

2016 Conference Speakers



Wade Barnes,
President & CEO, Farmers Edge



As one of the foremost agronomists in North America, Wade Barnes is a pioneer in the precision agriculture movement. Raised as a grower in rural Manitoba, Canada, Barnes founded Farmers Edge in 2005, and over the last decade he has expanded both the company and the range of grower-based solutions the company offers to encompass four continents and five countries.

Leading a team of more than 250 dedicated precision agronomists, technology innovators and sustainability experts, Barnes is focused on increasing sustainable farm yields to feed the world's 9B by 2050.



Eric Bosveld,
President and founder of Bosveld and Associates

Eric Bosveld is the president and founder of Bosveld and Associates, and has spent much of his career helping entrepreneurs improve their businesses.

Prior to founding Bosveld and Associates in 2011, he was the most senior operating executive of a major agribusiness/crop input distribution network in Eastern Canada. Over a period of 12 years, he served on the boards of numerous agribusiness companies, some for terms of more than 10 years.

Barnes was also president of two agribusiness companies: A grain, feed and crop input supplier and an identity-preserved food soybean value-added processor and exporter. He has extensive experience in general management, business development, strategic planning and execution, risk management, operational improvement and mergers and acquisitions.



Aaron Breimer,
Precision Ag Specialist, Veritas Farm Management Inc.



Aaron Breimer was born and raised on a cash crop farm in northern Middlesex County, close to the town of Ailsa Craig. Breimer attended University of Guelph, where he obtained his honours, bachelor of science agriculture. Following university, Breimer worked in the ag retail industry for 10 years, with a territory that included part of Essex and Kent Counties. For the last four years, he has been working with Veritas as an agronomist and sales agronomist out of the Parkhill office.



Dale Cowan,

CCA Senior Agronomist/Sales Manager, AGRIS Cooperative

Dale Cowan is a graduate of University of Guelph with a diploma in agribusiness (1975) and BSc in crop science (1978).



Cowan is a 36-year veteran of the agribusiness industry in Ontario, and has a strong background in crop product and soil fertility practices. Cowan is a leading advocate in the use of precision agriculture technologies and information utilization. He has always been on the leading edge of emerging technologies throughout his career. He is never standing still, he is always looking for better ways to increase grower profits.



Karon Tracey-Cowan,

Founder, AgTech GIS

Karon Cowan launched AgTech GIS in 1995 to provide tools, information, support and training services to the ag industry using GIS and web-based technologies. AgTech GIS has a 20-year history promoting products from Ag Leader Technology, Farm Works (Trimble) and recent addition, iCropTrak, always promoting solid tools to get quality data into the hands of decision makers.



More than just a software reseller, Cowan is a front-line user of ag-specific GIS software products to communicate soil sampling information, yield maps, imagery analysis, field level topographic data and variable rate application prescriptions. Cowan's career focus has been to develop data and customer competency for growers, consultants and local agribusinesses through a personalized training approach. Since 2010, Cowan has been teaching the hands-on lab portion of the precision ag course at University of Guelph, Ridgetown campus.



Chris Creek,

Region Manager, Precision Planting



Chris Creek is the Northeast Region Manager for Precision Planting. Precision Planting is a leader in agriculture technology. They develop innovative products and solve important agronomic issues facing growers. Precision Planting provides insights and assistance so each farmer they work with can reach their best yield. Creek is that rare individual who can successfully bridge the gap between the technical and marketing departments.



Mike Duncan,
Industrial Research Chair in Precision Agriculture & Environmental Technologies, Niagara College Canada

Dr. Duncan and his team have developed a variety of web applications that provide real-time data, mapping, map analysis, and value-added services for farmers. Currently, the team's Precision Agriculture work is at the stage where it can be applied with growers and grower consultants to increase their productivity and competitiveness. To properly apply and test precision agriculture theories, Dr. Duncan's group is involved with the GFO, and OMAFRA researchers on a project with 30 growers. A state-of-the-art server and disk system is being used to implement a software system to process their data and test definitions of management zones. The system is being designed to provide quick turnarounds prior to applying inputs to their fields. At the end of the project, the algorithms and the system will be developed into a semi-automated entity that has the capacity to process data from thousands of farms in a timely manner.



