2018 Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Leadership Conference

November 26-27, 2018 • Iowa State University
Scheman Building • 1805 Center Drive • Ames • Iowa 50011
Welcome

Hello Friends!

On behalf of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the conference advisory committee, I would like to welcome you to the 2018 Women in Ag Leadership Conference.

This year’s conference theme is “The Conversations of Leadership.” Our keynote and capstone speakers highlight how important a single conversation can be. Concurrent session speakers offer advice for engaging others through shared values. Panelists share how our conversations can influence both the agricultural organizations we serve and ourselves as individuals. The workshop shows how to communicate your personal brand.

In response to feedback from last year, we added a Women Impacting Agriculture reception as well as networking activities. We also shortened the general sessions and lengthened the concurrent sessions.

The conference activities are sure to replenish your spirit and deepen your aspirations to lead within your family and across the global agricultural industry. The conference advisory committee designed this event around three major goals. We hope you will take home and carry with you:

1. A belief in yourself and the power of life-long learning

2. Connections with other women that inspire your leadership journey

3. New skills that enhance your leadership on the farm and off the farm

Women work in, manage and own complex farms and agribusinesses in Iowa. We know how much you accomplish every day. That is why we are especially pleased to offer this opportunity for rest and renewal as you share, network and learn with others.

I would like to thank everyone who volunteered her time to prepare for a successful event.

Enjoy the conference!

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Women in Ag Program Manager
Conference Agenda

Monday, November 26, 2018

12:30 p.m. Onsite check-in begins

1:00 p.m. Iowa State University Campus Tour
  • Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering
  • Campus Points of Pride

3:30 p.m. Networking and refreshments

4:30 p.m. Workshop
  Building and Marketing Brand YOU – Laura Cunningham, Marketing Manager, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds; and Kilah Hemesath, Marketing Specialist, Latham Hi-Tech Seeds

6:30 p.m. Networking Dinner
  • Networking Activity
  • Dinner Remarks

7:30 p.m. Closing

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

7:30 a.m. Onsite check-in begins

7:30 a.m. Networking and refreshments

8:30 a.m. General Session One
  • Opening remarks
  • Welcome - Wendy Wintersteen, President, Iowa State University
  • Keynote Address: Why It’s Important to Have REAL Conversations - Janine Bruder, Human Resource Director, Nationwide Agribusiness
  • Women Impacting Agriculture Recognition - 2018 Honorees
    Sarah Carlson – Polk County
    Sarah Ham – Washington County
    Leslie Miller – Marion County
    Caite Palmer – Winneshiek County
    Val Plagge – Franklin County
    Margo Sievers – Buena Vista County

9:45 a.m. Networking and refreshments

9:45 a.m. Women Impacting Agriculture Reception, everyone welcome

10:15 a.m. Concurrent Session A
  • Session A1: Preparing to be REAL – Janine Bruder, Human Resource Director, Nationwide Agribusiness
  • Session A2: A Mediator’s Lens on Communication and Conflict Resolution – Kathy Hall, Organizational Outreach and Development Director, Iowa Mediation Services (Repeated in Session B)
  • Session A3: Top 10 Decisions to Transition a Farm to the Future – Melissa O’Rourke, Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialist, ISU Extension and Outreach (Repeated in Session B)
11:30 a.m. Networking Luncheon and General Session Two

- Networking Activity
- Luncheon Remarks

12:30 p.m. Concurrent Session B

Session B1: Panel: Leading our Agricultural Organizations
Moderated by Jennifer Savits, Enologist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Guests include Jenni Peters, Member, National Beef Board; Jen Sorenson, Board Member, Iowa Pork Producers Association; Jolene Riessen, Board Member, Iowa Corn Growers Association; Anne Zwink, Registered Apprenticeship Program Committee, Iowa Wine Growers Association.

Session B2: A Mediator’s Lens on Communication and Conflict Resolution
Kathy Hall, Organizational Outreach and Development Director, Iowa Mediation Services (Repeat of Session A)

Session B3: Top 10 Decisions to Transition a Farm to the Future
Melissa O’Rourke, Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialist, ISU Extension and Outreach (Repeat of Session A)

1:45 p.m. Networking and refreshments

2:15 p.m. General Session Two

- Panel: Career Conversations - Perspectives from Agricultural Cooperatives
  Moderated by Sara Clausen, Director of Communications at Key Cooperative. Guests include Carla Elliott, Vice-President of Human Resources, Innovative Ag Services; Laura Sangwin, Human Resources Manager, First Cooperative Association; and Janelle Thomas, Chief Human Resources Officer, Landus Cooperative.

