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PRESS RELEASE: Contact Roger Wippler
612-625-7766 800-510-6242
Email: mncia@mncia.org

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association Presents Awards

Jim Kukowski, a long-time certified seed producer and strong advocate for agriculture; Duane Dahlman, a hybrid seed corn producer; Pete and Mike Friederichs, lifelong Foundation seed producers; Grass and Sons Seed, a multi generation seed company; and Jody Prudhomme, a dedicated MCIA employee were honored by the members of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA). The awards were presented during the MCIA Annual Meeting held January 5th in Fergus Falls.

Achievement in Crop Improvement Award

Jim Kukowski of Strathcona was recognized with the Achievement in Crop Improvement award for dedication to the certified seed industry and his many contributions to various agricultural organizations. Kukowski along with his wife Marilyn have been certified seed growers for over thirty years. Primarily wheat seed producers, they also own and operate an approved seed conditioning facility. Their Roseau County farm is also a host site for the University of Minnesota small grain trials.

Kukowski is a passionate and vocal supporter of agriculture and serves a number of state and local organizations. He is a member of the MCIA Board of Directors, serves on the Two Rivers Watershed District Board, and is a director for the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. He has also been involved in the Minnesota Canola Council and the Minnesota Wheat Growers Association. The award is MCIA's highest honor and is presented annually to recognize exemplary service by an individual to agriculture and the seed industry.

Premier and Honorary Premier Seedsman Awards

Duane Dahlman, Pete and Mike Friederichs, and Grass and Sons Seed Inc. received Premier Seedsman Awards. The award, presented annually since 1929, recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a long-term commitment to the production and promotion of high quality certified seed and have been active in the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association and their local community.

Duane Dahlman of Cokato and the Dahlman family have been producing certified seed corn since 1922. Today as Dahlman Farms Inc., Duane and his brothers Kevin and Craig concentrate on producing traited and conventional hybrid seed corn varieties for the wholesale market. In addition to being Chief Financial Officer, Duane is the Seed Plant Manager, responsible for the drying, processing, and bagging their seed production. Duane is active in a number of local organizations including the Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District, local and state 4-H, and Dassel-Cokato Basketball Association. He has provided many years of service to MCIA, including three years as board chair.

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Pete and Mike Friederichs of Foxhome are the fourth generation to operate the Friederichs farm, producing certified seed in the southern end of the Red River Valley. Pete and Mike have been involved in all aspects of seed production from planting through harvest and conditioning. Their fathers Robert and John began growing Foundation seed for MCIA in the late 1960s. That tradition continues as Pete and Mike cooperate to produce and distribute high quality Foundation seed. In addition to handling seed, Friederichs Seed also processes and packages food-grade sunflower and soybean products. They are active in the state soybean, wheat, and barley commodity groups. Pete currently serves as President of the National Barley Growers Association and Mike serves on the Minnesota Barley Research and Promotion Council.

Grass and Sons Seed of LeRoy, in southeast Minnesota, has been in the seed business for over 70 years. Dave Lunning is the most recent generation to own the business, having taken over from his Father, John Grass, Jr. Today a fifth generation has joined the family seed business. Grass and Sons produce, condition, and bag certified oats and soybean seed as well as seed for private companies. They also clean and package organic and non-GMO food-grade soybeans. In addition to being members of MCIA, Grass and Sons belong to the Midwest Shippers Association and Global Organic Alliance. Involved locally, Dave served on the local school board and LeRoy Community Foundation.

Jody Prudhomme of Shoreview received the Honorary Premier Seedsman award, presented to individuals who demonstrate outstanding support of agriculture and MCIA but are not directly involved in the seed industry. Jody has been employed at Minnesota Crop Improvement Association for over 18 years. She serves as the Certification Specialist working with seed producers and approved facilities, assisting them with all aspects of seed certification. Her calm professional manner and extensive knowledge of the various program standards is a true asset to MCIA. Jody is the staff liaison for the Agronomic Standards Committee, helps conduct seed certification training and workshops, and provides input for revisions to MCIA programs and procedures. In her free time she is a Girl Scout troop leader and Co-Chair of an annual walk to cure Tuberos Sclerosis Complex.

