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**International Certified Crop Adviser Hybrid Board Meeting Minutes**

**Sept. 25, 2024 – Eastern Time Zone**

**In-Person:** Hilton University of Florida Conference Center, Gainesville, FL

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| **Executive Committee attending:** Sandy Endicott, Chair  Isaac Wolford, Past Chair  Karl Wyant, Vice Chair  Andy Knepp, ICCA Board Rep, ASA Board  **Ex-Officio/Staff/Guests:**  Jim Cudahy, CEO  Lacey Edwardson, Support Center Lead  Leif Fixen, The Nature Conservancy  Dawn Gibas, Certifications Director  Paul Hermans, 2024 ICCA of the Year  Peter Kyveryga, ASA President-Elect Michele Lovejoy, Lead Exam Operations Representative  Luther Smith, Chief Administrative Officer  Donnie Taylor, ARA  Sara Uttech, Governance Director | **Board Members/Chairs/Admins attending:**  Arkansas – Sterling Clifton  Florida – Gary England, Mary Hartney  Illinois – Karen Corrigan, Brian Marcinkiewicz, Lisa Martin  Indiana –Mershon Tobin, Ben Wicker  Iowa – Ben Gleason, David Simonson  Kansas – Nathan Eck, Clay Fagan  Kentucky – Matt Hayden  Michigan – Chuck Lippstreu, Tim Schaub  Mid-Atlantic – Matthew Farace, Jenell McHenry  Mississippi – Mike Mulvaney  Missouri – Andrea Rice  Nebraska – Connie Schroeder, Terry Gorecki  North Carolina – Todd Rowe  North Dakota – John Christianson  Northeast – Jeanette Marvin, Peter Naumann, Shawn Wallace  Northwest – Terry Helms, Errin Nelson  Ohio – Kevin Otte Janice Welsheimer  Pennsylvania – Ben Hushon  South Carolina – Jonathan Croft  South Dakota – Paul Luetien, Liv Stavick  Southeast – Glenn Beard  Wisconsin – Tryston Beyrer  Atlantic Provinces – Walther Brown, Jessica DEntremont  Ontario – Aaron Breimer, Susan Fitzgerald  Prairie Provinces – Mary Jane Debreuil  Brazil – Luiz Lucchesi, Flávio Bolzan |

**Optional Tour Tuesday, Sept. 24 Hosted by Florida Certified Crop Adviser Board**

9:00 AM – University of Florida, Live Oak Research Facility & Lunch

12:30 PM – Lee Peanut Farm, Madison, FL

3:30 PM – Ginnie Springs, High Springs, FL

5:45 PM – Dinner, Great Outdoors, High Springs, FL

**Wednesday Sept. 25: Hilton Hickory Conference Room**

1. Chair Sandy Endicott opened the meeting and announced that due to Hurricane Helene, we would condense the ICCA Board Meeting from 1.5 days to 1 day.
2. Florida Farm Bureau President Jeb Smith welcomed participants to Florida.
3. ACTION: The following Consent Agenda items were approved:

* Sept. 25-26, 2024 ICCA Board of Directors Meeting Agenda (Document 1)
* June 6, 2024 ICCA Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (Document 2)

1. Director of Certifications Dawn Gibas provided an update of the CCA Program (Document 3):
   * In 2024, there are 12,357 CCAs. We are continuing conversations internally and externally on marketing and other efforts to increase the number of CCAs.
   * Exam Program Overview, including:
     + Pulling data on how many times people take the exams before they pass
     + Specialty Exams: some of them don’t get many requests to take the exams, so we are analyzing these trends and asking if we need to sunset/rebrand or fold them into the ICCA or local board exams, or do we need to keep with the times and offered additional specialty exams? If you have opinions, please reach out to Dawn and/or the ICCA Exec Committee with your input.
     + Window Testing seems to have helped as there is an increase in the number of exams in 2024.
     + Working with universities to offer the exam as a capstone, One-pager, step by step process to help universities do this.
     + CCA survey shows a need for a study guide, we will look into offering this.
     + Larger number of exams with window testing and possibly section testing.
     + MonitorEDU is the name of our new proctor, which features better security with cameras at two angles and offers Spanish speaking proctors.
     + Need to revisit the discussion of combining local board exams with similar agriculture.
     + Ran item analyses for exams with enough examinees this year and will contact exam committees if needed.
     + Moving Forward with Exams:
       - Increase exam numbers and retention
       - Evaluate the section testing program
       - Work on increased statistical analysis
       - Where does Artificial Intelligence (AI) fit in?
   * Policy & Procedures Manual – structure may need to be revisited with Mexico, Canada, and Brazil.
   * Strategic Plan 2023-2025 will need to be updated for 2026: will form a task force/ad hoc committee to begin work on this.
   * We are a team. We are not here to dictate to you. We want to work with you and help you grow the program. Showed list of accomplishments for 2024.
2. Vice Chair Karl Wyant presented the ICCA Program Financials and Budget (Documents 4, 5).

