

2019 Soybean Leadership College Speakers



Karey Claghorn, COO, Iowa Soybean Association

Karey Claghorn serves as the chief operations officer at the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA). In this role, Karey is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the organization, helping advance the association's long-range strategic plan and ensure the annual business plan is effectively and efficiently implemented. She represents the association to a variety of audiences and stakeholders and serves as a spokesperson for the organization and soybean industry. Karey also participates frequently in trade missions to countries that are significant buyers of soybeans to build demand and add value to each bushel of soybeans grown and marketed by Iowa farmers.

Prior to joining the ISA in 2011, Claghorn served as Iowa's deputy secretary of agriculture. She also served as corporate manager of training and development for Marsh Supermarkets and Village Pantry convenience stores in Indianapolis, Ind. Claghorn was raised on a livestock farm near Bloomington, Ind. She graduated from Indiana University with a degree in Consumer Science Education.



Steve Cortes, CNN

Steve Cortes is a *CNN* political commentator and has appeared daily on cable news for the last 12 years. From 2006-15, he worked for *CNBC* as part of the *Fast Money* ensemble, debating stocks and global markets. He then transitioned to a hybrid of money and politics after moving to *Fox News*. In 2016, he took a leave from *Fox* to work full-time for the Trump presidential campaign as a prolific TV surrogate, appearing on hundreds of news programs, often in highly adversarial settings as a "happy warrior." His former *Fox* colleague Maria Bartiromo called Steve "a strong communicator who understood very early on what the people wanted in a Commander in Chief." Cortes has also worked for 25 years on Wall Street as a trader and market strategist, most recently at BGC Partners, advising hedge funds and sovereign wealth funds on macro trends in all asset classes, including commodities. Because of his experiences, he brings keen insight into the critical intersection of money and politics.



Mike Harper, Industry Relations Manager, FMC

After 37 years with FMC as a Retail Market Manager in Missouri, Mike was named Industry Relations Manager for the US and Canada in March 2017. He graduated from Purdue University in Ag Economics and was raised in Columbus, Ind., before starting his career with FMC in Missouri. With previous experiences with MO-AG Agri-Business Association and serving on the Certified Crop Advisor MO State Board, he was a member of the Missouri Soybean Association and values how commodity groups impact the agriculture industry. Mike and his wife Bobbi reside in Columbia, Mo. and have two grown children living in St. Louis.



Ryan Findlay, CEO, American Soybean Association

Ryan Findlay is CEO of the American Soybean Association and a native of Caro, Mich., where his family still farms row crops. He earned a degree in political science from Western Michigan University and an MBA from Northwood University in Midland, Mich. The last four years Ryan worked for the global agricultural company Syngenta, focusing on freedom-to-operate issues impacting farmers. Previously, his seven-year tenure with the Michigan Farm Bureau included work on two farm bills, international trade, climate change and regulatory issues. Ryan, his wife Gretchen, and their two children live in the St. Louis area.



John Heisdorffer, Chairman, American Soybean Association

John Heisdorffer, a soybean producer from Keota, Iowa, is chairman of the American Soybean Association (ASA). He previously served as president and vice president of ASA, and has served on the ASA Board of Directors since 2010. He also raises corn and finishes 10,000 head of hogs a year. John farms with his wife Deanna and son Chris. John and his wife Deanna have three children: Lisa, Jody and Chris. John served on the Iowa Soybean Association (ISA) for 20 years in various positions. He also served on the National Biodiesel Board (NBB) from 1996 – 2004 and now serves as president of the NBB Foundation. John also served on the local coop board and his church council.



Kate Lambert, Director of Marketplace Education and Engagement, FCS Financial

Kate Lambert grew up in Sycamore, Ill., about 60 miles west of Chicago. She graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a degree in ag business and started working for FCS Financial, a Farm Credit Cooperative. For the first seven years of her career with Farm Credit she served as a Certified General Farm Appraiser in north-central Missouri. She then transitioned roles

to take over a diverse loan-portfolio, working with crop and livestock farmers in north-central Missouri. In 2018, she left the field to serve as the Director of Marketplace Education and Engagement for FCS Financial.

