

SIFTINGS

Volume 18 Issue 2
November 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO SEED GROWERS ASSOCIATION

From Brad...

2009 Annual Meeting...

The staffs of CSGA, Colorado Wheat and Colorado Corn have been working hard to put together another great meeting at The Ranch in Loveland. See page 2 for the schedule. We have some very high profile speakers invited, and an afternoon of breakout topics that makes it hard to decide just which talk you should go hear. This is really a great opportunity to get together with your fellow producers and stay up to speed on current events in agriculture. I look forward to seeing you there.

*2009 Annual Meeting
&
Colorado Ag Classic*

*December 8th - CSGA
Board Meeting*

*December 9th - CSGA &
CSIA Annual Meeting*

December 10th - Ag Classic

See Page 2!

Wheat Germination update...

This fall was a very strange year for the seed lab and certifying of wheat seed. Scab, or *Fusarium* ssp. *fungi*, caused a problem with germination in some seedlots. Due to Colorado's dry climate, this is a very unusual problem for us. However, it just goes to show you that these diseases stay around at low levels just waiting for the right conditions. We ended up having 10 out of about 200 samples fall below the certification threshold of 85%, or about 5% of all seedlots. The range was 50% to 99%. Some of these seedlots were able to be sold as certified seed after the seed was treated. In some cases, treatment brought the germination rate up by as much as 30%. This season was a good reminder that seed testing is cheap insurance, and all seed should be tested before being planted to make sure it is healthy. Plus it's just one more selling point for the quality of certified seed.

Passing of Norman Borlaug...

At the CSU Ag Day this year, I was talking with Dr. Jim Quick, who many of you know quite well from his many years as the CSU wheat breeder. Dr. Quick and I were talking about Norman Borlaug, and what a profound influence he had on the world through his work with wheat. Dr. Quick knew Norm Borlaug, and had lunch with him several times when he was working at CIMMYT in Mexico. Dr. Quick shared that "Norm could never get through lunch with all of us scientists without getting interrupted by a call from some Senator back in the states, needing to get his opinion on this or that" (I'm paraphrasing a little bit). This small connection we all have, through Dr. Quick, to the great man made me feel it was appropriate to repeat the following article published by the Wall Street Journal.

The Man Who Defused the Population Bomb

*by Gregg Esterbrook
Wall Street Journal 9/16/9*

Norman Borlaug, arguably the greatest American of the 20th century died September 12th after 95 richly accomplished years. The very personification of human goodness, Borlaug saved more lives than anyone who has ever lived. He was America's Albert Schweitzer: a brilliant man who forsook privilege and riches in order to help the dispossessed of distant lands. That this great man and benefactor to humanity died little-known in his own country speaks volumes about the superficiality of modern American culture.

Born in 1914 in rural Cresco, IA, where he was educated in a one-room schoolhouse, Borlaug won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his work ending the India-Pakistan food shortage of the mid-1960s. He spent most of his life in impoverished nations, patiently teaching poor farmers in India, Mexico, South America, Africa and elsewhere the Green Revolution agricultural techniques that have prevented the global famines widely predicted when the world population began to skyrocket following WW II.

In 1999, the Atlantic Monthly estimated that Borlaug's efforts combined with those of the many developing-world-agriculture-extension agents he trained and the crop-research facilities he founded in poor nations saved the lives of one billion human beings.

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***Schedule of Events, Annual Meeting & Colorado Ag Classic
The Ranch, Loveland, CO***

Tuesday, December 8th

9:00 am to 3:00 pm CSGA Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, December 9th - Annual Meeting

8:00 am	Small Grains Committee Meeting	Grass Committee Meeting
9:00 am	Bean Committee Meeting	Education & Promotion Meeting
10:30 am	Conditioners Committee Meeting	
12:00 pm	Luncheon	
1:00 pm	CSGA & CSIA General Session and Affiliated Reports	
2:00 pm	CSIA Business Meeting	
3:15 pm	CSGA Business Meeting	
5:00 pm	Reception/Legislative Social	
6:00 pm	Ag Classic Dinner	
7:00 pm	CAWGPAC/Colorado Corn Small Donor Committee Auctions	

Thursday, December 10th - Ag Classic

6:30 am	Commissioner's Unity Roundtable Breakfast	
7:30 am	Registration	
8:00 am	Grain Marketing - Dan Maltby	
9:00 am	General Session Begins: Commissioner John Stulp	
9:30 am	CSU President Tony Frank	
10:15 am	U.S. Senator Michael Bennett (Invited)	
10:45 am	Keynote Speaker: Jennifer Ozimkiewicz, Monsanto	
11:45 am	Luncheon	
1:00 pm	Breakout Sessions Begin	
1:00 pm	1	Ag Family Succession Planning - Cliff Polk
	2	Water In The West: What is The Future of Irrigated Agriculture? - Dr. Reagan Waskom
	3	Greenhouse Gas Mitigation by Agriculture: Boon or Boondoggle? - Dr. Keith Paustian
2:00 pm	1	Feeding The World: What Agr. Science Can and Can Not Do - Dr. Pat Byrne
	1	Crop Genome Improvement: Past, Present and Future - Dr. Jan Leach
	2	Ammonia Deposition in RM National Park: Is Agr. to Blame? - Dr. Jay Ham and Phyllis Woodford
	3	Economics for Agr. Associated with Cap and Trade - Patrick Westhoff
3:00 pm	1	Using iFARM Calculators to Compare Alternative Farming Practices - Dan Palic and Gale Dunn
	2	Energy Crops: The New Frontier in Agriculture - Frank Hardimon
	3	Grain Marketing - Dan Maltby
4:00 pm	1	Worker's Compensation Dividend Program Safety Meeting
	2	Grain Sorghum: NREL Research, Variety Trials and Checkoff Update
	3	Economics for Agr. Associated with Cap and Trade - Patrick Westhoff
5:00 pm	Ag Classic Ends	