- Capstone Address: Conversations that Lead to Open Doors, Amanda De Jong, State Executive Director, USDA-Iowa Farm Service Agency

- Closing Remarks

3:30 p.m. Closing

SPONSORS

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Extension and Outreach

Farm Credit Services of America
Monday Session Descriptions

Tour
Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering – Led by Amy Kaleita-Forbes, Professor

The tour group will travel by vans to Elings Hall on the ISU campus for a visit of the Department of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering. The US News and World Report’s 2017 “Best Colleges” rankings placed the program first among all national universities. The tour will showcase new buildings, student programs, student workspaces, and women’s leadership. The group will visit the Iowa Learning Farms Edge-of-Field trailer and learn about other extension and outreach programs from the department.

Campus Points of Pride – Led by Madeline Schultz

On this optional walking tour, the group will visit central campus to hear about some of the university’s points of pride and campus folklore. We’ll pass through a few of the central buildings for a closer look at architecture, art and student life.

Workshop
Building and Marketing Brand YOU – Laura Cunningham and Kilah Hemesath

Much like business mission statements, personal brands communicate values, shape reputation and create a vision for the future. A clearly defined personal brand can help in a variety of facets in your career and personal life. What is most important to you? Oftentimes we know the “What” and the “How”, but what is the “Why” behind what you do? What drives you every morning to accomplish the day? Do you ever feel spread too thin at work, at home, or as a volunteer? A clearly defined personal brand can help you focus on the things that give you energy. It can help identify which opportunities will help you reach your goals and allow you to comfortably pass on opportunities that may distract from your end goal, your “WHY”. In this workshop we will complete a workbook of exercises that help to develop your personal brand. At the close of the session you will have the tools you need to refine your brand and effectively market “Brand YOU” in a way that helps reach your goals.
TUESDAY CONFERENCE SESSIONS

General Session One

Keynote Address  Why It’s Important to Have REAL Conversations - Janine Bruder

“While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career, a company, a relationship or a life – any single conversation can.”
--Susan Scott, CEO, Fierce, Inc. and best-selling author of Fierce Conversations

Recognition  Women Impacting Agriculture

The Women Impacting Agriculture recognition program will honor six women from across Iowa who enhance our agricultural systems. We’ll share the honorees’ personal stories with pictures and presentations and gain a deeper appreciation for the varied roles of women in agriculture. These women were selected for creating a more sustainable Iowa by improving economic resiliency and stability; conserving natural resources; and/or being influential agricultural leaders, family members and community volunteers.

Concurrent Session A

Session A1  Preparing to be REAL– Janine Bruder

Now that you know why you need to have REAL conversations, this session will help you get ready. Prepare yourself for your next tough conversation with a deeper understanding of the steps you can take. You’ll practice techniques to help you achieve more effective and less stressful communication.

Session A2  A Mediator’s Lens on Communication and Conflict Resolution – Kathy Hall

Resolving conflicts is a goal most of us have. However, it is not always easy. Participants will explore the process of mediation and its use in a variety of situations. As a communication “helper,” you will be presented with ideas on how to approach others with different values and beliefs. The presenter is a practicing mediator and will provide attendees with basic conflict resolution skills they may “take and use” in their everyday interactions as they search for win/win solutions. (Repeated in Session B)

Session A3  Top 10 Decisions to Transition a Farm to the Future – Melissa O’Rourke

Whether a farm operation is small with limited acres and livestock, or a large commercial operation, everyone should prepare to transition the farm and family relationships to the future. If operators become sick or disabled, how will decisions be made, and what happens to an ongoing operation? Are there plans to expand in the years ahead, or transition the farm to future generations? Is a team of professionals in place to help devise, advise and implement the plan? Is there a need to have what might be touchy conversations and communicate with family members? Melissa O’Rourke, an attorney and ISU Extension Farm and Business Management Specialist will address these and other Top Ten decisions necessary to prepare for the future. (Repeated in Session B)
Concurrent Sessions B

Session B1  Panel: Leading our Agricultural Organizations – Jennifer Savits, Jenni Peters, Jolene Riessen, Jen Sorenson, and Anne Zwink

Women are involved in important conversations as leaders of agricultural organizations in Iowa. The panel will discuss their beliefs that led them into leadership. They will share the stepping stones on their personal leadership journey and the challenges they overcame along the way. This session will highlight the unique value women bring to commodity boards and other leadership positions. Panelists will share experiences and offer advice on how leadership roles can help you grow as a person, benefit your family and business and offer exciting new opportunities.

