

# URBAN•AG ACADEMY

New Faces for Agriculture in the 21st Century

Saturday, November 12, 2011  
Iowa Soybean Association  
1255 SW Prairie Trail Parkway  
Ankeny, Iowa

An Initiative of Rellim Group, LLC

Sponsored By:



# URBAN•AG ACADEMY



Welcome Colleagues!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for attending the maiden event of the Urban-Ag Academy Initiative. The purpose of today's gathering is to provide a real opportunity for urban and minority legislators to learn more about agricultural and rural issues. By bringing urban, minority and rural policymakers together with experts in agriculture, rural development and other relevant areas, we begin to create opportunities for all legislators to be fully engaged in the conversation and efforts to move this sector of our constituencies forward.

With state legislative bodies across the country becoming more urban with greater numbers of minority legislators, the disconnect between rural and urban districts is widening. The urban-rural disconnect in Iowa is a microcosm of the "Ag vs. Urban" tensions in legislatures across the country and at the federal level.

Through today's program you will be better informed about the unseen effects of the "disconnect". As a result, it is my sincere hope that this initiative will enable you to be fully engaged in agricultural and rural issues, better able to describe the concerns and interests of rural Iowa, actively engage in problem-solving specific to rural issues and find areas in common with urban districts by which we can meet the needs of both constituencies.

I encourage you to ask questions, seek solutions, and engage in the process as we begin to change the urban and rural landscape of agricultural relations in Iowa.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Helen Miller". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Helen Miller  
Iowa State Representative, District 49  
Founder, Urban-Ag Academy Initiative



November 12, 2011

Dear Legislators:

Welcome to the Urban-Ag Academy Initiative! I wish I could join you today, but I am in Japan on trade mission with Iowa meat producers.

The one bright spot in Iowa's economy has been agriculture. Our state is a national leader in agriculture. Our farmers are the top producers of corn, soybeans, pork and eggs, and are in the top ten in beef and turkey production. Taken together, we are third in the nation in the total value of agricultural products sold.

In addition, Iowa farmers are stewards of the land who take great care to prevent soil erosion and protect the water quality in our state. This attitude has helped Iowa retain the productivity of our soil over successive generations.

You are very lucky to have Representative Helen Miller leading your academy as she understands Iowa agriculture. As the Ranking Member on the House Agriculture Committee, she certainly understands the policy side of agriculture, but as a legislator with a rural district, she also understands how important farmers are to Iowa's economy.

I hope you enjoy your academy today. In addition, if there is ever anything you need from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, don't hesitate to contact me or Susan Fenton.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Northey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Northey  
Iowa Secretary of Agriculture



Dear Friends,

Welcome to the 2011 Urban-Ag Summit!

Agriculture is a \$77 billion a year and industry in the state of Iowa – and growing. Iowans have worked hard for years to do what we do best – feed the world. At the same time, urban areas in Iowa are also growing. Both areas of our Iowa culture are vital and important, but on the surface it may seem as though agriculture and urban life are polar opposites.

Today we're going to take a look deeper and see that isn't so. Agriculture and urban living can and do successfully coexist. It takes all of us! They don't work against each other - in fact, they need each other. Businessmen and agriculturalists have been successfully working together to increase growth and promote the economic condition of Iowa for years.

This summer I took part in the trade mission to South Korea and China with the Lieutenant Governor Kim Reynolds and Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey, among others. These two countries have large populations and are in need of food, and they recognize the quality products Iowa has to offer. I was thrilled when the free-trade agreement between the U.S. and Colombia, Panama and South Korea was passed recently.

Today we gather to discuss how we can continue maintaining Iowa's position as a top agriculture producing state. We're fortunate to have a great slate of experts, economists, professors, administrators and businessmen, to learn from. And I'm so pleased to be able to be a part of today, because I firmly believe that agriculture is key to Iowa's success.

