

ASAC News



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American Society of Agricultural Consultants

Full Agenda Planned for Nov. Annual Meeting in St. Louis

by Ken Hilton, CAC
President-Elect and Annual Meeting
Chairman

Two full days of education and networking are in the making at the 2007 ASAC Annual Meeting set for November 11 - 13 at the Crowne Plaza, St. Louis -- Clayton.

The committee organizing the meeting has had several phone conversations over the last few weeks, and is currently putting the final touches on the program for a very informative gathering.

The meeting will start the afternoon of Sunday, November 11th, with a board meeting, a strategic planning session, and a meeting with our friends from the Canadian Consulting Agrologists Association. That will be followed with an Officers' Reception where everyone can gather for introductions and getting re-acquainted with old friends.

The next two days will be packed with 16 hours of continuing education including the ethics course that several members will need for re-certification for their CAC status. There are eight very interesting, one-hour sessions planned for these two days. Topics planned include: financial management, best management practices, precision ag technologies, livestock handling, international consulting, a farm bill update, and professional development. Many of the speakers for these subjects have been confirmed, and more detail will be available soon.

We have an exciting speaker confirmed for our Monday evening banquet, and

are exploring the area surrounding the meeting hotel for an informal gathering place for those who would like

to network after our official events. While we are not planning a formal spouses' tour, we are compiling a list of local activities for spouses or family members that may be traveling with attendees but not attending the meetings. We'll also squeeze in a membership meeting!

Our goal for the conference is to provide an abundance of education, networking opportunities, planning for the future, and entertainment, all at an affordable price. We expect to have a great attendance this year!

I would like to thank our committee members: Paige Gilligan, Roy Ferguson, and Bill Zweigbaum, as well as our Executive Director Carroll Merry, for their enthusiasm and guidance in putting this event together.



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The President Says: Sam's Comments



We all have heard the familiar statement, "These are exciting times to be in agriculture." In dealing with production agriculture, I constantly hear about new technology, products,

processes, machinery and other management inputs that allow producers to "be the best" at what they do – it allows us to discuss and evaluate what is best suited for each entity.

Similarly, it is "A very exciting time to be an agricultural consultant." Talk about exciting, ASAC is really generating a lot of interest. Our membership continues to grow and is gathering steam as 'diversified agricultural consultants' from around the world are reading and hearing about ASAC! I have been

very pleased with many of you who provided our EVP, Carroll Merry, with names of publications and groups that have printed news releases about "The New ASAC." Folks are hearing about how ASAC brings agricultural consultants "of all disciplines" together in certification, networking, great and informative annual meetings, and numerous other benefits.

The ASAC Board continues to work in several areas to ensure we remain strong to serve the needs of our growing membership. One example is a two-page summary that will be forthcoming – it will be easy for each ASAC member to know how the recertification and continuing education process works, and the manner to keep their certification current. The summary also provides a concise list of requirements for joining ASAC.

Don't you just enjoy this super ASAC Newsletter that Ib Hagsten and Carroll Merry assemble each quarter? Yes indeed, I hope you agree it is exciting to be involved in agriculture – it is certainly very exciting to be an "ASAC" agricultural consultant!!!

Enjoy the ride!

Sam

**Sam Bartee, CAC
ASAC President**

To the Editor:

I want to express to the board, the EVP, and the members how very grateful I am for the award presented to me by Fred at the annual meeting. I would have liked to be there to see everyone and especially to enjoy receiving this in the presence of my friends in ASAC. This will always be very special to me. I can't think of a group anywhere that I would rather be perceived as being worthy of such an award. I have written to Fred personally.

I received it by mail and I told Fred that the letter he wrote with it meant a great deal also. Putting his comments in writing is something I can always have and will cherish, which offsets somewhat my not being able to be there.

I look forward to meeting all of you – hopefully at least in November.

Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

(signed)

Ida V. Hurley, CAC

(Ida: We, the members, are glad you are among us, we are proud of our association with you – And, you are a most worthy recipient of ASAC's Meritorious Service Award

We all felt warm inside when Fred read the lovely note to and about you during the banquet.)

Adapting Larger Firm Practices to Smaller Consultancies

by Blaine Canitz, P.Ag., CAC

Focus on 4 key related areas.

- Rate: what are you really worth?
- Billable hours: disciplined tracking of.
- Leveraging: an efficiency tool.
- Think in after-tax dollars.

1. RATE

Is what you are worth, what you are charging?

