



Market News Web Portal Project

The Fruit and Vegetable Market News Branch has hired a contractor to re-engineer the Market News Service Website, using Portal Technology, to increase its functionality and user friendliness. The Web Portal will identify the Market News Service as the premier provider of customized real-time produce, ornamentals and specialty crops, price and supply data via the Web. At the successful completion of the Fruit and Vegetable project, the contractor will assess the needs of the other commodity groups for possible inclusion to the Web Portal Project. The other commodity groups will include the Livestock and Grain, Poultry, Dairy, Tobacco and Cotton Branches.

The Web Portal contractor will develop and implement a Portal solution to initially supplement, then eventually replace the current FV Market News Website. The Portal should include the functionality of the current Website but also include:

- User customized (personalized) access
- Improved access to current and archived PDF and TXT files
- A user-friendly search option by commodity, origin, season, time period, grade size variety, etc.
- Ability to easily convert search data to graphic and spreadsheet presentation
- Printer-friendly option
- Departmental security requirements, at a minimum
- Links to other government Websites and other approved Web-sites
- Map links to specific shipping districts and terminals

In addition, the following options should be considered and priced separately in the contract.

- Currency, metric and language conversion options

- Email notification, with links, to updated market information
- Ability to handle “subscribe” and “unsubscribe” requests for email, fax and printed reports automatically

2002 Scholarship Award Winner

Ms. Dusty Conner was the winner of the 2002 National Market News Association Memorial Scholarship. Dusty is now a senior at the University of Arizona in the Plant Science curriculum with an emphasis in horticulture. She is expecting to receive her Bachelor of Science degree this May then pursue a Master’s Degree in Agriculture Education with expectations of receiving her degree in May 2004.

Dusty has a strong agricultural and community service background. She is an alumnus of the Future Farmers of America and has been a member of the Collegiate Cattlewomen’s Association, the National Home Gardening Club and the community service oriented Jacob’s Cline Society. She shows a strong entrepreneurial spirit and a promising future and is truly worthy of the 2002 NMNA Scholarship.

WHAT A WEB WE WEAVE THE NMNA WEB SITE

Keep up with the latest NMNA news by checking the new web site at the following:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nmna/nmna.htm>

Add this web site to your favorites and check it regularly for future updates concerning the National Market News Association.

Many thanks go to Denise Melcher as web master for this very attractive site.

2003 Award Nominations: Be an early bird.

Click on the web site and use the Award button to submit someone for an award. Your nomination goes straight to Awards Chair-person, Holly Mozal. **The deadline is Aug 31, 2003.**

Conference Registration: Simply fill out the form on the web site and your done. Well, you do need to bring your money when you come or send your check (payable to NMNA) to <mailto:Randy.Alford@usda.gov>, Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries, Room 107, 1445 Federal Dr, , Montgomery, Al. 36107.

National Market News Association Business Meeting Minutes

October 19, 2002

Steve Skuba, President, called the meeting to order. First business was to introduce the committee chairpersons and their members. Randy Alford, Chairmen of the Awards Committee said that there were several good candidates this year but we would have to wait till the banquet to hear the winner. He acknowledged his members of Fred Teensma, Dan Schussler, and Johnny Freeman and asked them to stand. Achievement and Recognition was chaired by Donald Carnes. He also asked his members of Sherry Warren, and Richard DeMenna to stand. Tina Colby was the chairperson and sole member of the Membership committee. It was her responsibility to update the members list with any new employees and keep track of those that had retired or were no longer with Market News. The Nominating Committee was chaired by Holly Mozal. First she introduced her members as Jim Epstein, Stokes Quisenberry, and Mary Adkins. Holly announced that the committee had decided to nominate Linda Verstrate of the Fruit and Vegetable Division from Yakima Washington. She asked for other nominations and to everyone's surprise there came another nomination from the floor for Zak Ashraf from Atlanta Georgia. With 2 nominations, according to the bylaws there had to be a vote. The 2 nominees were sent out of the room and Holly asked for a vote of the 2 for Secretary. Linda Verstrate was the favorite and it was official. The Scholarship Committee was headed by Stephen Skuba. He introduced his committee of John Kyranos and Abbie Hannon. Steve announced that Dusty Conner was this year's recipient of the NMNA Scholarship. Steve remarked that the decision was very difficult as all applicants were very well rounded individuals. This year's scholarship amount was \$2500.00. Though there was more money than this in the scholarship fund it had been decided by the Executive committee to keep the scholarship amount at the current level just in case the auction that funded a major part of the fund was not as successful as the previous years. The Honorary Lifetime Membership Committee was headed by Debbie Friday. She recognized her members as Charles Hackensmith, Lewis Langell, and Amos Hardy. Debbie announced that her committee had a few surprises but they would be announced at that night's banquet.

