

IL Crop News by Dennis Thompson, CEO • dthompson@ilcrop.com



Dennis Thompson recognized by C-FAR chairman Nels Kasey

## IL Crop Recognized by C-FAR

**D**uring the recent C-FAR Annual Meeting, chairman Nels Kasey presented a 15 year Charter Membership certificate to Chief Executive Officer Dennis Thompson recognizing IL Crop. The Illinois Council of Food and Agricultural Research (C-FAR) was founded in 1993 as a statewide coalition organized to support relevant, high-quality research and related outreach programs for Illinois' food, agricultural, and related systems. The largest and most diverse association of its kind in Illinois, C-FAR organizes and implements research programs to strengthen the state's economy and enhance the health and welfare of Illinois citizens.

IL Crop staff members have received three

competitive research grants, totalling over \$230,000, which spanned five calendar years. Research related to high oil corn, wheat kernel hardness and development of an extractable starch NIR calibration for corn.



Thompson has chaired the C-FAR Rules and Procedure committee for a number of years and serves as IL Crop's designated representative to C-FAR.

Kasey recently completed his term in office as Chairman of C-FAR and currently serves on the board as past-chairman. He also serves as Treasurer of the Illinois Crop Board of Directors.

## Uncommon.....and Proud of It!

**W**e've heard it said about IL Crop that "crop improvements don't do things like . . . ." But we believe it is okay to be UNCOMMON in our approach of partnering with clients and other reputable colleagues in the advancement of seed products and technology.

I recently came across retired Indiana Colts coach Tony Dungy's latest book titled "Uncommon." While I'm not particularly enamored by the world of professional sports, I couldn't help but be curious about the content of his book. So I checked it out and later even purchased it! Glad I did!

Dungy's message is to all men, young and old, and about how to be a man in this day and age. His message can also be appropriately applied to the world of business including the seed and grain aspects of the global food industry.

I can relate what the IL Crop organization is striving to accomplish and how we are going about it to Dungy's opening chapter, "Develop your Core." In life, as in business, developing the "core" relates to things such as: character, honesty, integrity, humility, stewardship and courage. Not what we do, but more importantly how we go about doing it. The core.

IL Crop endeavors to achieve these core attributes by how we approach business and how we perform services for our clientele. We hope our UNCOMMONNESS does not go unnoticed.

As a result of the serious global, international, national, regional and local economic crisis that faces us all, IL Crop is again proud to be somewhat UNCOMMON.

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### Calendar of Events

**June 9, 2009**  
 IL CROP-ISTA  
 Annual Meeting  
 Hawthorn Suites Hotel  
 Champaign, IL

**June 10, 2009**  
 ISTA Hacker/Slacker  
 Golf Outing  
 U of I Golf Course  
 Savoy, IL

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# Seed Lab News

by Gary Cook, Seed Lab Director • gcook@ilcrop.com

## Seed Quality

**S**oybean seed quality is good with a few exceptions. Mechanical injury is starting to be more of a problem. If a soybean lot has a seed quality issue, ninety percent of the time it is due to mechanical damage. Care should be exercised in the handling and conditioning of low moisture soybean lots. There continues to be some pod and stem blight, but in most cases, not a major problem.

Corn seed is good, but there have been a few problems with the current year and carryover seed with reduced viability and vigor. Some of the carryover seed has had dramatic reduction in viability and vigor since tests were run last fall. Causal agents are hard to determine, but it appears to be due to less than ideal environmental conditions during the production year. We have also noted some diplodia infection in both sheller run and conditioned seed for this crop year. Some

of the lots have higher than normal amounts of cracked seed and higher amounts of silk cut. In most cases, conditioning using gravity tables, etc. is taking care of the problem, although the average amount of broken seed/inert matter is higher than normal.

The variability of seed quality within and among seed lots has resulted in a need for a wider regimen of testing to determine the most accurate assessment of each seed lot.