Andrew Elgersma,
Grower Services Manager, BASF

Andrew Elgersma has worked for BASF Canada for eight years with time spent in Alberta as a business representative, followed by Eastern Canada market manager for corn and soybeans, and more recently a manager at Grower Solutions. As Grower Solutions' manager, he is responsible for the development of tools and offers for BASF Canada's grower customers and has put an increased focus on tools and offers that address grower risk management and business management needs. This focus has enabled investment by BASF in new and unique services and offerings for the Canadian market. Elgersma has been instrumental in working with Affinity Management to launch Compass Grower Advanced—an all-in-one mobile farm data management system. Elgersma holds a bachelor of science in agriculture from the University of Guelph.



Noah Freeman,
Manager, Precision Agriculture Technologies

As the manager of since January 2014, Noah Freeman has led the development of AgReliant Genetics' precision agriculture platform, Advantage Acre. Prior to joining AgReliant, Freeman was the agriculture program director at Ivy Tech Community College, where he led the local and statewide development of the Ivy Tech agriculture program and its curriculum. In addition to his program director duties, he taught agronomy, precision agriculture and agriculture systems courses along with managing the college's 60-acre teaching and demonstration farm. From the start of the Ivy Tech agriculture program in the fall of 2007, the program enrollment increased from zero to more than 250 students in the fall of 2014.

Freeman also has teaching experience from his time at Parkland College in Champaign, Ill., from 2001 to 2007. While at Parkland, Freeman developed one of the first community college precision agriculture degree programs in the country, along with teaching a wide variety of agriculture courses related to soil science and integrated pest management.

Freeman has a bachelor of science from the University of Illinois in crop sciences, an master of science from the University of Illinois in plant pathology and breeding; a graduation certificate in geographic information science from Northwest Missouri State University; and is currently working to complete a doctorate in agriculture systems management from Purdue University, with a focus on precision agriculture.



Aron Gampel,
Vice President and Deputy Chief Economist, Scotiabank

Aron Gampel is the vice-president and deputy chief economist at Scotiabank, where he is a senior advisor to the bank's executive management, as well as to the organization's diverse customer base in Canada and internationally.

Prior to joining Scotiabank in 1984, Gampel spent six years as an economist with the investment firm of Pitfield Mackay Ross Ltd., and four years with the Ontario Economic Council, both in Toronto. For the past eight years, Gampel has also been a director of the Canadian German Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Gampel is a graduate of York University in Toronto, Ont., where he received his master's of arts degree in economics. He also earned his honours bachelor of Arts degree in economics and computer science from Brock University in St. Catharines, Ont.



J.P. Gervais,
Chief Agricultural Economist, Farm Credit Canada

J.P. Gervais is the chief agricultural economist at Farm Credit Canada (FCC). Prior to joining FCC in 2010, he was a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at North Carolina State and Laval University. Gervais is currently president-elect of the Canadian Agricultural Economics Society. He obtained his Ph.D. in economics from Iowa State University in 1999.



Ben Gist,
Business Development, Analyst, XSInc

In his role as business development analyst, Ben Gist leads innovative precision ag initiatives at XSInc, a North Carolina-based software company that specializes in data collection, cleaning, integration, analysis and reporting for the agriculture and turf and ornamental industries.

