

Aligning Global Research Priorities & Investment Strategies for Sustainable Water Management

Speaker & Facilitator Biographies

***Denotes Facilitator**

Rebecca Bartels, Trust in Foods



Bartels has spent her career working domestically and internationally as a strategic partner and market navigation advisor to leading food retail and CPG companies, multinational agribusinesses, foundations, government and nonprofits. Specializing in leveraging human-centered data-driven insights to inform engagement and behavior change, she has a proven track record helping partners ensure that every dollar spent on farmer and value chain outreach has maximum impact on outcomes. Bartels uses her extensive network across the public and private sector to build collective impact coalitions and form strategic partnerships that advance the adoption of conservation agriculture practices in measurable ways.

Bruno Basso, Michigan State University



Basso's research falls broadly in sustainable agriculture. His approach is to integrate diverse disciplines such as biophysics, climatology, hydrology, genetics, agronomy and soil science to understand the overall agricultural systems and to improve decision making across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, from the smallholder farmer in the developing world to the industrial producer and policymaker at all scales.

Moshi Berenstein, European Irrigation Association/Netafim



Berenstein has served voluntarily as the president of the European Irrigation Association since 2020. Actively engaged in the irrigation & water management sector for 14 years, he is CEO of Netafim in France, a global leader in smart irrigation solutions. In this role, he's responsible for the expansion and development of smart irrigation solutions across the French market and he is involved in various sustainability projects in the European Union. Israeli by origin, Berenstein joined Netafim in Israel in 2008 and moved with his family to southern France in 2013.

Hannah Birgé*, The Nature Conservancy



Birgé is a senior scientist in food and water with The Nature Conservancy Corporate Engagement Team. Her team works with producers, companies and scientists to implement programs that achieve immediate conservation wins while providing prototypes for the kind of agriculture needed to sustain the planet's estimated 9.8 billion people by 2050. Birgé currently serves as a governor appointee on the Nebraska-Kansas Blue River Compact and as part of the Ecosystem Services Market Consortium's soil carbon research working group. She previously served on the Nebraska Governor's Healthy Soils Task Force and as the Governance Working Group Lead for a NATO Science for Peace and Security Series workshop.

Kathy Boomer, Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research



Boomer leads FFAR's development of research programs and partnerships in sustainable water management. She brings extensive experience in landscape modeling and watershed research and a passion for advancing science-based decision-making in resource management. Before joining FFAR, Boomer was the lead watershed scientist for the Nature Conservancy's Chesapeake Bay Restoration Program.

Nicole Brooks, University of Maryland



Brooks is dedicated to elevating diverse perspectives in environmental resource management. She has worked extensively to analyze how Traditional Environmental Knowledge is used in policy and how local tribes are involved with restoration throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. She brings extensive experience in surveying and outreach to diverse communities to facilitate meaningful connections and partnerships.

Nick Brozović *, Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute



Since 2014, Brozović has served as the director of policy for the University of Nebraska's Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute. He is also a professor of agricultural economics at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Brozović has over twenty years of international experience working on policy, technology and entrepreneurship issues related to water and agriculture. Areas of interest include smallholder irrigation; natural resource policy and governance; agricultural and water entrepreneurship; and economic analysis. Recently, he's supported irrigation entrepreneurs in the U.S., Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia; collaborated with multiple agtech incubator programs; provided corporate strategy and ESG consulting; and completed research on water risk and the value of water in agriculture.

Jim Butler, Kansas Geological Survey



Butler authored "The Design, Performance, and Analysis of Slug Tests" (Second Edition). He currently is a senior scientist in the Geohydrology Section of the Kansas Geological Survey at the University of Kansas, where he has worked for over 30 years. His research interests include aquifer testing, assessment of aquifers that support irrigated agriculture, high-resolution subsurface characterization, well responses to natural and anthropogenic stimuli and the role of phreatophytes in stream-aquifer systems.

Jessica Christiansen, Bayer



Christiansen joined Bayer in June of 2010 as a Global Chemistry Regulatory Affairs lead. She transitioned to the Global Crop Protection Organization as the Global Crop Protection Marketing and Portfolio lead. She then moved into the role of North American Regional Crops lead, focusing on product management and business strategy for several crops. She later transitioned into a global commercial strategy role as the Global Cotton, Sorghum and Alfalfa manager, accountable for leading cross functional teams across the regions, technology and corporate to develop the wholistic crop strategies across seeds, traits, CP, seed growth and digital platforms. Christiansen's current role is vice president of Sustainability & Business Stewardship for Bayer Crop Science.

