



**SPONSORED BY AMERICAN SUGAR ALLIANCE**

Grand Traverse Resort & Spa | Traverse City, MI | August 1-6, 2025

## **Speaker Biographies**



## ***ASA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE***

**Jack Pettus** – ASA Chair

*Vice President of Government Relations*

American Sugar Cane League

**Luther Markwart** – ASA Vice Chair

*Executive Vice President & CEO*

American Sugarbeet Growers Association

**Ryan Weston** – Secretary/Treasurer

*Chief Executive Officer, Florida Sugar Cane League*

*Washington Representative, Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers, Inc.*

**Cassie Bladow**

*President & CEO*

United States Beet Sugar Association

## ***STATEMENT OF PURPOSE***

The American Sugar Alliance is a national coalition of sugarbeet and sugarcane producers, including sugar farmers, sugar processors, sugar refiners, sugar suppliers, sugar workers and others dedicated to preserving a strong U.S. sugar industry. The American Sugar Alliance works to ensure that sugar farmers and workers in the U.S. sugar industry survive in a world of heavily subsidized sugar. Only through a united effort can these dedicated Americans continue to offer a plentiful, secure and reasonably priced sugar supply. The American Sugar Alliance provides the backing and support to meet this national need.

**[sugaralliance.org](http://sugaralliance.org)**

*MONDAY, AUGUST 4, 7:30 a.m. BREAKFAST*

**Jack Pettus**  
Vice President of Government Relations  
American Sugar Cane League

Jack Pettus began his career on the legislative staff of the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture before staffing a federal commission to improve the risk management tools available to farmers. Jack has been an advocate and consultant for a number of commodity groups and commodity trading companies, has represented the Louisiana sugarcane industry since 2001, and has served as Vice President for Government Relations for the American Sugar Cane League and as a member of the Executive Committee of the American Sugar Alliance since 2006.

Jack resides in Alexandria, VA, with his wife, Laura, and their k9id, Dexter.

**Rep. Jack Bergman (R-MI-01)**

Chairman, House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness; Member, House Budget Committee; Chairman, House Budget Committee Oversight Task Force; Member, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs

Growing up in the Midwest, Jack Bergman's parents instilled in him the values that drive the American Dream: If you work hard, never quit, and strive for excellence, you will find success. Those values are what guided him to the rank of Lt. General in the United States Marine Corps, empowered him to successfully own and operate a small business, and allowed him to enjoy a 22-year career as a commercial airline pilot.

Jack proudly represents the First District of Michigan. The boundaries contain the entire Upper Peninsula and all of the northern lower Peninsula. Altogether, the district makes up about 44% of the land mass of the state of Michigan. The Bergman family's roots in Michigan's Upper Peninsula stretch back to the late 1800's where his ancestors worked as iron miners. Serving his country in uniform for 40 years, Jack has spent time all around the United States – and world. Nearly three decades ago, Jack and his wife Cindy settled in Watersmeet, on the western edge of Michigan's beautiful Upper Peninsula.

Jack is a grandfather to ten grandchildren. This has always been one of the largest factors in his service in Congress. When Jack sees what is happening in Washington, he knows that we are not doing our best at leaving our children and grandchildren a better place. From his business to his distinguished military career, and now in Congress, Jack Bergman does not accept the status quo as an acceptable path forward. Jack is driven by his commitment to serving others. While in the military, he launched two successful startup businesses in the medical equipment field, maintaining an obligation to both his nation and his customers simultaneously. As an entrepreneurial leader focused on mission accomplishment and customer satisfaction, Jack knows how to get things done.

Hard work and commitment made the United States the most exceptional nation in the world. Those are the principles that have guided Jack's life, and are the principles that he is bringing to Washington. He believes what most Michiganders believe: Americans know how to live their lives better than politicians or bureaucrats do. Jack's life has been dedicated to service and defending the Constitution. He is the highest ranking combat Veteran to have ever served in the U.S. House. He is shaking up the status quo Congress and will continue defending the United States from those who want to weaken it, both domestically and abroad.

## **Clint Hagen**

**President, Michigan Sugar Company Central District Board of Directors**

**Vice President, American Sugarbeet Growers Association**

Clint Hagen is a fifth-generation sugarbeet farmer from Huron County, Michigan. Along with his brother, Brad, and their 20 employees, he operates Atwater Farms Inc. in Ubly, Michigan. The farm includes 4,100 acres of sugarbeets along with edible beans and white wheat. The Hagen brothers also have a trucking business and recently expanded into livestock with cattle.