- If you do not think you and your offering are worth much, why should the market?
- If you are not losing some prospects because of price, you are not charging enough.
- Could you double your rate?
- Double the Rate? (I have a client that does that with my and several other consultants rates.)
- Re-evaluate, you may be providing more value than you think.
- When you place a higher value on your offering, the market might also.

2. BILLABLE HOURS

- Insure you are getting paid for all the time you spend on a client.
- To insure that when you bid a lump sum project that your time estimate was accurate.
- To be able to either renegotiate mid-contract, or prevent, deliverable creep.

3. LEVERAGING

- Sub-contract the technical or clerical skills of others.
- Form consortiums on projects to utilize the expertise of other consultants.
- Leveraging allows you to deliver a superior product in as shorter time and often at a lower cost, while you focus on your area of expertise.

4. AFTER TAX \$s

- Think and evaluate in after-tax dollars.
- These are the real dollars. Pre-tax dollars are a partial mirage as you do not own them all.

Look at ... Your client's evaluation of your fee.

Look at ... The operation of your own business.

Summary

- Rate: charge what your top customers will pay, it may be more than you think.
- Billable hours: track and evaluate.
- Leverage: to be more productive and efficient.
- Think in after-tax dollars, and coach your clients to do so as well.

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NACS Program Filled with Information

by John Jackson, CAC, Agricultural Management Group, Inc (AMG)

As always, CCAA's North American Consulting School in Banff, Alberta, Canada, was excellent. Fred Hepler, Ken Hilton and I attended the meeting and represented ASAC. The meetings were held at the Banff Center, a facility for training and the arts near the center of town; it was very peaceful and provided a great atmosphere in which to learn. The hospitality and networking were excellent and a good place to meet friends.

There was an impressive roster of presenters covering many topics. Four presenters on spoke marketing, internet, and media. People tend to have various 'love it or hate it' feelings about media, but the fact is, media are a factor in consulting and in marketing. There were two lawyers, one who spoke on preparation for negotiations and one on risk, as did another speaker.

All the talk about risk made it sound like one should not do anything out of fear 'what if this or that happened'. ASAC Past President Fred Hepler addressed the question "Will farm management spread to Canada?" Fred, is it catching? I did not learn the answer to the question Fred was to addressing because I attended the presentation by Helgi Eyford on the cultural roots of conflict in the world's hot spots. One of my favorite topics -- culture -- not hot spots!

There were also speakers on outsourcing, two views on environmental consulting and the impact of more scrutiny on agriculture; a good presentation on ethics; and Alex Schumacher's informative discussion on his environmental and agricultural consulting practice internationally, focusing on the participatory and results-based approaches to monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of projects. This is especially interesting to me, as AMG has a long-term project doing M&E for USAID.

CCAA Past President Blaine Canitz turned over the gavel to Terry Betker, who did a superior job of moderating and tying the various topics together into a comprehensive package.

One of the many great things about the school was staying in one room for many

presentations, both lunches, and breaks making more opportunities for networking. There was only one set of concurrent sessions.

In Blaine's comments he mentioned that Jane Kerner, Past President of CCAA, established strong bonds between Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and ASAC. He spoke of the positive value of these relationships, to which I agree. As an example of this, many of the long-time ASAC members will remember Chris Hansen, one of ASAC's former members who has spoken at several of our Annual Meetings when he worked at the Inter-American Development Bank. Chris was in Canada as Associate Deputy Director General for Development for IICA and it was great to see him again. Chris sees many ways in which IICA, CCAA, and ASAC can cooperate. He would love to meet his old friends in ASAC at a future meeting in Canada, or in Washington, DC.



At CCAA Meeting in Banff

Terry Betker, PAg, CAC, (at left) with Meyers Norris Penny, LLP, is shown with ASAC's 2006 President Fred Hepler, CAC, Westchester Group; John Jackson, CAC, Agricultural Management Group, Inc.; and ASAC President-Elect Ken Hilton, CAC, Red Wing Software. The group was attending CCAA's North American Consulting School in Banff, Alberta, Canada in March. The two organizations have a reciprocal arrangements such that members of either organization can attend events sponsored by the other at the host-group registration rates.

Dispatches From Banff, or Loonies for Touques

by

Larissa and John Jackson

Kansans in Canada, Spring of 2007

John: Since my grown daughter has never been sure what I do, I took the opportunity of the NACS to take her to work. Larissa has traveled with me at various times to Moldova, Romania, and Ukraine and she loves to travel. Sharon and I were in the Peace Corps in Iran where Larissa was born and the travel bug has been Larissa's curse. Adele asked us to write a piece that might be used in the CCAA newsletter (if Larissa could report on ten things she learned at NACS).

