4th ANNUAL WOMEN IN AG LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

November 30 - December 1, 2020
Hello friends!

On behalf of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the conference advisory committee, I would like to welcome you to the Fourth Annual Women in Ag Leadership Conference. We are delighted to bring women in agribusiness, women in farming, students and all interested people together in a virtual format for 2020.

The conference theme is Leadership in Unprecedented Times. I’m proud of the advisory committee’s work to bring you a conference that reflects the world we live in, today. Our remarkable speakers are ready to share leadership knowledge and skills you can apply to help you succeed in your farm or agribusiness career.

A veteran of crisis communication, Eileen Wixted, will present a workshop on Monday afternoon. She will engage the audience in preparedness activities that can help minimize business disruptions during a crisis. Miriam Erickson Brown, Chair and CEO, Anderson Erickson Dairy, keynotes our conference on Tuesday morning. She’ll be sharing her experiences of leading a food company through a global pandemic. As the Director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Kayla Lyon, will discuss the challenges and surprising trends during COVID-19 and the derecho which devastated and closed parks across the state. The Tuesday afternoon conference session focuses on nurturing diversity. Philomena Morrissey Satre, Director of Diversity + Inclusion, Land O’ Lakes Inc. will offer insights into supporting a diverse workplace. We are pleased to bring you a panel of two former Leadership Conference Advisory Committee members, Zoami Calles-Rios and Jittaun Floyd, who will share insights on working in agriculture as minorities. Our capstone speaker, Melissa O’Rourke, will help put 2020 into perspective and poise the audience to move into 2021 with grace and optimism.

Once again, we will honor Iowa’s Women Impacting Agriculture during the conference. This honor highlights and celebrates women’s unique contributions to a safe and plentiful food supply while enhancing Iowa’s agricultural systems.

The mission of the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Program is to improve the quality of life in Iowa by providing research-based educational resources and programs that expand agricultural business, improve natural resource management, and support the community of women in agriculture.
Our Leadership Conference Advisory Committee helps guide the conference activities and outcomes. The committee’s goal is to offer a women-centered program that replenishes spirits and deepens aspirations to lead within families and across the global agricultural industry.

Specifically, our conference objectives are to:

- Encourage women to believe in themselves and the power of life-long learning,
- Facilitate opportunities for connections with other women that inspire individual leadership journeys, and
- Share practical knowledge and skills that women can directly apply in their farm, rural, or agribusiness career.

We know how much you accomplish every day. That is why we are especially pleased to offer this opportunity for renewal as you network and learn with others. I would like to thank everyone who volunteered time to prepare an inspiring virtual event. Enjoy the conference!

Sincerely, Madeline Schultz

We are in awe of the excellent work you, as women in agriculture, do every day. That is why we are especially pleased to offer this opportunity for personal development as we learn and laugh together. We would like to thank everyone who volunteered time to prepare an extraordinary event for you. Enjoy the leadership conference!

Sincerely,
Madeline Schultz and Jade Hargrafen, Conference Co-Chairs
Women Impacting Agriculture is a recognition program to honor women who are making a positive difference in Iowa’s long-term vibrancy by improving economic resiliency and stability; conserving natural resources; and providing leadership to families, communities, organizations, farm businesses and agribusinesses. The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Program began the award in 2016 to recognize women for their contributions and to share their inspiring stories. Each year, Extension professionals across the state nominate extraordinary women in agriculture and honorees are selected by a committee.
2020 Women Impacting Ag Honoree - Emily Boettcher

A rare set of male beef calf triplets, Huey, Dewy and Louie, were born on Boettcher Farms last spring. Emily Boettcher enjoys showing the calves off to farm visitors while educating families about the challenges and successes of raising cattle near Iowa’s Great Lakes. “I especially like to share the beef industry with my softball buddies and their children. My friends love my cows too,” said Boettcher. As the next generation on her family farm in Dickinson County, Iowa, Emily earned the ISU Extension and Outreach 2020 Woman Impacting Agriculture honor. She was nominated for the award by Gary Wright, ISU Extension and Outreach Farm Management Field Specialist. “Emily is a major player in her family farm, both in the management decisions and sharing labor with her father. She has a long-term agriculture sustainability perspective,” Wright stated.

Sharing agriculture with others is important to Emily. The Dickinson County Farm Bureau, where she serves as Treasurer, gives her opportunities to talk about legislation, water conservation, careers in agriculture and more. “These are great people to work with. The hard thing is there is not a lot of young people. I’m more comfortable talking to them now; I realize they want to know my generation’s thoughts,” Boettcher related.