A motion was made to move the existing NMNA officers to the next ranking position. The motion was seconded followed by a unanimous vote.

Steve asked Weldon to give the Historian report. Weldon had no new resolutions or changes to the bylaws. Weldon then informed everyone that he will be retiring in May of 2003. After many moans and groans, Terry Long asked if Weldon would stay on as Historian or if we needed to be looking for someone new. Weldon replied that he would probably be with NMNA through 2004 but we would need to be looking for a replacement. Weldon announced that there was some interest in forming an Alumni Association with the NMNA. On old business, Weldon recognized Mike Sheats for the work he did on making the new Livestock and Seed web page 508 compliant. 508 compliant means that the web page will be accessible to the handicap. The website will have a new face but the links will remain the same. Weldon also recognized Denise Melcher for her work on this project. Weldon also said that there has been some discussion of creating a private website for the NMNA. The NMNA web page was originally built on the USDA's main web page, however it has come up that this could be a conflict of interest. Weldon announced that Fred Teensma had volunteered to continue as the NMNA photographer.

For some old business, Steve Skuba announced the association was looking to change the current logo. There was a total of 38 different logos that had been submitted and members were asked to vote on one by going to the NMNA web site and if they hadn't had the chance by convention they could vote when registering at the convention. The top 3 logos were chosen before the business meeting and those attending were asked to vote on one. The 3 logos being voted on were number 21, 35 and the current logo. A motion was made from the floor to change the wording of logo 21, which stated "Think Nationally; Act Locally" to "Think Globally; Act Locally." It was decided if the motion did not pass to change the wording then the wording would be dropped completely. Steve asked for a vote and though there were a few that wanted the wording the nays won the majority, therefore the wording was dropped from logo 21. Steve said he would keep everyone in suspense and announce the winning logo at that night's banquet. Steve also mentioned that maybe creating an online survey from the current convention would help with the following years convention.

Steve made a motion to accept last years minutes from the business meeting. The motion was seconded and went to a vote. The motion was overwhelmingly accepted.

Steve Skuba asked the Treasurer, Debbie Friday to give her report. She announced that the total balance thru December 2001 was just over \$50,150. This also included the scholarship fund which had a healthy sum of \$4,079.81. This in part was due to the success of the auction. Steve made a motion to accept the treasurers report. The motion was accepted and went to a vote. The motion was passed with a majority vote.

This years conference included 171 reporters, 35 spouses and guests which included the support winner and his wife and the scholarship winner and her mother. International members and visitors were also included from Mexico.

There was no further business and a motion was made from the floor to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Tina Colby, Secretary.

BRANCH UP DATES

POULTRY

Michael E. Sheats has accepted an offer to join the AMS Poultry Programs as the new Market News Branch Chief. Mr. Sheats comes to us with over 19 years of experience in the Agency where he has proven himself to not only be a sound technical resource; but also a visionary leader in a number of initiatives that have moved several of the Agency's market news reporting services to the forefront in terms of both relevance and importance to the industries we serve.

