



December 2-4, 2019 | Fredericton, New Brunswick

## **Speaker Profiles + Presentation Abstracts**

### **Management Tactics for Leading Farmers – Dick Wittman, Wittman Consulting**

Family business governance practices and relationship problems, not economic issues, are often the reason family operations dissolve business relationships or transition processes fail. These tragic conclusions stem from operators failing to run the farm in a professional manner. Farms with good production and financial footings fail because they either don't know the basic rules of conducting a business, or they know the rules, but don't document them and apply them consistently in daily farm operations. This presentation examines best management practices that must be implemented for a family farm business to excel and pass successfully from generation to generation. It also covers the consequences of failing to adopt these practices in everyday operations. Participants will be led through a self-assessment test to score themselves on basic managerial proficiency in personnel, financial and marketing management. The goals of this session will be to help participants become familiar with (1) a systems approach to managing a family farm business; and (2) strategies for family farm business managers to implement more professional management systems.

Dick Wittman is a board chair, transition coach and former manager of a 20,000-acre Idaho family farm partnership involving crops, cattle and timber and provides consulting services in family farm business and financial management in the US and abroad.

After receiving a degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Idaho and an MBA from the University of Utah, Wittman worked for the Farm Credit System from 1972-1980. In 1980 he joined the family farm in Idaho and established a part-time private consulting practice. Wittman has worked with numerous farm clients and professional practitioners, conducted seminars, facilitated strategic planning, taught college classes and developed videotape training modules on a variety of topics throughout the U. S., Canada, and Australia. He specializes in financial management, developing management systems and solutions for business succession planning and conflict resolution.

Wittman is a contributing editor for Farm Futures magazine, has served on the faculty for the TEPAP Ag Executive Program in Austin, Texas since 2003, and is an adjunct faculty member of Texas A&M University. He is also a founding member of familybusiness.ag, a peer group of consulting professionals promoting excellence and integrity and empowering continuity in the agricultural family business consulting profession.

Wittman and his wife, Dawn, have raised five children. Stewardship has been a Wittman Family Farm tradition. The farm was selected as the national Millennium Farm Family in 2000 by the

Ag Earth Partnership. Wittman received the 2002 Governor's Award for Excellence in Agriculture in Environmental Stewardship.

### **Taking Care of Business: You and Your Farm- Facilitated Discussion lead by Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**

Research shows farmers face a variety of diverse challenges, for example mental health self-stigmatization, community isolation, financial uncertainty, accessible healthcare services, etc., which can contribute to increasing rates of stress, anxiety, depression, and burnout.

A comprehensive health and safety plan that addresses both physical and mental hazards plays a crucial role in improving and maintaining the quality of one's life, health, and the overall well-being of the farm and farm team.

Join us as we:

- Facilitate a dialogue and conduct group exercises on how to access positive outlets to ensure that taking care of both you and your farm business, through hard-work ethics, are supported by community, technology and prevention-based health and safety programming.
- Provide a forum to voice work experiences and health concerns and what you need to achieve optimal health and safety outcomes.
- Outline resources available to help farmers recognize, assess, control and evaluate all forms of workplace hazards (physical and psychological).



### **Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety**

CCOHS is Canada's national resource for the advancement of workplace health and safety.

CCOHS was established in 1978 by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety Act, which was passed by unanimous vote in the Canadian Parliament. CCOHS promotes the total well-being – physical, psychosocial and mental health – of working Canadians by providing information, training, education, management systems and solutions that support health, safety and wellness programs. A federal department corporation, CCOHS is governed by a tripartite Council - representing government, employers and labour - to ensure a balanced, approach to workplace health and safety issues. We offer a range of workplace health and safety services to help your organization raise awareness, assess risks, implement prevention programs, and improve health, safety and well-being.

### **Farm Business Management Resource Showcase**

The Farm Management Showcase provides an opportunity for industry stakeholders and especially farmers to learn about farm business management projects, programs, resources and tools available to them. Tables are hosted by industry groups including non-profits, private companies, government and academia, rotating every 15-20 minutes so that participants are exposed to a maximum number of offerings.