“On the Dickinson County Cattlemen’s side of things, those guys are like fathers to me,” shared Boettcher. “We have one rule – no pork on our grill,” she laughs. The group grills for 10 to 30 events each year. Emily feels good the cattle producers are recognized in the community. The money earned from larger events like Pioneer Days goes to scholarships and other local support.

Dickinson County is home to over 15,000 acres of water. The annual Blue Water Festival lets Emily talk to families from all over the state. “Our farm is part of the Big Spirit Lake watershed. People want to know if farmers are causing high nitrate levels in the lake,” explained Boettcher. She is proud her father began strip-till and no-till 20 years ago. Over the past six years, Emily has helped expand cover crop use to nearly all of the family’s crop ground.

Spirit Lake High School has a January J-Term that offers students hands-on learning and field trips to local businesses to see careers in action. “It was really cool I got the call to be a driver. I got others on board at Farm Bureau to help, too,” said Boettcher. She enjoys teaching students they don’t have to be a farmer to have a successful career in agriculture.

Her own career took a unique twist. “Criminal justice was my dream, but now it’s hard to leave my cows,” shared Boettcher. She earned a B.S. in Sociology and Criminal Justice from Northwestern College in 2009. Jobs nearby were hard to come by. As luck would have it, her Dad’s hired man retired. Emily stepped up to the plate and has been farming in partnership with her family ever since. father’s Northwest Seed business. “In farming, you need to have your hand in three or four things or you’re not going to make it,” shared Boettcher.
Northwest Seed sells Asgrow, Dekalb, and new this year, Millborn cover crop seed. Emily does the paperwork for the seed business and assists her father with sales. Not all farmers are comfortable buying seed from Emily. “Some seed customers do not want to work with a girl, I just continue to show them my experience.”

“I run the seed treater; that is my baby. Dad can run it, but not like I can,” laughs Boettcher. She adds, “I get certified through ISU Extension. Bestsy Buffington does the class every year on changes in how to calibrate the mixes and new types of seed treatments coming out.” Emily explained farmers can sometimes save money on seed treatments, depending on weather and other conditions, so she does not treat any seed until a customer requests it. To serve customers in a timely manner, she and her dad bred the heifers to calve in March, rather than April, giving them more time for seed treatments. “Dad and I found we can do a lot of this ourselves if the timing is right, but weather is always a factor,” says Boettcher.

Emily enjoys fishing trips with her father and going to Mexico with her parents and older brother. Emily’s grandfather died from cancer when her father was a young man. “Then Dad got cancer in ’09 when I started working here; he couldn’t work,” stated Boettcher. In 2014, Emily was diagnosed with chronic Lyme’s Disease and could not work for six months. “We’ve been blessed. We have learned that vacation time is important; we’re a tight-knit group,” shares Boettcher. Her mother gets a lot of credit for the farm’s success even though she does not work with cows or drive tractors. “Mom is the one who feeds us and keeps us going,” says Boettcher. Emily further explains, “She is the in-between if my Dad and I are butting heads, she’s the mediator that brings us back to reality.”

In a year filled with a global pandemic and other stressors, Emily prioritized spending time with her friends in state slow-pitch softball. “I hit a homerun to help win the championship game.

My whole team freaked out, the fence was 300 feet, it was the highlight of my year,” shared Boettcher. Emily has one piece of winning advice for other women in agriculture. “If you find something you love to do, don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it,” stated Boettcher.
2020 Women Impacting Ag Honoree – Laurie Johnson

Starting from a young age, Laurie Johnson was involved in agriculture through her family’s acreage and 4-H. After marrying her husband, Phil, 22 years ago, she became even more active in the agriculture industry. Today, Laurie’s activities focus on record keeping, machinery operations, and grain marketing for their Wright County, Iowa farm. She is also a leader in her community, serving extensively on cooperative and church boards. Laurie’s exceptional leadership earned her the ISU Extension and Outreach 2020 Women Impacting Agriculture honor. “Laurie Johnson is a talented farmer and farm manager who has demonstrated outstanding leadership skills; she is very active in her community and has a positive influence on people she has worked with,” stated Kelvin Leibold, her nominator and ISU Extension and Outreach Farm Management Field Specialist.

“Laurie is truly a lifelong learner and looks for opportunities to improve her skills,” described Leibold. As a lifelong learner, Johnson has taken on many opportunities to improve her grain marketing skills and abilities. ISU Extension and Outreach has been a good resource. Laurie was a founding member of a local Women Marketing Grain group over ten years ago. She participated in Annie’s Project, Managing for Today and Tomorrow, and Women Marketing Grain courses.