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General Session Two

Panel  Career Conversations: Perspectives from Agricultural Cooperatives – Sara Clausen, Janelle Thomas, Carla Elliott, and Laura Sangwin

Human resource leaders from three agricultural cooperatives in Iowa will share tips to help women thrive in their careers. The women will discuss starting out right in a new job, negotiating salary and getting the right benefits to meet personal and family goals. Panelists will talk about opportunities for moving up in cooperative organizations, and finding mentors or networks for greater career satisfaction. They’ll cover what to do if there is a problem on the job. This session will offer insight on how human resource departments function to help employees grow with the company.

Capstone  Conversations that Lead to Open Doors - Amanda De Jong

Amanda will discuss the people that have come into her life both personally and professionally that changed her life trajectory by opening doors she wasn’t always looking for. Life is all about the choices we make, but it’s also about the people who helped us make those choices along the way. She will challenge the group to think about how what we say and do, influences other women in agriculture.
MONDAY EVENING SESSION

Workshop: Brand YOU, Your Personal Marketing Plan

Laura Cunningham is a Marketing Manager for Latham Hi-Tech Seeds where she spent 11 seasons working with her team to build Latham brand awareness across seven Midwest states. As Latham’s seed dealer network grows, she also works with farmer-dealers to develop their personal brands and find success in building their own businesses. Laura is co-owner of SkyView Farms, Inc. in North Iowa where she raises corn, soybeans, alfalfa, rye and Angus cattle together with her husband. Laura’s degree in Agriculture Business from Iowa State University is valuable in helping direct market the farm’s beef to local families and restaurants. Laura’s most recent volunteer roles in agriculture include serving as Floyd County Farm Bureau Vice President and a term as State Chair of Iowa Young Farmers. She enjoys opportunities to share agriculture with students in the local school district through virtual field trips on SkyView Farms.

Kilah Hemesath, Marketing Specialist for Latham Hi-Tech Seeds is starting her fourth year on the Latham Marketing Team. Originally from a corn, soybean and hog operation in Decorah, Iowa, she brings valued perspective to the team by combining her farm background with her education. Kilah graduated from Iowa State University with degrees in Agricultural Business and Public Relations. She enjoys being involved in agriculture and working with Latham dealers and farmers throughout the Midwest. Her collaborative attitude and creativity are applied as she coordinates dealer events and expands Latham’s online presence. In addition to the work at Latham, Kilah raises corn and soybeans with her fiancé in North Iowa. She enjoys serving on the Cerro Gordo County Farm Bureau Board and volunteering her time and talents at church.

TUESDAY GENERAL SESSION

Keynote Address: Why It’s Important to Have REAL Conversations

Janine Bruder is currently the Human Resource Director for Nationwide Agribusiness and will be celebrating her 20-year anniversary with the company this December. Janine graduated from Nebraska Wesleyan University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Political Science and History and attended the University of Nebraska College of Law. Her HR background includes experience in both public and private sectors, negotiating with collective bargaining units, employee relations, talent planning and executive coaching. Janine’s passion is helping employees and leaders have real conversations that help move business operations forward.
Guest Speakers

TUESDAY CONCURRENT SESSIONS

A Mediator’s Lens on Communication and Conflict Resolution

Kathy Hall is the Organizational Outreach and Development Director for Iowa Mediation Services. She oversees the office management, project administration and training efforts along with providing mediation services in workplace, school, neighborhood, victim-offender, family and agricultural settings. Kathy has a passion for helping people explore options and seek self-driven outcomes. Kathy regularly serves as a mediator for the Polk County Attorney’s Restorative Justice Center on issues such as victim-offender and neighborhood disputes and is a contract mediator for the United States Postal Service handling Equal Employment Opportunity cases. She served four years with the International Victim Offender Mediation Association. Additionally she is a certified Family Team Meeting facilitator and evaluator for the Department of Human Services.

Top 10 Decisions to Transition a Farm to the Future

Melissa O’Rourke is an Attorney and Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist and Extension Dairy Team Member for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Melissa has practiced extensively in the fields of business and estate planning, employment legal issues and agricultural commercial litigation and has worked with numerous farm and ranch families to facilitate planning for management of their farm businesses. Melissa’s particular areas of interest include farm estate and succession planning, agricultural human resource legal and management issues, farmland leasing and tenure arrangements, and working with beginning and transitioning farmers. Melissa’s work with Iowa State University combines her background in education, agriculture and law as she informs and advises members of the farm and agribusiness community on an expansive array of business planning and legal topics.

