



2026 WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Local Leadership: Global Impact

CELEBRATING THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER

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CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF THE WOMEN'S AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

For nearly three decades, our conference and network have highlighted the vital role women play in agriculture. Inspired by a vision from Robin Kinney and Doris Mold, the first Women's Agricultural Leadership Conference, "Making Our Place in the World," was launched in 1999 to activate and connect women across the industry.

In 2026, we celebrate 28 years of impactful programming, leadership development, and networking through our annual conference and Women's Ag Leadership Network (WALN) events. We're also proud to partner with the Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture program to provide stress-reduction resources tailored to farm women and women in agriculture.

This year marks the 24th year of honoring outstanding agricultural mentors. This award recognizes individuals who have shaped leaders, especially women, through guidance and example. In 2026, we look forward to recognizing new award recipients alongside the 90+ mentors celebrated over the years.

2026 Committee Members

The conference planning committee is entirely volunteer-driven and involves members from all walks of agriculture.

Jennifer Alexander, Regional Marketing Specialist, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Jill Brindamour

Sarah Dornink*, Executive Director, Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council

Amanda Durow*, Vice President – Lead Relationship Manager, CoBank

Jenna Hasara, Strategy Director, Lessing-Flynn

Katala Holycross

Caitlin Keck*, Senior Director of Stakeholder Communications at the National Pork Board

Emily Krekelberg*, Extension Educator – Farm Safety and Health, University of Minnesota Extension

Isabelle Lindahl*, Credit Associate – Diversified Industries Group, BMO Commercial Bank

Deann Lufkin, co-founder/owner CannonBelles Cheese

Doris Mold, (Co-Founder)*, President, Sunrise Agricultural Associates and CEO, Annie's Project

Kim Neumann, Financial Officer, AgCountry Farm Credit Services

Sam Schwoeppe, Co-Owner, Schwoeppe Dairy LLC & Director of Business Partnerships, Fresh Connect Central

Carrie Stowers, Farm at the Arb – Ag External Relations and Engagement Manager, University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Greta Tank*, Education Program Specialist, University of Minnesota

Sue VonBank*, Special Projects Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

***Indicates 5+ year committee volunteer**

If interested in joining the WALC planning committee, contact

Doris Mold at doris@sunriseag.net.

Public Relations Intern: **Kayla Visser**, Undergraduate at University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, studying Animal Science & Agricultural Communication and Marketing

Graphic Designer: Molly VanBrocklin, BFA in Graphic Design, University of Minnesota, College of Design | Portfolio: behance.net/helloimmolly

Past Conference Themes

2025: Rooted in Agriculture: Cultivating Leadership; Growing Together

2024: Elevate. Empower. Evolve.

2023: Sterling History: Empowering Leaders for 25 Years

2022: Deep Roots Strong Future

2021: Leading for Change into a New Decade

2020: Dare to Lead: Through Challenging Circumstances

2019: Changing the Agscape

2018: Passion for Progress

2017: Embracing Innovation

2016: Activate Her

2015: Planning Our Future

2014: Lean In!

2013: You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet!

2012: Changing the Face of Agriculture

2011: Telling Our Story

2010: New Perspectives

2009: Activating "Generation Next"

2008: Celebrating the Power of 10

2007: Deciphering Our Future

2006: Re-Defining Agriculture

2005: The Power of Leadership

2004: Breaking New Ground

2003: We Are the Strongest Link

2002: Together We Stand

2001: Creating Your Future in Agriculture

2000: Empowering Yourself for the Future

1999: Making Our Place in the World



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE | TUESDAY, MARCH 31, 2026

Minnesota Landscape Arboretum | 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska, MN

7:45-8:30AM

Registration & Networking

8:35AM

Welcome: **Keeley Runge**, Minnesota FFA Association State Reporter

Emcee: **DeeAnn Lufkin**, CannonBelles Cheese

8:45AM

General Session: Keynote Panel, *Local Leadership: Global Impact - Celebrating the International Year of the Woman Farmer*

Speakers:

Lady Diana Gómez Forero, MAST International Colombia

Jodi Ohlsen Read, Cheesemaker & Co-owner, Shepherd's Way Farms

Lori Stevermer, Co-owner, Trails End Farm & Past-President, National Pork Producers Council

Jane Windsperger, Owner, GEDEF Organic Farm & Vice President, Minnesota African Immigrant Farmer Association

10:15AM

Break & Networking

10:45AM

Breakout Session #1

12:00PM

Luncheon Program

Greeting: **Doris Mold**, Conference Co-Founder

Remarks: **Andrea Vaubel**, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Outstanding Agricultural Mentor Award: **Emily Krekelberg**, WALC Mentoring Committee Chair

Networking Activity

1:45PM

Break & Networking

2:00PM

Breakout Session #2

3:15PM

Mini Sessions - Roundtables on different topics

Learn about a variety of industry issues, new ideas, and other trends by taking part in up to three 14-minute mini-sessions. Multiple sessions occur simultaneously, creating substantial energy.