Over the years, Johnson developed skills, strategies, and techniques she enjoys sharing with others. Co-hosting a north-central Iowa grain marketing workshop two different years gave Laurie a chance to share her passions and knowledge with other women in the industry.

She presented at the 2017 ISU Extension and Outreach conference on grain marketing and demonstrated spreadsheets she has developed to track costs, breakeven prices and returns to storage with the Women Marketing Grain group.

Not only is Johnson involved in learning, sharing, and decision making of grain marketing, but she is also very involved in her community. She is currently serving on the board of directors of Gold-Eagle Cooperative. “Her leadership skills proved to be very valuable as the North Central Cooperative and Gold-Eagle Cooperative merged,” stated Leibold. Laurie represented an 11-state region on the Resolutions Committee for CHS Cooperative to help bring the voices of farmers to policy makers in Washington D.C.
Giving back to her community is important to Laurie. She served the Trinity Lutheran Church as board secretary for 11 years. Currently, she is leading a fundraising campaign for an addition to the church building. She can also be found volunteering at the mobile food pantry to help meet the needs of local residents. Laurie also serves as the Wright County clerk for the Belmond Rural Fire Department and served two years as president of a New Mexico condominium association board.

As a big supporter of conservation work, Laurie is excited to be a newly elected Soil and Water Conservation District Commissioner for Wright County. She and her husband implemented buffer strips and grass waterways on their own farm, as well as utilizing the USDA Conservation Reserve Program.

As a woman who is actively involved in farming and her community, Laurie demonstrates true leadership within the agricultural industry and makes an impact on her rural community.
2020 Women Impacting Ag Honoree – Elaine Utesch

Elaine Utesch believes it is extremely important consumers know where their food comes from. Elaine’s strong advocacy for agriculture is one reason she earned the ISU Extension and Outreach 2020 Women Impacting Agriculture honor. She was nominated by Mary Tuttle, ISU Extension and Outreach Cherokee County Director. As a partner in her family’s Triple U Ranch located in Woodbury County, Iowa, Elaine hosts everyone from school groups to international trade delegations on their farm. “The whole gate-to-plate story is so much different than it used to be. I’m hoping people understand the cattle we produce here, we raise in a responsible, sustainable manner,” stated Utesch. She is proud her family earned the Environmental Stewardship Award in 2000 from the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association.

Elaine loves to share her passion for agriculture with the local community and even hosted the national Today Show’s producer and film crew for a Farm to Fork segment. She and her family host tours for the Iowa Department of Economic Development including groups from Germany, Mexico, Japan, China, and South Korea. Another messaging effort the Triple U Ranch, LLC participated in was a commercial for HyVee’s meat advertising that was led by Tyson.

Through the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Elaine is a trained Master of Beef Advocacy and Beef Spokesperson. Working with the Iowa Cattlemen’s Association, she and her family were featured in several of the Beef It’s What’s for Dinner commercials as well as being part of the rebranding of Beef It’s What’s for Dinner called Rethink the Ranch. Elaine wants people to understand her family cares about other families. “The cattle that go out of here to feed people all over the United States are the same cattle that I put on the Christmas dinner table for my children and grandchildren to eat, your family is just as important to us as our family is,” Utesch said.

Teaching is a lifelong passion for Elaine. She was a high school home economics teacher for 23 years before resigning to work on the ranch. “I think by being an educator [and farmer], kids that came into my classroom got a real farms, real foods kind of background on things so that they didn’t have some crazy notion,” shared Utesch.

Elaine served as a 4-H leader and superintendent for the Woodbury County Fair for 33 years. She started in the home economics department before becoming the overall 4-H building superintendent and then shifted to the overall livestock superintendent. From 1991 to 2015, she led the 4-H and FFA livestock auctions, raising nearly $80,000 each year for youth exhibitors yearly. Elaine served on the ISU Extension and Outreach Woodbury County Extension Council.
Creating opportunities for people to ask questions and learn about the sustainable practices the vast majority of farmers use every day to produce the food people consume in their homes and restaurants is Elaine’s major focus in the agriculture industry. “Elaine has proven how much farming has shaped her life and continues to show that love of the farm life to her children and grandchildren. I am amazed at how much this town girl that I grew up with has made such an impact on agriculture and other women in Ag,” shared Tuttle.