Panel: Leading Our Agricultural Organizations

Moderator - Jennifer Savits is the enology (winemaking) extension field specialist at the Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute at Iowa State University. Her work primarily involves assisting winemakers around the state and greater Midwest region with best winemaking practices, providing technical information, and improving overall wine quality through education and outreach activities. Jennie has also served as a lecturer, teaching laboratory courses in the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department and worked as a research associate for the MGWII. Jennie earned BS and MS degrees in Food Science at Iowa State. Jennie resides in Boone County with her husband and three children, on a century family farm that includes row crops, a cow-calf herd and a trucking business.

Panelist – Jenni Peters serves on the National Beef Board. She and her family manage Peters Beef Genetics on a sixth generation family farm in Jackson County. Jenni welcomes groups to her farm and shares information about the non-traditional strategies her family uses with their bred heifer market – hand feeding and rotating pen/pastures for quiet heifer dispositions; crop rotation of corn, soybean, hay and pasture to maintain soil; pasture rotation for better weed control; and pasture water tanks formed using tiling, springs and cement basins. She travels internationally on behalf of trade missions to increase global demand for U.S. beef and pork.
Panelist - Jolene Riessen raises corn, soybeans, alfalfa and cattle in Ida and Sac counties along with her husband and two sons. Jolene represents District No. 4 on the Iowa Corn Growers Association Board and she is the Vice Chair of the Industrial Usage and Production Committee. She has worked in different ag related jobs that compliment her farm roots. Jolene currently serves as an Ida Co. District Soil Commissioner and is President of the Sac/Ida Corn Growers Association. She served in the past on the Animal, Ag and Environment Committee for Iowa Corn and is a vocal advocate for what farmers are doing to help improve water quality. Her commitment to the ag sector continues through her memberships to the Ida County Cattlemen, Ida County Farm Bureau, and Iowa Soybean Association. Jolene served on the Ida County 4-H Extension Council and coached FFA crops teams. She is a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church.

Panelist - Jen Sorenson is the Director of Communications at Iowa Select Farms. She grew up on a hog farm in southeastern Iowa, and has a passion for telling the story of agriculture. After receiving degrees in animal science and journalism and from Iowa State University, Jen gained communication experience at the Iowa Pork Producers Association, Christensen Farms and McCormick Company. Jen has been with Iowa Select Farms for seven years and is responsible for internal and external communications, media relations, public relations and industry outreach. She manages the Deb and Jeff Hansen Foundation. Jen is a board member for the National Pork Producers Council and Iowa Pork Producers Association. She chairs the NPB/NPPC We Care Task Force, chairs the NPPC Ag Labor Task Force and serves on the IPPA Issues Management Task Force, IPPA Public Relations Committee and NPPC Budget Committee. In 2018, Jen was awarded the Outstanding Young Professional Alumni award from the ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Panelist - Anne Zwink is a winemaker for Soldier Creek Winery in Webster County. After a fire destroyed a hog barn in 2002, her family decided to diversify with grapes. This led Anne to a food science degree with an emphasis in winemaking at Purdue University. She earned a master's degree in wine sensory at Washington State University. Anne is an international wine judge and her peers recognized her as the 2018 Iowa Wine and Grape Association Winemaker of the Year. Anne and her family participate in many ISU Extension and Outreach events and regularly host industry workshops at their winery. Anne serves on the Iowa Wine Growers Association registered apprenticeship program committee to create the first ever job training programs in cellar work and winemaking. Anne is active in the Fort Dodge Young Professionals, Leadership of Fort Dodge and the Fort Dodge Fine Arts.

Panel: Career Conversations: Perspectives from Agricultural Cooperatives

Sara Clausen is the director of communications and member relations at Key Cooperative where she represents 19 locations across the state of Iowa serving more than 3,000 grain, agronomy, feed and energy members. Sara grew up on a grain and livestock operation in Zearing and has lived in Story County her entire life. She obtained a journalism and mass communication degree from Iowa State University. Sara joined Key Cooperative in 2012. She is highly involved in her community, serving on the economic development council, as a member of the Rotary Club of Nevada and as a cabinet member for the United Way of Story County. Sara is also currently serving on the advisory committee for the Iowa Food and Family Project directed by the Iowa Soybean Association.
Guest Speakers

Panelist - Janelle Thomas, Chief Human Resources Officer, oversees the human resources, safety, and quality departments. This includes the functions of recruitment, talent development, payroll and benefits, employee relations, safety programs, quality management, and regulatory compliance. She joined Landus Cooperative in 2016. Previously working at an Emerson business and Todd & Sargent, she has nearly 20 years broad-based human resources experience including talent acquisition, organizational development, compensation management, benefits administration, human resources systems and technology, and employee and labor relations. Janelle holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Northern Iowa and a MBA from Iowa State University. Thomas has earned SHRM-SCP accreditation by the Society for Human Resource Management and SPHR certification by the HR Certification Institute.