4:00PM

Closing & Prizes: Join us for a quick wrap up and prizes

4:30PM

Optional *Continue the Conversation*

Join us in the Rootstock Cafe for post-conference networking to connect, exchange ideas, and continue to build meaningful connections.

#WALC2026



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Check out our Website at:
[womensagleadership.org](https://www.womensagleadership.org)

MINI SESSIONS

Take part in up to three 14-minute mini sessions. Multiple sessions occur simultaneously, creating substantial energy.

A | Annie's Project: Tools for Risk Management

Annie's Project is a national program facilitated by the University of Minnesota Extension through online webinars, retreats and county based programs. We'll walk through the five Risk Management Areas of Agriculture – production risk, financial management, human resources, marketing, and the legal field – and do a fun budgeting exercise. Open to all, Annie's Project builds confidence and will strengthen your role in understanding risk management in agriculture.

Colleen Carlson, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

Heather Dufault, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

B | Beyond the To-Do List: When Busy Isn't the Same as Leading

In this interactive discussion, Jasper will draw from her experience as a cattle producer and strategic coach to explore how "reaction mode" shows up for women in agriculture. Each attendee will leave with one actionable step to create space for intentional leadership. Join this session for honest conversation and practical tools.

Jasper Oeltjen, Strategic Advisor, Heritage & Horizons

C | Climate and Agriculture: What Should Farmer Advisors Know?

Farmers are increasingly dealing with stress from challenges related to changing and extreme weather patterns, like floods, drought, and longer growing seasons. Advisors are a key part of building resilient farmers, but some farmers report that those who can currently advise on these topics are hard to find. In this session, we'll engage attendees in a conversation focused on identifying critical skills, sharing best practices, and getting feedback on future trainings for farmer advisors.

Katie Black, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

Andrea Elvir Flores, Graduate Research Assistant, University of Minnesota

D | Conservation Connector: A Centralized Platform to Find Conservation Programs and Providers

CTIC's Conservation Connector is a powerful, one-stop directory that makes it easy to explore and compare conservation programs (e.g., cost share, carbon markets) by crop, practice, and location – and quickly connect with local experts who can help put plans into action. Learn how the Connector can give farmers and advisors a clear path to conservation opportunities and transform conservation planning into a more intuitive, efficient, and accessible experience that fits their operations.

Theresa Pedretti, Senior Soil Health Specialist, Conservation Technology Information Center

Maria Teresa Tancredi, PhD, Minnesota Soil Health

Specialist, Conservation Technology Information Center

E | Creating an Employee Culture of Caring

Join Dianne to discuss considerations for culture-building as a means of employee retention. With a focus on caring, you'll learn culture-building strategies that will help employees feel heard and valued.

Dianne Bettin, Consultant on Foreign Labor and HR, Bettin Consulting

F | Farm Safety Grants

Hear a brief overview of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's two farm safety grant programs: the Grain Storage Facility Safety Grant and the Rollover Protective Structure (ROPS) Rebate Program.

Allison Beauregard, Grant Administrator, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

G | Growing Farmer-Led, Community-Centered Enterprises through Cooperative Development

Co-ops exist in every sector, and member-ownership prioritizes efficiency and reinvestment in communities. Our Cooperatives for Climate grant supports co-ops responding to climate-related challenges and opportunities. We'll share a case study showing how modest investments empower locally driven solutions, and how "going it alone" presents barriers in capital, infrastructure, and market access.

Ariel Kagan, Director, Climate and Working Lands Program, Minnesota Farmers Union

Katie Marty, Program Manager, CoMinnesota

H | Introduction to Managing Financial Risk

Join us for an introduction of the tools, skill sets, and one-on-one technical assistance available to manage financial stress.

Sandy Martini, Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Native Agriculture Financial Services

Bailey Tom, Agriculture Credit & Technical Assistance Officer, Native Agriculture Financial Services

I | Latest Updates from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health

Join Board chair Erica Sawatzke for the latest news from the Minnesota Board of Animal Health. Updates will include recent activities and disease surveillance efforts.

Erica Sawatzke, Farmer, Oakdale Farm and Chair, Minnesota Board of Animal Health

J | Leading the Way In Farm Business Management: Serving Producers, Industry, and Policymakers

The Minnesota State Farm Business Management (FBM) program has served Minnesota farmers for over 70 years. Over the years, the educational method has remained similar, but the ag industry and farm producers' needs have evolved. This session will cover what this program provides for farm producers and the agricultural industry. Learn what farm financial benchmarking does for producers enrolled in FBM – and how we can use this information to advocate for the ag industry at large.

Tina LeBrun, Executive Director, Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence

Denise Reeser, Farm Business Management Instructor, South Central College



MINI SESSIONS

K | MAST: Cultivating the Next Generation Through International Exchange

Innovation in agriculture doesn't stop at the fence line; it thrives on the exchange of global ideas. MAST International provides temporary talent to farms and ag businesses, fosters cross-cultural exchange, and builds personal and global connections within the industry. Bring the world to your doorstep by becoming a MAST host trainer or explore how MAST Experience Abroad can provide rewarding exchange opportunities for budding American agriculturists.