Elaine advises other women in agriculture to be innovative. “You can tell a lot of really good stories about the way it used to be, but I don’t see anyone giving up their smartphone or their computer because we didn’t used to have those. We pull ourselves into new technologies, new research – and stay current. You just can’t NOT stay current and stay viable as a business,” related Utesch.
Daniel J. Robison began his tenure as the Endowed Dean’s Chair of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Iowa State University in January 2019. He also serves as director of the Iowa Agriculture and Home Economics Experiment Station. Following a national search, he was announced as the 11th dean in the history of Iowa State’s agricultural college in October 2018.

Robison came to Iowa State from West Virginia University, where he served 2012-2019 as the dean of the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design. During his tenure, the Davis College achieved record student enrollment and retention while adding several new teaching and research facilities, and programmatic initiatives. Prior to that position, Robison served on the faculty at North Carolina State University for 16 years, where he directed the Hardwood Research Cooperative working with forest products industries and agencies across the South. He completed his tenure at NC State as associate dean of research in the College of Natural Resources, with responsibilities that also included service, international and strategic programming. His primary teaching responsibilities were courses in forestry and natural resources, and forest science. Robison, a forester and forest entomologist by discipline, has published and presented, and trained graduate students in the areas of forest entomology and pest management, silviculture of natural hardwoods, biomass-bioenergy plantation systems, agroforestry and clonal forestry. His international experience includes spending two years in West Africa as a consultant and volunteer for the West Africa Rice Development Association, African Development Bank and U.S. Peace Corps and Agency for International Development. He also has done field work in countries that include Canada, Myanmar, Israel and South Africa.

Robison earned a doctorate in entomology from the University of Wisconsin at Madison in 1993. He earned a master’s degree in silviculture and forest influences in 1986 and a bachelor’s degree in forestry in 1982, both from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry-Syracuse. He was a Fellow of the American Council on Education 2007-2008. Robison is a native of New Jersey. He and his wife Julie, a native of Wisconsin, have two daughters.
Eileen Wixted

A nationally recognized strategic communications and crisis management veteran with core competencies in the financial services, nuclear energy, agribusiness, and health care industries. As a strategist and communication trainer, she has helped clients navigate brand damaging issues as well as coached them to face hostile media interviews and government investigations.

An experienced executive coach, Eileen prepares clients for investor conferences, shareholder meetings, quarterly earnings conferences and congressional testimony. She has prepped executives for interviews with national and international news outlets, including TODAY, MSNBC, Squawk Box, Good Morning America, The Wall Street Journal, Forbes and many others. Companies and organizations across the country turn to Eileen for expert communication counsel that drives business goals as they face sensitive issues.

Eileen uses the same business-driven approach while assisting professionals working in nuclear energy, manufacturing, finance, health care and non-profit organizations. She provides counsel to two-thirds of the commercially-owned and operated nuclear power plants in North America as well as a significant number of the nation’s hospitals.

Eileen is the principal of Wixted & Company and was named the Business Record’s 2016 Women Business owner of the Year. She also served as interim senior vice president of communications & government affairs for Advocate Health Care, the largest health care system in Illinois.

Prior to Wixted & Company, Eileen spent more than a decade as a broadcast journalist receiving an Emmy Award. Eileen is a graduate of Michigan State University with a degree in mass communications. She is a native of Brooklyn, New York and the mother of four children.
Speakers

Jittaun M. Floyd

Floyd lived and travelled extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East. Her professional career included inventory management, trading, agricultural economics, general management and executive management across the U.S. and abroad. The companies Floyd worked for include Bell Helicopter International, Tehran, Iran; Lockheed Missiles and Space Co., San Jose, CA; Cargill Inc., Minneapolis, MN (9 locations); R.J. O’Brien, Chicago, IL; and Valero Energy Co, San Antonio, TX (Hartley, IA location.) Floyd’s education both domestic and abroad coupled with her professional work experience in both rural and urban locations gave her a unique view of global markets and how people must farm, trade, live and get along. She currently lives on 7 acres in Earlham, Iowa where she enjoys occasional agricultural management and consulting in retirement. Floyd earned a B.A. in Economics from the University of California – Davis in 1980.