(continued from page 1)

As a young agronomist, Borlaug helped develop some of the principles of Green Revolution agriculture on which the world now relies including hybrid crops selectively bred for vigor, and “shuttle breeding” a technique for accelerating the movement of disease immunity between strains of crops. He also helped develop cereals that were insensitive to the number of hours of light in a day, and could therefore be grown in many climates.

Green Revolution techniques caused both reliable harvests and spectacular output. From the Civil War through the Dust Bowl, the typical American farm produced about 24 bushels of corn per acre; by 2006, the figure was about 155 bushels per acre.

Hoping to spread high-yield agriculture to the world’s poor, in 1943 Borlaug moved to rural Mexico to establish an agricultural research station, funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Borlaug’s little research station became the International Maize and Wheat Center, known by its Spanish abbreviation CIMMYT, that is now one of the globe’s most important agricultural study facilities. At CIMMYT, Borlaug developed the high-yield, low pesticide “dwarf” wheat upon which a substantial portion of the world’s population now depends for sustenance.

In 1950, as Borlaug began his work in earnest, the world produced 692 million tons of grain for 2.2 billion people. By 1992, with Borlaug’s concepts common, production was 1.9 billion tons of grain for 5.6 billion men and women: 2.8 times the food for 2.2 times the people. Global grain yields more than doubled during the period, from half a ton per acre to 1.1 tons; yields of rice and other foodstuffs improved similarly. Hunger declined in sync: From 1965 to 2005, global per capita food consumption rose to 2,798 calories daily from 2,063, with most of the increase in developing nations. In 2006, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization declared that malnutrition stands

“at the lowest level in human history,” despite the global population having trebled in a single century.

In the mid-1960s, India and Pakistan were exceptions to the trend toward more efficient food production; subsistence cultivation of rice remained the rule, and famine struck. In 1965, Borlaug arranged for a convoy of 35 trucks to carry high-yield seeds from CIMMYT to a Los Angeles dock for shipment to India and Pakistan. He and a coterie of Mexican assistants accompanied the seeds. They arrived to discover that war had broken out between the two nations. Sometimes working within sight of artillery flashes, Borlaug and his assistants sowed the subcontinent’s first crop of high-yield grain. Paul Ehrlich gained celebrity for his 1968 book “The Population Bomb,” in which he claimed that global starvation was inevitable for the 1970s and it was “a fantasy” that India would “ever” feed itself. Instead, within three years of Borlaug’s arrival, Pakistan was self-sufficient in wheat production; within six years, India was self-sufficient in the production of all cereals.

After his triumph in India and Pakistan and his Nobel Peace Prize, Borlaug turned to raising crop yields in other poor nations especially in Africa, the one place in the world where population is rising faster than farm production and the last outpost of subsistence agriculture. At that point, Borlaug became the target of critics who denounced him because Green Revolution farming requires some pesticide and lots of fertilizer. Trendy environmentalism was catching on, and affluent environmentalists began to say it was “inappropriate” for Africans to have tractors or use modern farming techniques. Borlaug told me a decade ago that most Western environmentalists “have never experienced the physical sensation of hunger. They do their lobbying from comfortable office suites in Washington or Brussels.

If they lived just one month amid the misery of the developing world, as I have for 50 years, they’d be crying out for tractors and fertilizer and irrigation canals and be outraged that fashionable elitists in wealthy nations were trying to deny them these things.”

The final triumph of Borlaug’s life came three years ago when the Rockefeller Foundation, in conjunction with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, announced a major expansion of high-yield agriculture throughout Africa. As he approached his 90s, Borlaug “retired” to teaching agronomy at Texas A&M, where he urged students to live in the developing world and serve the poor.

Often it is said America lacks heroes who can provide constructive examples to the young. Here was such a hero. Yet though streets and buildings are named for Norman Borlaug throughout the developing world, most Americans don’t even know his name.

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Brad Erker, Director of Seed
 Programs
 Linda Munk, Assistant to Director

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Dates To Know

November 26th & 27th ~ CSGA Office Closed, Thanksgiving

December 9th & 10th ~ Annual Meeting & Colorado Ag Classic

December 21st - January 1st ~ CSGA Office Closed, Christmas and New Year

In Memoriam

Former CSGA Board Director, Don Mais, passed away on September 12th, 2009. Don was 83 and had served the seed growers of District 2 for 23 years when he resigned in 2005. Don was a veteran of WW II and was also associated with the Elks Club, Chimney Canyon Grazing Association, Prairie School Board at New Raymer, Royal Lean Pork Association, Weld County Farmers Union and the Central Great Plains Research Station. Don will be truly missed.



Knowledge to Go Places

Colorado Seed Growers Association
Department of Soil and Crop Sciences
Colorado State University
Fort Collins, CO 80523
#5-35607

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