

2026 Agricultural Economics Conference

Speaker Bios

Cody Stone

MSU Extension, Executive Director and State Relations

For 30 years, **Cody Stone** has engaged clientele and faculty through his work with Extension in Texas and Montana. In Texas, he served as an Extension Agent, 4-H Specialist, and Regional Program Director. Cody and his wife Mary moved to Montana in 2005 to begin work at the Montana 4-H Center for Youth Development where he served as the Volunteer and Leadership Development Specialist before becoming the Director of the 4-H Center and State 4-H Program Leader. Cody served three years as the Associate Director of MSU Extension and one year as the Interim Director. After a nationwide search Cody was selected in August 2018 as the Executive Director of Montana State University Extension. In 2026, he took on additional duties related to State Relations for MSU. He holds a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Texas A&M University and a Doctorate in Adult and Higher Education from Montana State University. Cody, wife Mary, and daughter Brinkley enjoy spending time as a family camping, cooking, listening to vinyl records, and attending live music performances.



Andrew Swanson

MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Assistant Professor, and MSU Extension Farm Management Specialist



Andrew Swanson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. He also serves as a Farm Management Specialist for Montana State University Extension. Andrew grew up on a corn, soybean, and cattle farm in rural Nebraska. His research covers the impacts of federal and state policies on agricultural commodity markets with a focus on biofuel and low-carbon fuel policies.

He received his bachelor's degree from Hillsdale College in Michigan, his master's degree from Montana State University, and his doctorate from the University of California, Davis. Prior to joining Montana State, Andrew was a postdoctoral scholar at UC Davis in cooperation with the USDA, Office of the Chief Economist.

Nicole Karwowski

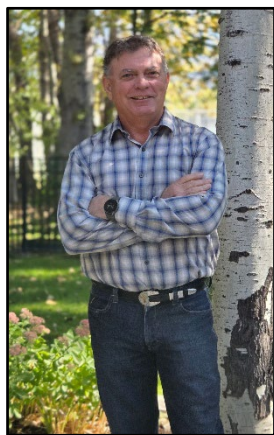
Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Assistant Professor

Nicole Karwowski is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. She received her Ph.D. in Agricultural and Applied Economics from the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her research focuses on how conservation and nature-based solutions can improve agricultural resilience and environmental outcomes. Her recent work examines how conservation easements affect water quality, crop insurance indemnities, and agricultural productivity. Her research aims to provide practical evidence that can support cost-effective policies and better land-use decisions. Nicole teaches courses in agricultural marketing and farm and ranch management.



Mike McDonnell

Norman Wheeler & Associates



Michael McDonnell is a Partner at Norman C. Wheeler & Associates in Bozeman, Montana, specializing in the appraisal of farm, ranch, and recreational properties across Montana, including conservation easements and collateral valuations for lenders, land trusts, and government agencies. Mike began his appraisal career in 2004 with Northwest Farm Credit Services in Billings, then spent five years with Hall and Hall appraising rural and recreational properties across the western U.S. before joining Norman C. Wheeler & Associates as a partner in 2018. He holds a B.S. in Agricultural Business and an M.S. in Animal and Range Sciences from Montana State University, and is an

Accredited Rural Appraiser (ARA) through the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers. He is a past president of ASFMRA's Montana Chapter and previously served on the Montana Board of Real Estate Appraisers, having been appointed by Governor Greg Gianforte in 2023.

Diane Charlton

MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Associate Professor



Diane Charlton is an associate professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics & Economics at Montana State University.

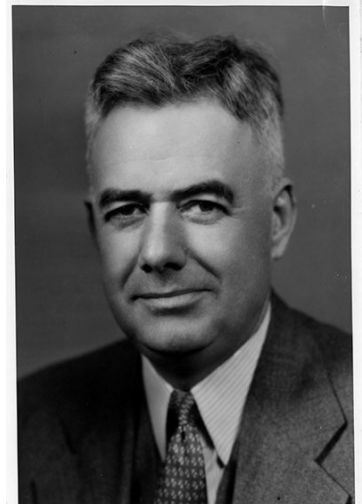
Her research interests are at the intersections of agricultural labor markets, immigration, and technology adoption.

M.L. Wilson Lecture

M.L. Wilson

M.L. Wilson came to Montana in 1909 with a B.S. degree from Iowa State College. He was a homesteader and then became the first Montana agricultural extension agent.

Subsequent to completion of a M.S. degree in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin, he was the first head of the Department of Agricultural Economics at Montana State College. He made major contributions to public policy and programs designed to meet the problems of drought, depression and low farm family income.



