this wasn’t his calling. He transferred to Purdue University where he majored in Agronomy in the College of Agriculture, receiving his BS degree in 1977.

After graduating from Purdue he moved to Indianapolis and worked for Syler Seeds in their office on Kentucky Avenue. In August of 1982 he was hired by Central Indiana Supply Company to start and manage a seed division. In July of 1989 he left Central Indiana Supply to pursue his own business on the northeast side of Indianapolis under the name of “George W Hill of Indiana” specializing in forage and turf seed. His company was then purchased by AgriBiotech in 1997. After some market changes, he was welcomed back to CISCO with open arms in August 2000 and now serves as the Seed Division Manager, coordinating the forage, cover crops and turf products, and Vice President of The CISCO Companies.

Steven Houghton’s record of service to both Indiana organizations represented at the CBSC is outstanding: He served on the ICIA Board and as President of ICIA in 1990, Steve has served on the ICIA Awards, Nominating and Annual Conference Planning Committee’s. He also served on the ISTA Board and served as President of ISTA in 1998.

Steve and his wife, Terry, have a son Travis, and two daughters Courtney and Stephanie. Congratulations Steve – a deserving recipient of the 2014 Crop and Soils Merit Award!

The Indiana Crop Improvement Association awarded Jon Stafford of Monsanto Wheat its Crop and Soils Merit Award — the association’s highest distinction given for outstanding contributions to the association and the seed industry at the 2015 Corn Belt Seed Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

“Jon has the unique ability to find common ground with people, make them feel comfortable and, consequently, he is the consummate salesman,” says Steve Houghton who presented the award. “His knowledge of the industry is unprecedented and this is an attribute of his ability to communicate with people.”

Stafford who started his career farming and still farms, has spent his entire career trading, selling and promoting nearly every species of seed planted in the Midwest. Stafford has managed a grain elevator, participated in the retail corn business several times, brokered seed grains and forages, participated in the popcorn business and marketed soybean and wheat genetics.

Houghton reports that Stafford has participated on a number of the association’s committees, including the Soybean Committee, the Small Grains Committee, Intellectual Property Rights Committee, Annual Conference Planning Committee, Nominating Committee and Awards Committee. Jon also served as the president of ISTA in 2000.

Jon and his wife Janet have a daughter, Jennifer. Congratulations Jon, on this well-deserved award!
Record attendance, a top notch program and cooperative weather made for one of the most successful Corn Belt Conferences to date.

Jay Akridge, Glenn W. Sample Dean, College of Agriculture at Purdue University kicked off the morning with an update of the exciting developments and projects on the horizon at Purdue. As part of the Purdue Moves initiative there is a plethora of investment, building expansion and industry collaboration and innovation under way!

The keynote speaker, Aaron Thomas, a teacher and high school football coach from Parkersburg, Iowa brought an inspirational message of Passion, Courage and Attitude. In 2009, when faced with the tragic death of his father at the hands of one of his own football players, Aaron Thomas realized the lessons his father had taught him would carry him, his family and his community through this devastating time. Aaron’s father, Ed Thomas was named 2005 National High School Football Coach of the Year. He coached four young men that had careers in the NFL. He led the community in a massive rebuilding effort after a tornado wiped out Parkersburg in 2008. Ed Thomas truly led by example; he prepared his children for their future by demonstrating truth, perseverance and passion for life. “Toughness” Aaron says. The definition of toughness is doing what is right, all the time, every time, even when it’s hard or uncomfortable or scary. You need to be tough to be a leader, to truly help people. It was Ed’s example that prepared Aaron for the challenging times ahead, for his opportunity to share with all of us the lessons his dad shared with him and those fortunate enough to have known him. It’s all about Attitude, Charles Swindoll says, “life is 10% what happens to me, and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you ... we are in charge of our Attitudes.”

This message inspired attendees for the remainder of the day to be open to the learning opportunities and take charge of bringing knowledge back to their businesses. The morning concluded with a dynamic panel presenting tools, technologies and research regarding precision farming and what the future of the farm looks like. We thank Bruce Erickson, Jim Schwartz and Rodney Rulon for sharing with us their valuable perspectives.