Sincerely,

Annette Sweeney, Iowa House of Representatives

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November 12, 2011  
Ankeny, Iowa

## Urban-Ag Academy Initiative Agenda Iowa Soybean Association

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- 8:30-9:15 **Ready, set** - Registration and continental breakfast
- 9:15--9:40 **Havin' our say**
- Welcome and occasion, Rep. Helen Miller
  - Opening remarks from legislators
- 9:40--10:15 **It's the economy!** - Dr. Michael Duffy, Professor, Iowa State University
- 10:15--10:50 **Bring it on!**
- Mark Edelman, Professor ISU and Chair Iowa Rural Economic Development Council
  - Sandy Ehrig, Economic Development Administrator Renew Rural Iowa/Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
- 10:50--11:15 **Paula Volesky**, Farm Loan Program Director, Farm Service Agency - United States Department of Agriculture – Contact: 515-254-1540
- 11:15--11:40 **Urban Gardens** - Jamie Anderson and Marie Waynar
- 11:40 --12:00 **Over here!** - Joseph Hrdlicka, Iowa Telecom Association
- 12--1 **Lunch**
- 12:00--12:15 **"And now a word from our sponsors!"**
  - 12:15--12:45 **"Sunny with Chance of Meatballs": Weather's impact on agriculture** - Dr. Elwynn Taylor - Climatologist, ISU
- 1:00--1:20 **Information is power!** - Susan Fenton, Legislative Liaison, Iowa Department Agriculture

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- 1:20--1:50    **Sowing Seeds: Ag Education Panel**
- *K-12 Ag Education:* 4-H Jay Staker, ISU Extension, Youth Development
  - *Community colleges:* Iowa Central Biofuels Testing Lab - Dr. Donald Heck
- 1:50--2:30    **Soybeans, cows and hogs - oh my! - Ag production panel** - Senator Joseph Seng, Representative Annette Sweeney, Representative Dan Muhlbauer, Representataive Brian Moore, John Weber
- 2:30--3:00    **Organically Yours** - Andy Larson, ISU Extension Specialist in Small Farm Sustainability
- 3:00--3:30    **What's goin' on?** - Bill Couser, and wife Nancy, 2011 winners of the National Environmental Stewardship Award Program
- 3:30--4:00    **Are we there yet?** Wrap up – Representative Helen Miller and legislator remarks
- 4:00            **Adjourn**

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## Ag-101 Presenters

**Iowa State Representative Helen Miller** – Contact: PO Box 675, Fort Dodge, IA 50501; 515-570-3535; [helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:helen.miller@legis.state.ia.us)

Member of Iowa House of Representatives 2003 to present representing House District 49 (Webster County). Representative Miller currently serves as Ranking Member of the House Agriculture Committees, Member Natural Resources and Economic Growth Committees, and Ag/Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee, member State Agricultural and Rural Leaders, Agriculture Policy Committee Chair for the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, Iowa Council for Agriculture Education and founder of the Urban-Ag Academy Initiative.

**Michael D. Duffy, PhD., Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University** – Contact: 478E Heady Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-6160; [mduffy@iastate.edu](mailto:mduffy@iastate.edu)

Dr. Michael Duffy is the Director of the Iowa State University Beginning Farmer Center. He serves as the Director for the Graduate Program in Sustainable Agriculture. He is an Extension Economist in farm management and a Professor of Economics at Iowa State University. His research activities include land valuation, land management, farm transitioning, farm profitability, small farms, soil conservation, integrated pest management, bioenergy sources and sustainable agriculture.

**Mark A. Edelman, PhD., Professor, Department of Economics, Iowa State University; Chair, Iowa Rural Economic Development Council**  
Contact: 515-294-6144; [medelman@iastate.edu](mailto:medelman@iastate.edu)

Dr. Edelman is Professor of Economics, Extension Economist and Director of the Community Vitality Center (CVC) at Iowa State University. Professor Edelman has taught both undergraduate and graduate courses in Agricultural Policy and Economic Development. His research and extension record includes many topics in entrepreneurship and business development; agricultural and food policy; international trade; government finance and organization; economic development; and philanthropy.

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**Sandy Ehrig, Economic Development Administrator for the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation** – Contact: 5400 University Ave, West Des Moines, IA 50266; 515-225-5480; [sehrieg@ifbf.org](mailto:sehrieg@ifbf.org)

Sandy works to connect business and resource providers with the Renew Rural Iowa program. It is a comprehensive initiative providing education, technical assistance, mentoring and financial resources for growing existing business and entrepreneurs. Ehrig was recently elected to serve as President for the Professional Developers of Iowa.

With nearly 25 years of experience in economic development Sandy worked most recently as the administrator for community development at the Iowa Department of Economic Development. Prior to this role, she served as the director for business development with five central Iowa rural electric cooperatives.