Sue Riesgraf, Training Coordinator, MAST International
Leah Bliss, Academic Coordinator, MAST International

L | Planting the Seeds: How a Children's Museum is Growing Agricultural Literacy

Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum is a welcoming destination where children, families, and caregivers can explore, play, and connect. Our museum celebrates Western Minnesota's agricultural heritage while fostering curiosity, intergenerational relationships, and community pride. It is a space to inspire, educate, and create lasting memories, ensuring the stories and spirit of our region continue for generations to come. We will share about our exhibits and educational program.

Kari Goldschmidt, Executive Director, Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum
Ali Bouta, Treasurer, Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum

M | Reset in 14 Minutes: Calming Stress with Vagus Nerve Massage

Life in agriculture rarely slows down – but your nervous system can. In this quick, hands-on mini-session, discover how simple vagus nerve massage techniques can help your body shift from stress to calm in just minutes. You'll learn the science behind the vagus nerve's role in resilience, practice easy methods you can do anywhere, and leave with a simple daily routine to restore balance, focus, and well-being – right in the middle of a busy day.

Monica McConkey, Ag Mental Health Specialist, Eyes on the Horizon Consulting, LLC

N | Should I Be a Beekeeper? Actions to Help Pollinators

Beekeeping in northern climates faces unique challenges compared to the rest of the U.S. In this session, you will gain an introductory knowledge of beekeeping, where to find resources, how the UMN Bee Lab can help you, and what actions you can take to help native populations.

Marvus Whyte, Student Outreach Worker, University of Minnesota Bee Lab–Bee Squad

O | Strengths at the Kitchen Table: Using Clifton-Strengths to Calm Tough Farm Conversations

Struggling with family conversations on your farm or at home? Join this discussion on using your natural strengths to navigate what's best for your farm, ranch, and community. With 70% of U.S. farmland expected to change hands in the coming decades, effective family communication is critical. Discover how CliftonStrengths for Agriculture can improve your well-being and relationships with those who matter most.

Kristin Harner, Owner, Campbell-Harner Horizons

P | What You Need to Know About Minnesota Paid Leave

Join this session for a short overview of Minnesota Paid Leave and key considerations for farm employers. Get your questions answered!

Susanne Hinrichs, Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension

Q | What's Happening in Minnesota 4-H?

Exciting events are happening in Minnesota 4-H! Come and learn about what activities are coming up this spring and summer for youth to make themselves "Beyond Ready"!

Minnesota 4-H State Ambassadors

R | Who are the Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters?

Learn more about Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters at both the state and local levels, and how we partner with chapters and communities. Discover how these collaborations strengthen programs and support agricultural education.

Jamie Hugoson, Regional Director, Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters

S | Winners Drink Milk: The Indy 500 Tradition

The Indy 500 winners' milk tradition began in 1936 when winner Louis Meyer drank buttermilk in Victory Lane to refresh himself, a habit stemming from his mother's advice. The tradition was formalized in 1956 to celebrate victory and promote dairy, with winners now selecting whole, 2%, or skim milk. The "Winners Drink Milk" slogan remains one of the most famous in American sports, symbolizing the intersection of agricultural heritage and high-speed racing.

Sam Schwoeppe, Co-Owner, Schwoeppe Dairy LLC & Director of Business Partnerships, Fresh Connect Central

T | You've Found Your People..Now What?

You've met new people with similar and exciting backgrounds...now what? Keep talking. What started as encounters at Women In Ag Conferences has turned into "8 Maids a Milking," a group of women with similar backgrounds yet different communities. We discovered we weren't the only ones going through similar situations with farming, family, and life. Let's talk about options of how to start your own group and why sharing with others is important for our health.