He is considered one of the architects of the original Federal agricultural commodity programs. M.L. Wilson left Montana in 1933 to serve as chief economist in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. He then served as Assistant and Under Secretary from 1934-1940 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He later served several foundations that focused on world agricultural issues. M.L. Wilson was president of the American Farm Economics Association in 1925 and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Montana State College in 1935.

M.L. Wilson Lecture

Seth Meyer

Director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute and Associate Professor, University of Missouri



Seth Meyer is the Director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute (FAPRI) as well as an Associate Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics in the MU Division of Applied Social Sciences.

Prior to his return to FAPRI, Dr. Meyer was appointed USDA's Chief Economist from January 2021 through December 2025. FAPRI is well known for its agricultural policy and market analysis, being called on by Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for its insight into commodity production, price, farm income and trade impacts from various agricultural policies including Farm Bill proposals, trade agreements and disruptions, and crop insurance. Dr. Meyer was previously the head of the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB) in the Office of the Chief Economist (OCE), the agency at USDA charged with bringing together USDA resources in the assessment of crops around the world. The OCE also publishes those findings in the 'WASDE' report which is closely watched by agricultural markets here and abroad.

Previously, Dr. Meyer served as an economist with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations and as a visiting scholar at several research institutions around the world. Dr. Meyer grew up in eastern Iowa and has a Bachelor's and Master's degree from Iowa State University and a Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from the University of Missouri.

Ian Foley

Montana Department of Agriculture, Administrator-Ag Sciences Division



Ian Foley, Administrator at Montana Department of Agriculture's Ag Sciences Division, is committed to strengthening Montana's number one industry and providing agricultural producers and consumers, both commodity and environmental protection.

Originally from Milwaukee, WI, Ian found himself in Montana for graduate school at Montana State University where he earned a M.S. in Entomology. Since 2008, Foley has served Montana producers at the department in various roles, including state entomologist, pest management program manager, and commodity services bureau chief.

Before his work for the Montana Department of Agriculture, Ian worked in international export certification starting in 2001 for the USDA in different roles from St. Louis, Missouri to the Mexican border in South Texas before coming back to Montana to follow his passion for bugs and agriculture by working for the Montana Department of Agriculture.

Ian understands the challenges and risks Montana producers face. Through facilitation of the export of Montana's high-quality ag commodities internationally and the administration of Montana laws, he preserves the Montana producer's value and way of life.

Mike Honeycutt

Montana Department of Livestock, Executive Officer

Mike Honeycutt has served as the Executive Officer for the Montana Department of Livestock since February 2016. Prior to this appointment, Mike served in various roles with Cargill, the National Council for Agricultural Education, and the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Organization.

Mike is a native of North Carolina and earned both a bachelor's and master's degrees in Agricultural and Extension Education from North Carolina State University.



He currently resides in Helena with his wife Raylee, a proud MSU College of Agriculture alumnus, and their two daughters.

Gregory Gilpin

MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Professor



Gregory Gilpin is a Professor of Economics at Montana State University. He earned his PhD in Economics from Indiana University in 2009. Dr. Gilpin has established a national reputation in the fields of labor economics and community development. Over the past fifteen years, he has published 16 peer-reviewed academic articles and several invited articles.

Dr. Gilpin has taught a wide range of courses, with a particular focus on Macroeconomics at both the introductory and graduate levels, as well as Urban Economics and Money and Banking.

Eric Belasco

MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Department Head

Eric Belasco is a Professor and Department Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics at Montana State University. He holds a PhD and MS in Economics from North Carolina State University and a BS in Economics from Saint Mary's College of California. His research explores agricultural technology, financial engineering, crop insurance, farm policy, and risk management, resulting in 36 peer-reviewed journal articles and two book chapters. His work has been featured in major outlets such as the Washington Post, New York Times, MarketWatch, as well as many regional publications.



In the classroom, Eric teaches courses on agricultural policy, financial engineering, and agricultural marketing. He has directed more than \$4 million in federally funded, interdisciplinary projects, ranging from the development of online risk management tools and weather-based agricultural policy programs to research on biodegradable mulches and the economics of organic labeling. He currently serves on the Board of the Council on Food, Agriculture, and Resource Economics, is a Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a former President of the Western Agricultural Economics Association, and an Associate Editor for the *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*.

Kelsey Larson

MSU Department of Agricultural Economics and Economics, Assistant Professor, and MSU Extension Specialist



Kelsey Larson is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics and Extension Specialist at Montana State University. Her research studies programs like carbon credits, agricultural practice incentive programs, and conservation easements that support protecting environmental value on private and agricultural land.

She received her PhD in economics from MIT, where she was a NSF GRFP Fellow, a Martin Fellow for Sustainability, and a Lincoln Institute of Land Policy C. Lowell Harriss Dissertation Fellow. She teaches MSU's class on economics and the environment.