**Paula Volesky, Farm Loan Specialist, Farm Service Agency - United States Department of Agriculture** – Contact: 515-254-1540; [paula.volesky@ia.usda.gov](mailto:paula.volesky@ia.usda.gov)

Paula Volesky holds a degree in Animal Science from Iowa State University. Her past positions include farming, teaching vocational agriculture, and managing a cow herd. Paula met her husband while in the position of cattle buyer for Wilson Foods out of Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She and her husband have two children, both of whom are also Iowa State University graduates.

Paula has worked for the USDA, Farm Service Agency, in Farm Loan Programs for the past 26 years. She has held various positions within the agency and is currently serving as Field Specialist. Her responsibilities include reviewing the loan making and servicing activities in the county offices, training employees and coordinating the financial analysis computer programs in the state.

**Jamie Anderson, Human Resources, City of Fort Dodge** – Contact: 819 1<sup>st</sup> Ave. South, Fort Dodge, IA 50501; 515-576-2201 (Human Rights) or 515-576-6869 (Human Resources); [janderson@fortdodgeiowa.org](mailto:janderson@fortdodgeiowa.org)

Jamie Anderson was appointed as Director of the Fort Dodge Human Rights Commission in January 2005 and continues to serve in that capacity on a part-time basis. In March of 2007 she took a position with the City of Fort Dodge Human Resources department. Prior to her work in Fort Dodge, Anderson held a position as Human Resource Development Recruiter & Counselor with Coastal Carolina Community College in Jacksonville, North Carolina for two years. Anderson graduated from Webster University in 2004 and holds a dual M.A. in Human Resource Development and Business and Organizational Security Management. She received her graduate education at Camp Lejeune Marine Corp Base, NC while her husband served in the military.



**Maria Waynar, Fort Dodge Human Rights Commission, AmeriCorp**

**VISTA** – Contact: 819 1st Ave. South, Fort Dodge, IA 50501; 515-576-2201;  
[mwaynar@fortdodgeiowa.org](mailto:mwaynar@fortdodgeiowa.org)

Maria Waynar was selected to serve as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) with the Fort Dodge Human Rights Commission through the Iowa Civil and Human Rights VISTA Project. Prior to her work as a VISTA, Waynar attended St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa majoring in Psychology. She played a vital role in the establishment and development of a new community garden, known as Our Garden, in Fort Dodge, Iowa. The garden produced over 100 pounds of produce, which was donated to local pantries, shelters, and low-income households.

**Joseph Hrdlicka, Director of Government Relations, Iowa**

**Telecommunications Association** – Contact: 2987 100<sup>th</sup> Street, Urbandale, IA, 50322; 515-867-2091; [jhrdlicka@broadband4iowa.com](mailto:jhrdlicka@broadband4iowa.com)

Joe Hrdlicka is an experienced marketing manager versed in a wide variety of marketing disciplines, including public relations, advertising, promotion, and event management.

**Susan Fenton, Legislative Liason, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship** – Contact: 515-281-7808; [Susan.Fenton@iowaagriculture.gov](mailto:Susan.Fenton@iowaagriculture.gov)

Susan is currently the Legislative Liaison for Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey. She has held the position since January 2007. Her duties, among other things, include communication with legislators, Governor's Office and Congressional delegation concerning the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) policies and budget issues.

Prior to joining the Secretary, Susan worked in the Iowa House of Representatives, serving on the House Republican Caucus Staff and also serving Majority Leader and Speaker of the House, Brent Siegrist. In 2006, Susan joined the staff of Chuck Gipp in the Majority Leader's Office.

## **S. Elwynn Taylor, PhD., Professor of Ag Meteorology, Iowa State**

**University** – Contact: 2104C Agronomy Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-1923; [setaylor@iastate.edu](mailto:setaylor@iastate.edu)

Dr. Taylor is the Iowa State University Extension Climatologist. He has been at Iowa State since 1979. He was an agricultural weather forecast specialist with the National Weather Service for 6 years previous to accepting his position in Iowa. Dr. Taylor is well known for his research concerning the impact of weather on crops and livestock. His emphasis on long-lead weather forecasting and associated risk to crop yields has attracted the attention of farmers and farm commodity related business throughout the world.