### **Bridging the Gap: Farm Transition Panel – Moderated by Brent VanParys, BDO**

The Bridging the Gap Session is taking on a new look this year. Positioned as a panel discussion, the goal is to provide a mechanism for different generations of farmers and industry stakeholders to focus on what needs to happen within the family farm to ensure the best chance of a successful transfer. Panelists will bring their unique perspectives to the farm transfer conversation. Have you thought about your wife/mom/mother-in-law's perspective? Have you

put yourself in your husband/son/son-in-law's shoes? Taking a different look at a farm transfer situation, can be eye-opening and allow you to better understand why people may make the decisions or say the things that they do.

We aim to help bridge the gap between generations of farm managers.



**Moderator- Brent VanParys, BDO**

Brent is a Chartered Professional Accountant, a Family Enterprise Advisor, and a Partner of BDO Canada LLP, operating from the firm's Woodstock office.

Brent is a trusted advisor to generations of farm families, helping them understand and manage the dynamics of being in business together. As a regional Practice Leader of BDO Business Transition Services, he provides transition and exit strategy planning for family-owned farms and other private businesses. He helps farm families and stakeholder groups communicate and collaborate to reach their goals.

As a business advisor, Brent facilitates strategic business planning engagements with farm owners and management teams. His collaborative method of strategic planning combines the expertise of farm management with his own business knowledge to produce a clear, actionable plan to take the farm business to its intended destination.

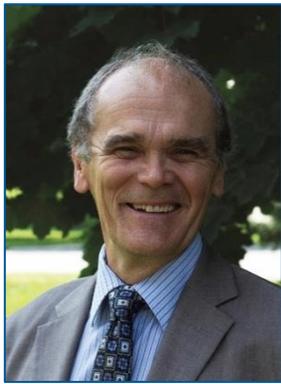
An accomplished speaker, Brent presents at workshops and conferences covering a wide variety of topics of interest to private businesses. He is an experienced moderator, overseeing candidate debates at the federal, provincial and municipal levels. He is currently Chair of the Woodstock Hospital Board of Trust and frequently uses his skills and experience in the service of his community.

**Black Swans- Friend or Foe? Don Buckingham, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI)**

"Black swan events," as described by author Nassim Nicholas Taleb in his 2007 book *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable*, are extreme, impactful, rare and unpredictable outlier events. They "shock" existing systems with unexpected and novel outcomes which disrupt, challenge, damage and even overwhelm otherwise robust systems. But such events also provide opportunities, new alignments and innovative relationships for existing systems. While relatively rare, for better or worse, "black swan events" seldom leave existing systems intact.

So, fasten your seat belts and join us for this session which explores:

1. where and when "black swan events" have surfaced in Canadian agriculture and agri-food;
2. whether we are currently witnessing "black swan events" in the areas of agricultural innovation, food consumption patterns, international trade disruptions and global climate change effects;
3. how "resilient" the Canadian agriculture and agri-food system might be to absorb shocks when "black swan events" occur and how able it is to "reboot" when necessary;
4. whether "black swan events" might actually contribute to Canada's agricultural growth potential by stimulating innovation that change practices directly at the producer level to optimize growth and enhance natural capital.



### **Dr. Donald Buckingham, President and CEO, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute (CAPI)**

Before assuming the position of President and CEO of the Canadian Agri-food Policy Institute in 2017, Dr. Buckingham acted as the Chairperson of the Canada Agricultural Review Tribunal and before that was a private lawyer, government lawyer, law professor, author and consultant in the areas of agricultural law, food law and international trade in agricultural products. He has gone to school for far too long holding an undergraduate degree in French literature and philosophy (University of Saskatchewan), a master's degree in development studies (Université de Liège), an undergraduate degree in law (University of Saskatchewan), a masters degree in international trade law (Cambridge University) and a doctorate in food labelling law (Universités d'Ottawa et de Montpellier 1). Passionate about the various aspects of agriculture and food since growing up on the family farm in northwestern Saskatchewan, Dr. Buckingham has since pursued his food and agriculture interests in a variety of professional contexts and geographic locations in Canada, France, Ghana and South Africa. He is the co-author of five books, including *Agriculture Law in Canada* (1<sup>st</sup> Edition - Butterworths: 1999; 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – LexisNexis; 2019), and is the sole author of Halsbury's Laws of Canada: "*Agriculture*" volume and "*Food*" volume (LexisNexis: 2009, 2014 and 2018 editions), as well as an extensive array of chapters and entries in other books and academic journals. Practically, he has always enjoyed working both ends of farm-to-fork spectrum. Today he tends a community garden in Ottawa, owns a couple of cows in Saskatchewan and acts as chef de cuisine in his home with his wife in Ottawa.

