



Three Honored with Siehl Prize for Excellence in Agriculture

An economist, a wheat farmer, and an agriculture commissioner have won the 2012 Siehl Prize in Agriculture from the University of Minnesota's College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences. The three recipients, **Philip Pardey** (knowledge), **Bruce Hamnes** (production agriculture) and **Gene Hugoson** (agribusiness) were honored May 24 at the McNamara Alumni Center.

The Siehl Prize, created in the early 1990's with a gift from New Ulm, Minn. area livestock breeder and businessperson **Eldon Siehl**, celebrates achievements in agriculture with a \$50,000 cash award for each winner, along with a sculpture and lapel pin.

2012 SIEHL PRIZE LAUREATES

2012 Knowledge: Philip Pardey



A day after accepting the Siehl Prize, Philip Pardey was traveling to Kenya and Tanzania on behalf of the Gates Foundation to gather data that will ultimately help corn farmers deal

with aflatoxin problems in sub-Saharan Africa.

Pardey's multidisciplinary approach to some of agriculture's most challenging questions bridges gaps in the fundamental knowledge that is needed for making informed decisions on strategic investments in agriculture research and development. His work affects national and international policies and investments

in agriculture in a way few others have achieved.

Pardey and his colleague **Stanley Wood** have been awarded grants totaling almost \$13 million from the Gates Foundation to lead a global research evaluation project called the HarvestChoice initiative, which evaluates potential investments in agriculture to help the poor worldwide.

HarvestChoice develops data sets that take into account economic and technical constraints to target interventions that will achieve the 'biggest bang for the buck.' "We provide the Gates Foundation with a basis to make more informed decisions," says Pardey. "It's getting away from scientists coming with potential magic bullets and policy makers with bright ideas. Those are good, but getting data and evidence on the table to calibrate those ideas is what we're about."

A native of Australia, Pardey received his Ph.D from the University of Minnesota in agricultural economics. At the International Service for National Agricultural Research in The Hague, he initiated visionary efforts to collect and analyze data resources on agricultural productivity and on research investments and institutions globally, work he continued at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington D.C. and now at the University of Minnesota (U of M).

"The biggest challenge facing agriculture is the evident need for sustained productivity growth going forward with limited new land to bring into production and a stress on land already in production in terms of soil quality, water access and availability in many parts of the world," says Pardey. He notes that for every dollar

that goes into agricultural research there is a \$20 benefit to society at the state level and \$30 at the national level.

When he returned to the U of M in 2002, Pardey formed the International Science and Technology Practice and Policy (In-STePP) center, which engages in economic research on science and technology practice and policy. A recent project seeks to leverage genomic knowledge across agricultural and health sciences. "Bringing technology to economic development has been a distinguishing attribute of the U of M's economics department for 40 plus years. It's what attracted me here as a graduate student and being able to maintain that legacy and bring it into the 21st century continues to motivate me. The Siehl Prize is a great honor," says Pardey.

2012 Production Agriculture:

Bruce Hamnes

Along with farming and running a small grains seed business in Stephen, MN, Bruce Hamnes has committed his life to public service and leadership, "I grew up in a



family that was active in the community so it seemed natural to get involved," says Hamnes, who is equally comfortable talk-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Three Honored with Siehl Prize for Excellence in Agriculture
- Member in Focus: Upper Midwest Management Corporation

Member In Focus

Company: Upper Midwest Management Corporation

Website: www.ummc.co or www.landspecialists.com

Location: Primary office is located in New Ulm with two other Minnesota offices located in Olivia and New Hope. There is also an office near Jamestown, Ohio.

Upper Midwest Management was founded in 1974 when investors from Germany began to invest in farm property in the United States. One of the founding partners of the company personally invested and brought other clients to invest as well. In the beginning, the company's portfolio was exclusively foreign investors that owned property and needed a management company to look after their investments. As time passed, their investments became a mixture of both farm and commercial property.