### Examples of Mechanically Damaged Soybeans:



Radicle damage with secondary development



Radicle with tip broken off



Damaged radicles



Radicle with multiple breaks

## Winter Wheat Forum

**T**he Illinois Wheat Association hosted this year's winter wheat forum on February 23rd in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. This year's meeting had excellent content and was very worthwhile. There were large groups of farmers and agri-business professionals in attendance who were able to take advantage of over twenty exhibitor tables. Each table provided various special interest information for wheat producers. Even if wheat is not a primary

crop for you, I am sure you would glean a lot of useful information from the semi-annual forums.

Along with exhibits, five educational presentations were given on nitrogen application, wheat diseases and management, the 2008 farm bill, marketing outlook for wheat, corn and soybeans, and maintaining wheat quality after binning. Following the presentations there is always a question and answer session that is very interesting and informative.

The forum also included speakers from the University of Illinois, University of Missouri, Purdue University and the Illinois Farm Bureau.

I believe it would be well worth the time to be in attendance at the next wheat forum held in August or the winter meeting next February, particularly if you grow or sell wheat. Membership is a very good value for both farmers and agri-business professionals, but is not a requirement for attending the forums.

## Sample Submission and Packaging

**M**ost shipping and handling methods are less than ideal, particularly for fragile seeds such as soybeans. We are currently doing experimentation to try and determine whether a portion of the injury to the seed may be due to the packaging and

handling of seed samples versus the conditioning and handling of the seed lot. This injury is evident during the germination tests and is reported as mechanical damage.

We would recommend that extra care be taken when you are sampling,

handling and packing your soybean seed samples for testing. Please note that packing material should be placed on all sides of the seed samples in your boxes and packed as tightly as possible to avoid shifting of the samples during transit. A few companies

are using individual bubble-wrap packing bags for each sample. Although most will not want to go quite that far, the more protection for your samples during shipping will definitely help protect the seed's integrity.

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# Field Services News

by Doug Miller, Field Services Director • [dmiller@ilcrop.com](mailto:dmiller@ilcrop.com)

## GSS for Your Trait Introgression Needs

**B**efore I proceed with my topic of off-the-shelf and custom services, please consider our newest venture, Global Seed Solutions Inc. (GSS), for all of your trait introgression needs. We are currently quoting trait introgression programs in corn utilizing markers for the rapid recovery of the recipient parent's genotype. GSS also provides services for soybean, sunflower and sorghum. If you can gain or provide access to traits, GSS Inc. can deliver the products you need for your seed business.

## IL Crop Services "Off-the-Shelf"

**A**pplying the term "Off-the-Shelf" to some of IL Crop's services is relatively easy. Germinations, protein analyses, nursery rows, field inspections and the QA system are all ready-to-use services or programs. These services or programs have already been designed, validated and commonly accepted in the industry. Our price-lists are an easy reference for IL Crop's off-the-shelf offerings. Offerings that help you produce a superior product

that will generate a profit for your business. Off-the-shelf products are considered by most to be cheap, readily available and easily implemented. Conversely many of our services can be referred to as made-to-measure, custom-built or one-off.

The first thought that comes to mind when considering a custom service is cost. When clients come to us with a need, we put on our "thinking caps" and utilize the expertise and unbiased perspective that is the mark of a good consultant. Why seek expertise and other viewpoints? From Sara Lovelady's "Six Reasons to Hire a Consultant", I would like to point out two reasons that should be important to you: save money and make money.

How do custom programs and IL Crop consulting services save you money and make you money? An outside expert can help you design profitable new products or processes for your business. IL Crop partners with companies in the advancement of seed products and technologies delivering expertise, experience and differing perspectives that can bring rapid improvements to your business. In a crisis your brand or company image can be in peril. An outside perspective with industry knowledge and experience can save your business money and offer the opportunity

to regroup or redirect for a profitable future.

**When clients come to us with a need, we put on our "thinking caps" and utilize the expertise and unbiased perspective that is the mark of a good consultant.**

I would like to provide examples of our special projects and consulting work that IL Crop has done. However, all of our work is done confidentially and is only mentioned to the public when allowed by the client. The most recent examples that we can share are listed under the "news" section of the [ilcrop.com](http://ilcrop.com) homepage. The best I can do here is to offer some tips when considering or utilizing outside services.

