



Iowa Seed News

ISO 9001:2000 Certified
A publication of the Iowa Crop Improvement Association

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:

Merschman Seeds, Inc.

Imagine being “knee high to a grass hopper” and tagging along with your father on his day to day operations. This is how Joe Merschman current CEO & President of Merschman Seeds, Inc. grew up. He is one of five children to graduate from Quincy University in Quincy, IL and became President and CEO of the family-owned company in 1998.

Wm. F. Merschman Seed was established in 1954 by Bill and Bernice Merschman on the farm of Bill’s grandfather in West Point, IA. In 1956 Bill and Bernice sold their farm and started construction of a new seed facility in the southwest corner of West Point. In that same year they planted the first 40 acre field of certified soybean seed in Lee County Iowa. The new facilities were finished in 1957 and the company changed their name to Merschman Seed & Supply Company. At this same time forage seed and bagged fertilizer were added to their oat and soybean business. They sold their first hybrid seed corn in 1992 and an additional seed warehouse was soon added to the seed plant increasing bag storage by one third.

Merschman Seeds, Inc. also operates another branch of their business through Merschman Fertilizer, LLC. They established the first fluid fertilizer plant in southeast Iowa to serve local farmers and a year later began selling fertilizer wholesale. A joint venture was formed in 1998 with a Norwegian company called Yara, one of the largest fertilizer company in the world, with USA headquarters in Tampa, Florida. With the combined assets of Burlington River Terminal and Merschman Fertilizer they have over 200,000 tons of dry and liquid storage. Locations include Fulton, Illinois and Burlington, Fort Madison, and Montrose, Iowa. Henry Merschman, Joe Merschman’s brother, is the President & CEO of Merschman Fertilizer, LLC. The company is operated out of the Merschman Seeds, Inc. office in West Point, IA.

Merschman Seeds, Inc. has a long history with Iowa Crop Improvement Association (ICIA). Bill Merschman, past President & CEO and current Chairman of the Board for Merschman Seeds, Inc. served on the Iowa Crop Improvement Association Board from 1967-1977 and served as the Vice President of the Board from 1973-1977. They have also been a participant in the ICIA’s Iowa Crop Performance Tests since 1971. Joe Merschman also serves for ICIA and is currently on the association’s Committee to Recommend Requirements for Crop Performance Testing.



Merschman Seeds, Inc. is an independent seed company with a strong focus on putting farmers first. The Company currently grows, conditions, and distributes soybeans, corn, wheat, alfalfa, and forage seeds. Merschman Seeds’ products are the latest in genetics and are available to farmers through their local Merschman dealers in: Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, Tennessee. For more information visit www.merschmanseeds.com or call 800-848-SEED.

Documentation and Verification is Still the Key - Eileen Wuebker

Having grown up on an Iowa farm and having studied agriculture at Iowa State University, when I first came to Iowa Crop Improvement Association I learned about seed certification of crops that I was already familiar with. I learned a great deal about taking field counts, staging crops, determining an off-type, using sequential sampling, verifying isolation, etc. I learned about the importance of documenting what was seen in the field accurately and objectively. I learned about applying this data to the standards and rules put forth by ICIA, AOSCA, OECD, the Iowa Seed Law, the Federal Seed Law, etc. I learned about the importance of providing our ICIA members with the best services so that we could assist them in marketing seed in both domestic and international markets. In the end I came to understand that the key to the certification process is careful documentation and inspections at critical points in the production process.

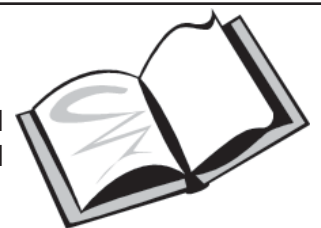
In 2002, I had the opportunity to work more closely with the association's native species certification program. To learn identification of over 150 species is a daunting task that I will be pursuing for a few more years. I also met a whole different segment of seed producers in Iowa who are just as devoted to producing quality seed as our corn, soybean, and small grain producers. This past summer as I walked a number of gorgeous prairie remnants, I was reminded again how different yet similar this certification program is to the others. One of the remnants I visited was over 15 acres of native prairie with well over 100 native species present! The remnant was quietly nestled amongst several soybean fields about a quarter mile off a gravel road. I was in search of Sullivant's milkweed and Rough tall dropseed, but saw many, many more species. The key to doing my job well was to locate this site, to document the presence of the two species that had been collected, and to note other species and attributes of the site that would verify the nativity of the site and authenticity of the collection. In the native species program the key for an inspector and grower alike is knowing the critical details of species identification and the ability to well document the entire seed production process.



