

# 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 meet-ups 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.

Please review this document and select up to three preferred alumni hosts listed in the drop-down menu on the sign-up form. The names are displayed in alphabetic order by the last. Matches will be based on demand and while we will consider 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 [l1c143@psu.edu](mailto:l1c143@psu.edu).

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## Agribusiness Management

**Mark Gagnon**

**Major: Forest Ecosystem Management (Graduate)**

**Current Company: Penn State College of Ag Sciences, Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

**Current Title: Harbaugh Entrepreneur and Innovation Faculty Scholar Associate Teaching Professor, Agribusiness**

Mark is participating in this program to share his expertise in forest products, distribution, entrepreneurship and strategic consulting

Mark is the Harbaugh Entrepreneur and Innovation Faculty Scholar, Associate Teaching Professor of Agribusiness, and Director of The Food and Bio-innovation Entrepreneurship Minor in The College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University. Mark is a former entrepreneur and business development executive. He has participated in green building product start-ups and has managed product portfolios exceeding \$300M. Mark co-founded The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program in The College of Agricultural Sciences at PSU. Mark's scholarly interests lie within entrepreneurship that addresses challenges in food, agriculture, and bio-renewables (Food-Agri-Tech). His research examines new technology value proposition development and strategic implementation.

**Courtney Gray**

**Graduation Year: 2012**

**Major: Agricultural Science**

**Current Company: PA Beef Council**

**Current Title: Director of Marketing and Industry Relations**

Courtney is participating in this program to give back to current students. She had many exceptional mentors while she was a student and feels very strongly that they are the reason she ultimately landed in her current role as the Director of Marketing and Industry Relations for the PA Beef Council

Courtney Gray is a 2012 graduate of Penn State University with a degree in Agricultural Science and an Animal Science minor. While at Penn State, she was very active in Block and Bridle Club, Ag Advocates, and Coaly Society. In addition to her role at the Beef Council, she serves as a Director for the Penn State Stockmen's Club. Courtney is on the Snyder County 4-H Foundation Board and the Selinsgrove FFA Advisory Committee. She resides in Selinsgrove, Snyder County, PA with her husband Brian and son Porter, where they have a small beef herd.

**Jeff Harding**

**Graduation Year: 1981**

**Major: Dairy Science**

**Current Company: Perdue AgriBusiness**

**Current Title: Territory Manager**

Jeff is participating in this program because he believes strongly in helping students identify rewarding and lucrative career opportunities, and is willing to share his learnings.

Jeff grew up on a dairy farm and received his B.S. from Penn State University in 1981. Once he finished his degree, he returned to his family farm and dairies for five years. Jeff then transitioned into the dairy support sector where he rose to several leadership roles within the U.S. dairy industry. He currently works in the dairy feed division of Perdue Agribusiness, one of the nation's most established agricultural companies.

**Daniel Hartzell**

**Graduation Year: 2012**

**Major: Animal Science**

**Current Company: Hartzell Farm**

**Current Title: Dairy Farmer**

Daniel is participating in this program to share his experiences with current students in the College of Agricultural Sciences as well as to network or assist spring graduates seeking careers in the dairy industry.

Daniel Hartzell may be the fifth generation to farm his family's land, but he says it's his work and education that is going to take it to the sixth generation. Daniel operates a 250 cow farm in Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania. His experiences at Penn State were invaluable to helping him run a business as well as have the background knowledge to make decisions to manage the daily operations of a modern farm business.

**Alexis Hauser**

**Graduation Year: 2019**

**Major: Agribusiness Management**

**Current Company: PepsiCo, Inc.**

**Current Title: Global Procurement Closures Analyst**

Alexis is participating in this program to show students that there are so many career options out there and teams of people that specialize in jobs that students may not have even considered.

A Philadelphia native, Alexis currently lives in New York City and works for PepsiCo as a Global Procurement Closures Analyst.

**Lisa Kirby**

**Graduation Year: 2010**

**Major: Agribusiness Management**

**Current Company: Kirby Family Farm**

**Current Title: Owner and Operator**

Lisa is participating in this program to share guidance on allocating and managing time, talent, and treasure during all seasons of life. Lisa also hopes to share some guidance on all aspects of life, professionally and personally, with an emphasis on personal.

Lisa is currently a stay at home mom to three active little boys. She spent seven years employed in the insurance industry as a large account (over \$250,000) field manager for the agribusiness division of Westfield Insurance focusing on food and farm accounts. She currently owns and operates a 70-acre farm with her husband (also a Penn State University Ag Sciences graduate) in Lancaster, Pennsylvania

**Mark Lowery****Graduation Year: 2009****Major: Agriculture and Extension Education****Current Company: CNH Industrial/New Holland****Current Title: Director of Commercial Marketing**

Mark is participating in this program to provide awareness of careers in agribusiness/agrimarketing. Alternatively, he hopes to gain insight into students' company selection as they're preparing to enter the job market.

