

# Ag Innovation



Bringing new technology, knowledge and opportunity to agriculture.

**FEBRUARY 13, 2024 | 8:00AM - 5:00PM**  
**DOWNTOWN MARRIOTT | KANSAS CITY, MO**

## Program...

- 8:00 a.m. Registration & Networking
- 8:30 a.m. Welcome & Opening Remarks.
- 8:45 a.m. "Glimpses of an Agri-Tech Future from Three Decades on the Precision Agriculture Adoption Path"  
Dr. Jess Lowenberg-DeBoer, Professor and Elizabeth Creak Chair of Agri-Tech Economics, Harper Adams University
- 9:45 a.m. Meeting Break
- 10:15 a.m. Panel: Soil Health – Implications for Land Value, Farm Economics & Food Quality  
Moderated by Michael Doane, Global Managing Director, Food & Freshwater Systems, The Nature Conservancy  
Panelists:
- Nick Guetterman, Guetterman Brothers Family Farms, Bucyrus, KS
  - Jason Tatge, CEO, PrairieFood
  - Dan Poston, Vice President, Research and Field Services, Pivot Bio
- 11:15 a.m. "A Brief History of 10,000 Years of Agriculture, and the Coming Tsunami of Digital Disruption and Technology Transformation"  
Aidan Connolly, President, AgriTech Capital
- 12:00 noon Lunch
- 12:45 p.m. Panel: Artificial Intelligence  
Moderated by Dr. Jonathan McFadden, Research Economist, USDA-Economic Research Service  
Panelists:
- Dr. Pascal Hitzler, Lloyd T. Smith Creativity in Engineering Chair and Director, Center for AI and Data Science, Kansas State University
  - Nic McCarthy, Senior Vice President Agronomy, Central Valley Ag Coop
  - Matt Olson, Precision Ag Go-to-Market Manager, John Deere
- 1:45 p.m. "Generative AI for Regenerative Agriculture"  
Ranveer Chandra, Managing Director, Research for Industry and CTO of Agri-Food, Microsoft
- 2:30 p.m. Meeting Break
- 3:00 p.m. Panel: Livestock Technology Adoption  
Moderated by Dustin Johansen, Senior Vice President, Livestock Division, Farm Journal  
Panelists:
- Paul Koffman, Executive Director, Livestock Technology Solutions, Merck Animal Health
  - Jerrod Westfahl, Chief Strategy Officer, Innovative Livestock Services, Inc.
  - Coby Buck, Director of Strategic Accounts, AgriWebb
- 4:00 p.m. Reception
- 5:00pm Adjourn

Produced & Hosted by

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## Featured Speakers...



**Dr. Jess Lowenberg-DeBoer**, Professor and Elizabeth Creak Chair of Agri-Tech Economics, Harper Adams University

Prof. Lowenberg-DeBoer has over 30 years of worldwide experience in agricultural research, teaching, outreach and leadership. His research focuses on the economics of agricultural technology. He has published 85 articles in refereed journals, two books and chapters in seven other books. He currently serves as president of the International Society of Precision Agriculture (ISPA) and co-editor of the journal Precision Agriculture. He is a pioneer in the use of spatial regression in analysis of crop sensor data with published work in this area from the U.S., Argentina and South Africa.



**Aidan Connolly**, President, AgriTech Capital

Aidan is President of AgriTech Capital, a resource for new and established companies working at the interface of agriculture and technology. AgriTech Capital has aided governments, fortune 500 food companies and large agribusinesses on their AgTech strategy. Previously, Aidan was CEO of Cainthus, a computer vision and artificial intelligence company specialised in monitoring key farm management practices that impact nutrition, health and the behaviour of livestock. Prior to that, Aidan held the position of CIO at Alltech. With 30 years of experience in strategic analysis and planning, Aidan adds the innovative thinking and capital investment needed to go from possibility to reality.