In addition to her work with Farm Credit, she and her husband own and operate Uptown Farms, in Linn County, Mo. They manage approximately 2,000 acres of conventional row crop, have a small herd of commercial cattle and a flock of registered sheep. They were named the 2017 Missouri Leopold Conservation Award winners, an award that champions stewardship on privately owned lands and is often referred to as the Nobel prize of conservation and agriculture. Kate is also extremely grateful for her opportunities to represent and advocate for farm families through her social media presence at Uptown Farms, her blog at UptownGirlBlog.com and through speaking and lobbying efforts both at a state and national level. She is a 2017 member of the ASA Advocacy Communications Team.



Chad McCollough, Vice President Marketplace Services, FCS Financial

Chad McCollough grew up in West Central Iowa on a diversified farm consisting of soybean, corn and alfalfa. The operation also included a cow/calf herd and feeder pigs. He graduated from Northwest Missouri State University with a degree in agronomy. Chad has worked for FCS

Financial for 10 years. Chad and his wife Monica, live on a small farm near Wilcox, Mo. growing corn, soybeans and kids with a few 4H Projects including pigs, chickens and High Tunnel.

He is active in the local and state Farm Bureau, Nodaway Co Community Fair Building Committee, Nodaway County Development Authority Board, is an Advisory Member to the Northwest Missouri College of Ag and participated in A LOT XVI. Chad is an ASA DuPont Young Leader.



Jack McCall

Our speaker this afternoon is a husband, father, son, a brother, a baby boomer, Sunday school teacher, and a professional speaker. He brings to the speaking platform a wealth of experience from a career in which he has been many things; including a Disc Jockey, Licensed Livestock Auctioneer, Financial Services Professional and HealthCare Executive.

An award-winning newspaper columnist, he is the author of three books, including *Fireflies in Winter*, *Snowflakes in Summer Time* and *Daffodils in Autumn*.

He is a graduate of the University of Tennessee, the Tennessee School of Banking at Vanderbilt University, and the Graduate School of Banking of the South at Louisiana State University. After developing his storytelling craft for over 35 years, he left the corporate world in 2000 to become a full timer on the professional speaking circuit.

Here to entertain and inform, is Jack McCall.



Ronnie Russell, Governing Committee Member, American Soybean Association

Ronnie Russell is from Richmond Mo., and farms in Ray County, Mo., producing corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and alfalfa. He is an at-large member of the American Soybean Association (ASA) Governing Committee. Russell operates a cow/calf operation and a retail commercial fertilizer business. In addition to serving on the board of directors of ASA,

Russell serves on the Missouri Soybean Association Board of Directors and is chairman of the Missouri Fertilizer Control Board. He also serves on the Ray County Hospital Board of Trustees and on his local extension council. He also is a member of the Missouri Corn Growers Association and Missouri Farm Bureau. Previously, Russell served for 20 years on the Richmond Rural Fire Protection Association board of directors and has served on the Farm Credit Services nominating committee. He was a participant in ASA's "Leadership At Its Best" program and is a graduate of the Missouri Agriculture Leadership of Tomorrow program (ALOT).

After graduating from Richmond High School, Russell received His BSED in Agriculture Education from the University Of Central Missouri (UCM) in 1981. Russell and his wife, Robin, have five daughters and two grandchildren.

Bill Schuermann, Executive Director, American Soybean Association

Bill Schuermann is executive director of grower, state, industry relations for the American Soybean Association (ASA) and in his 11th year at ASA. He has been involved with various segments of the ag industry his entire career. Having grown up in Des Moines, Iowa, he received his undergraduate degree in economics from Iowa State University and then a graduate degree in ag economics – agri-business management from The Ohio State University. He has held various executive sales and marketing positions in different ag industry sectors, but principally in the seed industry with DeKalb Genetics. He has also held publishing and group publishing positions in the ag industry and was publisher of *Agri Marketing* magazine for 10 years and senior vice president – group publisher at Doane Agricultural Services in St. Louis.



