



Minnesota Crop Production Retailers

INPUTS

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Executive Director's Report



Hello MCPR members,

As we enter the final quarter of 2018, much is in flux. We have the trade wars, stock and commodity markets dips,

the challenging ag economy, agribusiness mergers and acquisitions, and mean spirited and, yet consequential politics leading to elections. All this stirring the pot is having an impact on our Minnesota economic vitality. In spite of this, MCPR has come off another solid financial and program year. One thing is clear, you- the MCPR members are in charge of MCPR through your Board of Directors and leading us as we look to the coming months and years.

As MCPR looks to your future, we have been engaged in research investigations funded by research grants which have allowed us to explore alternative choices and ideas to respond to the ongoing challenges, particularly the environmental challenges. We have learned some lessons. Let me explain.

Several years ago, the MCPR Board decided to explore positive initiatives to address the strident public policy concerns and media attention on Minnesota water quality as part of a national concern over water quality included in the overall environmental movement. The Gulf Hypoxia, the 400-page MN Pollution

Control Agency Report on ag sources of nitrate pollution in Minnesota waters, the MDA decision to rewrite the Nitrogen Plan to address the ground water issues they were documenting, the Des Moines Water Quality law suit on nitrogen pollution in their water are but a few of the many initiatives we watched. MCPR needed to take initiative, the MCPR Board decided.

Starting out, we explored creating a certification program which might demonstrate our commitment to ensuring MCPR members were well versed and had completed training on the Minnesota Best Management Practices (BMP's) for crop inputs. Once a prototype was designed and reviewed, it was clear this approach had little real value to MCPR members who already had more than enough training in agronomy and BMP practices.

About that time, the Ohio Agribusiness Association was highly motivated to explore some sort of certification of good agronomy practices in response to the national publicity of the Lake Erie fertilizer pollution in Cleveland's drinking water. The 4 R Certification in cooperation with TFI and the Nature Conservancy was created and promoted. It is essentially a third-party audit of ag retailer practices. This was advocated as a national voluntary standard ag could use to prove we were listening to our critics.

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Participate in the Agronomy Challenge at the Short Course

Wednesday – December 12, 2018
\$1000 first place, \$500 second place

Agronomy Challenge 2018 – The 2018 Agronomy Challenge will be held on Wednesday, December 12th from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Participating teams of two will visit exhibitors to find answers to agronomic questions in hopes of earning the title: "Minnesota's Best Agronomy Team for 2018" and a chance to earn the first prize of \$1000 for the most correct answers or \$500 for the second place team. Based upon the very popular and successful agronomy challenge last year, we anticipate strong competition and much fun.

In preparation, exhibitors are submitting questions and preparing their staff to help make this event very successful. MCPR Board member, Kyle Kraska with The Mosaic Company is chairing the Agronomy Challenge again this year and promises to create a challenging contest. The MCPR Events committee reserves the right to determine which questions are used for the event and will make determinations on any questions or disputes. Plan to select your most competitive team member and make plans for your team of two to compete for the cash prizes. ✨

Taking Control

by focusing on building resiliency in your cropping systems and your organization

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11TH SESSIONS

Structural Changes in the Global Market for Fertilizers

Andy Jung, Senior Director, Market & Strategic Analysis, for The Mosaic Company



Explore the recent evolution of the nutrient supply side and what to expect going forward. Receive an overview of the structural changes to the crop nutrient industry that have taken place around the world over the recent past, with a particular focus on the impact on North American markets for N, P and K fertilizers. Note the resurgence of the North American nitrogen industry, the rationalization/consolidation of phosphate assets, as well as the changing competitive landscape in potash. The presentation will also outline ag commodity demand and how that translates to demand for the various crop nutrients, before detailing what that could mean for crop nutrient retailers going forward.

High Performance!

Greg "Boss"

Wooldridge, top tier speaker and motivator on demand across the USA building on his service as Blue



Angels Commanding Officer. Greg will build excitement within your crew as you join him in the cockpit in his heart-driven approach proven in the Blue Angel's culture of excellence will empower you and your team on their journey toward High Performance. His approach proved a

perfect match for the Blue Angels' culture of excellence, and he was called back to lead two more teams through times of difficult transition. Since his success with the Blues, Greg has been inspired to share his methods in order to empower individuals and teams on their journey toward high performance.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 12TH SESSIONS

How Do We Build Resilient Pest Management Systems?

Dr. Erin W. Hodgson, Associate Professor and Extension Entomologist at Iowa State University, will provide an update on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices that improve the economics of upper Midwest commodity crop production. Erin will include an overview of regional efforts to manage the soybean aphid with IPM. This will include the issues of increasing insecticide resistance, loss of insecticide registrations, status of developing soybean varieties with resistance to soybean aphid, advances in scouting, and the role of beneficial insects and other technologies in managing soybean aphid. Dr. Hodgson started working in the Department of Entomology at Iowa State University in 2009. She is an Associate Professor with extension and research responsibilities in corn and soybean. Dr. Hodgson's current extension and research programs are focused on improving corn and soybean production by using IPM tactics to protect yield and increase farmer profits while promoting environmental stewardship.