**Ranveer Chandra**, Managing Director, Research for Industry and CTO of Agri-Food, Microsoft

Ranveer Chandra is the Managing Director for Research for Industry, and the CTO of Agri-Food at Microsoft. He also leads the Networking Research Group at Microsoft Research, Redmond. Previously, Ranveer was the Chief Scientist of Microsoft Azure Global. His research has shipped as part of multiple Microsoft products, including VirtualWiFi in Windows 7 onwards, low power Wi-Fi in Windows 8, Energy Profiler in Visual Studio, Software Defined Batteries in Windows 10, and the Wireless Controller Protocol in XBOX One. His research also led to a new product – FarmBeats, which aims to promote data-driven farming techniques.

## Event Emcee...



**Kristie Larson**, Strategic Relationship Manager, The DeBruce Foundation

Kristie Larson is the Strategic Relationship Manager of the DeBruce Foundation where her focus is on developing strategic, innovative partnerships with stakeholders across the nation. Kristie attended the University of Missouri and received her degree in Agriculture Education. She has dedicated her professional career to the advancement of agriculture and education through work in a variety of industry segments- non-profit, government, and corporate organizations including the National Pork Board, Dairy Farmers of America, and the American Royal Association. Kristie currently serves as the vice-chairman of the Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City.

## Panel Discussions...

### Soil Health – Implications for Land Value, Farm Economics & Food Quality



Moderated by **Michael Doane**, Global Managing Director, Food & Freshwater Systems, The Nature Conservancy

At The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Michael leads a global team of the organization's foremost experts across agriculture, fisheries and aquaculture, and freshwater management. Michael brings twenty-five years of relevant business and leadership experience to the role. Prior to TNC, he spent sixteen years with Monsanto, where he led high performing teams across sustainability, food and nutrition security, corporate affairs and commercial business operations. In addition, he has played a catalytic leadership role in the development of multi-stakeholder sustainable sourcing organizations such as Field to Market and The Sustainability Consortium.



**Nick Guetterman**, Guetterman Brothers Family Farms, Bucyrus, KS

Nick Guetterman is a 4th generation row crop farmer in east central Kansas. The farm currently operates in southern Johnson County and Miami County, Kansas. Primary crops include corn, soybeans and wheat. The 100% no-till operation prides itself in not only farming as efficiently as possible, but as being stewards of the land.



**Jason Tatge**, CEO, PrairieFood

Jason Tatge brings a wealth of experience and expertise in the agricultural industry as the new CEO of PrairieFood where he excited to lead the company in its mission to revolutionize sustainable farming practices using micro carbon technology and promote soil health in agriculture. Previously, Jason served as the Senior Vice President of AGI SureTrack. Before joining AGI, Jason was the Co-Founder and CEO of Farmobile, leading a team that developed a unique capability to collect and standardize valuable field and machine-level data in real-time across farm and ag retail equipment. This innovation allowed for evaluating product, field, and fleet performance while automating field-level data for ESG reporting and program participation.



**Dan Poston**, Vice President, Research and Field Services, Pivot Bio

Dr. Poston is a native of coastal South Carolina but has spent most of his professional career conducting research and working with farmers in the mid-south. Driven by his desire to learn more about the relationship between the soil microbiome and crop nutrition, Dr. Poston accepted a position as the Director of Agronomy for Pivot Bio in early 2019. In this position, Dr. Poston helped develop an agronomy and field research team for the company. He currently serves as the Vice President of Field Research and Development. During his tenure at Pivot Bio, Dr. Poston helped grow the agronomy team from a few folks to a fully functional field research team. Dr. Poston firmly believes that Pivot Bio microbes can fundamentally change the way we manage nitrogen for corn production. Poston enjoys working with progressive farmers that like to challenge the status quo and that question conventional wisdom. He is passionate about production systems and developing ways to make them more productive and profitable.



## Artificial Intelligence



Moderated by Dr. Jonathan McFadden, Research Economist, USDA-Economic Research Service

Jonathan McFadden is a research economist in the Resource and Rural Economics Division at the USDA Economic Research Service (ERS). At ERS, his research mainly focuses on the commercialization and adoption of technologies and management practices that increase the productivity, financial, and environmental performance of U.S. agriculture. His topical interests include digital agriculture, climate change, genetic engineering, and emerging technologies. Prior to his work at ERS, Jonathan was an assistant professor in the Department of Economics at the University of Oklahoma.