* ACTION: Motion by Tim Schaub, second by David Simonson, to approve the 2025 Budget. Unanimous approval.

1. CEO Jim Cudahy & Task Force Chair Andy Knepp presented the CCA Needs Assessment Survey Results from July 2024 (Document 6)

* Feasibility of offering membership of some variety to CCAs, which is part of the ASA Strategic Plan, extending its membership value proposition, including to new audiences, whether it makes sense for CCAs to have their own membership category, either under the ASA umbrella or perhaps even as a different organization.
* Most important is that we look at the collective needs and interests of CCAs to deliver programs and services that are relevant to them. Whether that includes “membership” is almost beside the point
* Survey shows where CCAs are interested in seeing new types of programs and services.
* Due to time constraints will continue discussions with the Task Force, Executive Committee, and at the December ICCA Board Meeting
* Task Force Members include: Aaron Breimer, Jaime Cummings, Peter Naumann, Wade Thomason, Nicole Fiorellino, Peter Kyveryga, Andy Knepp, and Jim Cudahy

1. Chair Sandy Endicott presented the 2024 ICCA of the Year Award to Paul Hermans, Ontario, Canada. Nominations for the 2025 Award are due Oct. 31: [agronomy.org/awards/view/131](http://www.agronomy.org/awards/view/131)
2. Open Discussion: Marketing & Other Needs:

* Ontario Susan Fitzgerald: Continuing to be able to communicate with our CCA members. We had the use of a list-serv and now we don’t have that. My request to the ICCA office, push communication out. Higher Logic software may help with this.
* Ontario Aaron Breimer: More communication/promotion to growers highlighting the CCA designation so they ask for it.
* Illinois Lisa Martin: More promotion to get employers to value the CCA program
* Headquarters Jim Cudahy: We need to develop materials to market themselves and the CCA program. Should be in the next ICCA Strategic Plan. We attend ARA and Commodity Classic, host a booth to promote the CCA program.
* Executive Committee Issac Wolford: Concern over Crops & Soils magazine going digital in 2025, much prefer the print edition, and it was discussed at the ARA meeting, and they asked to bring it to the board.
  + Headquarters Jim Cudahy: Printing is not an option due to the economics of printing and mailing. We will commit to making a robust online edition of the magazine and find ways to connect CCAs to the online edition.
* Illinois Karen Corrigan: Two-year community colleges are not getting credit for their schooling as they are treated as high schoolers. Dawn Gibas suggested that they write a proposal to get this resolved. We also have an Illinois CCA banner and when it’s not being used it is up in her classroom.
* Illinois Jeanette Marvin: We had videos created to promote the program. Initially they were three-minute videos, but then we decided they were too long, so we changed it to be four different 1-minute videos. Working with the Soybean Association and others on ways to describe and promote the program.
* South Dakota Paul Luetjen: Ag Tech Schools and South Dakota State University, we rotate around – a member of the board will go talk to the classes, then we promote that we pay for the cost of them take the exam. We also buy them a CCA jacket if they pass.
* Ontario Susan Fitzgerald: A “CCA Works Here” sign with QR Code – plexiglass so employers can put them on their counters. QR Code goes to the Ontario site. Also attended a Farm Show and put them at booths where we knew who had CCAs. We hosted a reception and asked for ideas, offered a CCA t-shirt if people filled out the survey.
* Ohio Janice Welsheimer: Trip opportunity to visit the Lake Erie algae bloom with OSU
* Western Region Karl Wyant: Teamed up with a media organization for the meeting to include networking, offering CEUs, as ways to grow their meeting.
* Michigan Chuck Lippstreu: Our outreach focuses on the stories of CCAs who are early in the program and sending this out to students. How can we connect the program with 300+ CCAs, to promote the program and improve recognition with a pin/branding/co-branded items – since our trainings are a major draw
* Headquarters Lacey Edwardson: We have a voluntary Marketing Discussion Board Group, to give us feedback, showcase what others are doing, highlight current/future needs, and provide marketing ideas. We talked about tradeshow kits, putting together tablecloths, roll-up banners, flyers, etc. First, we need to update the design; we are working on that. We will have a webpage where you can download and print it yourself or we will print and ship to you or the show.