This year as the association became ISO9001 certified, I again saw the same message coming through. ISO requires a detailed documentation of your procedures and continual monitoring and audits of your quality management system. Over the years with ICIA, I have continued to learn about different species and programs. At the same time our association has continued to change with the ever changing seed and grain industries. And still as important today, as it was when I first started with Iowa Crop, is the need for a good documentation system and verification at key points in the process. For the association and our members alike it is essential that we continue to keep these principles in mind.

ISURF Update

The 2008 catalogs showcasing soybean and corn varieties developed at ISU will be available in December. Contact Julie Minot at jjgus@iastate.edu if you would like a copy sent to you.



ISU Seed Laboratory Update - Michael Stahr

After a fall that was (at times) warmer and wetter than normal, we are into more “typical” Iowa fall and winter weather. The fall was great for keeping those tomatoes and peppers growing, but not so great for harvesting soybeans and corn. Fortunately most seed corn was picked before the monsoon season started. Even so, we are seeing Fusarium and shredding on germs and some discolored kernels before planting. Soybeans could be more of a problem since some fields experienced wet conditions and dried back out. An additional problem for some producers was stems remaining green at the same time the seed was dry. We are seeing some discolored, oblong (and sometimes germinated) seed from the bag and Phomopsis, Cercospora & Fusarium in germination tests. Level of mechanical damage seems to be typical.

Those of you who are familiar with the landscaped area west of the Seed Science Center are in for a surprise the next time you visit campus – all the trees are gone and in their place are the walls of the new Center addition. Construction should be completed in late winter with the addition of two labs, a conference room, and several offices. We will gain an atrium area just outside the high tech classroom.

If you plan on being in Chicago this December for the ASTA Conference at the Hyatt, please visit us at the Seed Expo (booth 338). This meeting is great for learning about research, new products, and to keep current on developments that can affect the seed industry.

Directories Now Available

Are you looking for quality seed to plant in 2008? The Iowa Crop Improvement Association recently published the Iowa Seed Directory and Native Species Directory as a resource for finding sources of quality seeds of oat, soybean, triticale, wheat and native prairie species. The directories are free and available by contacting the ICIA office at (515) 294-6921 or iowacrop@iastate.edu.

The Iowa Seed Directory provides seed production information for over 100 producers and conditioners and lists fields that were inspected for genetic identity and purity during the 2007 season. The Native Species Directory contains seed production information for more than 150 species originating in Iowa that have been certified by ICIA.

ICIA encourages consumers to request analysis information when making seed purchases. Customers can obtain documentation of seed germination, purity and presence of weed species. This assures the buyer that they are purchasing quality seed.



**Quality Seed
Doesn't Cost
...It Pays**

Iowa Crop Performance Test Update

Results of the Iowa Crop Performance Tests are now posted on the ICIA website at www.agron.iastate.edu/icia/ and will be printed in the publications listed below. Contact the ICIA office or your county extension office to request a printed copy.

Crop	Publication	Issue
Alfalfa	Iowa Farmer Today	November 24
Corn	Iowa Farmer Today	December 1
Soybean	Iowa Farmer Today	December 15

Alfalfa - Mark Smith 515-294-7887

The 2007 growing season was highly variable. A late cold weather event in April, greatly reduced the yields in all tests. It had the most effect on the grass tests. Yields of orchardgrass, perennial ryegrass, timothy grass and reed canarygrass were down 30% to as much as 75% from 2006. Part of this reduction in yield was due to hot dry weather in June and July.

The alfalfa tests responded in a similar fashion, with reduced yields from last year. We saw yield reductions of 15% to 50%. The high yield at Ames was 5.16 tons per acre and the low was 3.34 tons per acre. The tests at Nashua performed significantly better than those at Ames. The cold temperatures in April did not have the same effect as in Ames. The Nashua plots received more timely rains and cooler temperatures all season long, resulting in more average yields. The high yield was 6.76 tons per acre and the low was 4.07 tons per acre.

The Alfalfa Leafhopper numbers and damage were high this year at Ames. The resistant varieties yielded significantly higher than the susceptible checks, under no-spray conditions. It was a good year to have a resistant variety in your field.