In addition to the awards luncheon, seed producers and processors from around the state participated in an educational program, business meeting, and industry trade show. For more information contact MCIA at 800-510-6242 or visit online at www.mncia.org.

Minnesota Crop Improvement Association General Information

Founded in 1903, MCIA continues its role as Minnesota's official seed certification agency. MCIA also provides a wide range of other services, including Identity Preserved grain certification, Quality Assurance programs, forage and mulch certification, and native seed certification. MCIA is an accredited organic certification agency and the Foundation seed program serves as the exclusive agent for the marketing of University of Minnesota agronomic crop varieties.

2017 ACHIEVEMENT IN CROP IMPROVEMENT AWARD

Jim Kukowski of Strathcona, a long-time certified seed producer and strong advocate for agriculture, was recently recognized with the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) Achievement in Crop Improvement award. The award was presented at the MCIA Annual Meeting held January 5th in Fergus Falls. It is MCIA's highest honor and is presented annually to recognize exemplary service to the seed industry as well as outstanding leadership in agriculture and the local community.

Kukowski along with his wife Marilyn have been certified seed growers for over thirty years, beginning in 1983 as contract growers. They own and operate an MCIA approved seed conditioning facility built in 2001. Over the years they have grown certified wheat, barley, and soybean seed. Today they focus primarily on wheat seed production, distributing high quality seed throughout the upper Midwest.



Jim and Marilyn Kukowski

Their Roseau County farm is a host site for the University of Minnesota small grain field trials. The location provides valuable yield and agronomic data that is beneficial to small grain growers in the area. Kukowski also finds it important to his business as he evaluates the many varieties grown in the trials.

He is a passionate and vocal supporter of agriculture and serves on a number of state and local organizations. As a director for the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association (MSGA), he serves on the Environmental Stewardship Action Team. As soybean acres grew in northern Minnesota, Kukowski became a top recruiter for MSGA and helped to bring many soybean growers to the organization. He has also been involved in the Minnesota Canola Council and the Minnesota Wheat Growers Association.

Locally he served as Chairman of the county Farm Services Agency (FSA) committee and was appointed to the Minnesota State Technical Committee. This committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on the implementation of the conservation provisions of Farm Bill Legislation. He is a long-standing member of the Two Rivers Watershed District Board, addressing water issues in northwest Minnesota.

As a member of the MCIA Board of Directors, his seed production background and experience with a wide variety of commodity groups and other organizations makes him a valuable contributor to meeting discussions. During his board tenure he has served as Vice Chairman and Treasurer and Chair of the Agronomic Standards Committee.

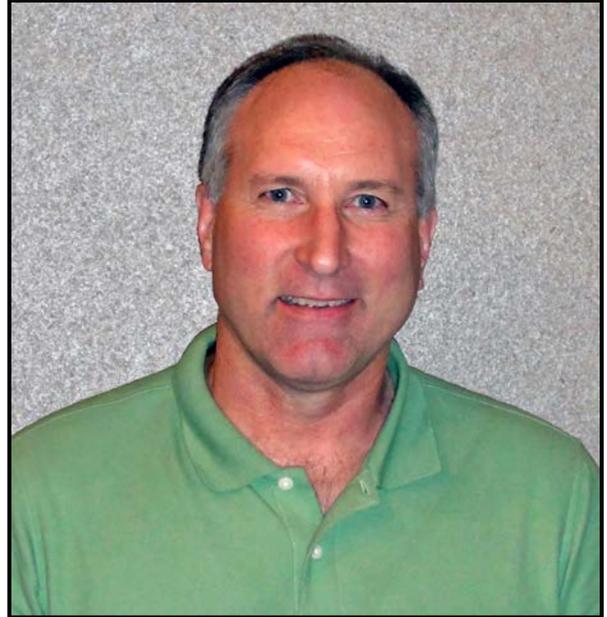
Kukowski credits his wife Marilyn for much of their success, saying she is a key part of the seed and farming operation. She does a lot of the seed conditioning and handles the paperwork and record keeping that is required of an approved facility.