## **Jay Staker, Youth Development Specialist, Iowa State University**

**Extension** – Contact: Extension and 4-H Youth Building, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011; 515-294-8417; [jstaker@iastate.edu](mailto:jstaker@iastate.edu)

Jay works in the State 4-H office in the Extension and 4-H Youth building at Iowa State and is the director for E-SET and the associate director for Education for the Iowa Space Grant Consortium. His role is to support science education for children in Iowa, developing partnerships for science outreach and funding development. He also tries to stay current with technology while working with the Iowa Youth Technology Team. Prior to working in his current position, Staker taught science at Ballard Community School district and served as a Master Biotechnology Educator at ISU.

## **Donald Heck, PhD., Director, Iowa Central Community College Fuel**

**Quality Testing Lab** – Contact: 101 Bioscience and Health Sciences Building, Iowa Central Community College, 4 Triton Circle, Fort Dodge, IA 50501; 515-574-1243; [allynheck@gmail.com](mailto:allynheck@gmail.com)

Dr. Donald Heck is Director of the Iowa Central Fuel Testing Laboratory with responsibility for the operation, direction and administration of the laboratory. He also teaches at Iowa State University as well as Iowa Central Community College. Dr. Heck taught full-time for Iowa State for five years, then accepted a position with Iowa Central Community College to create the Biofuels Technology degree program, complete with a fully instrumented teaching laboratory. This venture gained the attention of industry leaders and provided momentum for creating the Iowa Central Fuel Testing Laboratory, the first BQ-9000 accredited facility in the nation.

**Iowa State Senator Joseph Seng** – Contact: [joseph.seng@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.seng@gmail.com)

Dr. Joe Seng was elected in 2010 to his third term in the Iowa Senate. He represents Senate District 43, which includes Davenport on the eastern border of Iowa. Prior to serving in the Senate, he served one term in the Iowa House of Representatives. Previous to State Office, he served as Mayor ProTem and Alderman at large for the City of Davenport.

Senator Seng is chair of the Agriculture Committee and vice-chair of the Ways & Means Committee. He also serves on the Commerce, Ethics, and Natural Resources & Environment committees, as well as the Economic Development Subcommittee.

Senator Seng graduated from Lost Nation Community High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Veterinary Medicine from Iowa State University. He owns and operates St. Francis Veterinarian Hospital in Davenport.

**Iowa State Representative Dan Muhlbauer** – Contact: [dan.muhlbauer@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:dan.muhlbauer@legis.state.ia.us)

Along with representing District 51 in the Iowa House, Representative Muhlbauer is a member of the House Agriculture Committee, the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee and an active farmer in Manilla, Iowa.

**Iowa State Representative Annette Sweeney** – Contact: [annette.sweeney@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:annette.sweeney@legis.state.ia.us)

Representative Sweeney is in her second term in the Iowa House representing District 44. Representative Sweeney currently serves as Chair of the House Ag Committee and member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee. She has been a champion for the concerns of our rural Iowa communities. Her commitment to serving the people of Iowa was honored when she received the Uncommon Public Service Award from the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library Association this year.

**Iowa State Representative Brian Moore** – Contact: [brian.moore@legis.state.ia.us](mailto:brian.moore@legis.state.ia.us)

Along with representing House District 25, Representative Moore serves on the Agriculture, Commerce, Public Safety, Veterans Affairs, and Ways and Means Committees, and the Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Subcommittee in the Iowa House. Representative Moore is a small business owner and farmer from rural Zwingle, Iowa.

**John Weber, Iowa Pork Producers Association – Contact:**  
[weberbm@fctc.coop](mailto:weberbm@fctc.coop)

A grain and livestock farmer, John Weber farms 2300 acres near Dysart, Iowa with his wife and one of their sons, growing corn, seed corn and soybeans. The Webers' livestock operation consists of finishing approximately 14,000 market hogs annually. Mr. Weber also manages a seed sales and chemical business, as well as a small trucking business.

Mr. Weber has been active in the Iowa Pork Producers Association for many years and is currently serving as Past President. He was recently elected to his first term on the National Pork Producer Council.

**Bill and Nancy Couser, 2011 winners of the National Environmental Stewardship Award – Contact:** [cousercattle@iowatelecom.net](mailto:cousercattle@iowatelecom.net)

Along with recognition for their environmental stewardship and conservation efforts, Bill and Nancy Couser have been the recipients of numerous awards and recognitions for leadership in farming and the cattle industry. Highlights among these include the 2007 Wallaces Master Farmer Award, the 2008 WHO Radio Good Farm Neighbor Award, 2009 Inductees into the ISU Farm House Fraternity, 2010 State and Regional Environmental Stewardship Awards, and the 2011 Beef Quality Assurance Award from the Iowa Cattlemen's Association.