Gist combines his software expertise with his passion for practical applications of precision agriculture. He is also the host of the Precision Ag Insight webcast series, which features the AgVeritas precision yield analysis software from XSInc. Prior to joining the company, Gist's background includes roles in the GIS (Geographical Information System) applications and fisheries management fields. He holds a BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Glen Kroeker,
Director, FCC Management Software

Glen Kroeker is the Director of FCC Management Software. Kroeker has been working within the agriculture industry his entire career. He grew up on a farm in the Red River Valley area of Manitoba and has managed several different types of agriculture businesses throughout his career. His experience includes managing and leading crop input businesses, wholesale and retail businesses in the pet food and horticulture industries, managing a large commercial feed mill in the Fraser Valley area of B.C., and now leading the development, support and marketing of data and financial management tools for producers and processors. Kroeker is passionate about the new doors that are opening up in regards to the availability of information and how it can help producers.



Norm Lamothe,
Head – UAS Agriculture, Deveron UAS Ltd.

Combining his passions for aviation and agriculture, Norm Lamothe started a UAV imagery business for agriculture, which was acquired by Deveron UAS in 2015. Using advances in hardware, sensor and software capabilities he has helped growers "Take agronomy to new heights."

Today, Lamothe is the head of Deveron's agriculture division and is leading the company's expansion of UAV imagery services across Ontario. Deveron provides a reliable and affordable imagery solution to growers so they can focus on making decisions from the data acquired.

Lamothe is a graduate of the University of Ottawa's Telfer School of Business and is a licenced fixed-wing pilot. He is a professor with Durham College's food and farming program, and a volunteer in numerous community organizations, including the local Agricultural Society. He also manages his family's 500-acre farm near Peterborough, Ont.



David MacMillan,

Vice President, Corporate Development, Director, Deveron UAS

David MacMillan is vice president of corporate development and a director of Deveron UAS, a UAV imagery-focused service company, headquartered Toronto, Ont. Deveron is launching its services across the province of Ontario in 2016, and is looking to work with growers that are interested in new ways to increase yields and reduce costs. He is an entrepreneur focused on building start-up and venture capital companies with the help of public markets. He has been involved in more than \$30 million dollars in venture financing for TSX Venture listed companies over the last six years, holding various roles related to executive leadership and corporate development. MacMillan holds an MSc in international economics from the University of Glasgow and a BA in economics from McGill University. He is also a CFA Level 3 candidate.



Tim Marquis,

Meteorologist, Ag Solutions Expert, Weather Decision Technology

Tim Marquis is a meteorologist and ag solutions expert for Weather Decision Technology. Previously, he was a meteorological programmer at WDT and prior to that, he was a teaching assistant for senior level synoptic meteorology and mesoscale meteorology. While at Iowa State, Marquis served as a forecaster to Iowa State Athletics and Iowa State University. He focused his coursework on precision agriculture while at Iowa State. Investigating the development of mesoscale convective systems in numerical weather prediction models, was the subject of Marquis is a key meteorological phenomenon that supports agriculture across the farm belt of the United State. Lastly, Marquis worked at the Storm Prediction Center as part of the Student Career Experience Program (SCEP) during his tenure at the University of Oklahoma for undergraduate work.

Commented [SG1]: This doesn't make any sense and I don't know what they're trying to say.



Nevin McDougall,

General Manager, Agronomy Company of Canada

Nevin McDougall is currently the general manager at Agronomy Company of Canada, a subsidiary of La Coop Federee. He is an accomplished international executive with more than 20 years of agribusiness experience with innovative and industry-leading companies. Previously, McDougall held senior executive positions at companies including BASF Corporation and Cyanamid Crop Protection. He has served on the boards for Crop Life Asia and Crop Life America. Leading businesses in North American and International markets, McDougall has expertise in sales, marketing, product development, and general business management. He is currently an active director for several non-profit and private company boards. McDougall has a bachelor of science honours degree from the University of Guelph, as well as a master of agriculture, agriculture economics and business. His extensive knowledge and industry experience has allowed him to contribute to the sustainable development of business in an industry he has high passion for.