Panelist - Carla Elliott, VP of Human Resources, began her career with Innovative Ag Services in April 2012 and has a total of 20 years of experience in Human Resources. Carla is responsible for recruitment, workers compensation, benefits administration, employee labor relations, HR legal compliance, marketing communications, payroll, and training & development. Prior to joining the Ag Industry for Innovative Ag Services, Carla served in positions with increasing responsibility in a variety of industries including retail distribution, manufacturing and printing. Carla earned her Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management.

Panelist - Laura Sangwin is the Human Resources Manager at First Cooperative Association in Cherokee, Iowa. She graduated from Iowa State University in 2000 with a major in Agriculture Business and a minor in Agronomy. She began her career with First Co-op directly after college as an Agronomy Salesperson, worked her way up to location manager and in April of this year was promoted to the Human Resources Manager. First Co-op has 25 locations in northwest Iowa and about 200 full-time employees. Laura and her husband, Greg, and four children live and farm outside of Peterson, Iowa.

Capstone Address: Conversations That Lead to Open Doors

Amanda De Jong was appointed to serve as the state executive director of the Iowa Farm Service Agency (FSA) in November 2017. De Jong was raised on a corn and soybean farm in northeast Iowa near the town of Holy Cross. The farm has been in her family for over 150 years. She attended Iowa State University, receiving a bachelor’s degree in agricultural business, and later earned a juris doctor from the University of Iowa Law School. After law school, De Jong worked for USDA with the Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) and the Under Secretary’s Office for Marketing and Regulatory Programs. De Jong worked four years with Senator Chuck Grassley, where she negotiated provisions of the 2008 Farm Bill. Most recently, she was the senior policy advisor for the Iowa Corn Growers Association where she handled ethanol, farm policy, trade and transportation issues. De Jong is an active supporter of the Agriculture Future of America organization. She formed a non-profit organization, Young Professionals in Agriculture, to connect young people working in agriculture through networking, philanthropy and lifelong learning. She served as the organization’s first president and helped form other chapters throughout the U.S. De Jong and her husband, Ryan, are involved in a cattle and row crop operation near Rhodes and are raising two young sons.
Morgan Hibbs graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture and Life Science Education/Communications in May 2017. She works for the Linn County Farm Bureau as the Education Outreach Coordinator where she teaches core curriculum concepts in science, social studies, language arts and nutrition through agricultural-based content. Through her time at Iowa State University, Morgan held internships with Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Young Farmer Program, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Program, 4-H STEM Camps, and the Iowa State Daily. Morgan lives with her husband, Tyler, in Johnson County.

Jennifer Bentley is a dairy specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach. She develops educational programming with producers in 10 northeast Iowa counties. Jennifer is committed to providing research-based, hands-on dairy education programs. She works closely with dairy producers, providing them with information regarding facility design, calf management, and overall dairy herd management. Jennifer grew up on a dairy farm in north central Iowa, where her family still operates a dairy farm. She earned a bachelor’s degree in dairy science and a Master of Agriculture Degree from Iowa State University. Before her extension position, Jennifer worked for the ISU Research and Demonstration Farms at the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation in Calmar. Jennifer is a strong partner with dairy industry leaders, offering educational programs to advance the dairy industry in Iowa.

Sara Clausen is the director of communications and member relations at Key Cooperative where she represents 19 locations across the state of Iowa serving more than 3,000 grain, agronomy, feed and energy members. Sara grew up on a grain and livestock operation in Zearing and has lived in Story County her entire life. She obtained a journalism and mass communication degree from Iowa State University. Sara joined Key Cooperative in 2012 following working as the director at the Nevada Chamber of Commerce. She is highly involved in her community, serving on the economic development council, as a member of the Rotary Club of Nevada and as a cabinet member for the United Way of Story County. Sara is also currently serving on the advisory committee for the Iowa Food and Family Project directed by the Iowa Soybean Association. She lives in Story County with her husband and two children.