Natalie Schmitt, Co-Owner, Schmitt Dairy Inc
JoAnn Gratz, Co-Owner, Gratz Dairy



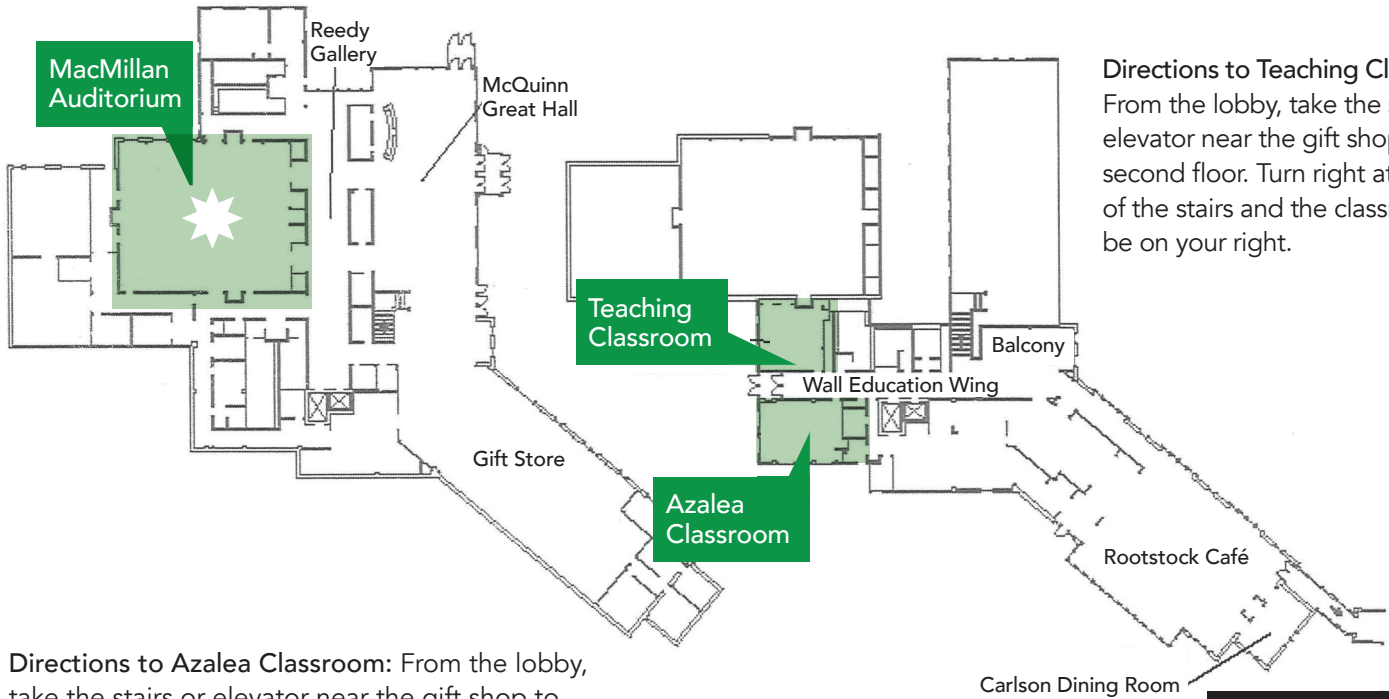
MINI SESSION 1

MINI SESSION 2

MINI SESSION 3

OSWALD VISITOR CENTER MAP

FIRST FLOOR

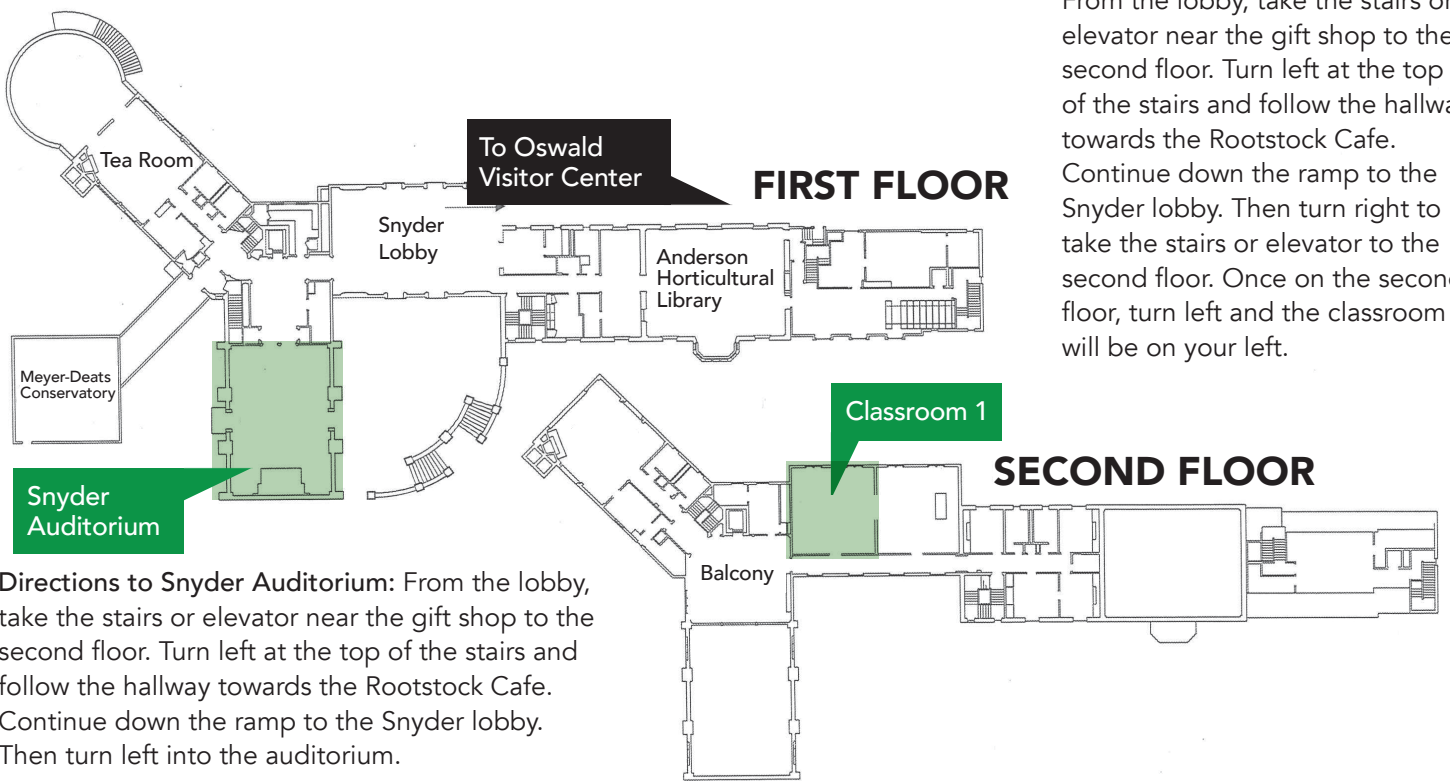


Directions to Teaching Classroom: From the lobby, take the stairs or elevator near the gift shop to the second floor. Turn right at the top of the stairs and the classroom will be on your right.

