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Highlights in the Seed Industry

Smith's Segment

by Greg Smith, President, ICIA

As fall harvest season comes to a close, we tend to reflect on the joys and challenges of the past growing season. The Seed Corn harvest was not as bountiful in our area as we had hoped for at planting season. However we did raise some corn. Soybean production has been way better than expected, thanks to the 9 inches of rain we received in August and the 5 inches of rain we received in September. I wish we had received some of that August rain in July to help the corn. We still need a few more weeks of good weather to get the rest of the Soybean crop out!

On August 14, 2012 the ICIA board, staff and committee chairs met for the first session of our Strategic Planning. I believe the meeting was very successful and informative for all who attended. We will have our follow up meeting at the next ICIA board meeting on November 12, 2012. I am looking forward to the November meeting to continue this process. We appreciate all those who made the time to be a part of the Strategic Plan.

As fall changes to winter let us all be thankful for the blessings bestowed on us this past year and look forward to the holiday season to be with family and friends!



Greg Smith, General Manager
Hubner Industries LLC
West Lebanon, IN



Upcoming events

November 12, 2012

ICIA Board of Directors Meeting
ICIA Conference Center

December 3-7, 2012

ASTA Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Research
Chicago, IL

January 8-10, 2013

IPSA Annual Meeting
Tucson, AZ

January 26-29, 2013

ASTA Vegetable & Flower Conference
Scottsdale, AZ

February 5, 2013

Illinois-Indiana Seed Conditioning Workshop
Indianapolis, IN

February 6-7, 2013

Corn Belt Seed Conference
Indianapolis, IN

Auditing and Accreditation

The value of ISO is primarily a tool to make ICIA better in delivering services to our customers.

ICIA participates in a number of accreditation programs which periodically require external audits. While there is an expense associated with these programs, they each bring something of value to ICIA and/or our member customers.

ICIA is a registered ISO 9001: 2008 organization. This is recognition of our quality management system or QMS. Components of this system include a focus on customer service, written processes and procedures for our daily operations and for our field inspection and laboratory activities. The value of ISO is primarily a tool to make ICIA better in delivering services to our customers. ISO is also recognized internationally which is important for our members who ship product out of the U.S. The ISO registration is meaningful to their downstream customers in other countries. Our QMS requires two internal audits, two management review meetings and one external audit by an ISO registrar annually.

ICIA is also a USDA Accredited Seed Laboratory. This is recognition by the USDA that the ICIA seed laboratory is performing germination and purity testing according to the AOSA Rules For Testing Seed and to ensure we have the facilities, equipment and personnel in place to satisfy the USDA requirements for this program. This adds value for our customers in knowing we are officially recognized by USDA as an accredited seed laboratory. This program has an on-site audit of our lab every three years and a desk audit of our activities and proficiency testing results annually. As a supplement to this program, our Registered Seed Technologist, Kevin Seward, is recognized as a U.S. Accredited Seed Grader. The value here is our ability to perform a germination and purity and also assign a Canadian grade to corn products destined for Canada. Previously, we could do the testing; however a lab in Canada would then have to assign the grade. This eliminates that extra step for our customers.

ICIA is responsible for OECD Certification in Indiana. This program is for certified seed moving in international channels. We operate with a Memorandum of Agreement with USDA and are subject to audits of that program every three years. ICIA is a member of AOSCA (Association of Official Seed Certifying Agencies)

and our certification standards must adhere to the minimum genetic standards of AOSCA. Part of that requirement is an annual evaluation of our compliance with the AOSCA Standards. There are also periodic on-site visits by AOSCA evaluators.

Finally, we are accredited by USDA/APHIS under the National Seed Health System (NSHS) to perform field inspections for pathogens to provide information for the issuance of state or federal phytosanitary certificates. Again, the value is to our members. Because we are already inspecting many of the corn and soybean fields for certification or quality control purposes; we can perform the phytosanitary inspections while we are in those fields. It eliminates an extra step for the seed company in having a USDA or state DNR entomologist inspector make a trip to the field just for the disease inspection. The NSHS accreditation requires annual training of all inspectors who will be performing phytosanitary inspections and we are audited on-site every three years by an external auditor.

