



Inputs

Capitol Update

The 89th legislative session was gavelled to order on January 6, 2015 with pledges of bipartisan cooperation from leaders of the Republican majority and the DFL minority. In the House of Representatives, Rep. Kurt Daudt (R-Crown) was elected House speaker on a 72-62 party-line vote pledging to bring some balance back to St. Paul. House Republicans from rural Minnesota complained bitterly two years ago when Democrats rolled agriculture finance issues into a broader Environment and Agriculture Finance Committee, which was chaired by a lawmaker from Minneapolis. The Republicans once again made the agriculture committee a stand-alone committee. New House committees include a separate Agriculture Finance Committee, to be chaired by Rep. Rod Hamilton, R-Mountain Lake. Republicans also created or re-tooled several committees that seem geared toward rural Minnesota concerns. The Senate is still controlled by the Democrats who did not face reelection last November but are already focusing on the 2016 November elections.

Governor Mark Dayton was reelected and was able to announce a projected state budget surplus of over \$1 billion dollars which some believe may become close to \$2 billion when the next state forecast is made. This provides the politicians with plenty of money to argue over, but means that the messy debate about which taxes to raise may be largely avoided this legislative session although you can count on much political bickering about how much money to give back to the voters in tax relief. Certainly farm property taxes are on the front burner for these new rural legislators and incumbents worried about their reelection.

Minnesota farm associations announced they will seek funds from the state legislature to address critical research and education needs. Their proposal is going to center on some new funding for agricultural research, additional investments in the agriculture rapid response fund, bonding dollars for the University of Minnesota and their animal isolation unit, advocating for rural Minnesota infrastructure and some strategic investments in agricultural education.

This session is the biennial budget session which focuses on state tax and spending for the next two years which are Minnesota Fiscal Years 2015-2016 starting on July 1. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture has not revealed yet what they asked the Governor to include in their budget request, but there are rumors that several fee increases may be forthcoming. The Governor will announce his budget proposals in about a month which will start the fiscal analysis process through the House and Senate Finance Committees.

MCPR expects GMO labeling, pollinator issues, and more push toward regulating crop inputs, particularly fertilizer, to be discussed in the coming months. Stay tuned MCPR members.



Inside this Issue

Capitol Update	1
Executive Director's Report	2
Reguletter	Insert
News & Notes	3
Craig's View	4

Executive Director's Report

Hello MCPR members,

Another successful CPM Short Course and MCPR Trade Show yielded record attendance and many compliments. We are already planning the 2015 show December 8-10...please place it on your calendar right now. You can find proceedings for the 2014 program on our web site at mcpr-cca.org.

During the annual meeting at the show, the MCPR Board reported on progress toward our goals and also held an election for Board seats. Elected to the MCPR Board Seed position was Doug Becher, Mycogen Seeds who lives and works from Wells, MN. Mycogen Seeds focuses on the germplasm and trait development business, providing seed options for grain corn, silage-specific corn, soybeans, cotton, alfalfa, sunflowers, canola and sorghum. As a Commercial Agronomist, Doug's territory is in the Upper Midwest District, encompassing southwest and south central MN. When not working, you will find Doug hunting, fishing, playing golf, serving on the Wells Fire Department, and being an active member of USC athletic boosters. Welcome to the Board of Directors, Doug. A special thanks to Ryan Tierney, District Sales Manager with Monsanto national brands, Dekalb and Asgrow in Stearns County. Ryan was not the successful Seed Seat candidate, but we applaud his interest and support.

Elected to another term for the Equipment Representative Board Seat was Arnie Sinclair who works as General Manager for Ag Systems Inc., Hutchinson, MN. AG Systems Inc. specializes in being equipment experts in the fertilizer and chemical application industry and is a distributor for CASE application equipment and manufacturer of spreaders, tenders, and toolbars covering Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Wisconsin. Arnie suggested that nitrogen management and proposed nitrogen regulations will be an issue impacting all retailers and people associated with production agriculture. He stated that not only will this impact how and when retailers can apply products but also creates issues with logistics on getting product and storage of products to meet demand and also equipment and personnel to effectively meet demands of the growers. When Arnie is not working, he spends time with his kids and also hunting, fishing, camping, snowmobiling, is a NASCAR fan and claims his golf outings involve hitting golf balls out of the trees and sand traps. Also running for the position, a special thanks to Mark Aslesen, who has been with Fast Manufacturing Co Inc. for 12 years, in Mountain Lake, MN. Mark serves as territory manager for Central/Northern Minnesota and North Dakota.

Running unopposed for the newly created Retailer at large Seat was Tristen Wilmes with WFS, Truman, MN. Many know that WFS is a large local farmer-owned cooperative in Minnesota, serving more than 4,000 producers in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Tristen is the WFS Agronomy Division Manager. Tristen is concerned about the additional and shifting regulations in our agriculture industry, and misinformation the public has regarding the agriculture industry. Tristen enjoys fishing, hunting, and spending time with his family.