Joni Erwin is a District Field Manager for the Iowa Corn Growers Association where she serves 11 counties in North Central Iowa. She strives to increase member involvement in her territory and increase awareness of Iowa Corn programs. Her roots run deep in agriculture. She grew up on her family’s grain and livestock farm in Crawfordsville, Iowa. She is a proud alumni of Iowa State University obtaining her degree in agricultural business and international agriculture. In addition to this advisory council, Joni serves on the NIACC Ag Advisory Committee and is the President of the Clear Lake Jaycees.

Callie Greiner plans to graduate from Iowa State University in May of 2019, with a major in Agriculture and Society and a minor in communications. Callie gained work experiences at Lagos Acres Golf and Country Club, Syngenta Seeds and Berkwood Farm. Currently, she is a student intern with the ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag program. Callie and her family are involved in the pork industry in Keokuk County. As a 4-Her and FFA member, she enjoyed showing pigs at the Iowa State Fair. As a university student, Callie serves on several Delta Zeta Sorority committees and contributes to community service projects. She has been active in Block & Bridle Club, Ag Communications Club, Agriculture and Society Club, Public Relations Student Society of America and the Iowa State Dance Marathon.

Jade Hargrafen is the county program director for ISU Extension and Outreach in Delaware County where she previously worked as youth coordinator. In her current role she works to increase community educational programming opportunities to fulfill county agriculture needs. She graduated from the University of Iowa with
degrees in political science and environmental policy. Jade was born and raised on a beef and swine farm near Delhi, Iowa. Her passion for roles within agriculture grew through her 4-H involvement. She showed cattle, swine and various static exhibits and held leadership roles including Delaware County Pork Princess and Delaware County Fair Queen. After a summer internship with ISU Extension and Outreach, she knew she wanted to pursue a career to help others and give back to a community that helped shape her life.

**Myriam Lafrenière-Landry** resided in Quebec City, Quebec before establishing her home in Pella, Iowa in 2015. Before coming to the United States, Myriam completed a Master's degree in plant sciences from Laval University and worked ten years for the Canadian government where she developed inspection programs and stakeholder collaboration on invasive plants. Later, she supported the adoption of agriculture innovations and conservation practices by developing and leading projects on agroforestry, water quality, invasive pests, and corn fertilization. Myriam assists the ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag program as a consultant. She is passionate about growing her art business and volunteering in her community.

**Melissa O’Rourke** is an attorney and Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist and Extension Dairy Team Member for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Melissa has practiced extensively in the fields of business and estate planning, employment legal issues and agricultural commercial litigation and has worked with numerous farm and ranch families to facilitate planning for management of their farm businesses. Melissa’s particular areas of interest include farm estate and succession planning, agricultural human resource legal and management issues, farmland leasing and tenure arrangements, and working with beginning and transitioning farmers. Melissa's work with Iowa State University combines her background in education, agriculture and law as she informs and advises members of the farm and agribusiness community on an expansive array of business planning and legal topics.

**Mindy Ott** is the Story County Executive Director for the USDA-Farm Service Agency where she implements various aspects of the Farm Bill for farmers and ranchers across the county. She previously worked for the USDA-Farm Service Agency in Webster County. Mindy reached a ten-year milestone working with the Farm Service Agency. Mindy is a graduate of Buena Vista University where she completed a degree in accounting. She raises beef cattle, pigs, corn and soybeans with her husband’s family. Mindy also works with her husband on their custom round baling business. She and her husband reside in Boone County with their two boys.

**Jennifer Savits** is the enology (winemaking) extension field specialist at the Midwest Grape and Wine Industry Institute at Iowa State University. Her work involves assisting winemakers around the state and greater Midwest region with best winemaking practices, providing technical information, and improving overall wine quality through education and outreach activities. Jennie also has served as a lecturer, teaching laboratory courses in the Food Science and Human Nutrition Department and worked as a research associate for the MGWII. Jennie earned BS and MS degrees in Food Science at Iowa State. Jennie resides in Boone County with her husband and three children on a century family farm that includes row crops, a cow-calf herd and a trucking business.