Larissa: The travel bug bit me so I decided to take Dad up on his offer to join him for a business trip to Banff. We flew in early so we could see the area together before he had to get to work. To start out, we wanted to go to the top of Sulfur Mountain for the breathtaking 360-degree view. The original plan was to hike up but, once we got there and saw how high and steep it was, we opted for a safe gondola ride versus heart attacks. It is amazing that one minute you can see for miles then the next it's snowing so much you can't even see two feet in front of you! Next we toured the cave and sulfur pools. We learned about their discovery and development into the national park that it is today. Afterwards we stopped at several museums in town including the history of the First Nations, a trading post, and a museum of stuffed wildlife.

The next day we took a quick trip to Lake Louise to see its famous beauty we had heard about. Even though I live in Minnesota where the snow is not usually done by March, I was not thinking it might still be completely snow covered there. Once again we found ourselves in near white out conditions. The lake was also still frozen and people were cross-country skiing. Sounds like a good time for a coffee break in the Chateau Hotel. Before we knew it, the sky turned blue and we could see again!

While in Banff, do not forget to go to the Banff Springs Hotel. Our excuse was to get breakfast (more food on the buffet than you can dream of). We took a self-guided tour through all the ballrooms and conservatory. Amazing is the only word for it though we looked like the Clampetts of Beverly Hills in the grand rooms.

Since it was a bit chilly, we didn't do much hiking (though once I bought my touque it was much better) but we did a quick walk in search of a hoodoo. There's still some debate about which mass of land and rock was the hoodoo but all was beautiful none-

the-less. I did some of my own walking on the trail along the Bow River and realized the Banff Center was a fairly quick hike to the main part of town.

Thankfully the bears were still sleeping but we saw deer right by the hotel sidewalk, then the largest elk I've ever seen was spotted on a field by our parking spot at the Banff Springs Hotel.

To add to my adventures I had some 'new' food: elk filet and Japanese food served on a train. Mmmmmmm...

During this trip I was able to spend a lot of quality time with my Dad for the first time in years. I got a better grasp of what he does for a living. He's no longer 'The International Man of Mystery' though some of it is still a bit confusing. I met a lot of amazing people who were kind enough to speak with me about their jobs. I also met a lot of people willing to accept me as part of the group when they met for dinner or drinks afterwards.

John: Adele: we are going to show you that two from Kansas can learn ten things (12 I think is the count) at NACS. We used Loonies and Twonies to buy Kokanee and a touque so we could go out to discover the secrets of hoodoos while always watching out for cougars. That should be six. Larissa also learned what I do and every job I ever had (poor thing) and that there are many other people in the world who cannot tell you what they do in less than an hour. She learned that

Dad has pretty cool friends. Larissa learned that a steel trap can break a pretzel but not a man's hand (see the photo) and how to hide \$100 in a lemon. ASAC members, come to NACS/CCAA next year to learn what I just said. We have wonderful neighbors and this is another opportunity to learn and network.



2007 ASAC Leadership

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* Denotes status as Executive Committee Member

Membership Directory Updates Underway

ASAC Membership Directory update forms are in the mail!!

Current members will be receiving a copy of their previous directory listing with directions on how to update their listing information. "We have added a place where members can list their cell telephone number," notes EVP Carroll Merry. "We realize this is the primary communication tool for many of our members and we want to make sure it is included in the membership listings."

He notes that the biggest change is the listings of Professional Specialization. "We are asking the members to select the categories of specialization from those listed on the form," Merry says. "We know that people visit our web site looking for specific professionals and we want to make it as easy as possible for them to find our members. In the previous directory members described their specializations in over 370 different ways. We've narrowed that list to 41 and would like to think it is all inclusive."

"There is room on the form for additional narrative about unique services offered," Merry continues. "We're asking the members to restrict any notes here to 25 words or less. This information will be posted on the member's listing on the web site, but we will not list all of that in the printed directory."

"In any case, please double check the information against the Professional Specialization listing so we can maintain some uniformity to the way the information is presented to the public."

For the sake of timeliness he is asking that all forms be returned by June 1. "Please send the forms back even if there are no changes. That is the only way we have of knowing that the forms were received in the first place," Merry adds.

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Clarifications on Receiving/Maintaining Designations

by Paige Gilligan
Agrestic Solutions

With the push for new members in full force, the Board asked for some clarification on both receiving and maintaining the CAC and CACI designations. The Education Committee met, outlined the new requirements, and received Board approval on the membership qualifications. The criteria were further reviewed and written in an easy to follow step-by-step process.