Laura Condon, Arizona State University



Condon is an assistant professor in the Department of Hydrology and Atmospheric Sciences. In addition to her academic experience, she worked as an engineering consultant and as a hydrologist for the Bureau of Reclamation, working on water resources management issues in Colorado and across the western U.S. Prior to joining the faculty at UA, Dr. Condon was an assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Syracuse University. Dr. Condon is interested in large-scale water sustainability and the dynamic behavior of managed hydrologic systems in the context of past development and future climate change. Her work combines physically based numerical modeling with observations and statistical techniques to evaluate large systems using rigorous quantitative methods.

John Farner, Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy



Farner is a leading expert on water, land use and agriculture and is executive director of the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy. Farner leads the Babbitt Center's work to promote the integration of land and water management in the U.S. and around the world. Farner was previously global chief sustainability officer of the precision agriculture technology company Netafim.

Patrick Fleming*, Franklin & Marshall College



Fleming is an environmental and agricultural economist, focusing on water quality, agricultural sustainability and the evaluation of policy incentives. His recent work includes evaluating farmer behavior in response to conservation policy and modeling of associated water quality effects; stated preference surveys of household environmental investments; and incentive design for targeting legacy pollution hotspots.

Thomas Harter, University of California, Davis



Thomas Harter holds the Nora S. Gustavsson Endowed Professorship in Water Resources at the University of California, Davis after serving as the Robert M. Hagan Endowed Chair for Water Policy and Management from 2007-2020. He has a joint appointment as Distinguished Professor and as Distinguished Professor in Cooperative Extension at the Department of Land, Air and Water Resources, is currently chair of the Hydrologic Sciences Graduate Group, and, as associate director of the Center for Watershed

Sciences, is a team partner for the World Water Center. At UC Davis since 1995, he has established a research program in agricultural groundwater hydrology developing novel understanding and solutions to address issues at the nexus of groundwater, the unsaturated zone, soils and agriculture.

Jerry Hatfield, USDA



Hatfield is the retired director of the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) National Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment in Ames, Iowa. His research focuses on the interactions among the components of the soil-plant-atmosphere continuum and their linkage to air, water and soil quality. His focus has been on the evaluation of farming systems and their response to water and nitrogen interactions across soils and remote sensing methods to quantify field variation. He utilizes the genetics x environment x management concept to show producers how they can increase their production efficiency, increase soil health and develop resilience to weather and climate variation.

Alex Held, CSIRO



Held is the AquaWatch Australia Mission lead at the Centre for Earth Observation in the CSIRO Space and Astronomy Business Unit. Held serves as the CSIRO Principal on the international Committee on Earth Observation Satellites. Previously, he served as a co-lead of the Landscapes Assessment facility of Australia's Terrestrial Ecosystem Research Network (TERN), which provides free and open access to various satellite-derived products for ecosystem science and land management. He also served as the Head of COSSA (the CSIRO Office of Space Science and Applications) from 2004 - 2007 and served as member of the National Committee for Space Science of the Australian Academy of Science. He has been linking remote sensing and vegetation mapping at CSIRO for 29 years.

Ellen Herbert*, Ducks Unlimited



Herbert is an ecosystem services scientist for Ducks Unlimited (DU) at their national headquarters in Memphis, Tennessee. She coordinates DU's efforts to quantify and communicate the benefits DU's conservation programs provide for wildlife and humans, including habitat, water quality, groundwater recharge, flood abatement, soil conservation, biodiversity, recreation, education and many others.

Amy Jacobs, The Nature Conservancy



Jacobs joined the Maryland/DC chapter of The Nature Conservancy in 2011 and leads efforts to improve water quality in agricultural landscapes across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Her collaborative efforts are focused across multiple states, working with TNC colleagues as well as farmers and agribusinesses to implement change in agricultural systems to meet our ambitious goals. Her work directly supports TNC's global goal of reducing nutrient runoff in agricultural watersheds with the goal of improving water quality and reducing dead zones in our estuaries.

Elliott Kellner, Donald Danforth Plant Science Center



As part of the Innovation Team, Kellner manages the Danforth Center's Wells Fargo Innovation Incubator (IN²) and Center for AgTech and Location Science Technologies (CATALST) programs that support early stage agtech companies on their path to market and further develop the regional innovation ecosystem. Kellner is a scientific professional with experience developing and managing partnerships, leading multi-institutional efforts, and promoting collaborative programs. As Chesapeake Bay Science Advisor, he spent three years supporting the efforts of USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to mitigate the impacts of agriculture on water resources.