The award was presented by MCIA President/CEO Dr. Fawad Shaw. Kukowski, joined by his wife Marilyn, was surprised and honored by the recognition saying, "I greatly appreciate this recognition and have enjoyed my years in the certified seed business."

2017 PREMIER SEEDSMAN AWARD

Duane Dahlman, Cokato, is part of the third generation of Dahlman's to produce certified seed. The family business began in 1922 when Duane's grandfather Albin Dahlman formed Dahlco Seeds. His father Stanley took over the business in the 1940s. Operating as Dahlco Seeds for many years, they produced seed corn, soybeans, wheat, and oat seed. Beginning with the open pollinated Minnesota 13 variety, seed corn has been a cornerstone of the family seed business.

A fire in 1979 destroyed the seed house; with his sons being interested in the seed business, Stanley decided to rebuild. In 1988, three brothers, Kevin, Duane, and Craig purchased the business from their father. Today the business operates as Dahlman Farms Inc.



Duane Dahlman

In 2009 they sold the retail brand, Dahlco Seeds, and now concentrate on producing traited and conventional hybrid seed corn for the wholesale market. Dahlman Farms produces, conditions, and bags a wide variety of hybrids for a number of seed corn companies. The seed they produce is distributed in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

A graduate from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Agronomy, Duane is involved in all aspects of the seed business. He currently serves as the Chief Financial Officer and Plant Manager. He is responsible for managing the drying, processing, and bagging facilities. The conditioning facility was recently remodeled to accommodate the "Refuge in Bag" seed corn system.

Duane has been an active member of MCIA. He has served on the board of directors, including three years as board president and currently as secretary. He is also very active in a number of local organizations, including a long tenure as a supervisor for the Wright County Soil and Water Conservation District and service to other county boards. He is also a Minnesota and Wright County 4-H volunteer, involved in the Dassel-Cokato Basketball Association and is a statistician for boys basketball. Committed to his church, Duane has served on many committees and as president of the congregation.

Duane and his wife Tammi have two children, Emily and Eric, and three grandchildren. He enjoys spending time with his family and traveling, sometimes combining the two and running a marathon along the way. Duane is also interested in collecting antique seed processing equipment.

2017 PREMIER SEEDSMAN AWARD



Pete Friederichs

Pete and Mike Friederichs, Foxhome, are the fourth generation to operate the Friederichs farm, which was established in 1889. Grandfather William, a MCIA Premier Seed Grower, began producing certified seed in the Red River Valley over 90 years ago.

Growing up in the seed business, Pete and Mike have been involved in all aspects of seed production from planting and roguing to harvest and conditioning. Before joining the farm operation, Mike obtained a degree in Diesel Technology from the North Dakota State College of Science and a certificate in Ag Production from Moorhead Tech. Pete graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in Ag Mechanization.

Friederichs Seed has been a producer of Foundation seed for MCIA since the late 1960s. Like their fathers Robert and John, Pete and Mike continue a tradition of producing high quality Foundation seed. Excellent cooperators over the years; they

work with MCIA to produce and distribute a variety of crops, condition small seed lots from winter increases, and provide bushel bag quantities of seed for test plots.

For many years they operated a small seed conditioning facility at the home farm on the banks of the Otter Tail River. In 2008 they expanded their operation with the purchase of the Gordy Knapp seed facility near Foxhome. That is when Friederichs Seed, Inc. was born; at this time they greatly increased their seed conditioning capacity and broadened their capabilities to include sunflower processing. Additional updates to the facility gave them the capability of processing food-grade products.

Both Mike and Pete are members of the Wilkin County Crop Improvement organization and served on the county soybean association. They are also members of state barley, wheat and soybean growers associations. Pete has served six years on the MCIA Board of Directors; he has been an active member of the State and National Barley Growers Association, and currently he is president of the national organization. He is also active on his church council. Mike currently serves on the Minnesota Barley Research and Promotion Council and previously on the board of the Minnesota Soybean Growers Association. Locally he is a township supervisor.



Mike Friederichs

Pete and wife Sheri have four daughters, Ava, Brooke, Mariah, and Isabel. Mike and wife Tammy have two sons, Ethan and Jonah. As another generation takes interest in the seed business, they will strive to maintain the family's number one priority of quality, service, and integrity.