Dr. Pascal Hitzler, Lloyd T. Smith Creativity in Engineering Chair and Director, Center for AI and Data Science, Kansas State University

Pascal Hitzler is endowed Lloyd T. Smith Creativity in Engineering Chair at the Department of Computer Science at Kansas State University, Co-Director of the Institute for Digital Agriculture and Advanced Analytics (ID3A), and Director of the Center for Artificial Intelligence and Data Science (CAIDS). His research record lists over 400 publications in such diverse areas as semantic web, artificial intelligence, neurosymbolic integration, knowledge representation and reasoning, machine learning, denotational semantics, and set-theoretic topology. His collaborations span many application areas including agriculture, humanities, and geosciences.



Nic McCarthy, Senior Vice President Agronomy, Central Valley Ag Coop

Through Nic's career at CVA, he has experienced all aspects of the business, including serving as an Applicator, Field Sales Agronomist, Location Manager, Regional Operation Manager, and VP of Operations. Still, his most compelling experiences are welcoming new opportunities for employees and patrons through mergers, growth, and progression since 2003. Nic serves on the board for Norkan LLC, Ag Agronomy LLC, ServiTech and is currently a member of the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee for the Environmental Protection Agency.



Matt Olson, Precision Ag Go-to-Market Manager, John Deere

Matt Olson is Manager, Precision Ag Go-to-Market at John Deere, a position he has held since January 2017. A graduate of Drake University with both an MBA and a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, he joined Deere & Company in May 2002 and has held positions in finance, sales and marketing. Sixteen of those years has been focused on Precision Ag. Currently, Matt is responsible for marketing equipment and technology solutions to help farmers increase yields, decrease costs and increase the efficiency of the work they do. In addition to his role at John Deere, Matt actively participates with his family's row crop, cattle and hog operation in North Central Iowa.

## Livestock Technology Adoption



Moderated by Dustin Johansen, Senior Vice President, Livestock Division, Farm Journal

Dustin Johansen serves as the Senior Vice President for the Livestock Division at Farm Journal. In this role Dustin has responsibility for the print and digital media channels that support the beef, dairy, swine and large animal veterinarian audience. Additionally, the livestock division supports clients with producer data, market research and custom projects to deliver marketing communications initiatives of the commercial companies supporting farmers and ranchers across America. Dustin is the past Chairman of the Agricultural Business Council of Kansas City.



Paul Koffman, Executive Director, Livestock Technology Solutions, Merck Animal Health

Paul Koffman is the Livestock Technology Solutions lead in North America for Merck Animal Health. His role includes leading pre- and post-sales customer support, business and product development, the transition of product incubation to full commercial, third-party partnerships, and driving collaboration of global marketing and R&D. Koffman has a 30-year career in the animal health industry with experience in sales, marketing, distribution, and technology in domestic and global markets.



Jerrod Westfahl, Chief Strategy Officer, Innovative Livestock Services, Inc.

Jerrod Westfahl is Chief Strategy Officer for Innovative Livestock Services, a cattle finishing and crop farming enterprise with operations in Kansas and Nebraska. After several years as a commercial litigator with Shook, Hardy and Bacon, he served as CEO of Purple Wave Auction and then co-founded AgriSync, a software startup purchased by John Deere Company in 2021. Jerrod's ILS responsibilities include identifying and structuring venture investment opportunities for the firm as well as operationally overseeing several ILS subsidiaries.



Coby Buck, Director of Strategic Accounts, AgriWebb

As Director of Strategic Accounts, Coby Buck advises ranchers, partners and industry stakeholders to leverage the power of AgriWebb and improve operational efficiency, productivity, and economic viability. Coby grew up as a 5th generation cattle rancher on Wray Ranch, located at the junction of the Great Plains and Sandy Chop Hills of the Colorado-Nebraska stateline. He remains active in the leadership of Wray Ranch as the Head of Growth & Acquisitions. After graduating from Harvard in 2016, Coby cultivated his career in energy and agricultural commodity supply chains and physical merchant trading. In early 2020, Coby Buck joined AgriWebb as the first employee in the United States to expand business operations to North America.

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