

# Ag Innovation



Bringing new technology, knowledge and opportunity to agriculture.

**FEBRUARY 18, 2021 • VIRTUAL MEETING**

**9am to 11:15am [morning session]**

**1:30pm to 3:30pm [afternoon session]**

## Program...

- 9:00 am CST Welcome: Tony Simpson, Business Development, TechAccel
- 9:15 am CST Keynote: Carl Casale, Senior Agricultural Partner, Ospraie Management, LLC, "The Tipping Point: Food Systems of The Future"
- 9:45 am CST Academic Panel: Promising Projects in the Pipeline Moderated by Nikki Hall, Area Sales Leader, Corteva Agriscience  
Panelists:
- Dr. Bob Hutkins, Professor of Food Science & Technology, University of Nebraska - Lincoln
  - Kevin Kimle, Director - Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative, Iowa State University
  - Dr. Jared Decker, Associate Professor of Animal Science & Wurdack Chair of Animal Genomics, University of Missouri
- 10:30 am CST Entrepreneur Panel: New to Market Technology Moderated by Gary Wheeler, CEO, Missouri Soybean Association  
Panelists:
- Matt Crisp, CEO, Benson Hill
  - Karsten Temme, CEO & Co-Founder, PivotBio
  - Naeem Zafar, CEO, TeleSense
- 11:15 am CST Meeting Break
- 1:30 pm CST Welcome Back: Mike Rohlfson, Chief Commercial Officer, TechAccel
- 1:45 pm CST Venture Capital Panel: Financing New Initiatives Moderated by Chris Simpson, Shareholder, Polsinelli PC  
Panelists:
- Renee Vassilos, Director of Agriculture Innovation, The Nature Conservancy
  - Kerryann Kocher, CEO, Vytelle
  - Spencer Stensrude, Executive Director, Ag Ventures Alliance
- 2:30 pm CST Sustainability Panel: Searching for Long-Term Solutions Moderated by Gardner Hatch, Public Relations Supervisor, Woodruff  
Panelists:
- David Darr, Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer, Dairy Farmers of America
  - Dr. Jason Clay, Senior Vice President – Markets, World Wildlife Fund
- 3:00 pm CST Closing Keynote: John Niemann, President, Protein Ingredients & International, Cargill Meat Solutions
- 3:30 pm CST Adjourn

Produced & Hosted by

**THE Agricultural  
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## Opening Speaker...



**Carl Casale, Senior Agricultural Partner, Ospraie Management, LLC**

Carl Casale serves as the Senior Agricultural Partner at Ospraie Management, LLC and is focused on identifying and investing in the next generation of agricultural production technologies. Carl spent twenty-six years working for Monsanto Company, starting as a sales representative in 1984 and after several sales, marketing, business development, and business leadership roles concluded his tenure as Chief Financial Officer. He went on to serve as CEO and President of CHS, Inc. for seven years. CHS is the largest farmer-owned cooperative in the United States.

## Closing Speaker...



**John Niemann, President, Protein Ingredients & International, Cargill Meat Solutions**

John Niemann joined Cargill Meat Solutions Sales and Marketing department in Wichita, Kansas, in 2001. He served in several key marketing and sales positions of increasing responsibility before being named Vice President of the Sales and Marketing team. In 2010, John was named Vice President and General Manager of Cargill Beef's Fresno facility where he directed the day to day operations of the plant and its almost 1,000 employees. In 2013, John returned to Cargill Meat Solutions corporate headquarters to become President and Business Unit Leader of Cargill Food Distribution. In 2015 John was named President and Business Unit Leader for Cargill Turkey & Cooked Meats. Currently John is leading the Protein Ingredients & International business channel.



## Panel Discussions...

### Academic Panel Promising Projects in the Pipeline



**Dr. Bob Hutkins, Professor of Food Science & Technology, University of Nebraska - Lincoln**

Professor Bob Hutkins is the Khem Shahani Professor of Food Microbiology in the Food Science and Technology Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The Hutkins Lab studies bacteria important in human health and in fermented foods. His group is particularly interested in: (1) identifying factors affecting persistence of probiotic bacteria in the gastrointestinal tract; and (2) how combinations of pro- and prebiotics (synbiotics) can improve human health.



**Kevin Kimle, Director - Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative, Iowa State University**

Kevin currently serves as the Rastetter Chair of Agricultural Entrepreneurship at Iowa State University, Director of the Agricultural Entrepreneurship Initiative, and Teaching Professor in the Department of Economics. He is also co-founder and co-director of the Ag Startup Engine, an investment fund and mentoring platform based in the Iowa State University Research Park.



