

# **ACRESUSA 2011 ANNUAL CONFERENCE and The San Antonio International Farm & Ranch Show**

**Columbus, Ohio – Hyatt Regency Downtown Hotel** was the site for last year's once-again highly successful conference. For Texas Plant & Soil Lab, it is the time that we always look forward to, as we get to see old friends, make new ones, meet people we read about in *Acres* magazine and finally meet in person clients with whom we have only spoken on the telephone. Our crew included Noel Garcia, Vice President of Operations and Chief Analyst, and Frank and Pat Schultz. We were joined by Dr. Larry Zibilske, soil research scientist and soil microbiologist with the USDA-ARS. It was Dr. Zibilske's first time to an Acres conference.

One of the things we look forward to is the Amish vendors with their great food and raw milk – which we drank with abandon.

Fact is, we enjoyed Columbus more than any other Acres venue we've been to, so far. The hotel is located within a three-block walking distance of many great restaurants and the North Market. The North Market is a collection of sellers of foodstuffs, baked goods and meals of many nationalities, plus local specialties. We bought meals from a different stand each time. We would have had to have stayed another week to sample something from each stand. We found the vendors there to be incredibly nice and the stay in Columbus to be very pleasant in general.

Here are some photos of the Acres Columbus experience...

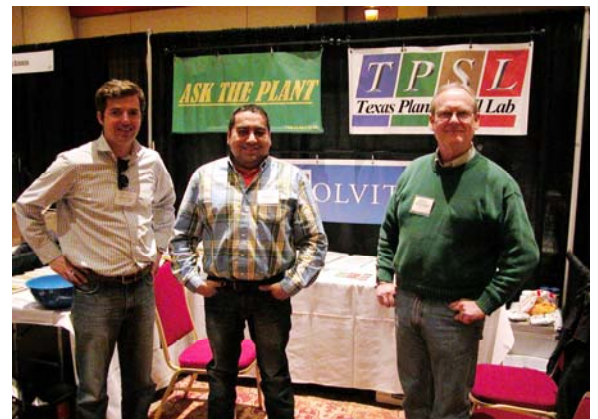


The aisles were crowded during breaks in presentations.

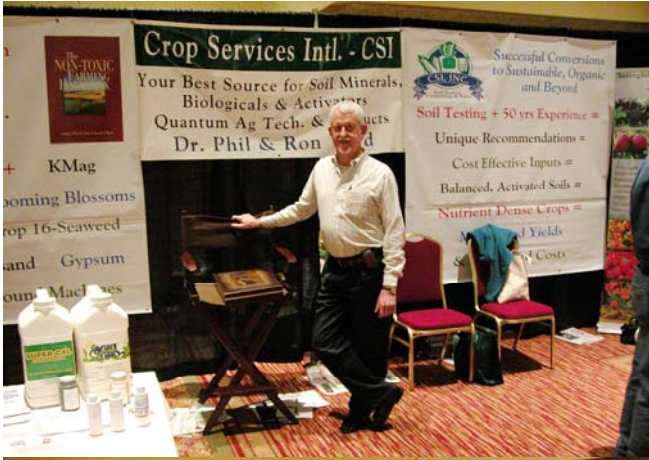


Our booth got very crowded at times.

A particularly nice aspect of the event was that we didn't have to drive back through a blizzard, as we did in 2010 from Indianapolis.



Andrew Sparda of Woods End Laboratories, Noel Garcia, Dr. Larry Zibilske.



Some of our friends –  
 Left: Dr. Phil Wheeler – Crop Services International  
 Below Left: Wayne Tucker – Bio-S.I.  
 Below: Joaquin Cortez - Erath Earth



North Market –  
 From the mezzanine.

The sit-down eating area is on all four sides and you can look down into the central market area.





The main floor...

### ***The San Antonio International Farm & Ranch Show***

We did a lot of shows last year and saw a lot of impressive and high-tech equipment. But occasionally, we would stumble across something that really attracted our attention.

At this show, it was *micro-balers* from Phil and Sharon Livengood of **Small Farm Innovations** [www.SmallFarmInnovations.com](http://www.SmallFarmInnovations.com). We spent some time speaking with them concerning specifications, tractor requirements, service, parts, markets, advertising outlets – and a lot of other things. I was really impressed with their level of knowledge about their products and description of their parts and service abilities. The product line is appealing to people who have livestock and/or hay on small acreage. The round baler can produce a bale from 25 to 70 pounds and the square baler can produce a variety of sizes up to about 40 pounds. A variety of models of both balers are offered and require a PTO horsepower from 15 HP, up – allowing them to be pulled with small garden tractors with a PTO.

These little machines feature tight turning radii and are able to bale in tight places. And –



A motley bunch – Wayne Tucker, Pat Schultz, Dr. Larry Zibilske, Noel Garcia.

the small, light bales are extremely convenient to handle, requiring no special handling equipment as do large round bales. They offer a variety of small farm equipment. Hope you would have a look at their website.