Upon graduation, Mark joined the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau as a Regional Organization Director. He completed a summer internship in Governmental Affairs that opened an opportunity for a field-based role to support the organizational development of county organizations. He joined CNH Industrial, specifically the New Holland brand, in 2011 as a Product Trainer. This position allowed him to apply his agricultural educator training to build courses for salespeople. His career path evolved into marketing roles with increasing responsibility. Mark also served in a sales role within the Parts & Service organization to gain experience with aftermarket solutions. In November 2020, he was promoted to his current role, Director of Commercial Marketing. He leads a department of seven individuals who support traditional and digital marketing functions for the North American agriculture and construction equipment brand. His team is engaged with promotional strategy and lead generation tactics that deliver sales results for nearly 800 dealers in the United States and Canada.

**Derek Nissley****Graduation Year: 2012****Major: Agribusiness Management****Current Company: The Wenger Group (Wenger Feeds)****Current Title: Relationship Manager**

Derek is participating in this program because he enjoys connecting with students and identifying new talent.

Derek is 31-years-old and grew up in Middletown, Pennsylvania on a commercial poultry farm with pullets and layers. In addition to being raised on a poultry farm, he spent four years working in production on a large poultry farm in Manhattan, Kansas. Derek was fortunate to be able to experience everything from harvesting crops, milling feed, managing breeders, helping in the hatchery, raising pullets, and egg layer production. He has been in his current role as a Relationship Manager for Wenger Feeds for over three years.

**Tyler Patton****Graduation Year: 2013****Major: Turfgrass Science****Current Company: Corteva Agriscience****Current Title: District Sales Leader**

Tyler is participating in this program to give back and positively shape someone's career that is interested in agriculture.

During Tyler's seven-year career, he has held various roles in sales in marketing. He had the opportunity to market products for the entire United States. He now a District Sales Leader in the northeastern United States. Tyler is an experienced sales and marketing person with a demonstrated history of working in the biotechnology industry. Tyler is also skilled in team building, agronomy, leadership, communications, and marketing.

**Kelvin Ranck**

**Graduation Year: 2020**

**Major: Agribusiness Management**

**Current Company: MidAtlantic Farm Credit**

**Current Title: Loan Officer**

Kelvin is participating in this program to offer the view of a recent graduate and give students the support and learning experiences they need to succeed in their life endeavors.

This past June Kelvin started working at MidAtlantic as a Loan Officer. Kelvin is happy to be serving the Ag community of Lancaster and providing them with loan products for their farms. Kelvin graduated from Penn State University this spring with a B.S. in Agri-Business Management, a minor in Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and a specialization in Finance. While in college Kelvin enjoyed the Agribusiness Management Club and participating on the Penn State National Agri-Marketing team which competed in Kansas City, MI.

Kelvin grew up on a family production farm in Juniata County where he learned all about the production of milk, corn, wheat, pigs, and hay. On the family farm, Kelvin bought a maple syrup evaporator and uses reverse osmosis to make maple syrup from the trees on the family property.

## Agriculture and Bio Engineering

**Megan Sullivan**

**Graduation Year: 2018**

**Major: Biological Engineering**

**Current Company: PepsiCo, Inc.**

**Current Title: Global Procurement Senior Buyer**

Megan is participating in this program to help students in the College of Agricultural Sciences that are interested in pursuing a career in Global Procurement (GP), or more specifically GP at PepsiCo, Inc. She aims to help students understand what a career in procurement may entail and what type of skills and capabilities individuals may develop in this career.

Megan is a Penn State alumna, graduated in 2018 from the College of Engineering/Agricultural Sciences with a degree in Biological Engineering and a minor in Biomedical Engineering. She started her career at PepsiCo in GP as a summer intern after her junior year, and returned to PepsiCo's Procurement Function full time upon graduation. She had three different roles within GP since re-joining PepsiCo as a full-time hire and has worked out of two locations -- first out of the Purchase, NY (headquarters) and most recently, Dallas, TX at the Frito Lay headquarters. She currently holds the title of Global Procurement, Senior Buyer (Energy). . Megan enjoys having the opportunity to return to Penn State (in person or

virtually) as part of the PEP GP Penn State campus recruiting team and remains involved in community outreach through various employee resource groups.

## Animal and Veterinary Sciences

### **Earl Biggers**

**Graduation Year: 1980**

**Major: Dairy Production**

**Current Company: Great Plains Dairymen's Association**

**Current Title: Dairy Cooperative Field Manager**

Earl is participating in this program because he enjoys helping and supporting young students and encouraging their participation in the dairy industry.

After graduating from Penn State, Earl operated a small dairy farm in Michigan and later he managed another farm in Kansas. In 2000, he took a field representative position with a large dairy cooperative, advanced to a supervisor and then to the management level. In 2010, he completed a Master's Degree in Ag Business from Kansas State University. In 2014, he took a position with a global dairy broker and provided member services for a small dairy cooperative in SD, MN, & IA.

### **Jeff Harding**

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Rock, Pennsylvania. His experiences at Penn State were invaluable to helping him run a business as well as have the background knowledge to make decisions to manage the daily operations of a modern farm business.