Amit Monga,
Chairman, Sarapoint Global

Dr. Amit Monga is a seasoned executive with extensive experience in investment banking, venture capital, start-up and corporate governance. Through Sarapoint Global's ag-innovation initiative and in collaboration with leading experts, he is developing tools to analyze data from farm-based sensors and equipment and satellite images. An expert in data analytics, his research has been published in leading peer reviewed academic journals such as: computers and industrial engineering, advances in engineering software, computers and operations research and *International Journal for Quality, Reliability and Safety Engineering*. He received his Ph.D. in mechanical engineering from the University of Alberta, where his research focused on solving complex reliability-based design problems using genetic algorithms. He has appeared numerous times on BNN (Business News Network) and CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) and has authored op-eds in the Financial Post on the topics of private equity, venture capital and entrepreneurship.



Jacques Nault,
Vice President, Agronomy, LaserAg – Logiag Inc.

Jacques Nault has a BSc and a MSc from the Macdonald Campus of McGill University. He started off his agronomic career in 1984. Between 1984 and 1999, he participated in various research relating to soil management and best management practices, wrote technical guides pertaining to soil fertilization and erosion control, and worked as a consultant with farmers. In 1999, he co-founded LogiAg, where he supervises field technical services and is in charge of business development. Between 2004 and 2014 he was also the general manager of a U.S. consulting firm that he partly owned.



Greg Patterson,
B.Sc. (AGR.) C.C.A (President), A & L Canada Laboratories Inc.

Greg Patterson, current president of A & L Canada Laboratories, was one of the principal founding members and also currently acts as the chief agronomist. His primary role is corporate administration, and customer support and service. With an honours degree in agriculture from the University of Guelph, followed by more than 20 years postgraduate experience as a professional agronomist, Patterson works closely with all our agricultural clients to support the service we provide. Patterson was also one of the first people in Canada to earn the designate as a certified crop consultant. As part of our ongoing customer support, Patterson personally conducts in-depth agronomy and fertility training seminars for field, horticultural and specialty (turf, viticulture and silviculture) crops.





Lisa Prassack,
Agri Food Innovation Expert and Data Strategy Consultant, Prassack Advisors

Lisa Prassack has more than 20 years of experience working with big data analytics. She specialises in working in tandem with innovators by providing critical market understanding with data-intensive solutions. She previously worked as the strategic marketing director for Trimble Agriculture and was responsible for the precision farming strategy, planning and mergers and acquisitions, as well as global strategic partnerships with several agricultural companies.



Andrew Pylypchuk,
Account Executive in North America, U.K. and Ireland at Planet Lab

Andrew Pylypchuk is an account executive in North America, United Kingdom and Ireland at Planet Labs. He has been working in the imagery and geospatial field for 16 years, and continues to develop the use of satellite imagery for industry users in the agriculture, exploration, mining and forestry industries, as well as for visual simulation systems. Pylypchuk's knowledge, skill set and understanding of the science behind satellite imagery and image processing, as well as utilizing new technologies and leveraging business models, allows him to deliver customer oriented solutions.



Nicole Rabe,
Land Resource Specialist, OMAFRA

Nicole Rabe has a MSc focused on precision agriculture and is currently the land resource specialist (environmental management branch) for Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). Having worked in precision ag throughout her career in Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba, Rabe has a background in applying geographic information systems and remote sensing for agricultural applications. Rabe enjoys collaboration with agriculture development branch colleagues on many different aspects of precision agriculture and soil resource management work.



Paul Raymer,
Co-owner, Practical Precision Inc.

Paul Raymer received his certification in mechanical engineering technology from Fanshawe College, and specializes in mobile equipment design. Raymer has a wide range of agricultural, industrial and military experience; working on various engineering teams such as John Deere and General Dynamic. Raymer has been instrumental in creating a tablet computer platform for GreenSeeker units that simplifies the mapping process. He has also brought the SoilOptix technology to Canada and is busy validating the information that can be gleaned from the sensors.