Burleson Smith, Industry Relations and Government Affairs Manager, BASF Corporation, Agricultural Solutions

With experience in industry, government and association management, Burleson has worked in agricultural policy, environmental protection, plant nutrition, crop protection, and non-crop pesticides. For seven years, serving at USDA coordinating pesticide and environmental policies impacting agriculture, developing an Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultation compliance process, participating in international environmental treaty negotiations, and was the Department’s liaison to EPA in support of American farmers and ranchers. He was a Congressional Science Fellow with the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture where I worked on pesticide policy and agricultural water quality issues. At BASF, Burleson engages in outreach to national and state stakeholder groups to support registration of BASF products and to help ensure their freedom to operate. Through part of a multi-disciplinary program within BASF to enhance on-farm biodiversity called “Living Acres,” he represents the Regulatory Affairs group in our efforts to promote habitat development for the Monarch butterfly by encouraging farmers to include milkweed in non-crop areas. Burleson is BASF’s representative on the Honey Bee Health Coalition and Monarch Collaborative, and participate as a subcommittee chair of the Pesticide Policy Coalition in Washington, D.C. and serves on the National Cotton Foundation Board of Directors and as Secretary of FieldWatch. Burleson has a BS, Plant and Soil Science; MS, Soil Science; Texas A&M University



Davie Stephens, President, American Soybean Association

Davie Stephens, a soybean farmer from Clinton, Ky., is president of the American Soybean Association (ASA). He previously served as vice president and secretary of ASA, and has been an ASA national director since 2012. He represented his fellow farmers on the Kentucky Soybean Association (KSA) board from 2006-14, serving as treasurer, secretary, vice-president and president during three, three-year terms.

Stephens farms more than 5,000 acres in Kentucky and Tennessee. In addition to soybeans, he grows corn and raises chickens in four poultry barns. His bachelor's degree came from the University of Kentucky, and he completed his master's at Murray State University. He is married to Judy Byrd Stephens, who is also an active Advocate for soybean farmers.



Jane Ade Stevens, CEO, Indiana Soybean Alliance

Jane Ade Stevens is CEO for the Indiana Soybean Alliance, Indiana Corn Marketing Council and the Indiana Corn Growers Association. She is responsible for the corn and soybean checkoff programs. The Checkoff is a farmer-funded program to promote the expanded use of corn and soybeans and corn and soybean products.

Before joining ISA/ICMC/ICGA, Jane was president of Stevens & Associates, a public relations and association management firm specializing in agriculture organizations. She also has worked for Indiana Farm Bureau, Elanco Animal Health Company, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. where she served as chief of staff to Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment.

Stevens lives in Indianapolis with her husband Roger and has one son. She is a graduate of Purdue University with a degree in agriculture.



Doug Winter, US Soybean Export Council

Doug Winter farms commercial soybeans, seed soybeans, non-GMO soybeans, yellow corn, white corn and soft red winter wheat on his farm in Mill Shoals, Illinois. He is serving his sixth year on the United Soybean Board and wants to increase his operation's profitability and sustainability efforts. In addition to farming, he is also a corn, soybean and wheat sales representative for Pioneer.

He is also involved in the White County Soil and Water Conservation District, White County Farm Bureau, American Soybean Association, Illinois and National Corn Growers Associations, White County 4-H Federation Advisory Council, and the Southeastern Illinois College Advisory committee.

Winter believes open trade in international markets, excessive government regulations, herbicide resistance and neglected infrastructure are issues facing our industry. He also believes that sustainability, increasing farmer profitability, and domestic and international marketing of high-quality soy products are big opportunities for our industry.