Directions to Azalea Classroom: From the lobby, take the stairs or elevator near the gift shop to the second floor. Turn right at the top of the stairs and the classroom will be on your left.

To Snyder Auditorium

LEON C. SNYDER BUILDING MAP



Directions to Classroom 1: From the lobby, take the stairs or elevator near the gift shop to the second floor. Turn left at the top of the stairs and follow the hallway towards the Rootstock Cafe. Continue down the ramp to the Snyder lobby. Then turn right to take the stairs or elevator to the second floor. Once on the second floor, turn left and the classroom will be on your left.

Directions to Snyder Auditorium: From the lobby, take the stairs or elevator near the gift shop to the second floor. Turn left at the top of the stairs and follow the hallway towards the Rootstock Cafe. Continue down the ramp to the Snyder lobby. Then turn left into the auditorium.



CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Scott Anderson, *Developing Markets Officer, AgCountry Farm Credit Services*. Scott has been with AgCountry for 22 years and now serves as the Developing Markets Officer for the Minnesota Southwest Region. A fourth-generation farmer, he raises corn, soybeans, and a flock of ewes on his family farm. Scott is passionate about helping young and beginning farmers establish their place in agriculture and build their own legacies.

Allison Beauregard, *Grant Administrator, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)*. Allison joined the MDA in 2022 and serves on the Grants Team administering the Farm Safety grant programs, AGRI Beginning Farmer Farm Business Management Scholarship program, Farmers' Market Nutrition Assistance Grant, and the AGRI Preparing for Extreme Weather (Prepare) Grant.

Dianne Bettin, *Consultant on Foreign Labor and HR, Bettin Consulting*. Dianne returned to consulting after retiring from her position as Human Resources Manager for LB Pork for over 10 years. During her time there, she managed foreign labor work visas. Dianne helps farmers understand the complexities of work visas to help solve some of the frustrations of today's labor market.

Amanda Bilek, *Senior Public Policy Director, Minnesota Corn*. Amanda joined Minnesota Corn in 2017 and works closely with the Minnesota Corn Growers Association (MCGA) and the Minnesota Corn Research and Promotion Council to develop and implement effective legislative and regulatory public policy strategies that contribute to Minnesota Corn's mission to improve opportunities for corn growers. She leads state and federal lobbying activities and oversees MCGA political activities.

Katie Black, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Katie is an Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership. She engages in teaching and research about climate risks and resilience-building practices and strategies for agricultural professionals and farmers of all production types.

Leah Bliss, *Academic Coordinator, MAST International*. Leah grew up on a farm in southwest Minnesota where she developed a fondness for nature, animals, and rural communities. She has since spent several years studying and working abroad in Germany, Norway, and Finland. Leah coordinates the optional semester of study at the University of Minnesota for MAST trainees.

Ali Bouta, *Treasurer, Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum*. Ali grew up on her family's 5th-generation farm near Murdock, Minnesota. She holds a Dairy Science B.S. from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls. Now an Ag Banking Officer at Bravera Bank, Ali remains a partner in Clark Farms, serves as Treasurer of the Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum, and is a proud mom of six.

Colleen Carlson, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Colleen owns a small farm with her husband and sons. They direct market beef and pork along with raising poultry. She is an Extension Educator in Carver and Scott counties.

Christina Connelly, *International Trade Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Agriculture*. Christina Connelly joined the Minnesota Department of Agriculture as the International Trade Supervisor in 2025. She previously worked for the Consulate General of Canada in Minneapolis, the Minnesota Legislative Auditor's Office, and the U.S. Government Accountability Office in D.C. She holds degrees and certificates from St. Olaf College, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, and George Washington University.

Sarah Dornink, *Executive Director, Minnesota Agricultural Education Leadership Council (MAELC)*. Sarah has 20 years of experience advocating for agricultural education. She holds a B.S. and Masters degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota. She's an alum of the Minnesota Agriculture and Rural Leadership (MARL) program and teaches an Agricultural Policy & Issues course at the UMN. Sarah and her family reside on a small Angus cattle farm.

Heather Dufault, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Heather is an Extension Educator in Polk and Norman counties. She brings a vast knowledge of crop insurance and ag business to her work. She farms alongside her husband and family on their multi-generational farm raising sugar beets, wheat, corn, and soybeans.

Andrea Elvir Flores, *Graduate Research Assistant, University of Minnesota*. Andrea is a PhD candidate in the Land and Atmospheric Science program at the University of Minnesota. Her thesis evaluates remote sensing technologies for nitrogen and water stress assessment in potatoes. She also serves as a graduate research assistant with the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership.