**Brynn Kafka**

**Graduation Year: 2008**

**Major: Animal Science**

**Current Company: Merck Animal Health**

**Current Title: National Account Manager**

Brynn is participating in this program because inspiring the next generation of agricultural graduates is important to her. She also wants to instill comfort in knowing that life changes and so can you! You can change jobs, industries, careers - and it's all okay. She reminds students that what will never change is your Penn State degree and that is so valuable!

Brynn is a proud Nittany Lion, residing in South Dakota. After graduation, she completed her MBA while working in the early part of her career in governmental affairs and communications. She refocused her career path and began working in animal nutrition and sales where she found her true calling and has been with Merck for almost two years. Before Merck, she worked for Land O'Lakes and Alltech/Ridley/Hubbard.

**Jody Kull**

**Graduation Year: 2001**

**Major: Animal Bioscience**

**Current Company: Valley Mobile Veterinary Service**

**Current Title: Large Animal Veterinarian**

Jody is participating in this program because she enjoys getting to know students and sharing her daily activities and career pathway.

Dr. Jody Kull graduated from Penn State University in 2001 and is a 2004 alumnus of the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine. She began her veterinary career at a mixed animal practice in Danville, Pennsylvania. In 2008, she started her practice, Valley Mobile Veterinary Service, Inc. As a solo food-animal veterinarian, Dr. Kull serves clients in seven counties in central Pennsylvania. She completed her Dairy Production Medicine Certificate from Penn State University in 2012. Dr. Kull enjoys volunteering with multiple organizations and sharing her adventures as a veterinarian with students.

**Megan**

**Graduation Year:**

**Major:**

**Current Company:**

**Current Title:**

Megan is participating in this program to give back to Penn State. The mentors she met while enrolled as a student helped her to focus on career goals and played an essential part in helping her achieve those goals. She hopes to assist current students similarly.

After graduating from Penn State in 2007, Megan enrolled in graduate school at Virginia Tech where she went on to obtain both a D.V.M. and a Ph.D. in Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences with an emphasis in Poultry Medicine. Her Ph.D. research focused on studying the epidemiology and pathophysiology of clostridial dermatitis in turkeys. She completed her graduate studies in 2015 and moved to central Minnesota to work as a Staff Veterinarian for Jennie-O Turkey Store. In that position, she provided veterinary services to approximately 70 company-owned and contracted turkey farms throughout central Minnesota. Her responsibilities included the development and oversight of biosecurity and vaccination programs, diagnosis of flock health challenges, and the development of disease treatment and control programs. She attained specialty board certification through the American College of Poultry Veterinarians in 2017. She returned to Pennsylvania in January of 2020 as an Associate Clinical Professor and Avian Diagnostic and Outreach Veterinarian at the Penn State Animal Diagnostic Laboratory.

**H.**

**Graduation Year:**

**Major**

**Current Company**

**Current Title**

H. Duane is participating in this program to allow students to investigate career experiences that can help them determine where their interest lies.

H. Duane grew up on a dairy farm in Liberty, Pennsylvania, and received B.S. and M.S. degrees at Penn State, and Ph. D. at Cornell University. He was a Research Geneticist at USDA's Agricultural Research Service for 42 years and Research Leader for 24 years. Duane also consulted at CDCB for eight years having received the J. Lush Animal Breeding and Genetics, Penn State Alumni Fellow, Land of Lake Research, and the Distinguished Service Awards, each from the American Dairy Science Association. He was National Dairy Shrine's Guest of Honor and World Dairy Expo's Industry Person of the Year. He has also participated as a 4-H activity leader for over 40 years.

**Nicole**

**Graduation Year:**

**Major:**

**Current Company:**

**Current Title:**

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

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

**Stephany**

**Graduation Year:**

**Major:**

**Current Company:**

**Current Title:**

Stephany is participating in this program because she enjoys mentoring and meeting students.

Stephany attended Penn State University from 2006-2010, where she received her degree in Animal Bioscience, now known as Veterinary and Biomedical Science, as well as an Equine minor. She went on to complete her Master's degree in Laboratory Animal Science at Drexel University, in Philadelphia. Since completing her schooling, she has become highly involved in the local branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. She was president of the organization from 2015-2016 and also won the ACTs Trainer Award in 2016. Stephany worked at the University of Pennsylvania as a Husbandry Trainer, Researcher Trainer, and an IACUC Specialist. She is currently employed as a Clinical Service Manager at Merck where she manages a large animal vivarium with a variety of species.

## Environmental Science

**Ann Sarver**

**Graduation Year: 1999**

**Major: Environmental Resource Management**

**Current Company: US Postal Service (Environmental Auditing)**

**Current Title: Facilities Environmental Specialist**

Ann is participating in this program because she enjoys remaining connected to the university and it's students. She is always amazed at the power of the Penn State network.

Upon graduation, she was employed by the consulting company where she had interned the previous summer. After six months, she moved south to Atlanta where she consulted with a few companies for several more years. An opportunity opened at the Postal Service (one of her clients) and she was hired as an internal environmental auditor located in Tampa, FL. After two years she moved to the facilities department. Ann's duties have included everything from building maintenance (underground storage tanks, mold, lead, and asbestos) to real estate transactions. She has volunteered with the Penn State Alumni Association, Tampa Chapter for more than ten years.