Due to our involvement in auditing and accreditation over the last few years we have recognized the need to have more trained auditors on our own staff. Recently, Kris Brock, Susan Overdorf, Amy Smeltzer and Aaron Whalen all successfully completed the week long ISO 9001: 2008 lead auditor training. They will be able to assist with internal and external audits that we perform.

We have 4 other ICIA staff qualified as lead auditors. We also have accreditations that are specific to individuals such as Registered Seed Technologist, Registered Genetic Technologist and Certified Genetic Technologist. These carry their own set of evaluations and requirements to maintain that status.

The costs for all these programs tend to add up but we will continue to positively approach these opportunities in order for ICIA to remain viable and relevant for our member customers.

Seed Business 101



ICIA was pleased to host the UC Davis Seed Business 101 class the week of September 17th. Seed Business 101 is a one week course presented by the UC Davis Seed Biotechnology Center. The course is designed to expose participants to the five functional areas of a seed company (R&D, production, operations, sales and marketing and administration). This was the second class which had a field crops curriculum. Previous classes had a vegetable crop focus. The course gives employees that are new to the seed industry a broad understanding of the major aspects of a seed company's operations and cross-departmental knowledge of best practices for profitability. This course is developed and taught by widely respected seed business executives with additional help from industry experts participating as guest speakers.

ICIA marketing director, Liz Pestow, participated in the class and had these comments. "I really valued the step-by-step approach to the workings of a seed company and how that fits in the industry as a whole. This class broke down the complexities of the seed business to an understandable level and helped me have a firmer grasp on the big picture. It provided an opportunity to meet colleagues from different areas of the seed industry who were also here to learn what it takes to run a successful seed business."



ICIA Summer Upgrades



ICIA took full advantage of the summer slowdown in the lab to install some upgrades to services in both the Genetics Lab and the Seed Lab.

The ICIA Genetics Lab has acquired the QuickScan technology from Envirologix. The technology consists of a system of test strips and a computerized reader which produces quantitative results. The QuickScan system, installed in June, is highly versatile and adds both efficiency and accuracy to the results. ICIA uses the system for mycotoxins (Aflatoxin and Fumonison) on a daily basis as well as to assess the presence of specific commercially available traits. One distinct advantage to the QuickScan system over the previous system is that an image is captured of each individual replicate at the time of sample analysis. These photographs are stored at ICIA long term and can be shared with a customer when a need is presented. An additional advantage to the QuickScan system is that it can be used to analyze the amount of Roundup Ready® contamination in non-Roundup Ready® soybeans. This service has been traditionally performed with ELISA plates produced by Envirologix. However, Envirologix is no longer offering this product for sale. ICIA is finishing up the stock supply of plates before transition to the QuickScan system for this application.

The Seed Lab has undergone some changes to enhance the sample flow by rearranging stations and adding more lab benches in the Warm Germination department. The Seed Lab also made significant improvements to our Shake Out process and set-up. ICIA conducts custom Shake Outs and reporting detail for grade sizes from 27/64 down to a 12/64, identifying seed size percentages for flats and rounds, and packaging and preparing samples to go through the lab for testing as well as for winter grow-outs. Over the summer we have added a countertop aspirator to make the process more efficient and to increase accuracy. We have also fully revised our online data reporting to improve efficiency in data entry for our technicians and most importantly, usability for our customers.

For more information about the services or processes above please contact Emily Dierking, PhD, Genetics Lab Director or Kevin Seward, RST, Seed Lab Director at 866-899-2518.

Illinois-Indiana Seed Conditioning Workshop February 5

The 27th annual Illinois/Indiana Seed Conditioning Workshop is set for February 5, 2013 at the Indianapolis Marriott North in Keystone. The Workshop is the day prior to the Corn Belt Seed Conference, one of the Midwest's largest seed related meetings.