Kayla Lyon

native of rural Decorah in northeast Iowa where she grew up on a family farm milking dairy cows. Since moving to central Iowa, Kayla has worked in government affairs for the dairy industry and the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives. Kayla worked for Governor Branstad as his agriculture and natural resource policy advisor and then made the transition with Governor Reynolds. After serving in that role, Governor Reynolds asked Kayla to serve as her legislative liaison until she appointed her in July 2019 as the director of the DNR. Kayla is serving as the eighth director of the DNR and is thrilled to serve in this role, combining her agriculture background with her passion and love for natural resources. Kayla and her family enjoy spending time at their family cabin camping, fishing, boating, hiking, horseback riding and relaxing around the campfire. She currently resides in rural Ames with her husband and two daughters.
Melissa O’Rourke

Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialists and Extension Dairy Team Member for ISU Extension and Outreach. Also, an attorney, Melissa has practiced extensively in the fields of business and estate planning, employment legal issues, and agriculture commercial litigation and has worked on numerous farm and ranch families to facilitate planning for management of their farm businesses. Melissa’s particular areas of interest included 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.

Zoami Calles-Rios Sosa

Moved to Iowa at age 11 from Veracruz, Mexico. Her family owns and operates Crooked Creek, a farm located in rural central Iowa. Together, they produce and sell a variety of fruits and vegetables at farmers markets around Iowa and in Omaha, Nebraska. Zoami has over 17 years of experience on the field selling at markets. She is living in Webster City, Iowa with her husband where she has been involved with ACE Community Center as the board president and member. ACE is a center that specializes in helping new immigrants assimilate into the community. She also hosted a Spanish-speaking radio hour on the local radio station. Currently, Zoami is studying a Civil Engineering degree at Iowa State.
Philomena Morrissey Satre  
Director of Diversity & Inclusion and External Strategic Partnerships

Philomena serves as Director of Diversity & Inclusion and External Strategic Partnerships. She joined Land O’Lakes June 2017, bringing more than 30 years of human resource experience in diversity and inclusion, community relations, work life and wellbeing. Before joining Land O’Lakes, she worked at Wells Fargo & Company. Her previous roles included VP of Organizational Effectiveness Development, Diversity and Inclusion; Community Outreach Consultant; and Senior HR Consultant.

Philomena has extensive experience in developing and implementing diversity strategies, including internal initiatives and community-focused pipelines. Previously, Philomena participated in a Middle East Fellows project, in partnership with Hamline University and the U.S. State Department and traveled to the Middle East as a part of the peace and economic development project.

Philomena joined the Board of Directors for the Cookie Cart organization. She co-leads the Leadership Advisory Board for SHIFT and formerly served on the Board of SHIFT (nonprofit focused on people in midlife) for 8 years. Philomena serves on the Agriculture D and I Consortium; and co-chairs the Twin Cities D&I Roundtable. Philomena was recently named to the Minnesota Workforce Citizen Commission on Aging. She previously served on the Minneapolis Workforce Council, the Executive Leadership Council for Honoring Women Worldwide, the Goodwill Easter Seals, Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES), Lifeworks, HIRED and Resource Inc. Advisory Boards. She also co-led the 2020 Women on Boards initiative for Minnesota.

Philomena has received numerous awards, including AARP/Pollen 50 over 50, the Minneapolis Business Journal’s Woman Change Maker and Minority Advocate, Minnesota Business The (Real) Power 50 Award and the University of Phoenix Diversity Leadership Award. Philomena has an MA in Organizational Leadership from St. Catherine University and a BA in Public Administration and Political Science from the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse. Philomena is an Adjunct Professor at the University of St Catherine in the Master of Organizational Leadership Graduate Program.
Miriam Erickson Brown

Miriam Erickson Brown as spent over three decades working in the family business, Anderson Erickson Dairy (AE Dairy). Her first job at AE was working on Saturdays during high school taking store orders over the phone. Miriam graduated from Wheaton College, in Wheaton Illinois, and after a brief stint in an entry level position at a publishing house in the suburbs of Chicago, she joined AE as a marketing specialist. For the next few decades, she worked on and held various marketing, sales, distribution and management positions until she was named President and CEO in 2006.

Early in her career, Miriam made it a goal to immerse herself in all things “dairy” and deepen her leadership skills. This conscious commitment involved a long history of serving on and leading dairy industry boards where she could be a voice for the smaller independent dairies, like AE, and learn from the best industry leaders. She was selected by the Secretary of Agriculture to join the GOT MILK? board where she has served for 25 years in a variety of leadership positions. Miriam also led the: International Dairy Foods Association and Milk Industry Foundation Board as Chair. In 2007, she was the recipient of IDFA’s Soaring Eagle Award for extraordinary service in the dairy industry.

Miriam is also committed to giving back to her community and has been active on many boards including: Keep Iowa Beautiful, Youth Homes of Mid America and the Greater Des Moines Partnership. More recently, she was honored with the Leadership Legacy Award from the Iowa Chapter of the (NAWBO) National Association of Women Business Owners.