1. Donnie Taylor presented an Agricultural Retailers Association update (Document 7):

* What are frustrations around the CCA program among Ag Retailers?
* Employers: They say they support the CCA program but sometimes only lip-service
* Skill Gaps – skills/expertise
* Carbon, Carbon credits what do those mean?
* Specialty around Endangered Species Act (ESA)
* We sing your praises and expertise in Washington DC, that your expertise and CEU requirement is similar to that of doctors and lawyers
* We sing your credibility when it comes to regulation. Most regulators and lawmakers don’t know what a CCA is or what the ARA is.
* We give you a seat on our board to give you a voice (currently Isaac Wolford). We can help open doors for you.
* Priorities & Public Policies. Ag labor – cut through the red tape.
* EPA: Not very receptive but we continue to work with them. They are mandated by the courts. They are afraid of being sued.
* ARA & ICCA –
  1. Pesticide CCA work to ensure CCAs are added to the pick list
  2. Farm Bill language around TSP
  3. Work together on the Congressional Visits Day, Feb. 2025
* Farm Bill – likely on hold until after the election
* Host Congresspeople out to your business, you have the best voice possible if you are in their district. ARA can help with a step-by-step guide
* CCA credits at the ARA meeting with professional development. You are all invited to attend.
* Promoting that ARAs pay for their employees to get certified. How to keep retailers to keep their certification. We need to promote more.

1. Vice Chair Karl Wyant provided and update on Organic Certification, hoping to wrap up in 2026. Working in a unique environment. Currently going through Performance Objectives to meet the groups’ needs and working with regulators on test questions.
2. Introduction of the Brazil Certified Professional Ag Engineer (CPAE) program by Luiz Lucchesi, CONFEA.
3. Vice Chair Karl Wyant announced the 2025 in-person Board Meeting will likely be in Colorado sometime in September 2025 with plans to offer the virtual option, but many do like the one-on-one in-person in-board meeting. Would like to have feedback on where we can improve on the meetings going forward.
4. Lunch Speaker Dr. Kevin Folta presented on Science Communication (Document 8)
5. CAO Luther Smith presented a Policy update (Document 9):

* Congressional Visits Day will be Feb. 25-26, 2025 with ASA, CSSA, and SSSA

1. Leif Fixen led a discussion on how ICCA can work with The Nature Conservancy and reviewed the Conservation Agronomists proposal. ACTION: Motion by David Simonson, seconded by Terry Helms, to form a Task Force on this topic, motion carries 17-1 (Document 10)
2. Support Center Lead Lacey Edwardson provided an overview of the implementation for:

* Amnesty Application (2025). She agreed to summarize and send to Boards and will put a write-up on the website soon (Document 11)
* Ethics CEU (2026). We will soft launch it in 2025, though the 1 CEU is not required until 2026. We will offer a variety of options and communicate this widely, including webinars and articles. We learned lessons when we offered this with CPSS. Note that Nutrien, Corteva, and several government agencies already have a 1-hour ethics professional development and those would satisfy this requirement as a self-reported Ethics CEU.

1. Past Chair Isaac Wolford and Staff Lead Luther Smith reported on the FFA Task Force that we are Moving forward with exams being offered at the FFA Meeting (Document 12).
2. Vice Chair Karl Wyant provided an update on the Industry Task Force that they met and are working with industry to identify needs, goals, and current gaps.
3. Due to time constraints, NRCS National Agronomist Betsy Dierberger provided her presentation as a PDF to review and contact her with questions (Document 13)
4. Dr. Michael Rodgers, Director UF/IFAS Citrus Research/Ext Center presented on Florida Citrus (Document 14).
5. Recognitions included:

* Incoming Vice Chair Aaron Breimer (Ontario Board)
* Outgoing Chair, Isaac Wolford
* Mary Hartney, Florida Board

Consensus to adjourn.