### **Building your Peer Advisory Group- Who and How – Terry Betker, Backswath Management**

A farm business management resource that is gaining in popularity is peer groups. Peer groups have existed for years in several different types of applications within different industries. They aren't a new concept and they aren't the "The breakfast group at the local café." They are also known as peer advisory groups, farmer to farmer discussion groups and peer advisory boards.

A peer group is a small number of people that get together in regularly scheduled meetings over time. They share insights on experiences and performance. Basically, farmers learning from farmers through facilitated discussion.

In this presentation, Terry Betker, President and CEO of Backswath Management Inc. will use his consulting experience to provide insight into peer groups ... from how they work to the potential benefits that can come from participation in a peer group.



### **Terry Betker, Backswath Management Inc.**

Terry is President and CEO of Backswath Management Inc., a company that provides business management expertise to farm families across Canada on strategic and business planning, transition planning, financial analysis, benchmarking and human resource management.

Terry has delivered presentations on farm business management throughout Canada, the U.S., Mexico, Chile, New Zealand, Poland, Tasmania and the Netherlands. He teaches at the University of Manitoba. Terry is a professional agrologist, a certified agricultural consultant and a certified management consultant. He is the 2015

recipient of Farm Management Canada's Wilson Loree award, recognizing his contribution to developing and promoting new and positive change in agricultural business management practices and expertise in Canada.

## **Secrets to Success: Canada's Outstanding Young Farmers – Amy Cronin, Cronin Family Farm**

*Details to come.*



### **Amy Cronin, Cronin Family Farm and Canada's Outstanding Young Farmer Alumna**

Amy Cronin is a mother of six children, hog producer, and business owner in Huron County, Ontario.

She and her husband Mike farm in Ontario, Iowa and Missouri and thrive on creating sustainable and innovative business plans that enable them to work with their team of over 100 towards their vision, "Progressive, Prosperous, Best-in-Class".

Amy is actively involved in many capacities at the local, provincial and national levels. She is the chair of the Leadership team and commander of the Incident Command Centre for Swine Health Ontario, chair of the Banff Pork Seminar Advisory Board, and is Vice Chair for VIDO (Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization) at the university of Saskatchewan. She currently represents the province of Ontario on NPAC (National Program Advisory Committee), advising government on business risk management programs. She has been involved extensively in agricultural leadership, including an eight-year contribution to the Ontario Pork Board of Directors, serving as chair for five years and co-chairing the Ag Growth Steering Committee for the Honourable Jeff Leal in 2016.

Also, Amy is a Huron-Perth Catholic School Board Trustee. She is a graduate of both AALP (the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program) and CTEAM (Canadian Total Excellence In Agricultural Management) Program. Amy and her husband Mike were chosen as the Outstanding Young Farmers for Ontario in March 2015 and for Canada in November 2015 and the BMO Farm Family of the Year award for 2016.

Amy's commitment to family, farm life and industry fuels her passion for having impact and making the world a better place for the next generation.

### **What's their Beef with Beef? - Ellen Crane, Nuffield Scholar**

When is the last time you purchased a beef product in a grocery store? For many beef producers purchasing grocery store beef is not a regular activity. The modern consumer has become increasingly conscious about the products they purchase. Is it good for me? Is it good for the environment? These are just two attributes of beef production a consumer may consider when making purchase decisions.

The disconnect between the average consumer and food production becomes increasingly apparent through advertising campaigns. Grocery stores and social media have become opportunities to share an often-misleading message to consumers. For nearly a decade, the conversation about the challenge to feed 9 billion people by the year 2050 has been a topic at agricultural conferences around the world. The answer often resembles the response of improvements in production efficiency and sustainability. Is there an opportunity to think outside the box when it comes to marketing Canadian products both domestically and internationally?

Ellen's Nuffield research revolved around impending trade deals for Canadian products including the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This research led her to learn more about consumer preferences and beef production in Scotland, England, Denmark, Ireland, France, Italy, Hong Kong and Japan. Join Ellen to gain her international insights.