**An outside expert can help you design profitable new products or processes for your business.**

Never fail to see if you have the ability to meet your own needs. If you have a staff, know what they can do and fully utilize their expertise. Conversely, consider their current workloads, their perspectives and their ability

to effectively address issues that impact your business. In the same line of thinking, do not neglect to inform and introduce outside consultants and service providers to pertinent staff members and employees.

Consulting work, such as crisis management, does not always involve forewarning for the client or the provider. For the uninitiated, communicating a clear need during a crisis is difficult. Be as exact and as forthright as you can to properly prepare for a project. Extracting pertinent information, identifying issues and designing a plan are a big part of IL Crop's success in offering custom services. Your knowledge may be limited and outside experience is often the key to successfully guiding a business venture working through "the fog of a crisis."

As always, please feel free to contact me regarding any current off-the-shelf offerings, custom projects or custom programs that utilize our excellent off-the-shelf expertise at either [dmiller@ilcrop.com](mailto:dmiller@ilcrop.com) or 217-359-4053.



## ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Direct Effects to the Customer

In my last article, I discussed the accreditation of many of our laboratory analyses under ISO/IEC 17025:2005. The primary goal in receiving this accreditation is the acknowledgement that our labs are able to provide accurate results to our clients.

I stated that the IL Crop labs are, in many ways, operating the same as before the accreditation. At the same time, there have been a number of significant changes. While I mentioned some of these in the last issue, I want to go into more detail on some of the newer implementations that have direct impacts on what the customer may encounter when working with IL Crop labs.

### Confidentiality and Impartiality:

As a third-party resource, IL Crop's integrity has always been our cornerstone. We have had longstanding policies concerning actions that may be viewed as conflicting to our by-laws or quality of work. In preparation for accreditation, new policies were adopted to ensure the protection of

confidential client materials and information. We have increased building security to limit access to client materials, be it seed, test reports, or even simply the knowledge of who else may be working with us. Visitors over the recent months have probably noticed signs designating 'Restricted Areas' at our facilities and an escort may be required in certain areas of our operations to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

**In preparation for accreditation, new policies were adopted to ensure the protection of confidential client materials and information.**

Many of our clients may also be counted as friends; these signs are not to be viewed as a sign of distrust of anyone. Instead, we hope clients understand that just as we strive to protect the confidentiality of others when conducting business with you, we are also striving to protect yours when working with them.

With our new policies, we ask that all visitors enter through the front door; even if just to announce that you have a delivery. This allows the appropriate employees to meet you and take care of your matters in a timely manner. It also

allows for some discretion in the handling of potentially restricted materials and paperwork in the area you must visit. We have also been employing an on-site shredding service to destroy any papers, such as sample envelopes, submission forms, extra test reports, etc., that may contain confidential information.

### Review of Test Requests:

This area has been one of the changes that is more visible to clients during implementation over the past few years. The key to the requirement of the standard is fairly simple – we need to make sure that we know what the customer wants us to do. This may seem straightforward, and most often it is. Occasionally in the past, though, we received a sample from a client that did not have explicit instructions. If this customer routinely had submitted similar samples for a particular test requirement, the assumption may have been made that the new sample should have been handled as previous samples were. While this would often be the case, there were times that we ended up performing the wrong test on the sample. This not only slowed down the process of getting results for the sample to the client, but also took time away that could have been used to analyze other clients' materials.

Our new policies are in place to ensure that we may

be both correct and efficient in what we do. We ask that sample submissions clearly indicate customer contact and billing information, as well as the specific test requests. If the required information is not submitted with the sample or is unclear, ambiguous, or contradictory, a representative from IL Crop will contact you for clarification. Again, this is not intended to be a hindrance to getting the work done, but we want to be certain that our client's specifications are being met as desired. Please note that in an effort to ease this process, we do offer sample envelopes and bags for use by companies sending samples to us, as well as printable submission forms on our website for those who wish to use their own containers. If you are interested in submitting sample information electronically, please contact Doug Miller [dmiller@ilcrop.com](mailto:dmiller@ilcrop.com) to discuss possibilities.