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Executive Director's Report

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Having participated in the MN Department of Agriculture's Ag Water Quality Certification Program (some call the certainty program) MCPR encouraged the MDA to modify the cumbersome program to be more compatible with modern precision ag practices and metrics. The MDA liked our suggestions which encouraged MCPR to ask for a grant to modify the assessment tool and metrics and explore in a pilot project if these modifications might fit into the marketing practices of MCPR members and be valued by growers. We also were provided a research grant by the Minnesota Soybean Promotion Council to take this idea further to see if we could actually create an environmental impact assessment tool which growers and agronomists who advise them could embrace to point at private sector metrics establishing a baseline metric score to answer critics as we over time improved our agronomic practices through precision ag and thus improved the metrics.

What did we find out?

Those precision ag agronomy MCPR members engaged in these projects spoke loud and clear that until there is a value proposition that provides real monetary and market reward for these approaches of metric documentation of agronomy practices and decisions, neither agronomists or growers find enough value to go down this road. Period. End of story. I must hasten to add recognition of the huge level of effort and commitment that many of MCPR leading retailers volunteered towards the projects. It is not that they are not interested, but rather in a business that is pressured to get more done with fewer resources it is difficult to take on additional services unless there is an economic incentive to do so. It is interesting that national initiatives such as the Field to Market program and the 4 R Certification program are getting

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Ice Breaker Reception

(included with registration)

December 11th, starting at 5:00 PM

Come and celebrate!
Complimentary appetizers, soft drinks
and a cash bar...\$1.00 beer!



Taking Control

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by focusing on building resiliency in your cropping systems and your organization

Are We Serious About Stewardship?

Jean Payne is the President of the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association (IFCA). Jean's talk "Are We Serious About Stewardship?" will discuss IFCA's efforts to be proactive in Illinois on difficult issues facing the ag industry and how IFCA built trust and transparency with environmental groups as the controversy over dicamba escalated. In a state with 22 million acres in crop production, but only a handful of legislators familiar with agriculture, IFCA's commitment to provide solutions instead of deflecting blame is paramount to ensure reasonable pesticide use policies. Jean will also share the results of IFCA's ag retailer dicamba survey and how IFCA used feedback from their members to help develop successful regulatory and legislative strategies in this major corn and soybean production state. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Ag Retailers Association, The Fertilizer Institute, the Mid America Crop Life Association, the American Agronomic Stewardship Alliance and the Asmark Institute.



Human Behavior and Herbicide Resistance

Dr. Micheal Owen, Professor Emeritus in Iowa State University's Agronomy Department, was the Principle Investigator on a recently completed, four-year investigation into the integration of human behavioral and agronomic practices to reduce the risk and consequences of herbicide resistant weeds. This project brought the agronomic sciences and social sciences together. Collaborations with the Weed Science Society of America and the project co-Pi's resulted in a number of farmer listening sessions across the United States. Information from these listening sessions, in conjunction with research findings from the project, identified a number of obstacles in changing farmer behavior towards herbicide-resistant weed management. The outcomes of the research provides avenues and ideas on how to address herbicide-resistant weed management including the adoption of integrated herbicide resistant weed management practices and what new educational programs may influence growers in the future. Dr. Owen has directed research on a number of topics including weed seedbank population dynamics, the genetics and physiology of herbicide resistance in weeds and the herbicide research/demonstration project.



For more information about the Short Course Program, please visit our website.
<https://mcpr-cca.org/short-course-programming-information/>

Dale's View

Hello MCPR Members,

I'm glad some MCPR members were able to take advantage of the annual MCPR golf outing. We had a great time. Participants were able to gather for lunch and dinner to discuss emerging issues, catch-up with old and new friends, and of course enjoy a day of golf and prizes/awards.

MCPR staff and the U of M are now working on planning the 2018 Short Course, entitled

"Taking Control by focusing on building resiliency in your cropping systems and your organization." It will be held December 11-13 at the Minneapolis Convention Center and Minneapolis Hilton Hotel. Registration is up and running and we're working hard to make this year the best short course so far. Please pay close attention to the contents of the newsletter as it contains programming information for what attendees can expect in educational programming. There is a good reason over 1400 folks come to this meeting each year and the Hilton sells out their rooms. Plan to join us. ✨

See you in December,

Dale Johnson

MCPR Board Chair,
 Dale Johnson



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Executive Director's Report

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some of the same feedback in their efforts to provide voluntary ag sensitive environmental improvement statistics.

Possibly because the environmental critics seem to never be satisfied with whatever efforts the ag sector takes to address environmental impact, we have not yet reached the point where MCPR members can engage substantially in these efforts. However, the market need for sustainability metrics continues to develop. Ultimately, I predict that MCPR members will engage in some method of documenting to third parties advanced agronomic practices. Who, what, when and where remains to be seen. ✨

Until next time,

Bill Bond

Bill Bond

Trade Show Floor Hours:

Tuesday, December 11th
3 PM – 6:30 PM

Wednesday, December 12th
9 AM – 5 PM

Thursday, December 13th
9 AM – 11 AM

All breaks and lunch on Wednesday will be served on the floor of the trade show.

Accommodations:

Minneapolis Hilton Hotel (Which always sells out - hurry to book!)

The Minneapolis Hilton hotel offers a special room rate of \$112/night if you **book before NOVEMBER 20th, 2018** or until the room block sells out – whichever comes first! You can make your Minneapolis Hilton hotel reservation online at www.mcpr-cca.org or by phone at (612) 376-1000 and use code **MCP**.