

ASAC News



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2008 Annual Meeting Offers Education, Entertainment in SLC Oct. 26 - 28

The upcoming ASAC Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City has all the earmarks as the most popular and well-attended ASAC meetings of the past," says ASAC President Ken, Hilton, CAC, president of Red Wing Software, Red Wing, MN.

"The location, Salt Lake City, offers great appeal and is a destination that many of our members have never visited. Plus, the planning committee is putting some great touches on the programming that will be a natural draw for many of our members' spouses. That will bring us a sure success as a meeting," he notes.

While the final agenda for the complete program is still being developed, the basic agenda looks like this, says Bill Zweigbaum, CACI, a consultant with First Pioneer Farm Credit in Plattsburgh, NY and meeting committee chairman:

Saturday, October 25

- Arrive at Salt Lake Plaza Hotel

Sunday, October 26

- Attend the recording of *Music and the Spoken Word*, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's weekly broadcast.

- Deli buffet lunch followed by open roundtable/experience sharing for all who want to take part. Joint ASAC/CCAA Meeting.

- Evening casual reception with possible guest speaker presentation.

Monday, October 27

- Group breakfast
- Genealogy program for spouses (will work with counselors in tracing family trees.)



ASAC meeting attendees will have the opportunity to be in the audience for the Sunday morning recording of *Music and the Spoken Word*, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's weekly broadcast. This presentation will take place in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, just a short walk from the hotel.

- "Improving Profits with Benchmarking" presentation
- Biofuel Update
- Past-Presidents' Luncheon
- Ethics program
- International Man of Mystery -- Customs, faux pas and RFP Opportunities
- Future of Plant Breeding
- Informal Dinner on Your Own at a Squatters (see www.squatters.com), a unique brew-pub just a few short blocks from the hotel.

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The President Says: Ken's Comments



There has been a lot going on “behind the scenes” in your ASAC organization since the last newsletter:

- The conference planning committee has been hard at work putting together a great program for the annual meeting in October in Salt Lake City. With the exciting things they have planned for our group and our spouses, I have even convinced my wife to attend the meeting this year. It will be great to see ASAC again have a big contingency of spouses join us as we have had at meetings in previous decades. Paige Gilligan already has plans underway for next year’s conference, which is tentatively scheduled for Washington, D.C.

- Our membership and certification records are now in the capable hands of Carroll Merry, our Executive Vice President. I have been keeping them up-to-date over the last few years with information that people have been sending. Carroll met me at the local airport one fine sunny day in southeastern Wisconsin, and we made the transfer of the file boxes. Please make sure you turn in your re-certification information if you haven’t done so already.

- At the latest board conference call, Russ Morgan updated us on the financial condition of ASAC, and informed us that with the positive cash flow from last year’s conference, and the continuing influx of membership renewals, we are in good financial condition.

- Members Sam Barte and Dale Johnson have a time scheduled to meet in Denver to go through the 30-something cases of information that have been in storage since ASAC changed management companies several months ago. It will be a daunting task, but I’m sure they’re up to it.

- Dr. James McLaren and I attended the CCAA North American Consulting School in Banff, Alberta, in early March. Jim’s presentation, “Bio-fuel Facts and Fantasies,” was similar to the one he gave at the ASAC conference last

November, but this time with a Canadian twist.

There were several other great speakers who educated the attendees on a variety of topics including:

- The latest technologies available for consultants that want to improve efficiency and communications.
- Using the Web to better communicate, and get one’s message out. One of the things learned was the mammoth amount of information available about each of us, and the importance of making sure this information is correct. I advise you to check out www.zoominfo.com and enter your name to see what information might be available about you!
- Creating your brand, and critical factors to consider when consulting to “Value Chains”
- The Deputy Minister of Enterprise Saskatchewan spoke about the changing face of Saskatchewan.
- Kevin Brosch presented NAFTA from an “insider’s” view. Kevin worked as a trade negotiator for the U.S. government during the WTO Uruguay Round and NAFTA negotiations.
- Len Penner, President of Cargill, Ltd., viewed the future of agriculture in Canada and the world as it is seen by one of Canada’s biggest companies

Each of the sessions was pertinent to consultants of any field and were of particular importance to consultants in the field of agriculture. There is more detail about this meeting elsewhere in the newsletter.

- And, of course, Ib Hagsten has been doing an exemplary job keeping us up-to-date on the happenings of our membership with the monthly *ASAC Communiqué*. Please let him know of any happenings in your company, or life, that you would like to share with other ASAC members.