**We ask that sample submissions clearly indicate customer contact and billing information, as well as the specific test requests.**

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## Harvest Update

**Corn, Soybeans, Sunflower, Pearl Millet, Dry Beans, Peanuts, Wheat, Barley, Cotton, and Misc. Crops**

**W**e are on the second half of our season where the majority of the corn nurseries are harvested and corn growouts are read. On the soybeans, the first cycle is harvested and replanted or shipped back to the clients, but we also have soybean crossing blocks that are for continuous cycles at the farm. For miscellaneous crops, sunflower growouts are read; pearl millet isolations, dry beans, wheat and barley trials will be harvested in early April. Peanut and cotton harvest was begun in late March. Cotton harvest is a new experience for us. In the past, we did small trials and harvested it by hand, but now we have increases that require machine harvest. Our crew and I learned a lot from this

and now we are better prepared for future cotton increases. From the last week of April to mid-June, the second cycle of soybeans will be harvested. This is also when material from the southern hemisphere is shipped to the farm for their off season plantings. In addition to the regular generation advance rows, we also received soybean increases for harvest. In the next newsletter issue, I will let you know how harvest went for the different crops. There is no off season at the winter farm, but that is the advantage of being in a tropical environment. There are also disadvantages like weeds, insects and diseases because you have to do scouting and pest control all year around.

## New Equipment Makes an Impact

**T**he equipment that we were expecting last January arrived in good condition. With the additional plot threshers, it is now possible to harvest two different projects at the same time or cut back harvest time which is very important due to the fact that most of our plantings are time sensitive. We also received a lyophilizer and label printer. Both are set up and running. During the month of March, around 30000 tissue samples were taken by our personnel. These samples were freeze dried at the farm and sent to different laboratories in

United States. Now this service is available for all our clients, but the main purpose is to have this tool as part of our trait introgression program. This new service can be adapted to any needs. IL Crop can do the full service of tagging individual plants, taking tissue samples, freeze drying it and sending it to the lab. If the client is doing everything and just needs IL Crop to freeze dry the samples, that can be done too. Check with us for additional information.

## Upcoming Projects Planned for the Farm

**S**ome of the fields at the new farm were planted with soybeans last February and look good. For most of the summer plantings, we are going to use this farm. This way we can do longer fallow periods on some fields on the main farm. Plans for summer include having Scott M. Bretthauer, Extension Specialist-Pesticide Safety Education, come to the farm to help us check the settings and calibrations on all our spraying equipment. Another summer project is doing preventive maintenance on all the tractors, planters, harvesting

and spraying equipment. We will also check the facilities for any painting or repairs. At the fields, we will check the irrigation system to make sure it is working efficiently. Fields not planted will be kept relatively clean of weeds. For the Winter Farm, efforts continue to develop an appropriate process-based quality management system to be consistent with leading industry programs like Biotechnology Industry Organization's (BIO) Excellence Through Stewardship.



# Illinois Seed Trade News

by Don Rhoads, ISTA President • [corndr@burrusseed.com](mailto:corndr@burrusseed.com)

## ISTA Update

On January 6th, Illinois Seed Trade Board Executive Secretary Richard Denhart and I had the opportunity to attend the Illinois Agricultural Legislative Roundtable in Bloomington. Several accomplished speakers were on the morning agenda, including the Illinois Director of Agriculture Tom Jennings and University of Illinois Dean of Agriculture Dr. Robert Easter. Each speaker gave reports on their respective areas of expertise, including past accomplishments as well as budgetary challenges facing them in the future. Small group discussions formulated the objectives and priorities to bring before the state and federal legislative bodies. It's encouraging to see so many talented and dedicated people working on behalf of Illinois agriculture.

Another item the board has been working on concerns cool season grasses. A bill

was introduced to amend the Illinois Seed Law to require labeling of "cool weather grasses" that includes a "sell by" date. This bill amendment would provide that cool weather grasses may be sold up to 15 months (instead of 12 months) after the applicable tests. At this writing the bill has passed out of the Ag committee by a vote of 10 to 0.