Mr. Sheats was a Supervisory Agricultural Marketing Specialist in the Livestock and Seed Program's Audit, Review, and Compliance Branch. In this position and under the direction of the Branch Chief, he was responsible for the management and administration of a nationwide program of regulatory compliance with the Livestock Mandatory Reporting Act of 1999 and the Livestock and Seed Program's Quality Systems Process Verification Program.

Mike comes to us with a wealth of experience in commodity marketing issues and Agency services. During his career, he has served in positions ranging from a meat grader, livestock and meat market news reporter, Officer-In-Charge of the red meat reporting program in the Des Moines, Iowa, Livestock and Grain Market News Branch Field Office, and the regulatory supervisor for the Livestock and Grain Market News Branch here in Headquarters.

Mike is a native of Michigan where he grew up on a family farm that raised both hogs and chickens. He is also a graduate of Michigan State University where he earned his Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science.

LIVESTOCK & GRAIN

Weldon Hall retired from USDA in early April. Weldon was Assistant Chief of the Livestock Branch and Historian of the National Market News Association. He has been a guiding force within the association and a tremendous help to the former and present board members. While his camaraderie and wisdom will be greatly missed by us, USDA, and industry, we wish him the best of the best in retirement.

NMNA LOGO



The new National Market News Association logo appearing on the cover of the "Communicator" was selected at last year's conference in Phoenix. After reviewing many entries, the members voted to adopt the new design created by Fred Teensma.

2002 AWARD WINNERS

Can now be viewed at http://www.ams.usda.gov/nmna/508/NMNA_Award_History.htm

45th Annual NMNA Workshop

Phoenix, AZ - 2002

The 45th Annual National Market News Workshop was held in Phoenix, AZ on October 17-19, 2002. Here are a few pictures of some of the more memorable moments:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nmna/508/NMNA2002.htm>

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nmna/508/NMNA2002a.htm>

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/nmna/508/NMNA2002b.htm>

WARNING!!! TRAVELING TO THE DEEP SOUTH MAY AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

Visitors to this year's conference in Mobile should be on the look out for symptoms associated with the infectious phenomenon known as Southern Hospitality. Feelings of relaxation, good cheer, and friendliness are often the onset of the more serious condition known as contentment. Should you experience any of these symptoms, be advised that there is no known cure and you may in fact spread this condition to others upon your return home.

A GLIMPSE OF 2003 CONFERENCE

There will be a "get acquainted" reception Thursday night to kick off our famous Southern Hospitality. Don't you just feel those symptoms coming on?

When you start to feel relaxed and loose, the Scholastic Silent Auction will kick off. We hope to have some real nice items again this year so plan on being generous.

You may send auction items to me at Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries, Room 107, 1445 Federal Drive, Montgomery, Alabama 36107.

Friday night calls for a trip to Casino Row on the Gulf of Mexico in Biloxi, MS for those wishing an evening of fun, food, entertainment, and gaming at the Grand Casino. Transportation is on us but the rest is every man & woman for themselves. For info on the Grand, go to <http://www.grandcasinos.com>

For those of you bringing spouses, we will have details on the spouse program in the next "Communicator".

Saturday night's banquet will wrap up the conference.

AND IN BETWEEN TIMES!!!! It will be work, work, work during the break out sessions. After all, that's why your really here. Right?

Get lots of rest between now and October. Your going to be busy.

BY THE WAY, GOLF ANYONE?

We have several golf courses around Mobile including a nearby Robert Trent Jones course. The Robert Trent Golf Trail has been acclaimed as some of the best golf courses in America. For more info on the Trail, go to <http://www.rtjgolf.com> If some of you would be interested in arriving early, and want to play, let me know by e-mail and I will check on some prices etc. <mailto:randy.alford@usda.gov>

ACCOMODATIONS

You can now make your reservations at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Mobile. Room rates are good for 2 days before and after the conference dates. Let the hotel know you are with the National Market News Association Conference. Single rates are \$55.00 and double \$65.00 plus tax.

Airlines into Mobile include Delta, USA, and Continental.

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