### **Ellen Crane, Beef Cattle Research Council**

Ellen Crane was raised on a cow-calf operation in Lorne Valley, Prince Edward Island. As a youth she was actively involved in the PEI 4-H program and the Canadian Junior Hereford Association. She completed a BSc. at the University of Prince Edward Island and a diploma in Bioscience technology at Holland College prior to completing a MSc. in animal science at the Dalhousie Agriculture Campus. During her MSc., Ellen was the first recipient of the Keith Gilmore Foundation prize for Beef Cattle Innovation. She was a mentee in the 2015 Cattlemen's Young Leader program, a mentorship program overseen by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. It was during her mentorship with John Baker, Director of business development for

Ontario Corn-Fed Beef, that she gained interest in the development of international markets for Canadian beef products. Ellen currently works remotely from Truro, Nova Scotia as the Extension Coordinator for the Beef Cattle Research Council.

### **Making the Case for International Collaboration to Improve Skills Training - Gavin Robertson, Nuffield Scholar**

The Canadian grape and wine industry has seen steady growth and success in the last decade, currently contributing \$9.04 billion to the economy and providing 37,300 full-time equivalent jobs to the workforce. This growth is forecast to continue as the market for Canadian wine domestically and as an export continues to grow. At the same time, the industry faces significant challenges that particularly impact the agricultural sub-structure of the industry, including urban land use incursion and elevated land prices, regulatory constraints, climactic and environmental threats, and labour availability and pricing issues. There is an acute labour shortage in vineyards that is common to the agri-food sector in general, but that poses unique challenges to viticulture because agricultural practices and market demands for wine grapes are distinct in numerous ways from other horticultural products. The objective of Gavin's Research was to assess the current needs and challenges of the viticulture industry in Canada and to consider ways that education and training programs can help address these needs by supplying a labour force to the industry with the most relevant skills and abilities to address these issues. Join Gavin as he shares the results of a survey of world-class international program models and lessons in success, demonstrating possible avenues for viticulture education and training programs improvement here in Canada.



### **Gavin Robertson, Garage d'Or Ciders**

Raised in the Ottawa Valley, Gavin Robertson studied the Humanities before moving to Europe where he encountered wine culture at the ground level, picking grapes to fund his travels and developing his palate by tasting great wines at every opportunity. Upon his return to Canada, he enrolled in the Winery and Viticulture Technician program at Niagara College in Niagara-on-the-Lake, ON, and expanded his education through the Wine and Spirits Education Trust program and the Court of Master Sommeliers. Having worked in a variety of vineyards and wineries in Ontario, Australia and New Zealand, he is currently employed as

Vineyard Manager, Head Winemaker and Instructor at the Niagara College Teaching Winery and the Canadian Food and Wine Institute at Niagara College. He is also co-owner and Cidermaker at Garage d'Or Ciders. He has been supported and accompanied in his Nuffield travels by his wife, Rachel, which took them to France, Italy, Germany, Spain, Switzerland the United States and South Africa. In the last two years, they have been joined on their adventures by a son, Huxley, and daughter, Florence.

### **Cultivating Innovation through On-Farm Trials - Shelley Spruit, Nuffield Scholar**

Local knowledge from the farmer perspective has often been under-utilized, but there is increasing recognition of the importance of farmer participation in exploring new crop varieties to combat rapidly evolving production conditions.

Shelley will explore the role and benefits of farmers in on-farm trials including lessons learned and keys to success from her travels as a 2018 Nuffield Scholar. Countries visited included Nicaragua, France, England, Scotland, Italy, Georgia, Denmark, USA and Sweden.



### **Shelley Spruit, Against the Grain Farms**

Shelley Spruit has a long relationship, diverse history, and serious passion for working with grain. For the last 30 years she has been a grain farmer, baker and chef, and ancient grain restorer and researcher.

Five years ago, concerned with the loss of agriculture biodiversity and seed availability for grains, Shelley began the venture that led her to found Against the Grain Farms. With persistence, she worked to adapt ancient grains from around the world to the Ontario climate.

Shelley Spruit is the recipient of the 2018 Canadian Nuffield Scholarship.

Shelley's interest in grain spans to her attendance at the International Conference of Wheat Landraces and she is continuously partnering with a number of organizations, such as the University of Manitoba and Rocky Mountain Seed Alliance, in participatory grain research. She is a board member with the Ecological Farmers of Ontario, Savour Ottawa, and the Eastern Canada Grain Alliance.