**Brian Stempowski**

**Graduation Year: 1991**

**Major: Environmental Resource Management**  
**Current Company: Arcadis**  
**Current Title: Vice President/Program Manager**

Brian is participating in this program to engage with and mentor students with similar interests and career path aspirations while sharing lessons learned through his career.

Brian is a 1991 ERM graduate and a Vice President at Arcadis with 29 years of applied experience conducting and/or managing environmental characterization and remediation projects and programs across the United States. After completing his undergraduate degree at Penn State, Brian earned his Master of Environmental Engineering degree from Johns Hopkins University and became certified as a Professional Engineer then later as a Project Management Professional.

Brian began his career in environmental consulting as a field technician responsible for data collection and remedial system operation and maintenance. He soon moved into a role as a project hydrogeologist then project engineer where he designed and constructed groundwater and soil remediation systems. All through his career, Brian was involved in aspects of project management and for the last 15 years, he has focused on managing numerous large projects and programs at Arcadis. He currently manages a program for a major oil company consisting of nearly 150 projects and is tasked with managing and stewarding them through all phases of environmental investigation and remediation to regulatory closure.

**Evan Verbanic**  
**Graduation Year: 1989**  
**Major: Environmental Resource Management**  
**Current Company: HP Hood**  
**Current Title: Environmental Health & Safety Manager**

Evan is participating in this program to contribute and benefit the current students in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

During his career, Evan has provided environmental and sustainability project management and business development services for a diverse client base, working in consulting, non-profit, and start-up capacities, with a long-standing interest in land protection, resource conservation, and sustainability.

He has been fortunate to be professionally affiliated with many innovative organizations in the Pittsburgh area, including Sustainable Pittsburgh, Hedin Environmental/Iron Oxide Recovery, and the regional office of the PA Association for Sustainable Agriculture. From 2001 through 2008, he applied his entrepreneurial and project management skills to the creation, development, and management of a certified organic farm business, Cherry Valley Organics. From 2009 to the present, he has worked in the private sector, progressively holding Environmental Health & Safety (EHS) and sustainability management roles, culminating with his current role with HP Hood in Batavia, NY.

Food Science

**Jaye Aster Broder**

**Graduation Year: 2017**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Mondelez International**

**Current Title: Associate Scientist II**

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

Jaye is an associate scientist at Mondelez International working to help people snack right. 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.

**Maggie Harding**

**Graduation Year: 2014**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Lactalis American Group**

**Current Title: Research Scientist**

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.

A "townie" born-and-raised, she packed up and moved out of State College as soon as she graduated and had experience in several aspects of the food industry across the country. She currently works as a cheese scientist and loves the creativity involved in developing new cheeses and improving on current products. She is active in the Ag Alumni Society and stays active – a nod to her time on the Penn State Women's Volleyball team.

**Andy Hirneisen**

**Graduation Year: 2007**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Penn State Extension – Food Safety**

**Current Title: Senior Educator**

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

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 teaching and currently works as a Food Safety educator with Penn State Extension.

**Sarah Houle**

**Graduation Year: 2003**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Ghirardelli Chocolate Company**

**Current Title: Research & Development Manager**

Sarah is participating in this program to give back to the undergraduate students at Penn State in the College of Agricultural Sciences.

Sarah is a 2003 graduate of the Penn State Food Science program. She has spent the past 15 years working in product development at various food companies, including General Mills, The Hershey Company, and most recently, Ghirardelli Chocolate Company. Currently, she oversees the team at Ghirardelli that is responsible for the development & commercialization of new chocolate squares, bars, baking chips, professional products, and ice cream fountain offerings.

**Roy Johnson**

**Graduation Year: 1982**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: John I Haas, Inc.**

**Current Title: National Sales Manager**

Roy is participating in this program to share experiences from his professional career and how those experiences at Penn State prepared him for his journey in life.

Roy graduated from Penn State in 1982 in Food Science. He then worked for Miller Brewing Company from 1982 through 1995 in the brewing department. Since 1995 he has worked for various companies supplying hops to the brewing industry. Roy is currently with John I Haas, Inc. as their National Sales Manager providing hops and hop products in the craft segment of the brewing industry. He resides in Yakima, Washington, but grew up in Vineland, New Jersey.

**Natalie Keller**

**Graduation Year: 2017**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Mondelez International**

**Current Title: Associate Scientist II**

Natalie is participating in the program to connect with current students and have them learn from her experiences as a scientist in Research & Development.

Natalie is a 2017 graduate, completing her degree in Food Science and an Honors thesis through the Schreyer Honors College. As a student, she worked in a food microbiology research lab for four years and completed two internships at Mondelez International in product development. She was also involved in Schreyer Student Council, THON, and Food Science Club. Following graduation, She joined Mondelez full-time, where she works in the US Cookies team in product development innovation. She

has worked on many products during her time at Mondelēz, including belVita, Nutter Butter, Chips Ahoy!, Stride & Trident gums, and other snack brands. She volunteers with the Penn State Alumni Association, serving as Vice President of the Scholar Alumni Society.