Please check out all the 2007 performance test results by picking up a copy of the Extension Bulletin or go online to www.croptesting.iastate.edu. Click on Alfalfa to see data of all the forage tests. Remember, here is where you will find the 2008 entry forms to print out and mail into me. They will only be available online. First call for 2008 entries will be in early January.

The deadline for all new entries is March 1st, 2008.

Corn & Soybeans - Jim Rouse 515-294-5604

Plot harvest went quite well this year, even though we parked the machines for twelve straight days in the middle of October. We weren't alone—I think the entire state had parked the combines for at least ten of those days.

Corn district yield averages ranged from a low of 178 bushels per acre in the northeast to 192 bushels per acre in the southeast. All other districts had an average yield from 180 to 186 bushels per acre. These averages do not include Salix or Dougherty. Salix suffered severe germination and stand issues due to a lengthy dry period after planting. Dougherty had to be discarded due to severe lodging caused by summer storms. Most other locations fared quite well. Lodging was sporadic in the trials, ranging from a high of 30% at Corning to essentially none at Cedar and Keystone.

Soybean district yield averages were fairly consistent across the state. The SW had a high of 54.5 bushels per acre, and all others were in the range of 49 to 53 bushels per acre. All of the soybean locations produced useful data this season, so we're quite pleased about that.

This year we also ran two specialty tests, one each in the central and southern regions. These tests included conventional-herbicide lines, low-linolenic lines, and Vistive® lines. Plans for a specialty trial in 2008 will depend upon interest. If there is enough commitment to participation these tests will be performed again.

The ratio of SCN-resistant to SCN-susceptible lines has been increasing over the past several years. This season we had over 60% SCN-resistant lines. Of the susceptible lines, less than 5% were entered in the southern districts. Because of this the susceptible lines were tested within the resistant experiments (and the appropriate maturity group). Based on these trends it is unlikely that we will have separate tests for susceptible entries in the southern districts next year. Further test reductions will depend upon susceptible entries.

Once again we feel this testing program is the best source available for comparative variety performance information. View or download data, peruse our procedures, or just monitor our progress at www.croptesting.iastate.edu.

Small Grains - Ron Skrdla 515-294-2732

The 2008 winter wheat and winter triticale variety tests were planted during the last week in September at Ames (September 27) and Sutherland (September 28). Nineteen hard red varieties, three hard white varieties, and five soft red varieties are being tested along with three triticale lines.

All plots are in excellent shape going into winter with abundant rainfall and warm temperatures after planting.

The 2008 variety reports can be found at the following web address:

<http://www.croptesting.iastate.edu/smallgrains/>

ICIA & CAD Tailgate

Thanks to everyone who came and joined us for our tailgate in September.



Pictured above members socialize during the tailgate. Pictured to the upper right are Bill Fjelland, Ken Larson and Irv Carlson enjoying some food and conversation. Pictured to the lower right are Jim Rouse and Carol Cornelious visiting with Jim Mairs.

2008 Crop Advantage Schedule

The Crop Advantage Series has something to offer everyone involved in crop production and protection in Iowa. These meetings feature a combined 40+ different workshops presented by over 30 different experts. Select a location that features the topics that will benefit your operation for the 2008 growing season and beyond.

Jan 4 - Burlington	Jan 22 - Storm Lake
Jan 7 - Ames	Jan 23 - Carroll
Jan 8 - Sheldon	Jan 24 - Fort Dodge
Jan 9 - Cedar Rapids	Jan 29 - Atlantic
Jan 10 - Mason City	Jan 30 - Waterloo
Jan 16 - Spirit Lake	Jan 31 - Ottumwa (NEW!)
Jan 17 - Osceola	

For more information go to <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/>

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Happy Holidays from the ICIA Staff

The ICIA office will be closed for the holidays December 24 through January 1. We will re-open January 2. If this closing will affect your business, please contact the office and we will make arrangements to accommodate your needs.

Dates to Remember

December

- 4-7 ASTA Corn & Sorghum and Soybean Research Conference, Seed Expo, Chicago, IL
- 24-31 ICIA Offices Closed, Happy Holidays!

January

- 1 ICIA Offices Closed, Happy New Year!
- 21 ICIA Offices Closed, Martin Luther King Day
- 22-24 IPSA Conference, Sheraton Sand Key Resort, Clearwater, FL