2017 PREMIER SEEDSMAN AWARD



Sharon and John Grass, Jr.

Grass and Sons Seed of LeRoy, in Southeast Minnesota, has been in the seed business for over 70 years. Nels Grass got the family started in the business as a dealer for Cashman Seeds of Owatonna and later Zimmerman Seeds of Racine. The Zimmerman Seed dealership was passed on to his son, John Grass, Sr., and two grandsons John Grass, Jr. and Richard Grass. Those three grew the business and began cleaning and selling certified seed oats.

John Grass, Jr. and his wife Sharon continued to expand the seed business under the guidance and support of MCIA Field Supervisor, Marly Gehring. In 1981 they joined MCIA, purchased a small cleaning mill, and began processing certified soybeans and seed oats. During this time, their five sons joined the family farming and seed cleaning operation and Grass and Sons Seed was born.

In 1992, Grass and Sons Seed built a seed cleaning facility at its current location on the family farm. Since then more warehouse space has been added and in recent years a seed treater and color sorter have been installed in the conditioning and packaging facility. John and Sharon became part owners of Gold Country Seed in 1995, thanks to Mike Willette and Bob Jackson. They continue to be producers and retailers for Gold Country Seed.

The business continued to grow. In addition to seed, John and his son Dave began to custom clean and package organic and non-GMO food-grade soybeans. To meet a growing demand, they began contracting with local farmers to produce food-grade soybeans, soybean seed, and seed oats.



Dave and Jody Lunning (left) and Family

The Grass family is also well known for their Simmental beef cattle operation. They are active in several agricultural organizations, including the Minnesota and American Simmental Association, the local cattlemen's group, Farm Bureau, Midwest Shippers, and Global Organic Alliance.

They have been involved locally as well. Dave has served on the local school board, the LeRoy Community Foundation and Economic Development Authority, and as a church elder.

In 2008, Dave and Jody took over ownership of the business from John and Sharon. Today a fifth generation of the family has joined the family seed business. "We are very proud of the family legacy and hope that it can continue for many years to come."

2017 HONORARY PREMIER SEEDSMAN AWARD



Jody Prudhomme

Jody Prudhomme, Shoreview, has been employed at Minnesota Crop Improvement for over 18 years. She currently serves as the Certification Specialist working with seed producers and approved facilities, assisting them with all aspects of seed certification. Her calm professional manner and extensive knowledge of the various program standards are a true asset to MCIA and its members.

Described by a fellow employee as “gifted at describing our processes and procedures,” Jody is responsible for processing, verifying, and maintaining field application and inspection records, completing final certification, and issuing certification labels. In addition to her certification work, she also handles accounts payable and receivable.

A key contact person for members calling MCIA, Jody has the ability to calm the irritated and help the frustrated. She says “The best part of my job is working closely with our membership and the MCIA staff.” Each day she strives to

provide direction and assistance to those who need it and to make the seed certification process as seamless as possible.

Jody is very familiar with the various steps of the seed certification process. She has attended and/or assisted in field inspections and trainings, seed laboratory audits, and approved facility inspections. In addition, she successfully completed auditor training for Quality Management Systems (QMS) and Biotechnology Quality Management System (BQMS) programs.

This experience enables her to provide valuable insight as MCIA upgrades its computer database and the ability to interact with members through the PureHarvest system. She also serves as the staff liaison for the Agronomic Standards Committee, participates in seed certification workshops, and provides input for revisions to the Seed Certification Handbook.

Willing to take on new projects and eager to learn new things, Jody was instrumental in working with authorized seed testing laboratories and was very involved in the transition to reopen the MCIA seed lab.

At home, Jody serves as a volunteer for the Tuberous Sclerosis Alliance as Co-Chair of an annual walk to cure Tuberous Sclerosis Complex. She is also a Girl Scout troop leader and is a volunteer for the Kylie’s Hope Golf Tournament.

Jody and her husband Jeff have one daughter, Natalie. They enjoy watching Natalie as she participates in school activities, dance, tennis, and Girl Scouts. If there is any other free time, Jody enjoys camping, fishing, hiking, and scrapbooking.