The Conditioning Workshop will again have an overview of the basics of seed conditioning. This will be followed by specific presentations on conveyance, color sorting and pest control. Along with those topics, the Workshop will have a major emphasis on seed treating. Topics will include dust off, accurate coverage and build up. The safety topic for this session will address personal protection when handling and applying seed treatments. There will be an update on seed conditioning experiences associated with the first couple of seasons of RIB packaging. And, no conditioning workshop would be complete without discussing the importance of image and customer service in the seed industry. For a change of pace, a farmer/customer will give his perception of seed company image and customer service.

This workshop is planned specifically for individuals who manage or work directly in seed plants. The workshop not only provides a wealth of educational information on topics specific to seed conditioning, attendees who are licensed Category 4 Seed Treaters will also be able to receive credit points for the session.

The workshop also features 30+ commercial exhibitors with information about equipment and products for the seed industry; lunch at noon; refreshment breaks; and a social hour at the close of the workshop for networking opportunities as well as more time in the exhibit area.

There are very few meetings designed specifically for seed conditioners. We encourage you to take advantage of this one as well as the educational program offered at the Corn Belt Seed Conference that follows on February 6-7. For more detailed information about the hotel, workshop registration information, etc., plan to visit the Corn Belt Seed Conference website at www.cbsconference.org where information will soon be available. Or contact the ICIA office at 765-523-2535.



PLAN TO ATTEND!



Indianapolis Marriott North, Keystone

Mark your calendars now for the 2013 Corn Belt Seed Conference.

This major seed meeting is scheduled for February 6-7 at the Indianapolis Marriott North, Keystone.

The two-day conference opens with a general session on Wednesday, February 6 featuring author and executive coach Krish Dhanam. Other speakers will focus on the changing logistics in agriculture from a global perspective. The Wednesday awards luncheon will provide an opportunity to relax, eat and congratulate individuals honored by ICIA and ISTA.

Wednesday afternoon offers an in-depth look at corn and soybeans during the workshop sessions. The corn management workshop will deliver updates on drought tolerance and rootworm resistance. The soybean session will offer weed resistance, along with an update on herbicides.

The Thursday morning session will offer a lineup of presenters discussing the customer impact and repercussions of high commodity prices in addition to the changing logistics in grain flow.

Industry News

Vision, leadership and service distinguish Indiana Seedsmen

The American Seed Trade Association spotlighted Sonny Beck of Atlanta, Ind., with its Honorary Member Award during its 129th Annual Convention June 22 in National Harbor, Md.

Honorary Members have distinguished themselves in many ways - through leadership, vision and service.

“Honorary Members truly represent the best of the best,” said Mike Gumina, ASTA chairman and vice president of production, safety, health and environment/risk management for Pioneer Hi-Bred, a DuPont business.

“Sonny has become a much-beloved living legend in this business. As president of Beck’s Superior Hybrids, his business philosophy emphasizes quality, service and the importance of agronomic research to the future well-being of the American farmer. Most importantly, Sonny is a farmer. He wears boots, blue jeans and a collared shirt every day to work,” Sonny would much rather be on a tractor than in a boardroom, Gumina said.

Beck’s Superior Hybrids is the largest family-owned retail seed business in the United States.



*Sonny Beck, President, Beck's Superior Hybrids
Mike Gumina, Pioneer Hi-Bred International*



*Tim Johnson, ISF President (L)
and Bernard Le Buanec (R)*

The International Seed Federation (ISF) at the World Seed Congress in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil welcomes Tim Johnson as its new President for 2012-2014. ISF facilitates the international movement of seed, related know-how and technology; mobilizes and represents the global seed industry; informs its members and promotes the interests and image of the seed industry.

“I truly look forward to working with the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, the staff of the Secretariat, and most importantly all the members. This is what makes ISF such a great organization to participate in,” said Johnson.

“We are happy to have Tim on board as ISF’s president. We are confident that Tim’s knowledge of the seed industry will continue to keep us heading toward our vision of being the principal organization representing the interests of the world seed industry at a global level.” says Dr. Marcel Bruins, Secretary General of the ISF.

“Tim does outstanding work and I’m confident that he’ll move the global seed industry forward, while keeping all interests in mind.”