Both hold several community and professional leadership positions. Bill is the Past President and Director of the Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, Director of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, and holds appointments to the Advanced Transportation Fuels Advisory Group of the Midwestern Governors Association and the Strategic Planning Session for IOWA 2030. Nancy currently serves on the Story County Planning and Zoning board, is the Director on the IBIC Board of the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, and holds an appointment to the Environmental Protection Commission.

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November 12, 2011  
Ankeny, Iowa

## **Adding New Faces in Agriculture for the 21st Century**

State legislative bodies across the country are becoming more urban and inclusive of more minority groups--this is a drastic change from just a few decades ago, and many policy discussions continue to take shape around urban versus rural interests. Agricultural education and outreach have not kept pace with this change in the legislative landscape, as rural legislators have retired or are faced with declining populations.

This urban vs. rural disconnect in Iowa is a microcosm of the "Ag vs. Urban" relations in legislatures across the country and at the federal level. Policy makers, both rural and urban, need to have an opportunity to reach outside their traditional audience to new, fresh faces, conduct educational outreach, and collaborate on solutions to mutual concerns. Both rural and urban districts stand to reap enormous benefits from increased understanding of the benefits of agriculture to urban economies and the issues faced by rural constituencies.

With the change in the rural-to-urban makeup of the population and their legislative bodies, it is time to create an environment for interactive problem-solving and the exchange of ideas.

### **Purpose:**

*Urban-Ag Academy* was created in order to:

- Bring urban and minority leaders and policy makers together;
- Inform an ever-increasing number of urban legislators on agricultural issues;
- Educate non-rural legislators on the often unseen effects on and potential benefits to their districts; and
- Lay the groundwork for a national conference of non-rural policy makers.

### **The First Step: Iowa Ag-101**

Saturday, November 12, 2011: Iowa Soybean Association, 1255 SW Prairie Trail Parkway, Ankeny, Iowa

- Bring urban, and minority Iowa legislators and policy makers from Iowa together;

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- Educate legislators regarding concerns and interests rural communities and business in Iowa;
- Educate non-rural legislators on the often unseen effects of the rural economy in their Iowa districts; and

**The Second Step: National Black Caucus of State Legislators Ag 101 presentation at the Ag Policy Committee meeting**

December 8, 2011, Chicago, IL

- Bring African American legislators in leadership roles in NBCSL together for a one-day Ag-101 conference before the annual summit in Chicago
- Educate legislators regarding topics of concern to rural communities and businesses in their states, and how these concerns impact their districts - education, jobs, the economy, health;
- Educate minority and non-rural legislators on the often unseen effects of the rural economy in their Iowa districts; and

**The Third Step: National Conference (NO FINAL DECISION MADE)**

Thursday, June 14 - 16, 2012, Des Moines, Iowa

- Bring non-rural, Minority, and urban legislators together in Iowa for an Ag-101 conference;
- Educate legislators regarding topics of concern to rural communities and businesses in their states and how these concerns impact their districts - education, jobs, the economy, health; and
- Educate and inform legislators about the often unseen effects of the rural economy in their districts.

**Recommended Reading:**

- <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20111016/BUSINESS/310160015/Iowa-Innovation-Embrace-ag-or-lose-a-chance-to-grow>
- <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/article/20111025/OPINION01/310250026/Guest-columnist-Farmers-eager-start-new-dialogue-consumers>

# URBAN•AG ACADEMY

November 12, 2011  
Ankeny, Iowa

## Academy Working Group

Helen Miller, Iowa State Representative, District 49  
Founder of the Urban-Ag Academy initiative

Deborah Berry, Iowa State Representative, District 22 , Legislative Collaborator

Brooke Miller, Project Manager, Rellim Group, LLC

Heather Strachan, Communications Director, Rellim Group, LLC

## The Urban-Ag Academy Working Group would like to thank our esteemed collaborators for their advice and support:

Jill Altringer

John Baker  
Attorney at Law  
Iowa State University

Carol Balvanz  
Iowa Soybean Association

Ab Basu  
Biotechnology Industry Organization

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Christopher Riley  
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Monsanto

John Whitaker  
Farm Service Agency