**Jessica Raskin**

**Graduation Year: 2019**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: Ingredion Inc.**

**Current Title: Technical Service Representative**

While I was a junior/senior, it was incredibly helpful to be able to shadow and talk with other food science majors already established in the careers so I could gain insight into potential jobs.

Jessica is a 2019 Food Science graduate with a minor in International Agriculture. Originally from south Florida, she was drawn to Penn State by her alumni grandmother. While at Penn State University, Jess was a New Student Orientation Leader, a Resident Assistant in East, and involved in a professional agricultural sorority, Sigma Alpha. Some of her favorite memories include working in a Food Science Lab researching ice cream, and traveling to India and Italy with food science courses. She is currently a Technical Service Representative with Ingredion Inc. Ingredion Inc. is a global ingredient solutions company that makes sweeteners, starches, nutrition ingredients, and biomaterials.

**Andrew Schlegel**

**Graduation Year: 2012**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: USDA Foreign Agricultural Service**

**Current Title International Trade Specialist**

Andrew is participating in this program to give students an inside look at government and how agriculture can take them around the world.

Andrew currently works at the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Service in the Trade Missions and Shows division. In his current position, Andrew works with trade shows around the world to establish USA Pavilion which helps U.S. food and agriculture companies connect with potential foreign buyers. Andrew has been with FAS for seven years and has spent time in international development, policy, and marketing. He graduated in 2012 from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Food Science and a minor in International Agriculture. Andrew currently serves as the President of Metro Washington, DC Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association and on the student engagement committee for the Ag Alumni Society.

# Forestry/Eco System Management/Wildlife & Fisheries

**Mark Gagnon**

**Major: Forest Ecosystem Management (Graduate)**

**Current Company: Penn State College of Ag Sciences, Entrepreneurship and Innovation**

**Current Title: Harbaugh Entrepreneur and Innovation Faculty Scholar Associate Teaching Professor, Agribusiness**

Mark is participating in this program to share his expertise in forest products, distribution, entrepreneurship and strategic consulting

Mark is the Harbaugh Entrepreneur and Innovation Faculty Scholar, Associate Teaching Professor of Agribusiness, and Director of The Food and Bio-innovation Entrepreneurship Minor in The College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University. Mark is a former entrepreneur and business development executive. He has participated in green building product start-ups and has managed product portfolios exceeding \$300M. Mark co-founded The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program in The College of Agricultural Sciences at PSU. Mark's scholarly interests lie within entrepreneurship that addresses challenges in food, agriculture, and bio-renewables (Food-Agri-Tech). His research examines new technology value proposition development and strategic implementation.

**Kathryn Schmidt**

**Graduation Year: 2016**

**Major: Wildlife and Fisheries Science**

**Current Company: Penn State Extension – Renewable Natural Resources/Forestry**

**Current Title: Forestry Educator**

Kathryn is participating in this program to talk to future students about potential pathways for a career in wildlife and fisheries science.

Kathryn graduated from Penn State in 2016 with a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Science, Wildlife Option, and a minor in forestry. She worked for a year at a Conservation District in western Pennsylvania before pursuing an M.S. in Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Oklahoma State University. She graduated from Ohio State University in December 2019 and began working for Penn State Extension in May 2020. Kathryn was born and raised in western Pennsylvania and is happy to live and work in the state now.

# International Agriculture/Education/Government Affairs

**Victoria Brown**

**Graduation Year: 2019**

**Major: Agriculture and Extension Education**

**Current Company: Kutztown Area High School**

**Current Title: Agricultural Education Teacher**

Throughout her college experience, she often had questions about her future career that she felt could only be answered by a current Agricultural Educator. Now that she is in the classroom, it has affirmed her belief that the best way to learn more about your future career is to ask someone who is involved in that field or get the first-hand experience. She hopes that current students have the chance to get questions answered about what it is like to teach so that they are better prepared to make decisions about their future careers.

Victoria's involvement in her own high school's Agricultural Education Program is what drove her to a career in Agricultural Education. Her time at Penn State helped her develop into the teacher that she is today through her course-work, student organization involvement, internships, and more. After graduating in May of 2019, she accepted a position as the Agricultural Education Teacher and FFA Advisor at Kutztown Area High School in Berks County where she is today. As Victoria teaches, she is also pursuing her Principal Certification and Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Penn State.

**Noel Habashy**

**Graduation Year: 2019**

**Area of Study: Agriculture and Extension Education**

**Current Company: The Pennsylvania State University**

**Current Title: Assistant Teaching Professor**

Noel is participating in this program to provide an applied learning opportunity to students.

Noel is an educator with over a decade of experience working in the fields of higher education and international development. He has the extensive intercultural experience, professional proficiency in Spanish, and experience living in five countries (Canada, Costa Rica, Egypt, Honduras, and the USA) and working in, or visiting over 30 total nations. His research interests include international development, international agriculture, local community perspectives of global partnerships, and the scholarship of teaching and learning.