**Upper Midwest
Management**

Over the years the company started adding U.S. clients. These were clients that owned property but did not have a farming background and needed assistance with the day to day management. There were also clients that wanted to diversify their portfolio, which led to opening the Ohio office.

This location is exclusively farm management and ag real estate sales. Upper Midwest Management continued to expand their services in Minnesota, adding both ag real estate sales and appraisals.

Now, the offices in New Ulm and Olivia offer farm management services, ag real estate sales, and appraisals. The farm management services primarily assist absentee owners with their property. Whether they inherited the farm land – being passed down from generation to generation – or the property was acquired as an investment, we serve as their eyes and ears taking care of the land. We work with three primary lease arrangements: cash rent, share cropping, and custom farming. Upper Midwest Management lists and sells ag real estate throughout a number of states and all of their agents are licensed realtors. They have a certified general appraiser on staff and also an appraiser trainee who is working towards becoming a certified general appraiser as well. Both appraise rural property for estate settlement or financing purposes. Upper Midwest Management is affiliated with the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) and is active in the organization.

Q & A with Dennis Schmidt, Accredited Farm Manager from the New Ulm office:

What is new with your company?

With social media so widely used, we also have changed how we connect with our clients and the generations that will follow. Email has become the requested way for many clients to receive their quarterly reports or crop update information. Many times data is received from the operator via their smart phone or iPad as they work the land. As time passes we see less and less paper being used to transfer our information to our clients. We have a free quarterly newsletter that has 8,000+ subscribers and is not only available via postal service, but has a large amount of email recipients.

What are your legislative priorities?

I think a key issue for us is to see what

happens to the farm bill. We know there has to be changes due to the large deficit spending, which may mean that the direct subsidies will possibly go away.

Another key concern for us is on the environmental side. We are proud to say that we are stewards of the soil when it comes to conservation practices. However, we do need our legislators to know they can't regulate everything; this can create issues that are burdensome to land owners and operators. It hurts the whole agricultural industry.

What are the key issues or trends affecting your industry?

I think the key trend right now in agriculture is the rapid increase in land values and rental rates. I believe this has occurred due to some very strong economic times the farmers have experienced the

past couple years. The farming community has seen much prosperity and this has created a much larger demand to buy farm land or, if unable to purchase additional land, they are willing to pay higher land rents to keep their rental land or obtain more.

Some land owners are seeing these record high land prices and making the decision that it is time to proceed with a sale. We currently have many buyers, but need more sellers.

Technology is changing so rapidly in the agricultural arena that it is sometimes difficult to stay abreast of the new things. Whether it is technology with our seed or advancements with our equipment, it is amazing to see how things have progressed.



The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council is an advocate for the state's food and agriculture industry. Founded in 1968, the Council is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that represents the shared interests of its 200-plus members, which include food and agriculture businesses, organizations and producers, as well as the service industries that support them.

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ing with Washington politicians as with foreign grain buyers.

In 1991, Hamnes gave the keynote address to the first Annual Regional Scab Forum in Moorhead, MN. The forum brought together researchers, growers and industry people to address the devastating disease, which had decimated wheat and barley fields throughout the state. Farmers burned their fields because there was no grain in the heads.

Motivated in part by Hamnes' heartfelt address, researchers from the Dakotas, Minnesota and Canada embarked on a path that rescued the region's wheat production as well as inaugurated an annual global forum. In 1995, Hamnes was instrumental in obtaining \$5 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and \$800,000 from the Minnesota Legislature for scab research. That work continues today. He also lobbied for a permanent wheat breeder at the University of Minnesota as well as a USDA geneticist, helping make Minnesota a leading wheat breeding center.

"It's important for farmers to be engaged," Hamnes says. "If you're not at the table, you can't help make the decisions. You've got to be involved. With time constraints on today's farm families, it's difficult, but it's important. Somebody has to speak for agriculture and farmers need to step up so somebody else doesn't make decisions for them."

That belief led him to approach the University of Minnesota Extension in the early 1980's with an idea for a leadership program. It became the highly successful Red River Valley Emerging Leadership program for farm couples.