Kari Goldschmidt, *Executive Director, Mini Sota Agricultural Children's Museum*. Kari is a passionate leader with a caring heart and a deep love for working in the nonprofit world. She brings a wealth of experience in volunteer leadership, community engagement, fund development, special events, grant writing, childcare, and management. Kari earned her B.S. in Business and Marketing from St. Cloud State University.

Lady Diana Gómez Forero, *MAST International Colombia*. Diana is a Colombian agricultural engineer inspired by her childhood on her grandfather's farm. She has skills in blueberry and ornamental crop production, integrating irrigation, soil management, and data-driven decision-making. Passionate about sustainable farming and team development, she values agriculture not only as production, but to strengthen communities and create opportunities for women in the field.

JoAnn Gratz, *Co-Owner, Gratz Dairy*. JoAnn farms with her family near Atwater, Minnesota and is an active member of Farm Bureau. She is one of the founding members of 8 Maids a Milking, a group of farmwomen who harnessed the power of their connections into a supportive community.

Kristin Harner, *Owner, Campbell-Harner Horizons*. Kristin is an agricultural and rural advocate who helps farm families have better conversations about their farm, succession, and legacy. Drawing on her background in association leadership and agriculture advocacy, she translates CliftonStrengths into a tool to use at work and on the farm.

Tessa Herman, *Farm Marketing Consultant, Hurley & Associates*. Tessa was raised in Barnesville, Minnesota, where her early involvement in agriculture sparked a strong passion for livestock. She earned a degree in Animal Science with a minor in Agribusiness Marketing, combining her interest in production agriculture with a desire to support farm families through sound business decisions. Tessa joined Hurley & Associates to help producers make confident, informed marketing decisions that support long-term success.

Susanne Hinrichs, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Susanne is an Extension Educator in agricultural business management. She holds a B.S. in Marketing, a B.S. in Agricultural Economics, and an M.S. in Leadership and Public Affairs. Susanne specializes in business planning, multi-generational farm transition, and farm policy, and leads the Women in Agriculture Network.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Jody Horntvedt, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Jody is an Extension Educator in Leadership and Civic Engagement, primarily serving 13 counties in northern Minnesota. Her passion is engaging with people in rural communities. Jody has more than 35 years of experience in developing customized programs for elected officials and community leaders focused on enhancing the leadership skills of people, with an emphasis on collaboration skills.

Jamie Hugoson, *Regional Director, Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters*. Jamie Hugoson lives on a small hobby farm with her husband and four children. As the Region 7 Director for the Minnesota FFA Alumni and Supporters, she often says she has gained her own FFA experience as an adult. Jamie enjoys judging FFA contests at all levels, with a focus on public speaking and agricultural sales.

Ariel Kagan, *Director of the Climate and Working Lands Program, Minnesota Farmers Union*. Ariel works on topics related to climate-smart agriculture, renewable energy, market development, and environmental policy. She holds an undergraduate degree in economics from Mount Holyoke College and a graduate degree in agricultural economics from University of British Columbia.

Emily Krekelberg, *Extension Educator, University of Minnesota Extension*. Emily grew up on her family's dairy farm near Le Sueur, Minnesota and is the Extension Educator for Farm Safety & Health. Her work focuses on youth farm safety, livestock safety, tractor safety, farmer mental health, and suicide prevention. She has a B.S. in Animal Science and a M.S. in Agricultural Education from the University of Minnesota.

Tina LeBrun, *Executive Director, Southern Agricultural Center of Excellence*. Tina also serves as Co-Director of Minnesota Farm Business Management. She earned a B.S. in Agricultural Economics and Animal Science from the University of Wisconsin–River Falls and a Master of Education at the University of Minnesota. Outside of her professional roles, Tina farms with her husband. They direct market beef while raising and guiding their four free-range children, keeping her firmly grounded in both agriculture and family life.

Deeann Lufkin, *Co-Founder/Owner CannonBelles Cheese*. Based in Cannon Falls, Minnesota, Deeann leads an award-winning artisan creamery rooted in community and bold flavor. A retired U.S. Air Force Major and meteorologist, she flew 125 hurricane penetrations with the Hurricane Hunters and supported global cargo, Army Aviation, and joint operations. Today, Deeann brings that same resilience and leadership to agriculture, championing local food systems and women in ag.

Sandy Martini, *Vice President/Chief Operating Officer, Native Agriculture Financial Services*. Sandy is a trained agricultural economist dedicated to educating farmers and ranchers on risk management, financial management, business planning, and access to capital. She previously served as associate CEO of the Native American Agriculture Fund and program administrator for the Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative. She began her career in extension and agricultural education. Sandy and her family run a 150-acre Arkansas farm raising beef and rehabilitating former racehorses.

Katie Marty, *Program Manager, CoMinnesota*. Katie manages this program that brings Minnesota cooperatives together across sectors and raises awareness of the power and potential of the cooperative model to transform business practices. Katie holds degrees in business and Spanish, certificates in cooperative development and abolitionist training, and serves on the Ralph K. Morris Foundation board.