The afternoon general session continued with a discussion of weed resistance technology. Representatives from Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences explained management and stewardship of their new herbicide technologies. Bob Starke talked about the requirements for Roundup Ready Improved 2Xtend™ and David Hilger explained the Enlist™ program for corn and soybeans. Bryan Young, Purdue University, made the point that for weed management, all future technologies will require an integrated program approach which was also a central theme in Bob and David’s presentations. All three speakers agreed no single herbicide will control all weeds indefinitely. Farmers will need to incorporate multiple modes of action and include other management practices.

Dr. Scott Downey, Professor at Purdue University, shared insight with the audience on how to approach your potential customer based on their generation. There is a lot of focus on the millennials – the youngest generation in the workplace right now – and how to best reach them and what’s important to them. We learned that this younger generation is not afraid to use the resources around them to learn or solve problems – whether these resources be people (experts) or other resources (i.e. Google).

The day concluded with a “Farmer Panel” with a broad based perspective to share with our seed company and service provider audience on “What Services Do you Expect from Seed Companies?” One unifying opinion was that each of these farmers, regardless of their age, the crops they raise or the size of their operation; they all want their seed rep to be knowledgeable about THEIR farm, what THEIR goals and challenges are and truly become a part of THEIR business.

The CBSC concluded on Thursday morning with an informative and timely session on Water Quality. While Indiana is fortunate not to have the water issues of California, Texas and other states, we have been proactive in addressing potential problems. Ron Turco, Purdue University, began the discussion with an overview of the interdepartmental activity taking place at Purdue on water issues. Dr. Turco leads a team of researchers examining water quality, water quantity, soil health, cover crops usage, and new technologies to reduce and reuse water supplies. Jane Hardisty, State Conservationist, NRCS/USDA, talked about their work with farmers and improving irrigations practices. Jordan Seger, Director of the Division of Soil Conservation for the Indiana State Department of Agriculture concluded the morning presentation. Jordan explained how ISDA was bringing all the groups in Indiana working on water issues together and collating information and data at a central location. Indiana is a national leader in achieving cooperation among multiple agencies within Indiana dealing with water issues. Indiana has been a model in preparing for current and future water challenges.
The Illinois/Indiana Seed Conditioning Workshop was held on February 3, 2015 at the Marriott North Hotel. A record number of attendees were present for this 29th annual conditioning workshop co-hosted by Illinois and Indiana Crop Improvement Associations. Moderator Larry Nees, the Indiana State Seed Commissioner, welcomed the more than 200 plus participants and introduced the lineup of speakers who covered a wide variety of high value topics. Thanks to Total Seed Production of Tipton, Indiana for sponsoring the day-long program.

Jon Popp, of Popp Engineering, opened the morning session with an in-depth discussion and review of the basic operations in seed cleaning and handling. He covered air screen cleaners, gravity tables and air flow. Jon had polled the attendees ahead of the meeting asking what seed conditioning issues were prevalent for the season. Seed size of soybeans was a common response and Jon spent some time discussing how to handle larger seed sizes. Dave Stimpson with Dow AgroSciences talked about stewardship in the plant and what steps are necessary to maintain the purity of seed lots. Brittany Durdle, also of Dow AgroSciences discussed equipment cleaning in the conditioning plant. Brittany answered several questions from the audience related to cleaning specific types of equipment. Dale Wehmeyer, Wehmeyer Seed, closed the morning session with a presentation on total plant management. Dale covered many other areas of conditioning plant operation not addressed by the previous speakers. Each of the four presentations complemented the others and tied the entire morning session on seed conditioning together very well.

The afternoon session started with highly informative seed treating topics. Jeff Ochampaugh, Agrilead, had a comprehensive presentation on industry advances in seed treatment care. Brian Baker, with the Office of the Indiana State Chemist followed with information on Indiana regulations for seed treatment and for the personnel applying the seed treatments. Rod Worth, Precision Soya LLC, discussed workplace safety but much of his presentation was related to seed treatment application safety so it fit very well with the other treatment talks. There were a number of comments from attendees about the educational value of the seed treatment presentations. The treatment session generated CCH credits for Category 4 seed treaters which was important for many attendees. The meeting also generated CCA credits for Certified Crop Advisors who were in attendance.