**.....I had the opportunity to attend the Illinois Agricultural Legislative Roundtable**

**It's encouraging to see so many talented and dedicated people working on behalf of Illinois agriculture.**

A bill the ISTA board is opposing is HB0985, introduced by Representative Deborah Mell. This bill creates the Genetically Engineered

Food Right to Know Act. If enacted, it would require a label stating "This product contains a genetically engineered material or was produced with genetically engineered material." This would apply to everything from corn flakes to hamburger from a cow that consumed genetically modified grain. At this writing, the bill is dormant, but that can change.

The U. S. Food and Drug Administration already approves crop varieties with biotechnologies which are safe for human consumption. To have individual states apply labels when the federal government deems it unnecessary will lead to confusion and will serve no useful purpose. To have a major agricultural state supersede the United States Food and Drug Administration on food labeling is irresponsible and undermines the long term success of the state's farmers and the consumer's continued supply of competitively priced food.



In closing, I want to remind all Illinois Seed Trade members that our annual meeting will be held in Champaign on June 9th with the golf outing taking place the next day. Please put June 9th and 10th on your calendar. More information will be coming about the meeting.

Everyone have a great spring and a safe planting season.



**April 2009 is Seed Month in the State of Illinois**





# IL Crop News Continued.....

## Uncommon..... and Proud of It!

(continued from page 1)

Recently, we shared with our employees and their families core facts about IL Crop in order to reassure them that the company is solid and stable with respect to our finances, services offered and their job security. With this message, I want to reassure our clientele and the broader industry that IL Crop is and is expected to remain alive and well-positioned to meet industry requirements. IL Crop . . . UNCOMMON and proud of it!

## Sample Submission and Packaging

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Any comments or questions about seed testing, sample submission or seed quality issues can be directed to the IL Crop Seed Laboratory. Please Contact Steve Beals, Seed Laboratory Assistant Director or myself at the IL Crop office.

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## ISO/IEC 17025:2005 Direct Effects to the Customer

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### Complaints and Corrective Action:

Another major aspect of the accreditation process is having procedures for handling complaints or other issues raised by customers, all in an attempt to minimize the occurrence of such issues. While the initial notification of a concern will get the resolution process started on our end, it is often of great help for the customer to be further involved by providing details for determination of the root cause of the issue. Help us solve the problem, and we are all better off going forward.

### Test Reports:

Users of the Seed Lab and/or Greenhouse lab services who receive reports by mail or e-mail have seen our new test reports. For those who have not seen them, the new reports are laser-printed and have been restructured in an attempt to make them easier to understand while meeting the standard for accreditation as well as AOSA Rules specifications. We plan to have the new format available to IPG Lab customers in coming months and available for online reports soon thereafter.

## In Other News

### Inspectors and Assessors Needed

Illinois Crop Improvement Association (IL Crop) is expecting continued demand for on-site assessors of seed and grain programs and is seeking additional retired professionals with agriculture experience. If you, or someone you know, enjoys working part-time in agricultural related activities, please contact Dave Rambow, Field Services Assistant Director, for more information. IL Crop currently has approximately 50 part-time inspectors that work from their homes during the crop season. We are currently accepting applications for 2009 and beyond. From walking fields to interviewing seed producers and farmers, IL Crop may have something that will interest you and be of benefit to the seed and grain industry. Contact Dave Rambow at 217.359.4053 or e-mail him at [drambow@ilcrop.com](mailto:drambow@ilcrop.com). If you would like to leave a message after hours, please use extension 34 to hear a brief recording on field inspections.

### Application Deadlines

#### Winter Grains

Barley, Rye, Wheat.....May 1

#### Spring Grains

Barley, Oats, Rye.....June 1

Corn, Sorghum, Broomcorn.....June 1

Soybeans (Foundation).....July 1

Soybeans .....Aug. 1

Soybean Roundup Inspections.....June 15

Source-Identified Program.....June 1

All Other Crops.....May 1



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