Monica McConkey, *Ag Mental Health Specialist, Eyes on the Horizon Consulting, LLC*. Monica has over 30 years of experience in the behavioral health field. Monica grew up on a farm in northwest Minnesota and has an intimate understanding of farm stress and its impact. She currently works as one of Minnesota's Ag Mental Health Specialists, providing support to farmers and their families.

Doris Mold, *Co-Founder, Women's Ag Leadership Conference & CEO of Annie's Project*. Doris is also the President of Sunrise Agricultural Associates, co-lead for the Cultivating Resiliency Program, lead for the Rural Resiliency Project, superintendent of Minnesota State Fair Milking Parlor and Moo Booth, and an instructor for MAST International at the University of Minnesota. Doris is a farmer, agricultural consultant, agricultural economist, educator, Ag Advocate, Ag Stress Maven, connector, 4-H leader, FFA mentor, mom, partner, and catalyst. She is passionate about developing agricultural leaders, the future of agriculture, and elevating women in agriculture.

Kim Neumann, *Financial Officer, AgCountry Farm Credit Services*. Kim grew up on a small livestock farm near Kerkhoven, Minnesota. She received her B.S. in Agribusiness from North Dakota State University. She has been working at Farm Credit Services for the last 12 years and prior to that at Farm Service Agency. She and her husband farm outside of Wabasso. They have two small children that keep them busy.

Jasper Oeltjen, *Strategic Advisor, Heritage & Horizons*. Jasper is a farm wife, cattlemaster, and founder of Heritage & Horizons – a space where strategy meets real-life cattle management. With roots in agriculture and experience in education and corporate leadership, she helps producers think beyond daily demands and build operations designed to last.

Jodi Ohlsen Read, *Cheesemaker & Co-owner, Shepherd's Way Farms*. Jodi is a cheesemaker at Shepherd's Way Farms family sheep dairy farm in Nerstrand, Minnesota. Jodi and Steven Read founded Shepherd's Way Farms in 1994 as a sheep dairy, and began making cheese in 1998. Now, Shepherd's Way has 225 ewes and produces eight different cheeses, bottled milk, wool bedding, lamb, chicken eggs, and whey-fed pork. Jodi initially worked as a writer and editor and became a full-time cheesemaker in 2001.

Carolyn Olson, *Vice-President, Minnesota Farm Bureau*. Carolyn grew up in the suburbs of Minneapolis and joined her husband on the farm in 1988. Once there, she quickly learned the ropes, preferring spring and fall tillage as well as running the combine. An organic crop farmer from southwestern Minnesota, Carolyn has served in many policy development and leadership roles at the local, state, and national levels and has a passion for bringing together all types of farmers.

Theresa Pedretti, *Senior Soil Health Specialist, Conservation Technology Information Center*. Theresa leads the Farmers for Soil Health program at CTIC, overseeing soil health specialists in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and South Dakota to deliver technical assistance and financial support for cover crop adoption. With more than 14 years of experience as an agronomist and a decade as a Certified Crop Adviser, she brings deep practical expertise to her role. Theresa is dedicated to advancing sustainable agriculture through pragmatic, science-based solutions.

Kristin Pronschinske, *CEO & Owner, LookUp, LLC*. Kristin grew up on a dairy farm in Western Wisconsin. She attended the University of Wisconsin–River Falls, graduating with a B.S. in Marketing Communications, M.S. Agricultural Education, and an MBA. She also earned a M.S. in Organizational Leadership from Colorado State University. Kristin is the founder and CEO of LookUp, LLC, which is a strategic agricultural partnership firm.

Denise Reeser, *Farm Business Management Instructor, South Central College*. Denise has been an ag educator for the past 30 years, teaching secondary and post-secondary education in addition to being a farm business management (FBM) instructor since 2017. She is also a co-leader of the Professional Excellence Program (PEP) – a mentoring program shaping the development of early career FBM instructors across the state and Midwest.

Sue Riesgraf, *Training Coordinator, MAST International*. Sue came to MAST with an extensive background in horticulture and viticulture, as well as a passion for cultural exchange that she developed through studying in Scotland, working in Australia, and serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Niger. Sue coordinates MAST's training opportunities in horticulture and winery.

Megan Roberts, *PhD, Ag Economist, Compeer Financial*. Megan provides education and analysis on the economy and farm finances to Compeer's clients and team members. Previously, she has worked in higher education. She's earned a B.S. and M.S. from the University of Minnesota and a PhD from Texas A&M. She lives with her husband and son on a south-central Minnesota farm raising corn, soybeans, and farrow-to-finish hogs.

Keeley Runge, *Minnesota FFA Association State Reporter*. From the St. James FFA chapter, Keeley is now a freshman at South Dakota State University, double-majoring in Agricultural Leadership and Political Science. Her mission this year has been to extend the same hand that once welcomed her – empowering students of all backgrounds to discover that they belong in FFA. Outside of FFA, she's active on campus, plays piano, shows pigs, and values time with family and friends.