Melissa Kenney*, University of Minnesota, Institute on the Environment



Kenney is the director of Knowledge Initiatives at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment, where she directs efforts to build synergy across IonE's broad scientific research portfolio. Her research expertise includes conceptual modeling and decision structuring, indicators, systems analysis, multi-attribute methods and evaluation of decision support to address environmental policy decisions. In her former role as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow, she played a role in visioning a transboundary climate early warning system in the Columbia River basin, facilitated academic center collaborations via a NOAA and NSF partnership, advised several federal agencies on enhancing their social science research agendas and recommended methods to quantify the value of federal programs.

Chad Klotzbach, Alleghany Farm Services



Klotzbach grew up working most summers learning how to operate equipment and run a job site for his family's business. Today, as managing partner, he helps Alleghany Farm Services serve both the commercial and agricultural markets. The construction side focuses on commercial site construction and directional drilling throughout the western region of New York. Alleghany has focused on becoming a leader within the farm drainage, conservation drainage, and sustainable water management sector. Klotzbach is actively involved with the Conservation Drainage Network, Agricultural Drainage Management Coalition, Ohio State University Overholt Drainage School and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Dean Lemke, Lemke Family Farms, LLC



Following retirement from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Dean Lemke moved to his family farm near Dows, homesteaded in 1876. Throughout his 43-year career he worked to help Iowans reach environmental goals and steward resources for future generations.

Mark Masters, Georgia Water Planning & Policy Center - Albany State University/CBEAR



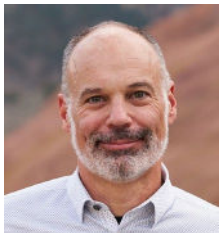
Masters is a leading expert in water management and planning in the Southeastern U.S. and has extensive experience in managing and supporting stakeholder-driven decision making and policy development processes. As director of the Georgia Water Planning and Policy Center at Albany State University, Mark has directed numerous research and outreach projects focused on agricultural water use, watershed planning and water management practice evaluation and has taught courses in environmental economics and water policy. Mark also serves as outreach director for the Center for Behavioral and Experimental Agri-Environmental Research (CBEAR), a USDA Center of Excellence focused on applying behavioral insights and experimental designs to improve programs related to agriculture and the environment.

Catherine Maxwell, Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research



Maxwell works with corporate, academic, governmental and nonprofit organizations to facilitate research partnerships addressing today's food and agriculture challenges. Prior to joining FFAR, Maxwell served in partnership development roles at Zamorano Pan-American Agricultural University, Meredith College, and NC State University, where she helped establish the NC Agricultural & Life Sciences Foundation.

Reed Maxwell, Princeton University



Maxwell is the William and Edna Macaleer Professor of Engineering and Applied Science and a Professor in Civil and Environmental Engineering and the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton University. He also directs the Integrated GroundWater Modeling Center. His research interests focus on understanding connections within the hydrologic cycle and how they relate to water quantity and quality under anthropogenic stresses. He was the 2020 Henry Darcy Distinguished Lecturer, is an elected Fellow of the American Geophysical Union and was the 2018 Boussinesq Lecture and the 2017 School of Mines Research Award recipient.

Keenan McRoberts, United Soybean Board



McRoberts is the vice president of Science and Program Strategy at United Soybean Board. McRoberts is a multi-disciplinary scientist with a passion for generating innovative empirical solutions to global agricultural programs, especially in crop-livestock systems.

Forrest Melton, NASA



Melton is a senior research scientist with the NASA Ames Cooperative for Research in Earth Science and Technology and with California State University, Monterey Bay. Forrest serves as the program scientist for the NASA Western Water Applications Office and as an associate program manager for the NASA Earth Science Applied Sciences Water Resources Program. His research interests include applications of satellite data to improve management of natural resources, remote sensing of evapotranspiration and agricultural water requirements and ecosystem and carbon cycle modeling.

Susan Metzger*, Kansas State University



Metzger serves as director of both KCARE and the Kansas Water Institute. She has other leadership roles at K-State, including director of Strategic Interdisciplinary Program Development. She works closely with the KCARE team of Watershed Specialists to support their efforts to improve water quality throughout the state and their work with Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategies (WRAPS) projects. Before her work at K-State, she was the deputy/assistant secretary of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, where she served the farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses of Kansas and assisted in the development and delivery of tools to grow the state's agricultural economy. Prior to that, she was the chief of Planning and Policy for the Kansas Water Office, where she was the team leader in the development and implementation of the Long-Term Vision for the Future of Water Supply in Kansas.