Please keep in mind that everyone in the organization is on the membership committee, and we need your help in recruiting new members. It takes an increasing membership to fuel the association and keep new ideas flowing. I look forward to seeing each of you in Salt Lake City, along with the new members you recruit.

Ken Hilton CAC
ASAC President

NACS Completes Successful Meeting in Banff; Presentations Available on Web Site

Every year, the North American Consulting School (NACS) continues to surpass expectations, and 2008 was no exception.

The seventh annual NACS was convened March 3 and 4 in the uniquely stimulating setting of Banff, which is recognized worldwide for inspiring creativity.

As demand for consulting services increases, the 2008 NACS attracted registrants from across Canada and the United States eager to learn from an impressive selection of speakers. Facilitated by the Canadian Consulting Agrologists Association (CCAA), the intensive two-day learning experience presented participants with insights into the vast and diversified agricultural sector and much more.

In determining the speakers for the 2008 NACS, the CCAA Board of Directors was cognizant of the need to include information for all professional consultants. Indeed, the consulting demands upon Professional Agrologists can extend beyond agriculture. Similarly, other Professional Consultants can find themselves in need of information relating agriculture, the environment, food security and safety, among other related areas of development, investment and human resources.

The 2008 NACS focused on ways to expand services through technology and networking opportunities, with financial and technical support from Agri-Trend Agrology Ltd., Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, Canadian Farm Business Management Council, Farm Business Consultants, George Morris Centre, Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), Meyers Norris Penny and the Western Producer.

The CCAA is pleased to provide the various presentations by experts from Canada and the USA at the highly successful 2008 NACS.

The following pdf documents are avail-

able at <http://www.ccaa.bz/nacs.htm>. (File sizes are noted in brackets).

Fulfilling the Promise: Introducing Enterprise Saskatchewan and the Sask-a-Boom! Dale Botting (323 KB)

The NAFTA Conundrum in the U.S. - Trade Success and Political Controversy, Kevin Brosch (308 KB)

Consulting in the Era of Value Chains, Martin Gooch (370 KB)

What Consultants Need to Know About the Organizational Structure of the Federal Government, Terrance (Terry) Hayward (46 KB)

Brand Academy™ 101, Sam Hudson (1314 KB)

Trade in Your Fax Machine for Pheromone Detector: Thriving in the Ubiquitous Technoworkplace, Tom Keenan (8931 KB)

Myths & Mystery of Biofuels, Jim McLaren (1591 KB)

Agriculture 2008 and Beyond, Len Penner (139 KB)

Gizmos and Gadgets for Consultants: How to Utilize Electronics to Advance Your Efficiency, Rob Saik (1672 KB)

Presentation Skills, Harry Siemens (178 KB)

The Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council - Industry & Government Working Together to Address Employment and Training Issues Facing Canada's Agriculture Sector, Danielle Vinette (123 KB)



NACS speakers Jim McLaren, Ph. D., (left) and Darrell Zbeetnoff, MSc., MNRM, MA, PAg, CAC, compare notes during a break at the 2008 NACS March 3-4 in Banff.

Presentations on Web Site are Valuable Resource

Presentations from previous ASAC meetings can prove to be a valuable resource, AND they are available as downloads at www.agconsultants.org. Specifically study the published presentations from the fall 2007 annual meeting in St. Louis. Below are excerpts to whet your appetite (and to remind you of what you might miss by not regularly attending the ASAC meetings. (Ib Hagsten, Ph.D, CAC, Editor).

P*romoting Hemispheric Integration, Solidarity & Rural Prosperity in the Americas*, by Chris Hansen, Executive Director of IICA

Outlines opportunities for ASAC Consulting Services because ...

- There is growing respect for the Agricultural Sector;
- The official Development Assistance for Agriculture is less than 8 percent, but rising;
- There is a World Development Report on Agriculture in 2008 for the first time in 25 years;
- The Impact of Agro Energy is part of the worldwide Debate; and
- There is Recognition that Agriculture accounts for a greater contribution to GNP's than official statistics show, for example it is 30 percent in Latin American Countries.

M*anaging by Manageable Segment* by Don Gillings, CPA, CACI, of Centrec Consulting Group

A Process for Setting up Your Farm Operation System:

- Examine Management Styles and Processes
- Identify the Managerial Accounting Structure
- Define the Allocation Methodology
- Specify Production Units of Measure
- Specify the Chart of Accounts
- Understand Report Content

There are many details to comprehend, however the study of this mind-expanding way of looking at, and keeping track of, your different manageable business segment, is well worth the time allotted.