Steve Redmond,
Precision Ag Specialist, Hensall District Co-op



Steve Redmond is the precision ag specialist with Hensall District Co-op (HDC). He has led HDC's efforts with the use of GreenSeeker technology for late-season nitrogen applications in corn using Y-Drops, since 2014. He has owned and operated two different UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) for aerial imagery of farm fields, and is currently investigating the use of satellite imagery through WinField's R7 Tool for the creation of crop management zones and the development of profitability maps.

Redmond is a graduate of the University of Guelph with a BSc in agriculture, and holds designations as a CCA (1997), Professional Agrologist in Ontario and Nutrient Management Planning certificates for ASM & NASM.



Robert Saik,
CEO, Agri-Trend Group of Companies



Robert Saik is a professional agrologist and a certified agricultural consultant. As founder of Agri-Trend, Saik has been involved in the development of many new business processes and spearheaded several advancements in technology integration in agriculture, including the development of the Agri-Data Solution, which was a winner of Alberta's 2002 E-business of the Year for online farm data management. In July 2014, Saik was appointed by the premier of Alberta to the Alberta Innovation Advisory Council—a leadership group working on technology integration and innovation leadership for Alberta.

Saik is also the author of an Amazon 2014 Best of Books: *The Agriculture Manifesto: Ten Key Drivers That Will Shape Agriculture in the Next Decade*. He is also the publisher of *The AgADVANCE Journal*, 2014 Western Trade Journal of the Year.

He is a passionate keynote speaker addressing audiences on the importance of modern agriculture. His 2014 TEDx talk, entitled "Will Agriculture be ALLOWED to feed nine Billion People" is a popular online reference and has been viewed more than 78,000 times.



Paul Schrimpf,
Executive Editor, Agribusiness Group, Meister Media Worldwide



Paul Schrimpf oversees the content development for the following brands: CropLife, PrecisionAg, and Farm Chemicals International. He works closely with publishers developing business strategies. He has more than 15 years of experience covering technology advancements in agriculture. Schrimpf creates and delivers presentations on topics related to precision agriculture across North America.



Dan Sinai,
Senior Executive, IBM



Dan Sinai is currently a senior executive at IBM, where he manages the company's innovation and incubation initiatives aimed at the Canadian start-up community.

Prior to joining IBM, Sinai served as Western University's associate vice-president (research). In this capacity, Sinai set the strategic direction for, and led, a team of research administration professionals at one of Canada's leading research-intensive universities.

A graduate of the University of Waterloo, Sinai has held various key research administration positions with both the Government of Ontario and the Government of Canada. He also has extensive research and development program and policy experience, and has worked for several high-tech companies, including Nortel and EK3 Technologies.

Sinai and his family have lived in London, Ont., for more than 15 years, where he has served on various local boards of directors.



Stephanie Smith,
M.S., C.C.A., Michigan State University in Crop and Soil Science



Stephanie Smith has M.S., C.C.A., from Michigan State University in crop and soil science. Smith worked for Monsanto for three years as a technology development representative in Iowa and Illinois, as well as a product manager in St. Louis. For the following two years, Smith became a field agronomist for DuPont Pioneer in Northeast Indiana. "When formed one and a half years ago, I had the opportunity to join Gregg Sauder's team as a regional agronomy manager and cover Michigan and Indiana, and all of the east coast and Canada. I am a resident of Fort Wayne and I farm with my family in Hillsdale County, Mich."

Commented [SG2]: What is this?



Jason Tatge,
CEO and co-Founder of Farmobile



Jason Tatge is a passionate, innovative and successful agritech entrepreneur based near Kansas City. Farmobile is Jason's third company in technology and agriculture industry (first, he was an early team member with Farms.com and second company was president with Farms Technology, which was sold to DuPont Pioneer in 2013). Prior to his entrepreneurial bug, he traded agri commodities with the Pillsbury Company for seven years. "Farmobile's business model and subscriptions are completely transparent and affordable to a fault. We are based in Kansas and have built this company from the ground up with hard work and nothing else to our name—except a love of agriculture, the ability to write code and a deep desire to do the right things, for the right reasons while promoting progress in the global food chain."