Miriam enjoys speaking about the health benefits of milk as well as creating (and of course, tasting new AE yogurt flavors). She and her husband, Gary, live in Urbandale with their 2 golden retrievers, Audrey and Sunny.
Jennifer Bentley

Jennifer Bentley is a Dairy Field Specialist for ISU Extension and Outreach in NE Iowa. Her base office is in Decorah, Iowa and she currently works and develops educational programming with producers in 10 surrounding counties. Jennifer grew up on a dairy farm in North Central Iowa, where the 3rd and 4th generation family is operating the dairy farm today. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Dairy Science and Masters of Agriculture Degree both from Iowa State University. She works closely with dairy producers, providing them with information regarding facility design, calf management, and overall dairy herd management. She enjoys educating the public about modern dairy practices and plays an integral role in telling the Iowa Dairy Story, a program to educate consumers about the importance of the dairy industry in Iowa. Jennifer is married and has 2 children Owen and Addison.

Cora Carpenter

Cora Carpenter is a senior at Iowa State majoring in Agricultural Communications. Cora was raised on her family’s dairy farm in southwest Wisconsin. She has been an ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag program student assistant for three years. She is involved in a variety of clubs and organizations on campus including the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow (ACT), Dairy Science Club, and Sigma Alpha, which is a professional woman in agriculture sorority. Cora has interned with the University of Wisconsin-Extension as a 4-H Intern, with Fair Oaks Farms as an Adventure Guide Intern, and with ST Genetics as a Marketing Intern.
Sara Clausen
Sarah 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.

Jade Hargrafen
Jade Hargrafen currently serves as the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Delaware county program director. In her current role, she works to increase community educational programming opportunities to fulfill county agriculture needs. Growing up on a diversified livestock and row crop operation taught her the importance of agriculture early on in life. She attended the University of Iowa and received degrees in Political Science and Environmental Policy. Today she continues to stay active in her community and family farm operation but in a new role, bringing new research, education, and technology onto the farm.
Morgan Hibbs

Graduated in May 2017 from Iowa State University with a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Agriculture and Life Science Education/Communications. While at ISU, Morgan held internships with Iowa Farm Bureau and ISU Women in Ag. Morgan has since moved back to Johnson County where she is advocating for agriculture through her position as the Education Outreach Coordinator for Linn County Farm Bureau. Morgan and her husband, Tyler, live in Tiffin and are expecting their first child.

Dr. Keri Jacobs

An associate professor and extension economist in the Department of Economics at Iowa State University and holds the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Endowed Economics Professorship. She received a B.A. in economics and business administration from Coe College in 1996 and a Ph.D. in economics from North Carolina State University in 2010. In her role at ISU, she is an undergraduate educator, researcher, and extension specialist with a focus on cooperatives. Dr. Jacobs provides training and applied analysis on the cooperative model, governance, and strategic financial and equity management. Her goal through extension is to enhance the effectiveness of cooperative organizations and support their efforts in managing sustainable organizations.
Myriam Lafrenerie-Landry

Resided in Quebec City, Quebec before establishing her home in Pella, Iowa in 2015. Before coming the United States, Myriam completed her master’s degree in plant sciences from Laval University and worked 10 years for the Canadian government where she developed inspection programs and stakeholders 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 currently serves as Watershed Coordinator for the Mahaska County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Mindy Ott

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 country. She previously worked for the USDA-Farm Service Agency in Webster County and has been with the Farm Service Agency for over 10 years. Mindy is a graduate of Buena Vista University where she completed a degree in accounting. She raised beef cattle, pigs, corn, and soybeans with her husband on their custom round baling business. She and her husband reside in Boone County with their two boys.
Melissa O’Rourke

Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialists and Extension Dairy Team Member for ISU Extension and Outreach. Also, an attorney, Melissa has practiced extensively in the fields of business and estate planning, employment legal issues, and agriculture commercial litigation and has worked on numerous farm and ranch families to facilitate planning for management of their farm businesses. Melissa’s particular areas of interest included 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.