As a Michigan Sugar Company grower-owner, Clint serves as President of the cooperative's Central District Board of Directors and was recently elected Vice President of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association during the organization's annual Summer Meeting in Boise, Idaho. Clint also maintains memberships with the Huron County Corn Growers and Huron County Junior Livestock Association and serves as President of the Ubly Community Schools Board of Education.

Clint and his wife Melissa have been married for 26 years and have five children – Dylan, Cole, Addison, and twins Beckett and Waverly – and one grandchild – Lochlan Rhett. Clint and Melissa enjoy watching their kids play sports and cheering on the Detroit Red Wings. Clint also enjoys a game of golf or two in the summer.

## **John Boothroyd**

**Director of Government Relations**

**Michigan Sugar Company**

John Boothroyd is the Director of Government Relations at Michigan Sugar Company. In this role, he advocates on behalf of the sugar industry and agriculture with local, state, and federal officials. He also manages the company's Political Action Committee.

John serves on the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and is the Co-Chair of its Government Affairs Committee, on the Business Advocacy Council for the Midland Business Alliance and the Advisory Board for the Henry Marsh Institute for Public Policy. He is also a former member of the Board of Directors and past President of the Arc of Midland and a former member of the Executive Committee for the Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce.

John joined Michigan Sugar Company in 2018 after serving five years on staff with Congressman John Moolenaar, including work as a Legislative Assistant. In that role, he was a lead staffer on issue areas including tax, agriculture, trade, foreign affairs, telecommunications, judiciary, immigration, social security, and labor.

John earned his bachelor's degree in history from Hillsdale College and his master's degree in public affairs from the University of Michigan. He enjoys cigars, embarrassing himself on the golf course, and collecting vintage political memorabilia. John and his wife Katherine live in Midland with their children Charlotte, William, Elizabeth, and Edward, as well as their German shepherd named Duke.

**Rep. Brad Finstad (R-MN-01)**

Chairman, House Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition & Foreign Agriculture;  
Member, House Armed Services Committee; Member, House Committee on Small Business

Congressman Brad Finstad was elected to Congress in a special election on August 9, 2022, and was sworn in three days later with his family by his side as he took the Oath of Office to proudly represent Minnesota's First District. Brad is a fourth-generation farmer and resident of the New Ulm area. He and his wife, Jackie, met on the school bus in second grade and they are now the proud parents of seven children. A graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in Agriculture Education and an emphasis in Rural Leadership Development, Brad and Jackie now operate an agriculture business in New Ulm while working alongside extended family to run their generational family farm.

Brad is proud to have served as State Director for USDA Rural Development in Minnesota where he worked to support infrastructure improvements, business development, homeownership, community services such as schools, public safety, health care, and high-speed internet access in rural areas. He previously served three terms in the Minnesota Legislature. He also held executive positions with the Minnesota Turkey Growers Association and the Center for Rural Policy and Development.

**Neil Rockstad**

President, American Sugarbeet Growers Association;  
Board Member, American Crystal Sugar Company

Neil Rockstad is the current President of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association and is the immediate past president of the Red River Valley Sugarbeet Growers Association. He and his wife, Elizabeth, raise wheat, corn, soybeans, and sugarbeets, and are proud to continue farming on land once farmed by three of their grandparents, and two great grandparents. The Rockstad's live in Ada, MN, with their two children, Nora and Hazel.

Neil has held leadership roles with the Farm Bureau at the local and state levels and has served as President of his local church. He is currently serving on the American Crystal Sugar Company Board of Directors.

**Rep. Haley Stevens (D-MI-11)**

Ranking Member, Science, Space & Technology Subcommittee on Research & Technology;  
Member, House Committee on Education; Member, U.S. House Select Committee on Strategic  
Competition between the U.S. and the Chinese Communist Party

Congresswoman Haley Stevens was born in Rochester Hills, Michigan, and graduated from Seaholm High School in Birmingham. She earned a master's degree in social policy and philosophy and a bachelor's in political science and philosophy from American University.

Before being elected to Congress, Congresswoman Stevens served as the Chief of Staff to the U.S. Auto Rescue Task Force, the federal initiative responsible for saving General Motors, Chrysler, and 200,000 Michigan Jobs. She also played a crucial role in setting up the Office of Recovery for Automotive Communities and Workers and the White House Office of Manufacturing Policy. After serving in the Obama Administration, Congresswoman Stevens worked in a manufacturing research lab focused on the future of work in the digital age.