Charles Vidal,
Director, R&D and Business development, KoptR Image; Board Member of Unmanned Systems Canada

Charles Vidal emerged as a leader in the field of unmanned systems in 2004, when he founded the highly-successful VAMUdeS at Université de Sherbrooke. During his studies, he led the group, developed many unmanned systems and won competitions worldwide.

Vidal started his career by realizing complex engineering development projects while piloting drones, maintaining them and performing critical technical support to operations in the field. He was a highly-regarded site lead for the Boeing Insitu ScanEagle operational site and completed three full tours in Afghanistan.

Today, Vidal continues to play a significant leadership role in the unmanned systems sector. Professionally, he has lead multidisciplinary teams creating the next generation of Canadian unmanned aircraft systems. Vidal is now in charge of product development and business development at KoptR Image.

As a volunteer, he has spent countless hours over the past eight years as chair of the Unmanned Systems Canada Student Competition, maturing it into a highly-competitive, highly-valued annual event.

Few have the breadth of knowledge and experience gained from high intensity military operations, engineering and commercial product development, as well as business development, management and interactions with Transport Canada and the Canadian Forces.



Jason Webster,
Innovation Lead, Beck's Hybrids

Jason Webster is currently the innovation lead for Beck's Hybrids, based out of Central Illinois. Webster is responsible for bringing new innovative agricultural testing to Practical Farm Research (PFR) program. The goal of Beck's PFR is to help farmers succeed by adding profitability to their farms through the application of practical farm research. "Beck's PFR is defined by our ability to bring innovation to farmers in the form new ideas, challenging the status quo of current farming practices, and facilitating the networking of the agricultural industry to keep the needs of farmers first.



Felix Weber,
President, Ag Business & Crop Inc.

For more than 20 years, Felix Weber has explored new technological and agricultural practices that would increase the productivity for clients of his consulting company, Ag Business & Crop Inc., and his own operation, as well. While researching effective ways to monitor crops using aerial imagery, he became the distributor for senseFly products in Canada. He is presently working on research for Pix4D Switzerland in development in mosaicking and GIS software, ongoing projects with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and camera, color and frequency research for different projects.

As an early innovator of UAVs in agriculture, Weber has been a presenter at numerous agricultural events across the country.



Rick Willemse,
Cash Crop Farmer, Parkhill, Ont.

Rick Willemse is a cash crop farmer from Parkhill, Ont. In the mid-1980s, Willemse began using rate control to side dress nitrogen and then progressed to yield monitoring in the mid-1990s, where he married the two technologies together. This led to a co-operative effort with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, and the University of Guelph in researching better ways to implement nitrogen rates on corn. This experience evolved into an interest in creating management zones within a field. By 2008, Willemse had created an algorithm to vary fertility based on micro-zones within a field. Since 2011, in collaboration with Niagara College, he has been working toward further developing this technology for commercialization.



Mike Wilson,
Manager, Precision Agriculture Technologies

Mike Wilson has been with Thompsons for more than 10 years. He is a graduate of the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. In 2002, Wilson began his career working at Orford Co-op in Chatham. In the spring of 2003, he started with Thompsons as a sales representative at the Kent Bridge location; immediately developing a passion for agronomy. Wilson obtained his Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) designation in 2006. Over the years, his passion for agronomy and his strong commitment to customer service has enabled him to rise through the ranks at various locations to his current position as advanced agronomy solutions manager at head office. In this time, he has gained invaluable experience and a very strong practical knowledge of agronomy and precision ag, allowing him to effectively communicate with and create solutions for customers.