Lisa Scarbrough

Communications Specialist with Iowa State University Department of Economics and Extension and Outreach. Lisa co-leads a Women in Agriculture program. She produces videos, designs marketing materials, coordinates promotion, manages websites, creates program impact reports and publishes an online newsletter. Lisa works with Extension professionals across the state to promote educational courses, workshops and conferences for women. She leads the Women Impacting Agriculture recognition program. Lisa earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Communication Studies with a minor in Journalism from the University of Iowa.
Madeline Schultz

Women in Agriculture Program Manager with Iowa State University Department of Economics and Extension and Outreach. She designs educational programs, increases connections among women, builds the professional capacity of educators, and stewards program funding in order to improve the lives of women and their families and enhance agricultural sustainability. Madeline coordinates farm management courses for women as well as an annual leadership conference. She serves on the national board of directors for Annie’s Project – Education for Farm Women. Madeline received the 2019 USDA Research, Education, and Economics Undersecretary’s Award in recognition of her team’s innovative courses, conferences, videos and tours impacting the lives of women in agriculture who are key stakeholders in the production of safe food. Madeline earned a Master of Science degree in business administration from Iowa State University.

Amy Tlach

Amy Tlach has most definitely earned a reputation as a woman impacting agriculture. She believes in the agriculture of today and the promise and potential of the industry’s future. With her husband, she owns Mid-Iowa Seeds where she lives the mission of improving customer yields and delivering top notch customer service. As a past full-time employee and current contract employee of the Iowa Soybean Association, she works to expand opportunities for Iowa’s soybean farmers. Amy has served her county for over 16 years as a member of the Warren County Extension Council, the last eight years as chairperson. She was instrumental in passing the Warren County Extension and Outreach tax referendum in 2015. As Warren County Fair Board superintendent, Amy positively impacts the youth and general public in Warren County. And as a mom, Amy is a role model for two girls who will be leaders of the next generation of agriculture.
Kitt Tovar

Kitt Tovar is the Staff Attorney at ISU’s Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation. She focuses on agricultural law including property law, environmental law, regulatory law, and farm policy. Prior to joining CALT, Kitt worked as an undergraduate research assistant in the Animal Production department at the University of Lleida in Catalonia, Spain, and interned with the international trade department for the National Pork Producers Council in Washington, D.C. While in law school, Kitt worked at the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation. Kitt earned her B.S. in Animal Science from Iowa State University and her J.D., with honors, from Drake University.

Sue Tronchetti

Sue 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, Nationwide Insurance Board Council, and is 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.
“LEADERSHIP IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES”

Virtual Event

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Fourth Annual Women in Ag Leadership Conference

November 30 to December 1, 2020

Monday Afternoon, November 30, 2020 – Crisis Communication Workshop

12:45 pm  Virtual conference rooms open for networking and conversation
1:00 pm    Session One Begins
            Welcome; Madeline Schultz, Manager, ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag
1:10 pm    Crisis Communication Fundamentals; Presented by Eileen Wixted, Principal, Wixted & Company
1:50 pm    Guided Discussion with Attendees in Breakout Rooms
2:10 pm    Crisis Communication Scenarios; Presented by Eileen Wixted, Principal, Wixted & Company
2:50 pm    Guided Discussion with Attendees in Breakout Rooms
3:05 pm    Crisis Communication Case-Study; Presented by Eileen Wixted, Principal, Wixted & Company
3:25 pm    Closing; Mindy Ott, Executive Director Story County, USDA Farm Service Agency
3:30 pm    Session One Concludes

Virtual conference rooms open for networking and conversation
Tuesday Morning, December 1, 2020 – Leadership in Action

9:15 am  Virtual conference rooms open for networking and conversation
9:30 am  Session Two Begins  
Welcome; Madeline Schultz, Manager, ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag
9:35 am  (Invited) Welcome, Daniel Robison, Dean, ISU College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
9:50 am  Keynote: Milk Life; Miriam Erickson Brown, Chair and CEO, Anderson Erickson Dairy
10:45 am  Guided Discussion with Attendees in Breakout Rooms
11:00 am  Presentation Title; Kayla Lyon, Director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and ISU CALS Alumni
11:40 am  Women Impacting Agriculture Recognition
11:55 am  Closing; Myriam Lafreniere-Landry, Watershed Coordinator, Mahaska County Soil and Water Conservation District
12:00 pm  Session Two Concludes  
Virtual conference rooms open for networking and conversation