T.J. Philips was reelected to the Crop Protection Seat. T.J. serves as account manager in central Minnesota for West Central with headquarters in Willmar, Minnesota. T.J. is focused on over regulation and education and feels we need to continue to form coalitions between all aspects of agriculture at the state and federal level to lobby and educate not only elected officials, but the general public as well. He suggested that the growing factions of advocates that abuse/ignore science have to be addressed and somehow reversed. His hobbies include golfing, ice fishing, traveling with his wife Annie and being a Grandpa. A special thanks to Matt Prigge, account manager for Rosens, Inc. in Fairmont, MN, who was the unsuccessful candidate for this position. Incidentally, Matt graciously accepted my apology as I got his name wrong on the candidate info and ballot.

Finally, in addition to recognizing outgoing Board member Cory Buysse with Monsanto-Asgrow/Dekalb, I want to recognize the contributions of another MCPR Board member for more years than anyone really knows...Mike Minnehan with WFS. Mike was on the search committee when I applied for my position in 2004. Mike was on the MCPR Executive Committee during those difficult months and years when former MCPR Executive Director, Craig Sallstrom, passed away in an untimely death. Mike exercised a strong leadership and also provided the perspective of many years of experience and insight all Board members respected. Thankfully, Mike will still continue to represent MCPR on the AFREC Board of Directors. From all of us, Mike, thank you!

Until next time,



Bill Bond

News & Notes

Baloun Retires — Minnesota State Conservationist Don Baloun has retired. Baloun had that job for the past four years. Before that, Baloun was the assistant state conservationist in Wisconsin. In retirement, Baloun plans to farm in western Wisconsin. RRFN.

Monarch Butterfly Considered for Endangered Species List — The US Fish and Wildlife Service plans to review the status of the monarch butterfly under the Endangered Species Act. The Center for Biological Diversity and the Center for Food Safety are among the groups that petitioned the government for this review. In the petition, these groups blame the use of glyphosate for the decline in the butterfly population. RRFN.

Drone Decision Delayed — Government and industry officials say any proposed rules for commercial drone operation by the Federal Aviation Administration will likely be delayed until late January. The FAA is expected to propose restricting drone weights of less than 55 pounds to altitudes under 400 feet; forbid flying them at night, and require drones be kept within line of sight. Drone operators may also be required to have a pilot's license. Once the proposed rules are published, it could be nearly three years before a final rule is in place. Until then, a ban on commercial drone flights remains in place. RRFN.

FAA Drone Concern is on Safety — North Dakota State University Extension machine specialist John Nowatzki says data and privacy is a concern for drone users. As a result, Nowatzki thinks much of the privacy regulation will likely be written by the courts. "The FAA is not concerned about privacy. Their only concern is safety. The issue is going to come back to the courts." Nowatzki thinks there might be different regulations for the different sizes of drone aircraft. Current FAA regulations allow recreational users to fly small drones as long as they stay under 400 feet, keep the drone in view and are more than five miles from an airport. RRFN.

A New Normal for Agriculture — According to AgResource Company President Dan Basse, 2014 brought a new normal to agriculture. Basse says for much of the past seven years, world grain prices rose on expanding demand tied to an expanding biofuel industry and rising caloric intake in the developing world. This demand story changed this past year. "Biofuels looks like it's become mature. There are no new ethanol plants in the US that would use corn under construction. The EU is backing off on its mandate for biofuels. With energy prices now at five year lows, the economic importance for biofuels is diminished. So, we're back to the world needing about 1.7 percent more grain each year to feed more mouths with a better disposable income." RRFN.

MN Ag in the Classroom — MCPR continues to be a strong supporter of MN Ag in the Classroom (MAITC). MAITC shares the story of ag in many schools throughout Minnesota. For example, the recent AgMag is a unique publication for first and second graders that is sent to 250 schools and over 20,000 copies. Your firm may want to consider supporting MAITC (www.maitcfoundation.org).

CHS Purchases Share of West Central - CHS has purchased a 25 percent share of **West Central**, a full-service wholesale distributor headquartered in **Willmar**, Minn. Fluence.



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Craig's View

Hello MCPR Members,

First of all I would like to thank everybody that attended the 2014 CPM Short Course and MCPR Trade Show. The three day show again set an attendance record which only stood for 12 months - back to our 2013 event. The MCPR would also like to recognize the following contributors; The University of Minnesota, Fertilizer and Crop Protection, Distribution, Big Iron and all vendors who make this show a huge success. As we move through the winter months and prepare ourselves for the upcoming planting season I encourage everyone to visit the MCPR website (www.mcpr-cca.org). It is a wealth of information. To me the highlight of the whole website is the clarification of the Best Management Practices (BMPs). All retailers need to know what the BMPs are for their geographic area in the State of Minnesota. Making the right recommendation today is the future of sustainability of all retailers. Use our website! Compare local and big data to structure your dealership to meet the regulations of fertilizer that are just around the corner.

Craig Maurer
MCPR Chairman