I*mportant Economic and Ag Trends and Value-added Beef Production* by Bill Helming of Bill Helming Consulting Services

Trends noted:

- The Golden Age of Agriculture has finally arrived. The future for American agriculture for the next 10 years is very positive.
- Cheap grain is gone for at least the next 10 years. Farm and grassland values will continue to go up.
- Substantially higher grain prices are primarily demand driven. Major increases in corn and soybean supplies (used for bio fuel production) and increased global consumer demand for grain, meat and milk in key places like China, India and elsewhere, are key factors driving the increased demand.
- As global consumer incomes increase, demand and consumption of meat, eggs, cheese and milk go up. All economists agree on this point.
- The trend for U.S. and global food prices will be up significantly for the next several years. Consumer expenditures for food (as a percent of total disposable income) will increase significantly as well.

The same will be true for energy and health care costs.

- The combination of (1) increased energy costs, (2) increased Ag commodity prices and food costs and (3) increased health care costs set the stage for significant consumer price escalation (inflation) and higher interest rates in the 2009-2014 time period.
- Increased yields and productivity will accelerate at the farm level. No one should underestimate the capacity of the American farmer to over produce. Farmers will plant more acres in response to the higher prices. There will be very intense competition for acres between corn, soybeans, wheat and other crops. However, there are limits on how many total acres that can be planted to grain crop production and for livestock grazing in the years ahead.

Concerns:

- Too many people focus on "I" or "Me" instead of "We" in the U.S.
- Increased level of fraud, decline in ethics and honesty, and the trend towards moral decline and a reduced belief in God.
- Over 50 percent of Americans now believe in government dependency, socialism, bigger government, higher taxes and servitude.
- The large portion of U.S. citizens who do not understand the serious threat of terrorism to their lives, freedoms, our economy and to America's future.
- The continued trend towards a very large number of illegal immigrants entering the U.S. each year (in addition to the ones already living here).

Annual Meeting Offers Full Program/Entertainment

(Continued from Page 1.)

Tuesday, October 28

- Group breakfast
- Understanding Utah's Agriculture -- A presentation by Kyle Stephens, Deputy Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food.
- Plant Physiology
- Developing Communications Skills
- General Membership Annual Meeting
- Awards Banquet
- An evening of music, dancing and Karaoke by Roy Ferguson and Bill and Darlene Zweigbaum

Wednesday, October 29

- Depart at leisure

"This program still has some elements to fill regarding meeting content, and as those come together we will let everyone know," Zweigbaum says.

"Most important, though, is the heavy emphasis on having an overall event that can be enjoyed as couples. We realize a lot of our members are sole-practitioners, and in fact, many of their spouses are heavily involved with the success of their businesses. We're designing this as a program that can be enjoyed by both and as a bit of a reward for all the hard

work that everyone does to make their individual businesses successes," he explains.

The hotel agreement provides the discounted room rates are valid beginning on Friday, Oct. 24, and running through Friday, Oct. 30, for anyone who wants to come in early or spend an extra couple days following the meeting.



Salt Lake Tabernacle

Home of the world-famous Mormon Tabernacle Choir, the Tabernacle, located just north of Assembly Hall, is an architectural and acoustic wonder. The famous organ at the front of the Tabernacle contains 11,623 pipes, making it one of the largest and richest-sounding organs in the world, and the building was constructed so that even the drop of a pin at the front of the building can be heard at the back.

"We've shown the agenda here as starting with people arriving on Saturday night," he explains. "In fact, the meeting itself will not officially begin until Sunday afternoon, so those who want to arrive at that time are welcome to join in accordingly.

Zweigbaum said that those attending the full program starting on Sunday afternoon through Tuesday evening will be eligible for a full 16 hours of continuing education credits from ASAC. "The 2-hour ethics session on Monday will also meet the qualification requirement set for those who have not updated their ethics classwork in recent years.

"Special thanks to Paige Gilligan, Kurt Ehnlé, CAC, CMC and David Hamblin, CAC, for the assistance they have given in getting us this far with our planning.

A more detailed agenda with registration information and speaker outlines will be forthcoming," Zweigbaum notes.



Start of a new year, a new era, maybe even a year of change

By Ib Hagsten, Ph.D., CACI, Editor

2008 is politically claimed by some as “the year of change” ... Yet it is also the Chinese “year of the rat” ... Depending on your reference point. The theme for this year’s ASAC newsletters is being designated “change.” Yes, we recognize that many things are changeless, particularly in the realm of core values, and Roy Ferguson helped us address that part of the equation at our annual meeting. However it is our hope this year to have members submit articles to share that will challenge us to change, or point us in the direction of change, or maybe even support “good reasons NOT to change.”