### **Getting Highest Value for your Cash Crop - Josh Oulton, Nuffield Scholar**

The idea that we can grow our own clothes is somewhat foreign to Canadian Farmers, in particular, the art of growing flax in which the primary purpose is to have the majority of the

plant end up in the linen spinning mills. This production stream is dominated by two countries at the moment; France and China.

Flax fibre is experiencing a resurgence of interest after its demise shortly after the Korean war due to the creation of synthetic materials. Textile companies and manufacturers are drawn to flax because of its ability to really "green up" a product. Growing flax that will end up as a fine yarn is akin to the care that it takes to produce a grape that will end up in high end bottle of wine. Josh has visited with people from around the world who have a passion for flax crops and sees the potential it carries. Can the tag "Made from Canadian Linen" soon be showing up on your next clothing purchase? Join Josh as he explores the possibilities for Canadian Farmers in this space.



### **Josh Oulton, TapRoot Farms Inc.**

Josh Oulton grew up in Windsor, Nova Scotia working alongside his grandfather on his beef and layer farm. After attending Nova Scotia Agricultural College he began his career in agriculture. He worked in the dairy industry for a number of years before transitioning to horticulture. In 2004, Josh purchased his 144-acre mixed vegetable farm in Lower Canard, Nova Scotia.

Currently he is farming with his partner Patricia Bishop and 40-member farm team, with some making the annual trip from Jamaica. Josh and Patricia have three children, Izaak, Lily and Frank.

Josh is currently farming 300 acres of vegetables, fruit, malting barley, and pastured livestock, and 3 acres of flax fibre. The farm has a 300-member CSA (community shared agriculture) and sells products to local farmers' markets. Josh was the president of Horticulture Nova Scotia and ACORN (Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network) and is active in the organic farming community.

The farm is in the 4th growing season of flax. The farm diversified into flax production to create new products and to provide new opportunities to the agricultural sector. This is the first year the farm is producing yarn. Interested in flax production from seed to shirt, Josh has studied all aspects of growing high-quality flax fibre straw and the processing of flax into high quality linen for clothes.

In 2010, Josh and Patricia were selected as Outstanding Young Farmers in the Atlantic region and are excited to be part of this great learning week in Fredericton.

## **Economic Outlook for Canada's Farmers – Farm Credit Canada**

*Details to come.*

## **Workshops**

### **Workshop 1- Financial System Design and Analysis, Backswath Management Inc.**

Do you have different spreadsheets, tools and programs that you use in managing your farm's finances? What are the systems and tools that you use? How could you more efficiently use them?

Capital investment on a farm is high. Many farms are significantly leveraged. Margins traditionally are narrow. These factors contribute to increased risk. Given knowledge is power, how can you derive optimum benefit from the different forms of financial information you have at hand?

In this workshop, Terry Betker, President and CEO of Backswath Management Inc. will use his consulting experience to comment on financial system design and alignment. This session will NOT be about ratios, although ratios are an important part of overall financial analysis.

### **Workshop 2- Farm CEO: transitioning from manager to executive, LeaderShift**

How can we achieve more of what matters most and stay ahead of the curve? Successfully operating within a global food production system is driven by how we “handle” ourselves in complexity. Developing a practice of integrating behaviours that foster personal and professional success should not be accidental, reactive or episodic. Grounded in current research, Kelly Dobson of LeaderShift Inc. will outline a framework that every farm professional can use to continually integrate new ways of thinking and performing to thrive in a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous world.



#### **Kelly Dobson, LeaderShift Inc.**

Kelly Dobson is a fourth generation farmer from Fairfax MB, which is 2.5 hours southwest of Winnipeg. Kelly has a life long passion for leadership and has served agriculture both provincially and federally for over ten years. Kelly is President of LeaderShift Inc. which supports personal and professional development of small business professionals with an ag space focus. LeaderShift's LeaderLab enables professionals to engage in rigorous leader development where they live and within a community of other professionals. Kelly is a contributor to Country Guide Magazine and has a master's degree in leadership and a Certified Executive Coaching accreditation from Royal Roads University.

### **Workshop 3- BMO Bank of Montreal**

*Details to come.*

### **Workshop 4- To Be Confirmed**

*Details to come.*