

Executive Director Report, by Rick Martens



staff explained to us that less money from the state's general

On March 8, MNCAA President Darrin Herickhoff and I met with staff from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) as well as with representatives from the CFO (County Feed Lot Officers). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss how the CAWT license fee money is being spent and why we are spending more on license fees and receiving less help (funding) in training and enforcement. MDA

funds are dedicated to our program and that the CAWT fees are used to cover MDA expenses. We questioned why, we as applicators, must fund the program with fees when the major benefit is for the state, with less pollution through better manure handling practices. We also reminded MDA that the agreement to increase CAWT license fees was predicated on getting more for training and enforcement. We also questioned why Minnesota Extension Service is not involved anymore. It was said that there was no one on staff and there was no funding. We ended the meeting restating our disappointment. The CFOs are also supportive and in agreement with us in regards to the CAWTs.

MEMBER PROFILE: Doug Rohlik, Eden Valley, D&G Custom Services



1. **How long have you been in business?** I started manure hauling in 1996.

2. **Describe your business.** We cover an area from Pipestone over to Springfield, up to Clara City – 75 miles around home base. We haul 40 million gallons a year. We use two tanks and we have 10 employees. Our clients are hog growers.

3. **How long have you been a member of MNCAA?** Since 2000, when the state mandated that you had to have a license to be a custom applicator, that is when I became a member and got involved.

4. **How did you find out about it?** When the state notified everyone in the custom applicator industry that you had become licensed – that's when I decided to become a member. Just because you aren't required to attend the annual MNCAA meeting every year, doesn't mean you're not going to learn anything. That is why I attend the annual meeting every year. You are going to get some benefit out of it. Anybody that's not a member, they are missing out. We learn about any new state laws and regulations that are coming down the pipeline. I like to stay one step ahead in the industry.

5. **Describe your involvement in the association.** I've been too busy to be a board member. I just don't have the time to devote. I always attend the annual meeting. I am more than happy to help promote and educate.

6. **How has being a part of the association benefitted your business?** It has offered us educational opportunities – I appreciate that being a part of MNCAA has kept me in the loop. During the annual meeting, we bring an MDA representative to tell us of updates on licensing and what's changing in state regulations. Anything that may impact our industry, whether negatively or positively, the association stays on top of that. It's better to be proactive.

7. **How do you feel the association has benefitted the custom applicators industry in Minnesota?** More applicators would probably become an MNCAA member if they knew that it's not just their image but it's a state issue. If we don't get involved, the state might delegate what we do without consulting us first. If we don't have enough of us supporting the industry they may push some laws down on our industry that might negatively impact us and financially cost us a lot more.

8. **What would you tell someone who is considering joining the association?** That it's good to take in the education opportunities the association offers. And, to be sure custom applicators have a voice at the state level. We need to have a bigger presence on the state level so that the state realizes we are all in unison when it comes to supporting and being informed. Some people may think it's somebody else's responsibility to have a voice but if we don't take an active role, we may be forced with laws and regulations that we don't like and it might seriously impact our industry financially.