

College of Agricultural Sciences Career Quick Connect Alumni Profiles

Thank you for your interest in The College of Agricultural Sciences Career Quick Connect Program. The Offices for Undergraduate Education and Alumni Relations have partnered to offer one-on-one virtual meetups for students and alumni, focused on career insights.

Below, you will find a categorized list of alumni hosts. Careers are rarely one-dimensional, and many alumni employers fall into multiple career clusters. As you review the document, please make note if there is a specific alumni member with whom you'd be interested in connecting. There will be an opportunity to note that on the sign-up form. Matches will be based on best fit as well as demand. While we will work to accommodate these preferred selections, they are not guaranteed.

If you are interested in the program but don't see anyone that aligns with your field of interest, please let us know! You may contact **Lori Connelly**, director of experiential learning and career services at agcareers.psu.edu.

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Agribusiness and Marketing

Jarrold Angstadt

Graduation Year: 1998

Major: Agricultural Systems Management

Current Company: Iveco Group, formerly CNH Industrial

Current Title: Network Development and Sales Operations Manager

Company Website: www.ivecogroup.com / www.cnhindustrial.com

Jarrold has worked for CNH Industrial for 23 years, in numerous roles including Field Tests, Service, Sales, Marketing, Product Management, Network Development, and Sales Operations. The last few roles have included managing people. His current role is with the Fiat Power Train brand as the Network Development and Sales Operations Manager for North America.

Jarrold is participating in this program to provide students with a better view of opportunities after Penn State.

Scott Hodgson

Graduation Year: 1977

Major: Agricultural Science

Current Company: Feed Commodities International

Current Title: Chief Operating Officer (Retired)

Scott started his career as a dairy feed salesperson. From there, he took on new challenges assisting the dairy nutritionist at his company. Eventually, he advanced to a branch manager position and then became General Manager of a local feed company. These learnings helped him to branch out for the next step of his career – he purchased a dairy equipment company and became the General Manager of a local feed and agronomy cooperative. Finally, he was named Chief Operating Officer of Feed Commodities International, a large New England feed company. During his career, he held board seats with numerous industry support boards, including PennAg Industries Association and Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance.

Scott is married and a huge Penn State fan. He was president of his college fraternity and head wrestling manager at Penn State as a student.

Scott is participating in this program to help current students decide where and how to start their career, how to find a work/life balance, provide a better understanding of his career path.

William Reitz

Graduation Year: 1986

Major: Agricultural Science

Current Company: SourceReit LLC.

Current Title: Chief Executive Officer

Company Website: www.sourcereit.com

William is currently the Chief Executive Officer of SourceReit LLC. Before this role, he was the Senior Vice President and Chief Procurement Officer for ZEP Inc., a manufacturer of industrial and institutional maintenance and sanitation products including sanitation solutions for the food and beverage industry.

William's previous roles include Vice President of Global Procurement for Chiquita Brands (Fresh Express), Purchasing Director for Agrana Fruit, Global Purchasing Process Director for Cadbury Schweppes, Fruit and Concentrate Buyer for Mott's and as an Agricultural Buyer for the Campbell Soup Company. While pursuing his degree at Penn State, he worked for Cooperative Extension in Vegetable Production and completed an internship as an Assistant Farm Manager at Hanover Foods. He also had the opportunity to be involved with the agricultural industry in Europe, Asia, and throughout the Americas. William holds an Associate Degree in Agricultural Business and a B.S. in Agricultural Science. He was born in Pittsburgh and raised in Johnstown Pennsylvania.

William is participating in this program because Penn State was key in starting his career in the global food and beverage industry. He considers the opportunity to share these experiences with an Agricultural Sciences student a small token of the appreciation.

Agricultural and BioEngineering

Dawn Chianese

Graduation Year: 2008

Major: Biological Engineering

Current Company: Northrop Grumman

Current Title: Sustainability Manager - Aeronautics Sector

Company Website: www.northropgrumman.com

Dawn has over 16 years of experience in sustainability, air quality, and climate change. She completed her MS and Ph.D. in Agricultural and Biological Engineering at Penn State and then spent over 13 years in environmental consulting. Since 2019, she has managed the Environmental Sustainability program for Northrop Grumman's Aeronautics Sector.

Dawn is participating in this program to support fellow Penn Staters and provide insight into options based on her career experience.