Tuesday Afternoon, December 1, 2020 – Nurturing Diversity

12:45 pm  Virtual conference room open for networking and conversation
1:00 pm  Session Three Begins  
Welcome; Madeline Schultz, Manager, ISU Extension and Outreach Women in Ag
1:05 pm  Creating Space for Diversity and Inclusion in Agriculture; Presented by Philomena Morrissey Satre, Director of Diversity + Inclusion, Land O’ Lakes Inc.
1:50 pm  Guided Discussion with Attendees in Breakout Rooms
2:05 pm  Gaining Empathy through Shared Experiences; Panelist - Jittaun Floyd, Retired Grain Trader; Panelist - Zoami Calles-Rios Sosa, Farmer and Iowa State University Engineering Student; and Moderator – Ebby Luvaga, Teaching Professor, Iowa State University Department of Economics
2:50 pm  Capstone: Leadership with Grace in Unprecedented Times; Melissa O’Rourke, Farm and Agribusiness Specialist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
3:25 pm  Closing; Cora Carpenter, Iowa State University Agricultural Communications Student
3:30 pm  Session Three Concludes  
Virtual conference rooms open for networking and conversation
“LEADERSHIP IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES”

Session One Descriptions

Crisis Communications Workshop; Eileen Wixted

The Crisis Communication Presentation discusses the fundamentals of media and crisis communication, through the lens of our current COVID-19 environment, beginning with the definition of a crisis versus an issue or a controversy. Participants will learn how the media works, how it has evolved in recent years and how the 24/7 news cycle changes the way a story is developed. The program touches on guidelines for interacting with the media during a crisis and why crises gain so much attention from key stakeholders and the media.

The session will then move into providing crisis communication skills for real-life scenarios, which the participants will be able to use when they return to their jobs. We will examine the importance of audience analysis, the four phases of a crisis, the concentric circles of influence and the critical relationship between trust and need for every organization. This will help participants to develop an understanding of how to build a solid message that resonates with stakeholders. Other key learning elements include handling Q&A and managing the message through bridging.

The presenter will use real-life experiences and case-study video examples to help illustrate key points. Participants will have the opportunity to work in groups on a crisis communication exercise during the session. In addition, participants will leave with a set of tools they can use to help them with crisis communication outside the session.

Session Two Descriptions

Keynote - Milk Life; Miriam Erickson Brown

Miriam Erickson Brown will give a “behind the curtain” look into a 90-year-old family owned dairy business in a rapidly changing industry. Her personal story includes building on a strong foundation with a new leadership team, navigating professional and personal challenges, and driving change in a traditional industry. Miriam believes continual improvement applies not only to the dairy production facility, but to our own lives as well. “As a leader, I can have a tremendous impact in my little corner of the world of dairy, and so can you,” she states.

Navigating the Unexpecteds of 2020; Kayla Lyon

It’s been a very unique and unusual year for EVERYONE! Learn how Kayla Lyon navigated her leadership role at the Iowa DNR during a global pandemic and a derecho. Hear about the surprisingly positive impacts and trends from Covid-19. Learn how she and her team responded to the severe weather in August that uprooted the landscapes of some state parks and how the State Forest Nursery is helping residents and cities start to rebuild their tree population.
Women Impacting Agriculture Recognition

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is honoring two amazing women in 2020. These Women Impacting Agriculture are creating a more sustainable Iowa by improving economic resiliency and stability; conserving natural resources; and influencing their communities. We look forward to announcing the honorees and sharing their inspiring stories.

Session Three Descriptions

Creating Space for Diversity and Inclusion in Agriculture; Philomena Morrissey Satre

At Land O’ Lakes, diversity and inclusion is vital to their success and core to who they are as a cooperative business. Morrissey Satre brings more than 30 years of human resources experience to her roles within the company. She’ll explain why diverse workforces create better customer connections, outperform those with less diversity, and lead to greater innovation and creativity. She’ll discuss the pillars of diversity and inclusion and how to empower others.

Empathy Through Shared Experiences; Panelists: Jittaun Floyd and Zoami Calles-Rios Sosa, Moderator: Ebby Luvaga

From Germany to Iran to Mexico, our panelists bring a global perspective to Iowa. The rich experiences and talents of Calles-Rios Sosa and Floyd contribute to the vibrancy of our state’s rural economy and communities. A successful grain trader, Floyd rose through the leadership ranks in white corporate America, making tough decisions and reaching out to build relationships along the way. A senior in Civil Engineering at Iowa State University, Calles-Rios Sosa raises and markets vegetables with her family. As the board President of All Cultures Equal, she helps other first-generation Americans create their own fulfilling lives in Iowa. For Calles-Rios Sosa and Floyd, their networks and sphere of influence runs deep. Hear their personal stories and heartfelt messages to gain new insights into championing racial and cultural diversity in Iowa.

Leading with Grace in Unprecedented Times; Melissa O’Rourke

As we bring the women in ag leadership conference to a close, Melissa O’Rourke will help us pull together the messages gleaned from our presenters and conversations. She will help us think about moving forward with grace and strength in unprecedented times.