Twenty-eight classes have graduated from the program with many of the graduates providing leadership in city, county and state organizations and government. "It's been fun to see the success of that program," says Hamnes. He believes one of the greatest challenges facing agriculture is attracting and retaining young people.

Semi-retired from farming, Hamnes currently is heading up a local community endowment fund that will provide annual community grants. "I'm humbled and overwhelmed by the Siehl Prize," says Hamnes. "For me it was enough to be nominated."

2012 Agribusiness: Gene Hugoson



Gene Hugoson led the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) for 15 years, modernizing the agency for the 21st century and tirelessly advocating on behalf of

the state's agriculture and food sector. He established Minnesota's national reputation for food safety, built a strong renewable fuels sector, and expanded markets for Minnesota agriculture.

"I think agriculture is the bedrock of what makes the world go round and Minnesota plays a very prominent role in that because of our capacity to grow things, but also because of our multi-national food processing and distribution companies," says Hugoson, who throughout his career in public service as a legislator and Commissioner, oper-

ated a corn and soybean farm in Martin County.

He made successful trade missions to China, Mexico, Cuba, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Brazil, Denmark, New Zealand and Vietnam; and his administration was recognized nationally for ensuring timely responses to food-borne outbreaks. "When I started my job as Commissioner of Agriculture, I never contemplated spending a lot of time on food security, but it increasingly became a primary focus," he says. "Agriculture's success depends on the general public having confidence in our food supply. Once you lose that trust, it's hard to get it back."

Since leaving the Commissioner's job, Hugoson is devoting more time to farming and to his grandchildren. He's also working three days a week at the University of Minnesota Center for Animal Health and Food Safety focusing on animal diseases that could affect the food supply. "It's not that we don't have safe food, it's that we are literally a germ away from a catastrophe that could change the whole fabric of agriculture overnight. We saw some of it with BSE and H1N1, but those both pale to what could happen with an outbreak of foot and mouth disease or avian influenza."

Hugoson advises young people to further their education and broaden their experiences. "Agriculture has changed dramatically in my lifetime and the ability to be flexible and keep up with change is essential. It's important to build a network of people and learn how to access different opinions and information," he says. ●

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EVENT CALENDAR: 2012

JULY

19: Faegre Baker Daniels Food & Ag Conf.
19-20: Agri-Growth Summer Board Meeting

OCTOBER

5: Agri-Growth Board Meeting

NOVEMBER

6: General Election
13: Annual Meeting & Speakers Conference

Agri-Growth Thanks Retiring Senator Magnus at Reception



The Minnesota Agri-Growth Council held a reception this month honoring **Sen. Doug Magnus**. The reception was held on June 7th following the 2012 Agri-Growth Legislative Wrap Up. Sen. Magnus, Chair of Agriculture and Rural Economies Committee, retired from the Legislature this year. Several organizations hosted this event: Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, **Minnesota Pork Producers Association**, **Minnesota Turkey Growers Association**, **Minnesota Milk Producers Association**, Minnesota Farmers Union, Minnesota Farm Bureau, **Minnesota Corn Growers Association**, **Minnesota Soybean Growers Association**, **Minnesota Grain and Feed Association**, **Messerli & Kramer**, and **Hormel Foods**.

“I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to represent my community at the Capitol. However, I feel that it is time for me to step aside and give another Minnesotan the chance to serve,” Magnus said. “At the end of this term, I will have been in the legislature for ten years and, for me, that is enough. It is best for the constituents of Southwest Minnesota to send someone to Saint Paul who can bring new and innovative ideas to government.”

Magnus was elected to his first term in the State Senate in 2010 after previously serving in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 2003-2010. Magnus, a fourth-generation farmer, is a well-known advocate for agriculture issues at the Capitol. As a veteran of the Vietnam War, he is a strong supporter of the state’s service men and women. He also served on the Committees for Capital Investment, Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications and Finance.

Magnus hopes to have more time to hunt, fish, boat, ride his Harley, and snowmobile in his retirement.

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engaging, always.

• **Bill Crawford** •