Animal and Veterinary Sciences

Fred Garrison

Graduation Year: 1967

Major: Animal Science

Current Company: Centreville Animal Hospital

Current Title: Retired Veterinarian

Fred studied Veterinary Medicine at Cornell after graduating from Penn State and was a vet in a mixed animal practice for three years in Reisterstown, Maryland. He then purchased a mixed animal practice in Centreville, Virginia where he worked until retiring in 2011.

Fred is participating in this program because he received help and assistance along the way and wants to pay it forward to current students.

Nicole Schlau

Graduation Year: 2009

Major: Animal Sciences

Current Company: Dairyland Labs

Current Title: R&D Manager

Company Website: Dairylandlabs.com

Nicole grew up in New York City and moved to Pennsylvania when she was 15. She graduated in 2009 with a B.S. in Animal Sciences and interned with Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education and the U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Chemical Defense, working in a pharmaceutical lab studying neurotoxins before attending graduate school. Nicole graduated in 2012 from the University of Alberta with a Master's degree and went on to work for Alltech for two years as a Research Laboratory Technician. After that, she joined Dairyland Labs as a Research Associate and has worked for them for the past six years.

Nicole is participating in this program to help students feel more comfortable applying for jobs and internships.

Environmental Science

Alan Bilzi

Graduation Year: 1976

Major: Agronomy

Current Company: Environmental Venture Group, Inc.

Alan graduated in 1976 with an M.S. in Agronomy with a soils concentration. He started working as a soil scientist with a consulting firm, then worked for 45 years as an environmental consultant. He has extensive environmental project and business management experience and managed over 200 employees with varied environmental backgrounds.

Alan is participating in this program to help students with their future after graduation and mentor students in how to become a consultant.

Lauren Shaffer

Graduation Year: 2020

Major: Community, Environment, and Development

Current Company: Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center

Current Title: Agricultural Outreach Specialist

Company Website: agsci.psu.edu/aec

As both a conservationist and an advocate, Lauren is fulfilling her passions by helping farmers with their conservation goals and pursuing other water quality improvement projects in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Currently, she works as the Agricultural Outreach Specialist for the Agriculture and Environment Center with Penn State University where she assists in the delivery of conservation outreach and assistance to agricultural landowners in the Chiques, Conoy, and Conewago Creek watersheds in Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin Counties, Pennsylvania, and other priority watersheds in the Lower Susquehanna region. She serves on the PA Soil Health Coalition, Lancaster Clean Water Partners, and Manheim Township Ag Advisory Board. She is currently working on my master's in Ecosystem Management and Administration and while in college at Penn State, she interned at Pennsylvania Farm Bureau as well as PA DEP Bureau of Clean Water.

Lauren is participating in this program to provide advice and answer any questions about internships, jobs, career paths, my work, or whatever else a student may want to talk about.

Robert Swigart

Graduation Year: 1978

Major: Environmental Resource Management

Current Company: Air Products and Chemicals, Inc

Current Title: Environmental Professional & Professional Soil Scientist (Retired)

Robert is currently retired but held various positions in a global Fortune 500 Engineering company (Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.). He also held positions at Penn State in soil and forage testing, at Pfizer as an engineering laboratory technician, at Air Products in multiple roles including research technician, Sr. Principal Environmental Coordinator, Technical Writer, and Supervisor of Technical Writing. Robert also holds professional certifications as an ARCPACS Certified Professional Soil Scientist, an NREP Registered Environmental Manager, a California Registered Environmental Assessor, and a Pennsylvania Sewage Enforcement Officer. Environmental compliance for industrial manufacturing sites and soil remediation were specialties, as were technical writing and soil science.

Robert is participating in this program to provide career guidance to students based on his extensive experience in the Environmental Resources Management industry.

Food Science

Jaye Aster Broder

Graduation Year: 2017

Major: Food Science

Current Company: Mondelez International

Current Title: Scientist I

Company Website: mondelezinternational.com

Jaye is an associate scientist at Mondelez International working to help people snack well. In her current role, she serves as brand steward for Honey Maid and Teddy Grahams and supports innovation for belVita. With interests in science and human connection, Jaye graduated from Penn State as a Paterno Fellow with bachelor's degrees in Food Science and Spanish and a minor in International Studies.

Jaye is participating in this program to discuss her experience as a food scientist and the broader food industry with students.

Maggie Harding

Graduation Year: 2014

Major: Food Science

Current Company: Lactalis American Group

Current Title: Research Scientist

Company Website: lactalisamericangroup.com

A "townie" born and raised, Maggie packed up and moved out of State College as soon as she graduated. She immediately obtained experience in several aspects of the food industry across the country. Currently, she works as a cheese scientist and loves the creativity involved in developing new cheeses and improving on current products. She volunteers regularly with the Ag Alumni Society and

stays physically active – a nod to her time on the Penn State Women’s Volleyball team.