Leah Palm-Forster*, University of Delaware



Palm-Forster is an agricultural and environmental economist and an associate professor in the Department of Applied Economics & Statistics at the University of Delaware (UD). Her research examines farmer decision making and the design of agri-environmental programs and policies to enhance ecosystem service provision in agricultural landscapes. Recent work also examines decision making under risk with a focus on coastal adaptation to climate change. Palm-Forster is the director of UD's Center for Experimental & Applied Economics and director of the M.S. in Agricultural and Resource Economics graduate program. Palm-Forster is a research fellow with the Center for Behavioral and Experimental Agri-environmental Research (CBEAR), and she serves on the executive board of the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee for the Chesapeake Bay Program. She is also chair of the Northeast Agricultural and Resource Economics Association's Career Advancement and Mentorship Program.

Natasha Rankin, Irrigation Association



Rankin is the CEO of Irrigation Association (IA), the premiere provider of education and certification programs for companies and individuals, supporting and advocating for the cutting-edge ideas and technology that offer solutions for water management and move agriculture toward sustainable growth. Prior to joining IA, Rankin was the Chief Strategy Officer for the American Counseling Association.

Angela Records, Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research



Dr. Angela Records joined FFAR as the chief scientific officer in May 2023. Records has spent more than 20 years pursuing transformational impact, from her work as a plant pathologist to her role at the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), where she co-founded and led the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security's Research Community of Practice. Records has substantial experience planning, operationalizing and managing international research programs and building partnerships across academic and research institutes, the private sector, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, research-for-development donors and other actors toward a shared agenda. She managed 16 multi-year research programs active in more than 38 countries with more than 90 collaborating institutions.

Dan Rooney, LandScan



Rooney is the founder and CEO of LandScan. He has over 20 years of experience in developing, protecting and commercializing innovative technologies for soil and vegetation mapping.

Dwane Roth, Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research, Front Porch LLC



Roth is a fourth-generation western Kansas farmer and is deeply rooted in agriculture and water conservation. His passion for water conservation has driven him to connect with professionals in the agriculture industry fostering collaboration through innovation. Through these strategic partnerships, he is working to address water challenges in his region.

Daran Rudnick, Kansas State University



Rudnick is a professor and director of Sustainable Irrigation at Kansas State University. Prior to his time at KSU, he was an associate professor and Irrigation Management specialist in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering at University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

William Salas, Regrow Ag



Salas is the co-founder and chief strategy officer at Regrow Ag. Salas has 30+ years of experience in environmental science and business leadership at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, the University of New Hampshire and AGS. He is highly regarded throughout the industry for his expertise in remote sensing and biogeochemical modeling.

Sarah Sexton-Bowser*, Center for Sorghum Improvement



Sexton-Bowser is managing director for the Center for Sorghum Improvement (CSI). At the Center, Sexton-Bowser facilitates collaborative teams across disciplines and institutions including public-private partnerships. Raised on a Kansas grain farm and now farming with her husband's family operation, Sexton-Bowser brings a comprehensive understanding of production agriculture and cropping systems. Sexton-Bowser has experience working for Kansas agribusiness trade associations, the United Sorghum Checkoff, and National Sorghum Producers.

Carrie Vollmer-Sanders*, USFRA



Vollmer-Sanders is the sustainability director for US Farmers and Ranchers in Action. She helps lead the partnerships among food and agriculture sector leaders to advance U.S. agriculture's triple bottom line of social, environmental and economic objectives, including the Center for Transformative Investment. Vollmer-Sanders came to USFRA from The Nature Conservancy, where she helped grow their agricultural strategy in Western Lake Erie Basin and across North America. Vollmer-

Sanders currently serves on the Edon Farmers Co-op and YMCA of Steuben County boards of directors and previously worked on the U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board and for the Michigan Farm Bureau.

Ken Williams, Renewable Resources Associates

Williams provides consult support after serving as executive director of The Wildlife Society and retiring from the USGS as Chief of the Cooperative Research Units, a natural-resources science program with research units at 40 universities in 38 states. He was also co-director of the USGS Science and Decisions Center, where he focused on adaptive management, valuation of ecosystem services, and advancing the use of science in natural-resources decision making. He held science and management positions at the USGS Patuxent Wildlife



Research Center in Maryland, the Office of Migratory Bird Management for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Vermont Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, and FWS's North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office.

Brock Woodson, University of Georgia



Woodson is an assistant professor in the College of Engineering and the University of Georgia and review editor, ICES Journal of Marine Science. His research interests include environmental fluid mechanics, mixing and transport processes and sustainable use of marine ecosystems.

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Erin Jones, Bayer
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