

**Minutes of the Central Alfalfa Improvement Conference Business meeting  
Dan Undersander, Chair**

This meeting was held in conjunction with the 38<sup>th</sup> NAAIC meeting at Sacramento, CA

Attendees:

Dan Undersander–Chair	Clive Holland	Lanny Rhodes
Jessica Tofte–Vice-chair	David Johnson	Debbie Samac
Charlie Brummer–Secretary	Garry Lacefield	Craig Sheaffer
John Caddell	Mark McCaslin	Sam Stratton
Sharie Fitzpatrick	Jim Moutray	Dick Todd
Gary Hoard	Mike Peterson	Mike Velde

Should the CAIC stop meeting altogether?

The 2001 meeting scheduled in Purdue was cancelled due to low pre-registrations, causing a loss of around \$2,000. The 1999 meeting in Ohio also had relatively low attendance (around 65) and lost some money (although it was considered to be a successful meeting). Dick Todd offered to host the CAIC meeting, in conjunction with several other groups, in Gettysburg, PA in 2003.

A vote was taken on the question “Should the CAIC have a physical meeting in 2003?”

Yes = 4

No = 14

Should the CAIC move to a virtual meeting?

As an alternative to a physical meeting, Dan Undersander suggested setting up a virtual meeting. Its structure could have various forms, such as (1) having a set schedule, with presentations made at a set time on a particular day and with “real time” discussion or (2) having a certain period–e.g., 2 weeks–during which the presentations are viewable, with threaded on-line discussions facilitated by the presenters. A combination of these ideas would be possible (as would other ideas altogether).

The content of a virtual meeting could be the same as a normal CAIC meeting, although more appropriate papers might be those that are discussion oriented, pose provocative questions, and present preliminary data of experiments in progress, to stimulate on-line discussion.

A vote was taken on the question “Should the CAIC proceed to develop a virtual meeting format for 2003?”

Yes = 18

No = 0

### Summary of discussion of above points

Everyone has too many demands on their time and the CAIC is a relatively low priority to some, suggesting that future physical meetings of the CAIC are not feasible. The CAIC could try to meet with other groups (e.g., local/regional grasslands groups), but a number of those present raised concerns that this would detract from the essential mission of the CAIC (i.e., oriented away from alfalfa improvement and more toward alfalfa/forage production).

The CAIC does have some important functions, including the discussion of standard tests, presenting research information, and rubbing shoulders. However, all of these could be handled by virtual meetings and occasional day groups or dinner meetings, such as the alfalfa producer’s meeting held in LaCrosse, WI, which could be expanded to permit interaction among scientists and between public and private concerns.

The virtual meeting could easily be made international in scope, thereby becoming an NAAIC function rather than a CAIC function. Although some concerns were raised that issues directly relevant only to the Central US region could be diluted, a general consensus indicated that the international scope would be a positive development.

If a virtual meeting is to be successful, everyone needs to pull together to get it going. Dan Undersander volunteered to spearhead the effort, and David Johnston, Marvin Hall, and John Caddell volunteered to assist Dan and the executive committee. Dan welcomes everyone’s ideas and urges the group to consider submitting papers.

Considerable discussion arose concerning the future of the CAIC variety test report. The paper copy was deemed by most attendees to be superfluous, except for the fact that some states don’t make their results easily accessible on-line. The industry wants everyone to put the data into an Excel format and have it easily available on the web; when that happens, the printed copy could be discontinued. Since John Caddell is willing to continue to produce the paper report, and sell it for \$30 to those who want it, the group suggested he continue for another year, until the web resources are sufficiently upgraded. John does an excellent job with the collation and distribution of this material every year, and he was urged to assemble a list of URLs that directly link from his site to each of the testing locations reports.

A formal recommendation, passing unanimously, was made from the group regarding variety test data reporting: “Alfalfa variety test data shall be made available on-line in Excel format by November 1 each year.”