**Tracy Hoover**

**Area of Study: Agriculture and Extension Education**

**Current Company: Penn State College of Ag Sciences**

**Current Title: Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education**

Tracy is participating in this program to provide an overview of how the college supports student success and engagement along with the scholarship of teaching and learning.

Tracy Hoover earned bachelor's and master's degrees in animal science from Delaware Valley College and Penn State, respectively. From 1985 to 1988, she taught agricultural education at Big Spring High School in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, before earning a doctorate in agricultural and extension education from Penn State and joining the Penn State faculty in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education in 1990. In 1993, she left to teach in the Department of Agricultural Education and Communication at the University of Florida, where she taught courses in leadership development and teacher education. Hoover returned to the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education at Penn State in 2001, with responsibilities in youth leadership development and teacher education. From 2004 to 2011, she served as head of the department. In July 2011, she became interim associate dean for undergraduate education in the College of Agricultural Sciences, and the following year she was named to the post on a standing basis.

**Mark Lowery**

**Graduation Year: 2009**

**Major: Agriculture and Extension Education**

**Current Company: CNH Industrial/New Holland**

**Current Title: Director of Commercial Marketing**

Mark is participating in this program to provide awareness of careers in agribusiness/agrimarketing. Alternatively, he hopes to gain insight into students' company selection as they're preparing to enter the job market.

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equipment brand. His team is engaged with promotional strategy and lead generation tactics that deliver sales results for nearly 800 dealers in the United States and Canada.

**Orry Pratt**

**Graduation Year: 2012**

**Major: Animal Science**

**Current Company: Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations**

**Current Title: Agriculture Officer**

Orry is participating in this program to provide students insight into international development issues.

Orry graduated with a bachelor's degree in Animal Sciences in 2012 and volunteered in Kenya the same year to assist in youth agriculture development. He also studied agricultural extension at Texas A&M for his Master's degree. Further, he served three years as an agriculture extension volunteer for the Peace Corps in Paraguay and spent one year as Communications Officer for Food and Agriculture Organization. Orry is currently an Agriculture Officer for FAO in Eastern Africa.

**Andrew Schlegel**

**Graduation Year: 2012**

**Major: Food Science**

**Current Company: USDA Foreign Agricultural Service**

**Current Title International Trade Specialist**

Andrew is participating in this program to give students an inside look at government and how agriculture can take them around the world.

Andrew currently works at the United States Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agriculture Service in the Trade Missions and Shows division. In his current position, Andrew works with trade shows around the world to establish USA Pavilion which helps U.S. food and agriculture companies connect with potential foreign buyers. Andrew has been with FAS for seven years and has spent time in international development, policy, and marketing. He graduated in 2012 from Pennsylvania State University with a degree in Food Science and a minor in International Agriculture. Andrew currently serves as the President of Metro Washington, DC Chapter of the Penn State Alumni Association and on the student engagement committee for the Ag Alumni Society.

**Caleb Wright****Graduation Year: 2014****Major: Agriculture and Extension Education****Current Company: Versant Strategies****Current Title: Chief Operating Officer**

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

Chief Operating Officer Caleb Wright's roots in Pennsylvania's agricultural community are deep, and accolades earned during his young career have marked him as a voice of rural Pennsylvania's new generation. Raised on a Huntingdon County farm that has borne his family's name for over a century, Caleb grew up as the grandson of the region's renowned veterinarian, Doc Kyper, with a family legacy of serving the rural community. Before joining Versant Strategies, he served as a PA State FFA Officer, was a National FFA Officer Candidate, and taught high school agriculture.

Caleb is a graduate of Penn State with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Extension Education. He was named as the College of Agricultural Science's inaugural Emerging Leader Candidate, working one-on-one with the College's Dean. Caleb investigated recruitment and retention of students in Agricultural Education as a Penn State research project. A skilled speaker, his energized commitment to rural education also earned him the Youth Agricultural Award presented by the Penn State Agriculture Council. Wright was elected to Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences Alumni Society Board and also serves on the Board of the PA FFA Foundation.

Along with managing the day-to-day operations of the firm, Caleb actively lobbies and assists with organizational management.

## Landscape/Turfgrass

**Joe Farina****Graduation Year: 1981****Major: Horticulture****Current Company: Independence Property Services****Current Title: Production Manager**

Joe is participating in this program to share his thoughts and experiences in the field today.

Joe is the Manager of Production at Independence Property Services based in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Previously, Joe managed operations at BrightView Landscape. Located in King of Prussia, Independence Property Services is one of eleven divisional companies throughout the country working for Aspen Grove Landscape which is a full-service grounds management company.

**Mark Kuhns****Graduation Year: 1977****Major: Agricultural Science****Current Company: Golf Course Management Consultants****Current Title: Golf Course Consultant**

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

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, and 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.

**Matt Owens**

**Graduation Year: 1993**

**Major: Landscape Contracting**

**Current Company: Edward Jones Investments**

**Current Title: Financial Advisor**

Matt is participating in this program because he would like to help students become more aware of the various opportunities available while pursuing your professional career. 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 me for a recent career change.

