Hello Friends!

On behalf of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the conference advisory committee, I wish to welcome you to the 2018 Women in Ag Leadership Conference. We are excited to bring together women in agribusiness, women in farming, students, and others interested in women’s leadership.

This year’s conference theme is “The Conversations of Leadership.” Our keynote and capstone speakers highlight how important one 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. We even have a workshop to help you communicate your personal brand.

In response to feedback from last year, we added a Women Impacting Agriculture reception for everyone to enjoy during the morning break, as well as networking activities to help you meet new people. As requested, we 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 wish to thank everyone who volunteered her time to prepare for a successful event.

Enjoy the conference!

Madeline Schulte
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Women in Ag Program Manager
CONFERENCE AGENDA

Monday, November 26, 2017

12:30 pm  Onsite check-in begins

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

3:30 pm  Networking and refreshments

4:30 pm  Workshop
  • Building and Marketing Brand YOU – Laura Cunningham, Marketing Manager, Latham Seeds; and Kilah Hemesath, Marketing Specialist, Latham Seeds

6:30 pm  Networking Dinner
  • Networking Activity
  • Dinner Remarks

7:30 pm  Closing

Tuesday, November 27, 2018

7:30 am  Onsite check-in begins

7:30 am  Networking and refreshments

8:30 am  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
    o Sarah Carlson – Polk County
    o Sarah Ham – Washington County
    o Leslie Miller – Marion County
    o Caite Palmer – Winnebago County
    o Val Plagge – Franklin County
    o Margo Sievers – Buena Vista County
9:45 am  Networking and refreshments
9:45 am  Women Impacting Agriculture Reception, everyone welcome

10:15 am  **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 am  **Networking Luncheon**

- Networking Activity
- Luncheon Remarks

12:30 pm  **Concurrent Session B**

Session B1: Panel: Leading our Agricultural Organizations – Moderated by Jennie 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 (Repeated from 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 (Repeated from Session A)

1:45 pm  Networking and refreshments

2:15 pm  **General Session Two**

- Panel: Career Conversations: Perspectives from Agricultural Cooperatives – Moderated by Sue Tronchetti, Board Member, Landus 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 pm Closing

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

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 Session Descriptions

General Session One

Keynote  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 Session B

Session A1  Panel: Leading our Agricultural Organizations – 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 – 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.

**GUEST SPEAKER BIOS**

**Monday Guest Speaker Bios**

**Workshop: Brand YOU, Your Personal Marketing Plan**

**Laura Cunningham** is 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 Guest Speaker Bios**

**Keynote: 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.

**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 - **Jennie Savits**, Enologist, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach  
Panelist – **Jenni Peters**, Member, National Beef Board  
Panelist - **Jolene Riessen**, Board Member, Iowa Corn Growers Association  
Panelist - **Jen Sorenson**, Board Member, Iowa Pork Producers Board  
Panelist - **Anne Zwink**, Registered Apprenticeship Program Committee, Iowa Wine Growers Association

**Panel: Career Conversations: Perspectives from Agricultural Cooperatives**

Moderator – **Sue Tronchetti**  
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 has served in positions with increasing responsibility in a variety of industries including retail distribution, manufacturing and printing. Carla has her Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management.

Panelist - Laura Sangwin is the Human Resources Manager at First Cooperative Association in Cherokee, IA. She graduated from ISU in 2000 with a major 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: 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.