Maggie is participating in this program to show students what a "real life" position looks like in the field of Food Science. As she reflects, she feels this kind of experience would have been immensely helpful to her as a student.

Andy Hirneisen

Graduation Year: 2007

Major: Food Science

Current Company: Penn State Extension

Current Title: Food Safety Educator

Company Website: extension.psu.edu

Andy’s first job after graduating was as a restaurant inspector. After that, he worked in Quality Assurance at Pepperidge Farm then obtained his dream job of working for The Hershey Company as a microbiologist. In this role, he traveled extensively supporting Hershey’s labs and factories all around the world. After eight years with Hershey, Andy turned to teach and currently works as a Food Safety educator with Penn State Extension.

Andy is participating in this program to share his knowledge with students and help them along their path.

Sydney Lawless

Graduation Year: 2011

Major: Food Science

Current Company: PepsiCo

Current Title: Technical Team Lead

Company Website: pepsico.com

Sydney received her B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. in Food Science. She worked for PepsiCo as a Nutrition Scientist right out of graduate school and continued in that role for five years. Her role as a Nutrition Scientist entailed communicating the science on low-calorie sweeteners to non-scientists to support the sugar reduction journey. Additionally, she participated in tracking and leading clinical research trials on functional ingredients to drive innovation of beverage products with differentiated structure-function claims. Sydney did a part-time rotation in Product Development for one year, working on H2OH! for Latin America. Last year I pivoted to be a Technical Team Lead, leading teams of scientists through the development of new products and packaging and fostering collaboration and communication within the team and to leadership and the business.

Sydney is participating in this program to provide mentorship and guidance to current students.

Jeff Martz

Graduation Year: 2012

Major: Food Science

Current Company: Mars Wrigley

Current Title: QMP Specialist (Quality Manager)

Company Website: www.mars.com

Jeff is a farm kid from central PA who wanted to stay in an agriculture-related field, but with more science. He loved his food science courses at Penn State and has found that working in the food industry (and especially with Mars) has been an excellent career path.

Jeff is participating in this program to share with current students and help them make informed decisions about their future.

K. T. McCann

Graduation Year: 1997

Major: Food Science

Current Company: Kellogg Company

Current Title: Vice President, R&D

Company Website: kelloggs.com

K.T. is a passionate food designer, driven by a culinary intuition to know good food and fueled by a technical strength to execute at scale. K.T. has 23 years of experience in new product development, product optimization, and technical leadership. The breadth of experience across technical platforms enables differentiated food design, driven by the consumer, category, and customer insights. K.T.'s entire career has been with the Kellogg Company, designing and launching new products for the United States and other regions around the world.

K. T. is participating in this program to provide mentorship and perspective to individuals entering the workforce in the food industry.

Jenae Stiles

Graduation Year: 2013

Major: Food Science

Current Company: United States Army

Current Title: Optometrist

Company Website: www.goarmy.com

Jenae is currently serving as an active-duty Army Optometrist and graduated from Penn State in 2013 with a degree in Food Science.

Jenae is participating in this program to help students interested in taking a non-traditional path to medical or post-graduate medical education.

Forestry/Eco-System Management/Wildlife & Fisheries

Dr. Brian Lee

Graduation Year: 2005

Major: PhD in Forest Resources – Watershed Management Option

B.S. Landscape Architecture (1992) from U. of Pennsylvania; Master of Regional Planning (1995)

Master of Liberal Arts – focused on Landscape Ecology (2000)

Current Company: University of KY, College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Current Title: Associate Dean

Company Website: ca.uky.edu

Dr. Lee's career path is filled with different experiences that have included traditional positions inside and outside of the academic world. It has involved natural and social sciences as well as a lot of work with information technologies and geographic information systems. His experience also involve working with students who are considering graduate school for career development which could lead to academic and non-academic careers. He aims to give back through this program because others did the same for him during his career.

Lauren Shaffer

Graduation Year: 2020

Major: Community, Environment, and Development

Current Company: Penn State Agriculture and Environment Center

Current Title: Agricultural Outreach Specialist

Company Website: agsci.psu.edu/aec

As both a conservationist and an agvocate, Lauren is fulfilling her passions by helping farmers with their conservation goals and pursuing other water quality improvement projects in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Currently, she works as the Agricultural Outreach Specialist for the Agriculture and Environment Center with Penn State University where she assists in the delivery of conservation outreach and assistance to agricultural landowners in the Chiques, Conoy, and Conewago Creek watersheds in Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin Counties, Pennsylvania, and other priority watersheds in the Lower Susquehanna region. She serves on the PA Soil Health Coalition, Lancaster Clean Water Partners, and Manheim Township Ag Advisory Board. She is currently working on my master's in Ecosystem Management and Administration and while in college at Penn State, she interned at Pennsylvania Farm Bureau as well as PA DEP Bureau of Clean Water.