Erica Sawatzke, *Farmer, Oakdale Farm & Chair, Minnesota Board of Animal Health*. Erica is a 6th generation farmer raising turkeys, corn, and soybeans. She is the retiring chair of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health and serves as a poultry instructor at Ridgewater College. She is married to a high school agriculture instructor who shares the same passion for farming and they have two daughters.

Sarah Schmidt, *Vice President of Marketing, AMPI*. Sarah is vice president of marketing for Associated Milk Producers Inc. (AMPI), a dairy cooperative headquartered in New Ulm, Minnesota. In this role, she shares AMPI's story with a variety of audiences to help grow revenue, foster relationships, and identify and develop new opportunities in the U.S. and around the world.

Natalie Schmitt, *Co-Owner, Schmitt Dairy Inc.* Natalie farms with her family near Rice, Minnesota. Along with many volunteer positions, she also maintains an impressive vegetable garden. She is one of the founding members of 8 Maids a Milking, a group of farmwomen who harnessed the power of their connections into a supportive community.

Anne Schwagerl, *Vice President, Minnesota Farmers Union*. Anne was elected as the MFU State Vice President in 2021. She and her husband, Peter, own and operate a diversified grain and livestock operation near Browns Valley, Minnesota. Anne also serves on the board of governors of Farmers Union Industries. Anne is a graduate of Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota. In her spare time, she enjoys gardening and spending time with her family and various farm critters.

Sam Schwoeppe, *Co-Owner, Schwoeppe Dairy LLC & Director of Business Partnerships, Fresh Connect Central*. Sam is a 4th generation dairy farmer from southern Indiana. At Fresh Connect Central, she works to convene food banks and community partners throughout the ag supply chain to increase nutrition served to communities across the U.S. Sam serves in various leadership roles, including on the boards of Annie's Project and Prairie Farms Dairy, Inc.

Lori Stevermer, *Farmer and Customer Success Manager, Alltech*. Lori is the Customer Success Manager for Alltech's U.S. Pork Business. Lori and her husband Dale are third generation farmers and raise pigs and crops near Easton, Minnesota, and have three adult children. Lori currently serves as the Immediate Past President on the National Pork Producer Council's Executive Board and enjoys advocating for the swine industry at local, state, and national events.

Maria Teresa Tancredi, *PhD, Minnesota Soil Health Specialist, Conservation Technology Information Center*. Maria Teresa grew up on a homestead in central Italy, where she developed a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and agriculture. She recently completed her PhD in the Social Sustainability of Agri-food Systems Lab at the University of Georgia, where her research examined farmers' perspectives on cover crops and their experiences with incentive programs.

Bailey Tom, *Agriculture Credit & Technical Assistance Officer, Native Agriculture Financial Services*. Bailey is a member of the Navajo Nation and supports the Distressed Borrower Assistance Network (DBAN), providing financial analysis and farm business planning assistance to help producers navigate agricultural finance and access USDA programs. With hands-on experience in the cow-calf and feedlot sectors, she understands the realities producers face and is committed to strengthening long-term resilience. She holds degrees in agricultural business and agribusiness from New Mexico State University and Texas A&M University.

Haley Van Nurden, *Farm Marketing Consultant, Hurley & Associates*. Haley grew up near New London, Minnesota, where life on her family's hobby farm and involvement in 4-H and FFA shaped her strong work ethic and values. She earned a degree in Agricultural Business from South Dakota State University, with minors in Agribusiness Marketing and Commodity Risk Management. Haley is passionate about serving and educating producers, helping them approach their farms and ranches as businesses and leverage the tools available to reach their goals.

Andrea Vaubel, *Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture*. Andrea was appointed in 2018 and has been with the MDA since 2013. Her current duties include internal oversight of many core agency functions, including human resources, emergency response, and legal affairs. Previously, Andrea worked for Minnesota Congressman Tim Walz in both Washington, D.C., and Minnesota. She lives in Dakota County with her husband and two kids.

Jennifer Vaughn, *LMFT & Agricultural Mental Health Provider, Acquire Mental Health*. Jenny is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, and a board approved supervisor. She is one of three Agricultural Mental Health Therapists for the State of Minnesota, providing services to Minnesota farmers. She is also a Certified AgriSafe Provider and is certified in several forms of therapy, including Accelerated Resolution Therapy (ART).

Marvus Whyte, *Student Outreach Worker, University of Minnesota Bee Lab–Bee Squad*. Marvus is a third-year undergraduate at the University of Minnesota studying Agricultural Education, Communication, and Marketing. Growing up on a dairy farm in rural Wisconsin, Marvus has utilized prior experiences to more effectively communicate in and about agriculture. Since freshman year, he has been employed by the University of Minnesota Bee Squad, which facilitates the outreach portion of the Bee Lab.

Jane Windsperger, *Owner, Gedef Organic Farm & Vice President, Minnesota African Immigrant Farmer Association*. Jane is a Kenyan-born immigrant farmer and community leader based in Kanabec County, Minnesota. She operates GEDEF Farm near Mora, focusing on culturally important African vegetables and specialty crops that serve both immigrant and local communities.

NOTES





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