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.

**Tyler Patton**

**Graduation Year: 2013**

**Major: Turfgrass Science**

**Current Company: Corteva Agriscience**

**Current Title: District Sales Leader**

Tyler is participating in this program to give back and positively shape someone's career that is interested in agriculture.

During Tyler's seven-year career, he has held various roles in sales in marketing. He had the opportunity to market products for the entire United States. He now a District Sales Leader in the northeastern United States. Tyler is an experienced sales and marketing person with a demonstrated history of working in the biotechnology industry. Tyler is also skilled in team building, agronomy, leadership, communications, and marketing.

**Ronda Roemmelt Sneider**

**Graduation Year: 1995**

**Major: Agricultural Science**

**Current Company: Ruppert Nurseries**

**Current Title: Sales Manager**

Ronda is participating in this program because she is passionate about Penn State and enjoys helping others find their career pathways.

Since graduation in 1995 from Penn State, Ronda has worked in just about every aspect of the nursery and landscape industry for companies big and small. She currently works as the sales manager at Ruppert Nurseries, a 600-acre wholesale tree grower, and as the owner of a small garden maintenance company in Annapolis, MD. She is also a certified professional horticulturist and an ISA certified arborist.

**Jon Schach****Graduation Year: 2000****Major: Environmental Science****Current Company: Good's Tree and Lawn Care****Current Title: General Manager**

Jon is participating in this program to strengthen connections with students that want a career in tree care, plant health care, or turfgrass.

Jon got his start in urban forestry in 1995 working as a groundsman for a small tree care company in his hometown near Reading, PA. Jon is a Penn State graduate with a Bachelor's in Biology and has a Master's in Environmental Science from Antioch University. It wasn't until after the formal education that he chose arboriculture as a career, joining Good's Tree Care in 2005. Jon moved from a production role to sales/consulting in 2007, and became a General Manager in 2020. Jon's greatest passion is sharing a richer understanding of trees with others. He says, "When we learn about trees, know their names, they are no longer strangers to us, and we are more likely to care about them."

**Shanna Scordo****Graduation Year: 2005****Major: Landscape Contracting****Current Company: Earth Craft Design-Build-Maintain****Current Title: President**

Shanna is participating in this program to give back to the Agricultural Sciences program at Penn State. When she was a student, she appreciated the visits and advice from industry professionals.

Shanna is a vibrant and dedicated leader, specializing in sales, design, short- and long-term strategy development, vision-casting, and creative problem-solving. She holds a Landscape Contracting degree from Penn State University and has experience working both within and outside of the green industry, including experience in marketing, market research, and direct sales. Shanna has owned and operated EarthCraft in partnership with her husband since 2010.

# Plant Sciences

## **Evan**

**Graduation Year:**

**Area of Study:**

**Current Company:**

**Current Title:**

Evan is participating in this program because he benefitted from career advice as a student and would like to give back.

Evan studied geology in college and completed his M.S. at Penn State while studying sod production for NFL football fields. He then worked as a grounds manager in professional baseball for about five years before returning to Penn State to pursue his Ph.D. in soil science. He now studies engineered soil mixtures for sports fields, with an emphasis on baseball and softball.

## **Kim Phillips**

**Graduation Year: 2009**

**Major: Biology (Eberly College of Science)**

**Current Company: Pioneer Seeds/Corteva Agriscience**

**Current Title: Direct Sales Leader**

Kim is participating in this program to discuss her experience as a Penn State Alumna and to educate others about the great company for which she works.

As a District Sales Leader for Pioneer Seeds, Kim, is responsible for the Mid-Atlantic region including DE, MD, Eastern PA, and NJ. Graduating from Penn State '07 (B.S., Biology) and '09 (M.S., Biology/Corn Genetics), Kim then attended Elizabethtown College to receive her M.B.A., in Business. A proud THON dancer ('07 FTK!), she started with Pioneer in 2010 as a Senior Research Associate at the New Holland, PA Research Station. She was promoted to Research Operations Lead in 2011 and transitioned to the sales side of the business when selected for her District Sales Leader role in 2015.

## **Tyler Patton**

**Graduation Year: 2013**

**Major: Turfgrass Science**

**Current Company: Corteva Agriscience**

**Current Title: District Sales Leader**

Tyler is participating in this program to give back and positively shape someone's career that is interested in agriculture.

During Tyler's seven-year career, he has held various roles in sales in marketing. He had the opportunity to market products for the entire United States. He now a District Sales Leader in the northeastern United States. Tyler is an experienced sales and marketing person with a demonstrated history of

working in the biotechnology industry. Tyler is also skilled in team building, agronomy, leadership, communications, and marketing.

**Mark Fiely**

**Graduation Year: 1988**

**Major: Plant Sciences**

**Current Company: Ernst Conservation Seeds**

**Current Title: Horticulturist**

Mark is participating in this program to pay it forward by assisting students.