**Sara Shepherd** raises purebred Charolais cattle and is a marketing consultant in central Iowa. Prior to starting her own farm business in 2012, she gained experience with the Humboldt–Dakota City Chamber of Commerce and the Eagle Grove Chamber of Commerce, as well as with her work as a Marketing Analyst for Brokers International Ltd. Sara graduated from Waldorf College with a degree in business finance and management information systems. She serves on the Adair County Extension Council and enjoys volunteering in the community for 4-H and FFA activities. Sara and her husband, Dan, continue to evolve their farming businesses in Iowa and Nebraska.
Women In Ag Leadership Conference

**Susan Tronchetti** is a business development professional and co-owner of Tronchetti & Tronchetti, Inc., a Greene County corn and soybean farming operation owned by Susan and her husband, Dan. Previously, Susan was a grain merchandiser for West Central Cooperative and an owner of a Pioneer Seed business based in Jefferson. Susan currently serves on the board of directors for several agricultural businesses, including Landus Cooperative, Land O’Lakes Executive Board Council, the Nationwide Insurance Board Council and a director of Home State Bank in Jefferson. She is skilled in risk management, customer service, sales and strategic planning. Susan is a graduate of Iowa State University with a degree in agricultural business and farm management.

**ISU EXTENSION AND OUTREACH WOMEN IN AG PROGRAM STAFF**

**Lisa Scarbrough** is a communications specialist with the Iowa State University Department of Economics, member of the ISU Extension and Outreach farm management team, and co-leader of the Women in Ag program. Lisa produces videos that showcase the successes of women working in agriculture. She also develops communication materials including posters, flyers and brochures. Working with a national team, she helped launch the Women in Agriculture Learning Network and coordinated promotion and facilitation of webinars for a national audience. Lisa received a degree in communication studies with a minor in journalism from the University of Iowa. She has twenty years of experience meeting the promotion and communication needs of ISU Extension and Outreach’s internal clients and external partners and stakeholders.

**Madeline Schultz** is a program manager with the Iowa State University Department of Economics, member of the ISU Extension and Outreach farm management team, and co-leader of the ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag program. Madeline works to develop educational programs, increase connections among women in agriculture, build the professional capacity of educators, and steward funding in order to help women improve their lives and contribute to national food security. Madeline also coordinates Iowa’s Annie’s Project courses. She contributed leadership to Annie’s Project nationally from 2008-15. Madeline began her career with ISU Extension and Outreach in 2003. She earned bachelor degrees in agribusiness and economics and a master’s degree in business administration with an interest in sustainable agriculture from Iowa State University.
Women Impacting Agriculture Honorees

Sarah Carlson

Sarah wants to fill rural church pews and school buses by helping farmers diversify their operations and protect their soil. She joined the Practical Farmers of Iowa staff in 2007 and currently serves as the Strategic Initiatives Director. Sarah transfers agronomic research about cover crops and small grains to innovative farmers through supply chain projects, articles, blogs and presentations. She listens to farmer’s concerns and seeks solutions for integrated crop and livestock production. Sarah completed her graduate studies in Sustainable Agriculture and Crop Production/Physiology though the Iowa State University Department of Agronomy. She continues to work with ISU researchers to improve cropping systems in Iowa. She also sits on the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service State Technical Advisory Committee. Recently, Sarah co-chaired the Cover Crop Working Group as part of the Conservation Initiative. In 2018, the Iowa Secretary of Agriculture presented Sarah with a Leadership in Conservation Award. Sarah teaches 3rd and 4th grade Sunday School at Oakwood Methodist Church and coordinates food for the summer vacation bible school program. She also supports her daughter’s Girl Scout troop by serving as the cookie Mom. Sarah has supported her step-son’s Boy Scout troop as the popcorn fundraising chair.

Sarah Ham

Sarah is proud to work with conservation-minded farmers as a Soil Conservationist with the USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service in Washington County. She is a leader on the southeast Iowa Soil Health Team, which focuses on promoting soil health practices and research. She also serves the southeast Iowa Geographic Information System (GIS) Team by supporting 21 NRCS offices. In addition to technical duties, Sarah finds the time to mentor new NRCS employees. Sarah is a great partner and supporter of ISU Extension and Outreach. She educates landowners at Annie’s Project courses, Agronomy in the Field for Women, Beginning and Young Farmers, and other extension programs for women and men. Sarah frequently shares her knowledge with others in the community through Women Land and Legacy, livestock associations and schools. Sarah is a 5-year board member of the Soil and Water Conservation Society where she has coordinated social media and represented the organization at national meetings. She is a volunteer for the Iowa Public Television Telethon, daily team leader for the Iowa Conservation Team RAGBRAI Tent, co-chair of the Kossuth County Economic Development Intern Committee, and board member of the Kingdom Kids Preschool.
Leslie Miller