Tim is the President of Illinois Foundation Seeds, Inc./SGI Field Crops Division, based in Lafayette, IN. IFSI is a leading research, product development, licensing and production company serving the world corn seed industry.

ASTA Distinguished Service

The American Seed Trade Association honored Mark Seem of West Lafayette, Ind., for his dedication and service to the association with its Distinguished Service Award during the 129th Annual Convention June 22 in National Harbor, Md.

The Distinguished Service Award recognizes those whose efforts have made a significant contribution to the association and the seed industry.



Seem serves as a technical agronomist for LG Seeds, a division of AgReliant Genetics, LLC.

“Mark’s provided a tremendous service to the association in one of the most humble and behind-the-scenes fashions,” said Mike Gumina, ASTA chairman, who presented the award.

Mark has been an instrumental voice on ASTA’s program planning committees for CSS and Seed Expo in Chicago, Ill. - one of our largest shows - for 24 years in a row, Gumina said.

He has served on both the soybean and corn and sorghum planning committees and recently as the Corn & Sorghum Seed Division chair.

“Mark has truly grown up in our industry,” Gumina said. “Even though his significant contributions to our association have been done quietly, they have helped shape the course of ASTA’s seed research conferences that have become a trademark of the association.”

Born and raised in a Pennsylvania family seed business, Seem has spent almost his entire career in the seed industry. Since Seem’s father was a corn breeder on Seem Seeds Farm, which was founded in 1936, he didn’t have to look far for work. Seem attended Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., and later Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind. During his professional career, Seem has done work in corn breeding, corn and soybean production and product advancement, agronomy and seed sales.



ICIA Lab Staff (L-R) John DeLuca, Leanne Toy and Larry Mays

ICIA Welcomes New Part-Time Staff for 2012 Testing Season

John DeLuca joins ICIA after retiring from the U.S. postal service. “I’m learning a great deal about seed”, said John who works primarily in the cold test department. “I enjoy the flexible schedule of working in the ICIA lab, it is an opportunity to continue working, while enjoying retirement.”

Bringing her seed lab knowledge from Hubner Industries LLC, Leanne Toy’s experience is advantageous for the ICIA genetics lab. In addition, Leanne assists with fall soybean inspections. “I enjoy working with the people of ICIA,” says Leanne.

After 35 years in restaurant management, Larry Mays is gaining experience with the ins/outs of a busy seed lab. Working in the shake out and cold test departments, Larry states, “ I’m learning the many different seed treatments and their characterizations, and how it defines testing.”

In Memoriam

Alan Stout
July 31, 2012

ICIA Inspector
Bluffton, IN

Don Eliason
September 13 , 2012

Eliason Seeds
Centerville, IN



7700 Stockwell Road
Lafayette, Indiana 47909

765.523.2535 (p)
866.899.2518 (tf)

www.indianacrop.org

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Seed Quality Update



Several carryover samples have already been through the lab and new crop samples for corn and soybeans are arriving daily. The testing averages below reflect these few new crop samples but are mostly carryover samples. The untreated germs for soybeans are 82% and the treated germs are 95%. We expect the early harvested fields to run a lower germination. Many of the later planted group three maturity fields may have better quality. We are seeing a fair amount of purple seed stain, some greener misshapen seeds and the weathering of seeds in the early harvested lots. We expect the soybean weathering conditions to continue through the season and overall seed quality to be average. You may consider requesting us to split a sample and run a germ on both the untreated and treated seed.

We expect that corn quality should hold steady with normal to above normal germinations. However, some grade sizes will be in short supply.

So far this season germination for wheat samples including treated and untreated is averaging 96.5%.

Soybeans

Warm Germ 89.8%
Cold Test 90.8%

Corn

Warm Germ 96.4%
Cold Test 91.4%

We look forward to servicing all your testing needs through this 2012 testing season. For more information or questions please contact Kevin Seward, RST, Seed Lab Director or Susan Dadacz, Sample Data Dept. Head at 866-899-2518 or email seward@indianacrop.org or dadacz@indianacrop.org.