Since 1995 Mark 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, and harvest committees. Among his responsibilities are plant prospecting, development of seed dormancy breaking protocols, formulation of seed mixes, and attending 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 Lawn to Meadow Conversion Committee. Mark is a co-author for two refereed publications.

## Research and Laboratory Services

**Matthew Gardner**

**Graduation Year: 2009**

**Major: Immunology and Infectious Disease**

**Current Company: Emory University**

**Current Title: Assistant Professor of Medicine**

Matthew is participating in the program to provide advice on the bigger picture to students interested in pursuing a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences so they may be better prepared.

Matthew earned his B.S. in IID from Penn State in 2009. He completed his Ph.D. in Dr. Mike Farzan's lab at Harvard University, earning my degree in virology in 2014. He continued his work with Dr. Farzan at The Scripps Research Institute in Jupiter, FL as a postdoctoral fellow. His studies focused on gene therapy applications for preventing and treating HIV infection. He also co-founded a startup biotech company to develop an HIV entry inhibitor developed during his graduate and postdoctoral studies. He recently joined the Emory School of Medicine and Yerkes National Primate Research Center as an

Assistant Professor to start his independent research program around research interests in gene therapy.

**Megan Lighty**

**Graduation Year: 2007**

**Major: Animal Science**

**Current Company: Penn State Animal Diagnostic Lab**

**Current Title: Associate Clinical Professor - Avian Diagnostic and Outreach Veterinarian**

Megan is participating in this program to give back to Penn State. The mentors she met while enrolled as a student helped her to focus on career goals and played an essential part in helping her achieve those goals. She hopes to assist current students similarly.

After graduating from Penn State in 2007, Megan enrolled in graduate school at Virginia Tech where she went on to obtain both a D.V.M. and a Ph.D. in Biomedical and Veterinary Sciences with an emphasis in Poultry Medicine. Her Ph.D. research focused on studying the epidemiology and pathophysiology of clostridial dermatitis in turkeys. She completed her graduate studies in 2015 and moved to central Minnesota to work as a Staff Veterinarian for Jennie-O Turkey Store. In that position, she provided veterinary services to approximately 70 company-owned and contracted turkey farms throughout central Minnesota. Her responsibilities included the development and oversight of biosecurity and vaccination programs, diagnosis of flock health challenges, and the development of disease treatment and control programs. She attained specialty board certification through the American College of Poultry Veterinarians in 2017. She returned to Pennsylvania in January of 2020 as an Associate Clinical Professor and Avian Diagnostic and Outreach Veterinarian at the Penn State Animal Diagnostic Laboratory.

**Evan Mascitti**

**Graduation Year: 2014**

**Area of Study: Soil Science**

**Current Company: Penn State .D.Ph.D. Studying Soil Mixtures for Sports Fields**

**Current Title: P.h.D. Student**

Evan is participating in this program because he benefitted from career advice as a student and would like to give back.

Evan studied geology in college and completed his M.S. at Penn State while studying sod production for NFL football fields. He then worked as a grounds manager in professional baseball for about five years before returning to Penn State to pursue his Ph.D. in soil science. He now studies engineered soil mixtures for sports fields, with an emphasis on baseball and softball.

**H. Duane Norman**

**Graduation Year: 1964**

**Major: Dairy Science**

**Current Company: Council on Dairy Cattle Breeding**

**Current Title: Technical Advisor & Industry Liaison**

H. Duane is participating in this program to allow students to investigate career experiences that can help them determine where their interest lies.

H. Duane grew up on a dairy farm in Liberty, Pennsylvania, and received B.S. and M.S. degrees at Penn State, and Ph. D. at Cornell University. He was a Research Geneticist at USDA's Agricultural Research Service for 42 years and Research Leader for 24 years. Duane also consulted at CDCB for eight years having received the J. Lush Animal Breeding and Genetics, Penn State Alumni Fellow, Land of Lake Research, and the Distinguished Service Awards, each from the American Dairy Science Association. He was National Dairy Shrine's Guest of Honor and World Dairy Expo's Industry Person of the Year. He has also participated as a 4-H activity leader for over 40 years.

**Nicole Schlau**

**Graduation Year: 2009**

**Major: Animal Science**

**Current Company: Dairyland Labs**

**Current Title: Research Associate**

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

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

**Stephany Silva**

**Graduation Year: 2010**

**Major: Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences**

**Current Company: Merck**

**Current Title: Clinical Services Manager**

Stephany is participating in this program because she enjoys mentoring and meeting students.

Stephany attended Penn State University from 2006-2010, where she received her degree in Animal Bioscience, now known as Veterinary and Biomedical Science, as well as an Equine minor. She went on to complete her Master's degree in Laboratory Animal Science at Drexel University, in Philadelphia. Since completing her schooling, she has become highly involved in the local branch of the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science. She was president of the organization from 2015-2016 and also won the ACTs Trainer Award in 2016. Stephany worked at the University of Pennsylvania as a Husbandry Trainer, Researcher Trainer, and an IACUC Specialist. She is currently employed as a Clinical Service Manager at Merck where she manages a large animal vivarium with a variety of species.