The board is working on a program of notifying all members of any education needs they might have in terms of their being current regarding designation.

The new information is shown below. If you should need any additional clarification, please contact either me, at 480-620-5257, or Ken Hilton at 800-732-9464.

There are two separate membership statuses for ASAC: Active Member and Certified Member. The Active member holds no title other than member, while the Certified Member may use the designations of CAC (Certified Agricultural Consultant) or CACI (Certified Agricultural Consultant – Independent) after his/her name. Listed below are the qualifications for each status. Additional membership classes are outlined in the organization's by-laws.

Active Member: To become an Active Member of ASAC, a candidate must have the following:

1. A four-year college/university degree or its equivalent may be accomplished by any combination of college/university credit and agricultural consulting experience totaling four years.
2. Completion of an application listing past consulting experience and qualifications plus three references from sources who have been clients that the applicant has provided consulting services for a fee.

Certified Member: To become a Certified Member of ASAC, a candidate must have the following:

1. Be an Active Member in good standing.
2. Have a minimum of five years of agricultural consulting experience at the time that application for Certification is submitted.
3. Been an Active Member of ASAC for a minimum of two years.
4. Attend at least one ASAC Annual Meeting.

5. Have at least 16 CE hours from the approved sources of continuing education credit hours. Approved sources of continuing education credit hours include the following as well as the list shown in the "maintaining certification" section:

A. Ethics and Standards [E-1]...as provided by ASAC authorized instructor[s] each year at ASAC's Annual Meeting, with one attendance required every five years for two CE hours credit. As an alternate, a maximum of two CE hours credit may be obtained by attending another authorized organization's Ethics course, provided approval is obtained **in advance** from ASAC's Continuing Education Committee.

B. Attendance at a minimum of 32 hours of presentations during ASAC Meetings within a rolling period of five years... with 16 hours of CE credit being available at each ASAC Annual Meeting. CE credit hours available at other ASAC meetings will be determined in advance by the Continuing Education Committee. CE credit is not available for attendance at ASAC or other social functions.

To Maintain Certification: A Certified Member must maintain 60 CE hours every five years. Of the 60 hours, at least 12 hours must come from the list below:

1. Attending 10 hours of non-ASAC meetings relating to an individual's professional discipline is credited for one CE credit hour per each one hour of attendance.
2. Successful graduate-level study involving at least 20 clock-hours of classroom attendance, with one CE credit hour awarded for each hour of attendance.
3. Attendance at up to 20 clock-hours of seminars, workshops, and other presentations involving an individual's professional discipline, with one CE credit hour awarded for each hour of attendance. Proof of attendance must be obtained via a written statement by the program's official presenter or sponsor.
4. Conducting up to 20 clock-hours of seminars, workshops, speeches, and other presentations involving an individual's professional discipline, with one CE credit hour

awarded for each hour conducting. Proof of conducting must be obtained by either providing a printed copy of the official program or via a written statement by the program's official presenter or sponsor.

5. Authoring at least 200 words per CE hour involving published commentary regarding an individual's professional discipline. Proof of authorship must be confirmed by providing a copy of the published work to the Continuing Education Committee.

6. Formal presentations involving speeches and participating in panel discussions, etc. qualify for one hour of CE credit for every one-half hour of personal presentation. Proof of involvement must be confirmed by providing a copy of the official program or via a written statement by the program's sponsor.

7. Continuing Education credit will not be recognized for attendance at non-educational

portions of Annual General Meetings conducted by other professional organizations.

8. Serving as an officer or director of ASAC or other professional organizations will not be credited with CE hours because such service is a personal honor rather than an educational achievement.

9. Proof reading another individual's draft, manuscript, etc. does not count towards CE hours nor does simply reading a professionally-oriented book or listening/viewing recorded presentations that have not been approved in advance by ASAC's Continuing Education Committee.

10. The basic thrust of items 7-9 is that since ASAC is the organization granting Certification, a strong majority of the CE hours should relate to activities and programs conducted or supervised by ASAC.

11. Providing proof of attendance at seminars, workshops, and other presentations is a common requirement for attorneys, accountants, and other professions.

Mark Your Calendars

May 28, 2007

North American Consulting School --
Eastern Conference
Ottawa, Quebec
Visit www.ccaa.bz

Nov. 11-13, 2007

2007 ASAC Annual Meeting
Crowne Plaza Hotel St. Louis
Clayton, MO
Visit www.agconsultants.org
OR www.agconsultants.com