**Dr. Jared Decker, Professor of Animal Science & State Beef Extension Specialist, University of Missouri**

Jared Decker is an associate professor in the University of Missouri Division of Animal Science. Jared is working to help stakeholders in the beef industry better understand the rapidly changing genetic technologies. His research focuses on understanding the history of cattle breeds, improving the accuracy and breadth of genomic tests, and creating genomic tools to match cattle to their environment. He is active on social media and his website A Steak in Genomics.

### Entrepreneur Panel New to Market Technology



**Matt Crisp, CEO, Benson Hill**

Matt Crisp is an entrepreneur, executive and former venture capitalist who is passionate about connecting technology and business with purpose to deliver global impact. Matt is a lifelong learner who started his career in venture capital, where he grew into a partner role and worked directly with and within emerging companies across biotechnology and other technology-driven fields.



**Karsten Temme, CEO & Co-Founder, PivotBio**

Driven by a passionate belief in the power of science and the desire to create meaningful change, Karsten Temme, Ph.D., has focused his work on improving farmer economics. Currently CEO and co-founder of Pivot Bio, Karsten and his team have developed a microbial nitrogen fertilizer that improves farmer outcomes without environmental downsides of chemical fertilizer.



**Naeem Zafar, CEO, TeleSense**

Naeem Zafar is a serial entrepreneur and currently serves as the co-founder and CEO of TeleSense, an IoT (Internet of Things) company creating real-time wireless sensing and predictive analytics solutions for the stored grain industry. Naeem has authored five books on entrepreneurship and he teaches entrepreneurship at UC Berkeley.

## Venture Capital Panel Financing New Initiatives



**Renee Vassilos, Director of Agriculture Innovation, The Nature Conservancy**

Renée Vassilos is The Nature Conservancy's Director of Agriculture Innovation. She manages TNC's investments in innovative companies that will help scale soil health building production practices. Prior to joining The Nature Conservancy, Renée spent nearly a decade at John Deere, including several years based in Beijing. Post-Deere, Renée led her consulting firm, Banyan Innovation Group, advising growth-stage agriculture technology start-ups and investors.



**Kerryann Kocher, CEO, Vytelle**

Kerryann Kocher is Chief Executive Officer of the combined companies Vytelle and GrowSafe. Prior to this role, Kerryann founded and led Rock Road Consulting, a boutique business consulting practice dedicated to animal agriculture and focused on helping clients translate their technology into meaningful value for farmers, ranchers and producers. At Rock Road, Kerryann served a range of clients from multi-national animal health companies to venture capital firms and start-ups.



**Spencer Stensrude, Executive Director, Ag Ventures Alliance**

Spencer Stensrude is the Executive Director at Ag Ventures Alliance in Mason City. The 300-farmer cooperative is on a mission to increase farm profitability by investing in new technology. Spencer led the sourcing, evaluating, closing, and management of new investments at the firm for four years before moving into the leadership role. Spencer's business experience includes venture capital, commercial lending, small business management, in addition to being a real-life family farmer in North Iowa.

## Sustainability Panel Searching for Long-Term Solutions



**David Darr, Senior Vice President & Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer, Dairy Farmers of America**

David Darr has been with DFA since 2001 and currently serves as chief strategy and sustainability officer. In this role, David leads efforts to connect DFA's strategy with members, employees and other stakeholders. In addition, David leads Cooperative efforts on sustainability, including environmental footprinting, animal care and corporate social responsibility.



**Dr. Jason Clay, Senior Vice President – Markets, World Wildlife Fund**

Jason Clay is senior vice president for markets and executive director of the Markets Institute at WWF, which was created to identify and address emerging global issues, trends, and tools impacting conservation in more timely, cost-effective, and scalable ways. His career has ranged from working on a family farm to working for the US Department of Agriculture. He has been a leader in WWF's work on agriculture, aquaculture, livestock, and corporate engagement.

## Our Event Emcees...



**Mike Rohlfesen, Chief Commercial Officer, TechAccel**

Mike Rohlfesen brings deep international agribusiness experience, including 18 years with Cargill Inc. in a variety of financial, strategic marketing, product and business development positions. Most recently, he founded and led Somaris Global, a Minneapolis-based business development firm working in next generation ag technology.



**Tony Simpson, Business Development, TechAccel**

Tony Simpson brings more than 23 years of experience leading and investing in companies in agribusiness and animal health. In 2015, Tony founded AgTech Advisors, LLC, a consulting firm focused on supporting entrepreneurs and investors in the agtech sector. Tony also serves on the board of directors of Green Dot Holdings, Advanced Animal Diagnostics, and the ATIP Foundation and he is an observer to the SmartVet board.



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