Lauren is participating in this program to provide advice and answer any questions about internships, jobs, career paths, my work, or whatever else a student may want to talk about.

Scott Cashen**Graduation Year: 1998****Major: Wildlife and Fisheries Science****Current Company: Self-employed****Current Title: Senior Biologist**

Scott is an environmental biologist with 28 years of professional experience in wildlife ecology, forestry, and natural resource management. For the past 14 years, Mr. Cashen has operated an independent consulting business that focuses on CEQA/NEPA compliance issues, management of sensitive biological resources, scientific field studies, and other topics that require a high level of scientific expertise.

Scott is participating in this program to provide participants with information that will enable them to avoid the pitfalls he experienced when trying to become a wildlife biologist. In addition, he can provide advice on what to expect as a biologist in various sectors (e.g., public, private, NGO).

International Agriculture/Education/Government Affairs

Caleb Wright**Graduation Year: 2014****Major: Agriculture and Extension Education****Current Company: Versant Strategies****Current Title: COO (Chief Operating Officer)****Company Website: www.versantstrategies.net**

Versant Strategies is a leading public affairs firm with specialty practices in agricultural, environmental and rural affairs. COO Caleb Wright's roots in Pennsylvania's agricultural community are deep. He was raised on a farm in Huntingdon county and accolades earned during his young career have marked him as a voice of rural Pennsylvania's new generation. Along with managing the day-to-day operations of the firm, Caleb actively lobbies and assists with organizational management. Before joining Versant Strategies, he served as a Pennsylvania State Future Farmers of America Officer (FFA), was a National FFA Officer Candidate, and taught high school agriculture.

Wright serves on the Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences Alumni Society board and the board of the Pennsylvania FFA Foundation.

Caleb is participating in this program to provide insight to students interested in public policy.

Landscape/Turfgrass

Mark Kuhns

Graduation Year: 1977

Major: Agricultural Science

Current Company: Golf Course Management Consultants

Current Title: President

Mark D. Kuhns, CGCS, is a Past President of The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), serving as President in 2009. Kuhns, who was first elected to serve on the board of directors in 2003, was the Director of Grounds at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, N.J. Previously, he was golf course superintendent at Oakmont Country Club; Laurel Valley Golf Club, Rolling Rock Club in Ligonier, and Ligonier Country Club. Kuhns is currently the Vice President of Business Development for Turco Golf Inc., serving on the board of directors of the Penn State Ag Alumni Society, a life member of the Penn State Alumni Association, and serving on The Pennsylvania Ag Council.

Mark is participating in this program to inspire and encourage students to achieve their educational and professional goals.

Matt Owens

Graduation Year: 1993

Major: Landscape Contracting

Current Company: Edward Jones

Current Title: Financial Advisor

Company Website: www.edwardjones.com

Matt loves every aspect of landscape and spent 26 years learning as much as he could to seize the next career opportunity. He worked with and got to know the best and brightest in the industry. He was an Executive Board member at both the local and national levels and is proud to continue to give back to the industry as the President-elect for the Penn State Ag Alumni Society.

Matt is participating in this program because he would like to help students become more aware of the various opportunities available while pursuing their professional careers. He held many roles from Student Intern to COO of a large landscape company, worked in both construction and maintenance in the landscape industry- all of which prepared him for a recent career change.

Joyce Williams

Graduation Year: 1972

Major: Agricultural Science

Current Company: Joyce K. Williams Landscape Design

Current Title: Owner

Company Website: chathamlandscapedesign.com

Joyce obtained a general agriculture degree specializing in ornamental horticulture and marketing. She spent 18 years as the owner/operator of a successful retail garden center with growing greenhouses, landscape contracting, and an equipment maintenance division. She complemented her original studies with landscape design programs offered by botanical gardens and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers. This helped build her business as an independent contractor and award-winning landscape designer.

Joyce is participating in this program to share her business experience and career path, providing insights to individuals as they begin their careers.

Plant Sciences

Alan Bilzi

Graduation Year: 1976

Major: Agronomy

Current Company: Environmental Venture Group, Inc.