Leslie works with farmers in a true partnership approach, financing their operations in ways that will allow them to be productive and profitable while achieving the same goal for the bank. Leslie is the Vice President and Agricultural Loan Officer at Iowa State Savings Bank. On the farm, Leslie and her husband make joint decisions and implement filter strips and rotational grazing to reduce soil erosion. Leslie co-founded the Farm Financial Standards Council, which arose after the farm crisis to produce guidelines that improve the ability of farmers, bankers and regulators to analyze farm credit. Throughout her career, Leslie held many leadership positions including chair of the Iowa Bankers Association Ag Bankers Committee and member of the Chicago Federal Reserve Advisory Board. Leslie is a graduate of Iowa State University where she continues to assist Animal Science and Economics professors in solving agricultural credit issues. She is an extraordinary community leader; volunteering with ISU Extension and Outreach - Marion County, serving as president of hospital and school boards, and co-founded Iowa Women in Agriculture. In 2018, Leslie became the second woman to receive the Jim Leach Leadership in Banking Award by the Iowa Bankers Association.

Caite Palmer

Caite mentors other young farmers on the business side of things as part of her passion to keep more farmers on the land and improve the rural economy through local foods. Caite and her husband are raising two young children along with grass-fed and grain-finished Angus cross and Normande beef cattle and Katahdin lambs on the Palmer family century farm in Northeast Iowa. She markets these products directly to consumers. Trained in culinary arts, Caite enjoys sharing farm-to-table cooking. Conservation is a priority for the family’s 300 acres of row crops, pasture, hay, prairie and pollinator CRP, woodlands and grass waterways. Caite valued the Annie’s Project course provided by ISU Extension and Outreach Allamakee County in 2017. She worked with extension professionals to establish beginning farmer and food networks. She led bookwork days and hosted field days on her farm. Caite sees ISU Extension and Outreach as putting actual people in the community to lead groups and answer questions. As the Vice-President of the Winneshiek Farmers Market Board of Directors, Caite manages relationships, leads marketing, and plans special events. She is active with Practical Farmers of Iowa and serves on the Iowa Food Hub board.
Val Plagge

Val is most proud of her husband and four young children. Working alongside her husband and being with her children as they grow is an opportunity she cherishes. Val leads the finance and marketing components of their hog, corn and soybean farm business. In 2018, Val was honored to be part of the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library’s Tall Grass to Knee High Special Exhibit and received the National Outstanding Young Farmer of America Award with her husband. Val is a December 2006 graduate of Iowa State University with a communications major and enjoys being a Franklin County 4-H communications project leader. She is an original member of a long-running women’s grain marketing group guided by ISU Extension and Outreach in Hardin County. At the Latimer Immanuel UCC Church you will see Val involved on the Christian Education Board. Val founded the Latimer Little Free Library, volunteers for Make-A-Wish in Iowa, and supports the local FFA chapter. Val educates the public about agriculture through her ‘Corn, Beans, Pigs & Kids’ blog, Common Ground, Rooted in Conversation, the National Pork Board’s #RealPigFarming, and Iowa Farm Bureau’s F.A.R.M. Team.

Margo Sievers

Margo is an advocate for lifelong learning as a retired teacher. Margo used her Master Gardener and Master Food Volunteer certifications from ISU Extension and Outreach to start two very successful businesses. She opened Sievers and Sons Gardens to teach about plants and landscapes through tours and workshops. Margo’s Not Quite Julia traveling show uses comedy to teach cooking, health, science, math, art and food safety. She volunteers in Buena Vista and Clay counties to teach 4-H, elementary school, and adult workshops on topics ranging from soils and worms, to groovy grains, to planting and cooking gourds. In 2018, Margo hosted the northwest ISU Extension and Outreach Crops Team Agronomy in the Field for women. Margo is a minister and serves on the Board of Trustees and Administration Board of her church. She contributes her leadership of Farm Bureau, Parent Education Organization, Federated Garden Club of Buena Vista County, Loess Hills Gourd Group, and Plant One Feed One. Margo is a five-year winner of the Buena Vista County Environmental Awareness Award, and the Women in Denim’s Inspiration Award. She lives on her husband’s family farm where she contributes to weed management and hauling grain.
ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Mission

To improve the quality of life in Iowa by providing research-based educational programs that:

expand agricultural business,

improve natural-resource management,

and support the community of women in agriculture.
Join us in the conversation!
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We want to hear from you!