Let me reflect a little on the term change, in order to maybe set the “tone” for our four newsletters this year. Let us get the political, presidential change out of the way first. As much time and effort that is being expended on the “maintaining change” or “fostering change” by the candidates for president, we are totally forgetting that any one person cannot change this country unless we, the people, allow him or her to do so by sticking our head in the proverbial sand. Unless you (each of you) are registered voters and exercise that privilege, you are (1) forfeiting the opportunity to complain for the next four years; (2) under-estimating the value of your individual vote, (every vote counts!); and (3) are not a participatory citizen.

Now let us look at ASAC changes following our annual meeting last fall. We are an independent society, we are no longer codependent on ASFMRA, however we are interdependent with one another. If we expect Ken Hilton, the president, or Carroll Merry, our EVP, to make ASAC grow, prosper, and be the vehicle for change in today’s and tomorrow’s agriculture, envisioned by our founding fathers 45 years ago, we will be miserably disappointed. (These are two good men, but they are not the society, they only serve in a couple of key positions). Unless, and until, you, I, and the other guys/gals, take an active role in inviting fellow consultants to join ASAC for the many good reasons each of us joined, change will not occur in any kind of a positive manner. As

Ken said at the end of the St. Louis meeting, “each one, bring one.”

How about the changes in our businesses, our town, our county, our agricultural community (locally or around/ across the globe), or our world? Elsewhere in this newsletter are excerpts from presentations during the last annual meeting. Complete talks with 20 to 80+ slides are posted on the ASAC Web site www.agconsultants.org for you to see for the first time or to review for additional information and/or details. I just tried to give a few highlights to whet your appetite or expand on what the cryptic title may actually allow you to gain further insight into ... in order for your horizons to be expanded or change.

The talk by Chris Hansen of IICA (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture [www.iica.int]) an organization that represents 34 countries of the Americas (North and South), tells of tremendous change/expansion in agriculturally-induced GDP’s in Latin America. Do you want to be part of that change?

Then there was the talk by our own Don Gillings, CACI, who shared very interesting new ways to analyze and manage the different parts of an agricultural operation. The two charts exemplify two very different ways to manage the manageable. Many details are available in the informative PowerPoint® presentation, which would alter the ways one measures change.

The presentation by Terry Betger, P.Ag, CAC, of CCAA, shared a number of Canadian best management practices utilized by successful farmers in their company’s portfolio. The more BMP’s a farm practices, the better it is at affecting positive change.

The banquet speech by our own Bill Helming, CAC, contained an amazing array of cultural, societal and agricultural changes that have taken place, as well as several predictions of changes to come (some negative and many positive). As always, when Bill talks, folks ought to listen.

The report of the North American Consulting School by Ken Hilton, CAC, points to several talks that would/ could help consultants (anywhere/everywhere) change the way they manage themselves and assist clients’ management of change.

We as agricultural consultants **MUST** rise to the occasion for there are profound changes not only looming, but already thrust upon us, by new forces and patterns affecting all aspects of the agricultural landscape. Producers must come to grips with and identify these often-confusing forces. We, as professionals, are strategically

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2008 ASAC Leadership

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[Mark Your Calendars](#)

October 26 - 28, 2008

2008 ASAC Annual Meeting
Salt Lake City Plaza Hotel
Salt Lake City, UT
Visit www.agconsultants.org
OR www.agconsultants.com

...A Year of Change

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placed to assist them in assessing the alternatives and presenting strategically-successful responses to challenges presented by globalization, transportation, genetic manipulation, social concerns, diseases, bankruptcies, climate change claims, and the “wild card” demand for sustainability.

Years ago I read a mind-expanding book by Dr. Robert Schuler with the “strange” title, “Peek to Peak.” Rather than tell you about the amazing stories of change in that book, let it suffice by explaining the title ... When in the meadow of a mountain range one can get a peek of a mountain peak up ahead. If one were to climb up to the peak of that first mountain, to one’s wonder and amazement another peek across the range reveals yet another peak (at a higher elevation). In order to get to the top of that peak one has to wander thru a valley, (imagine that, one can’t jump from peak to peak). When you get to that next peak (yes, you guessed it) – you will be able to peek at yet another even higher peak. So, get ready to be part of change by peeking at new peaks while enjoying the walk thru the valleys along the way!

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