To finish the day there were two speakers who focused on the image of the seed industry with the general public. Jane DeMarchi, American Seed Trade Association, related how ASTA was developing communication materials about the seed industry for use with the general public. She also touched on a couple of legislative topics that could have direct impact on the seed industry. She completed her presentation with a short video that had been recently produced about seeds. The final speaker of the day was Dr. Mark Krieger, Global Leader, Seeds Regulatory, Dow AgroSciences, who gave a presentation on behalf of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO). He discussed how BIO was responding to critics of genetically modified organisms and how individuals who work in the seed industry and agriculture can answer questions about GMOs. BIO has a web site called GMO Answers which allows people to ask questions about biotechnology and quickly receive responses from experts in various facets of agriculture.

The Seed Conditioning Workshop also featured commercial exhibits where attendees could talk with representatives from various supply companies and learn about new products, technologies and services for the seed industry. This year there were 43 exhibitors which was the most ever for a conditioning workshop. The Workshop location rotates every other year between Indiana and Illinois, so the meeting will be held in Illinois in 2016. The specific date and location will be announced at a later time. Thanks to all the speakers who contributed to the success of the workshop. And thanks again to Total Seed Production for their generous sponsorship to help make the meeting possible.
Mike Bailey has completed business with many in the seed industry over the years, however most are not aware of what he has done behind the scenes for Indiana Crop Improvement. As this year’s recipient of the Distinguished Service Award at the 2015 Corn Belt Seed Conference, Mike Bailey was one of the first people ever elected to the ICIA board who was not associated with a seed company. The Distinguished Service Award specifically recognizes significant contributions to Indiana Crop Improvement Association and the seed industry. Bailey serving on the board from 2003-2006, represented an industry supplier which set a precedent for maintaining a seat on the board for like individuals who supply products or services to the seed industry. He also served on the ICIA soybean committee and has been an exhibitor at the annual conference for many years.

Until the fall of 2002, ICIA hosted regional meetings around the state providing an update on association activities to its members. The meetings were always attended by ICIA management and staff, Larry Nees from the Office of Indiana State Chemist’s office and one other individual. Mike Bailey made it a point to attend every single meeting, every year so he could visit with ICIA members.

Mike has also been a tremendous help to ICIA. “He has been the go-to person for supplying ICIA with small quantities of protectants allowing us to provide our hand treating service to members,” said ICIA CEO, Alan Galbreth. For many years, Bailey kept ICIA current with the fungicides and insecticides being used by its customers and supplied the rates to be used for the small batches that were required. As mergers and acquisitions forged ahead, Mike continued to support ICIA with the necessary supplies for lab services - and never charged for his time or materials!

Congratulations Mike on receiving the Distinguished Service Award!
2015 ICIA Executive Members

(Pictured L-R) Kevin Cavanaugh, Beck’s Hybrids, Director at Large; Barb McMullan, Illinois Foundation Seeds, Inc., Vice President; Mitch Snyder, AgVenture McKillip Seeds, President; Craig Anderson, AgReliant Genetics, Immediate Past President
Not pictured, Marshall Martin, Purdue Faculty

2015 ISTA Honorary Membership Award

Dick Thompson, pictured above center with his wife Clara, and Quincy Cunningham, ISTA, receives the 2015 ISTA Honorary Membership Award.

2015 ICIA Board Members

Ryan Campbell, Total Seed Production
Doug Hubner, Hubner Seed
Andy Utterback, Ingredion

ICIA Board of Director’s hosted the Past Presidents and Managers Dinner on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at the Indianapolis Marriott North during the Corn Belt Seed Conference. The event, sponsored by Beck’s Hybrids, is hosted every three years.
Sponsors. Thank You!

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» El Dorado Packaging
» Indiana Corn Marketing Council
» Illinois Foundation Seeds Inc.
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» Thurston, Inc.
» Monsanto Wheat
» DuPont Pioneer
» MBS Genetics
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Exhibitors. Thank You!

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