Alan graduated in 1976 with an M.S. in Agronomy with a soils concentration. He started working as a soil scientist with a consulting firm, then worked for 45 years as an environmental consultant. He has extensive environmental project and business management experience and managed over 200 employees with varied environmental backgrounds.

Alan is participating in this program to help students with their future after graduation and mentor students in how to become a consultant.

Justin Dillon

Graduation Year: 2001

Major: Agronomy

Current Company: Pioneer Seeds

Current Title: Product Agronomist

Company Website: www.pioneer.com/us

Justin grew up on a small beef operation in western PA. Now as a veteran, husband, and father, he realizes his career is much more than just his education. He was grateful to perform research in Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Florida before working in Ohio. He and his family now live in Northeastern Ohio and he covers the entire state of Ohio for Pioneer.

Justin is participating in this program to share his knowledge and experiences to help students find their path to a productive career.

Marissa Dillon

Graduation Year: 2012

Major: Plant Sciences

Current Company: Centerra Co-op

Current Title: Agronomy Consultant

Company Website: www.centerracoop.com

Marissa graduated from Penn State in 2012 with a degree in Agroecology and minors in Agronomy and Environmental Soil Science. While in school, she was involved in Ag Advocates and Collegiate 4-H. After graduation, she began her career as a retail agronomist in northeast Ohio where she worked for eight years. She has since taken on a new role with similar responsibilities in March of 2021 for Centerra Co-op in Wayne County, Ohio. She currently resides on a small hobby farm with her husband and daughter. Marissa is a Certified Crop Advisor, a member of Ohio Farm Bureau, a lifetime member of the Penn State Alumni Society, and currently holds a seat on the Penn State Ag Alumni Society board of directors.

Marissa is participating in this program because she had many mentors from high school through this point in her career. She would like to help a student the way that her mentors helped her.

Mark Fiely

Graduation Year: 1988

Major: Plant Sciences

Current Company: Ernst Conservation Seeds

Current Title: Horticulturist

Company Website: www.ernstseed.com

Since 1995 Mark B. Fiely has been the horticulturist for Ernst Conservation Seeds. He holds a B.S. and an M.S. in horticulture from Penn State and the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, respectively. He is a member of Ernst's executive board and serves on their marketing, planting, seed processing, harvest, and pricing committees. Among his responsibilities are plant prospecting, development of seed dormancy breaking protocols, formulation of seed mixes, and attendance of trade shows. He serves as a member of the Penn State Center for Pollinator Research Stakeholder Advisory Board, the Pennsylvania Pollinator Protection Plan Working Group, and the Pennsylvania Lawns to Meadows Conversion Committee. Mr. Fiely is a co-author for two refereed publications.

Mark is participating in this program because it is an opportunity to pay it forward.

Research and Laboratory Services

Caroline Freeman

Graduation Year: 2020

Major: Immunology and Infectious Disease

Current Company: Perelman School of Medicine-University of Pennsylvania

Current Title: Clinical Research Coordinator

Company Website: www.pennmedicine.org

Originally from Raleigh, North Carolina, Caroline graduated from Penn State with an Immunology and Infectious Disease degree. For the first year after graduation, she worked as a sample processing technician at Charles River Labs in Malvern, PA before transitioning to UPenn. At Penn State, she helped found a student organization that mentored high school students in the college admissions process and was also an orientation leader and tour guide.

Caroline is participating in this program because she had a hard time finding jobs when she graduated, in the spring of 2020 when COVID emerged and wants to share her learnings. She mentored younger students at Penn State and wants to help current Immunology and Infectious Disease students with the job search process.

Richard Missett

Graduation Year: 2011

Major: Pharmacology and Toxicology

Current Company: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Current Title: Pediatric Anesthesiologist

Company Website: www.chop.edu

Richard Missett, DO is a 2011 graduate of Penn State with a B.S. in Toxicology. He attended medical school at Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine and is currently a Pediatric Anesthesiologist at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and assistant professor of anesthesiology at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School.

Richard is participating in this program to help answer questions from students interested in medicine.

Valerie Pascoe

Graduation Year: 2018

Major: Immunology and Infectious Disease

Current Company: Booz Allen Hamilton

Current Title: Lead Scientist

Company Website: www.boozallen.com

Booz Allen Hamilton is a firm focused in consulting, analytics, digital solutions, engineering, and cyber – with industries ranging from defense to health to energy to international development. As a consultant,

Valerie has many opportunities to change projects and use her specialized skills on different projects.

Valerie is participating in this program to help students discover non-traditional biology career pathways.