Congresswoman Haley Stevens sits on the House Committees on Education and the Workforce and Science, Space & Technology, where she serves as the Ranking Member of the Research & Technology Subcommittee. In the 118th Congress, she was appointed to the new U.S. House Select Committee on Strategic Competition between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party. On these Committees, Congresswoman Stevens serves as the leading voice for Michigan's best-in-class manufacturers and workforce, increased investment in critical research and development, and solutions to address the real issues impacting kids in schools, including gun violence prevention, school nutrition, and full IDEA funding.

Congresswoman Stevens played a central role in advancing the CHIPS and Science Act, a historic investment in our research institutions and in American manufacturing. The final package included several bills that she authored and moved through the Committee, including the CHIPPING IN Act to expand and diversify the U.S. chips workforce and the NIST for the Future Act, a comprehensive reauthorization for the agency that supports U.S. competitiveness through precision measurement research, technology development, partnerships with industry, facilitating and developing standards. Her first bill signed into law, the Building Blocks of STEM Act, advanced the role of girls and students of color in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics fields, a core priority of Congresswoman Stevens. This bill became law during her first year in office.

Congresswoman Stevens resides in Birmingham, Michigan, and is frequently seen walking through the many communities of her beloved Oakland County.

**Neil Juhnke**  
**President & CEO**  
**Michigan Sugar Company**

Michigan Sugar Company President and CEO Neil Juhnke is a native of North Dakota and joined Michigan Sugar in April 2023, continuing a career in the agribusiness sector that stretches back to 1990 when he went to work for American Crystal Sugar Company in Moorhead, Minnesota. He spent 15 years there working his way up to become Ag Operations Manager, at which time he was responsible for the harvest, storage, and transportation of the company's sugarbeet crop and served on the company's Executive Operating Committee.

After leaving American Crystal in 2005, Neil was instrumental in the founding and development of Northstar Agri Industries, where he led the development and construction of a successful canola processing and refining plant near Hallock, Minnesota. He later became President and Chief Operating Officer, overseeing the processing of more than 400,000 tons of canola seed annually into canola oil and canola meal.

More recently, Neil served as Vice President of Manufacturing and Operations for Fargo, North Dakota-based Red River Commodities Inc., a food processing company, with four divisions – including the well-known SunButter LLC – and seven factories spread across Kansas, North Dakota, and Texas. During his time there, he led a strategic operations initiative, improving the company's safety, capital deployment, plant maintenance, and production management processes.

Since joining Michigan Sugar, Neil has been focused on resetting the company's foundation and putting it on a path for future success. That has included bringing several new faces to the company's leadership team, raising the bar for excellence in factory operations, establishing new high standards for sugarbeet harvest and permanent piling, and overseeing the completion of Michigan Sugar's molasses desugarization facility that came online May 20, 2024, in Bay City.

Neil and his wife Heidi have four adult children – Aaron, David, Daniel, and Hannah – as well as six grandchildren.



**Kevin Bailey**  
Washington Representative  
Michigan Sugar Company

Kevin serves as the Managing Director of FGS Global's Food & Agriculture Practice in D.C., where he works with a wide array of corporate, non-profit and coalition clients, helping them manage advocacy and reputational campaigns as well as providing them with policy and strategic communications advice. Kevin has been working with Michigan Sugar as their DC representative since 2021.

Kevin joined FGS Global from the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry, where he served as Professional Staff to Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI). As Professional Staff on the Senate Agriculture Committee, Kevin handled a wide portfolio including rural development, energy and sustainability, telecommunications and rural broadband, appropriations/budget, immigration and the CFTC. Kevin played an integral role in negotiating the historic bipartisan Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, where he developed and coordinated Senator Stabenow's legislative strategy to address issues related to the rural economy, broadband, energy and sustainability and the bioeconomy. This included staff and Member-level negotiations, consultations with USDA and discussions with various interest groups, NGOs and public and private entities.

Prior to joining the Senate Agriculture Committee, Kevin served more than six years during the Obama administration at the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the White House Domestic Policy Council, where he managed the White House Rural Council and focused on agriculture, sustainability, energy, rural development, telecommunications and immigration issues.

Kevin was born and raised in Des Moines, Iowa, and holds a BA in History and Political Science from the University of Kansas. Kevin lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Lauren, two daughters (Guenn and Nelle) and Australian Shephard (Stetson).

**Rob Johansson, Ph.D.**  
Director of Economics & Policy Analysis  
American Sugar Alliance

Dr. Johansson is the Director of Economics & Policy Analysis for the American Sugar Alliance, representing American sugarbeet and sugarcane growers, processors, and refiners. Previously, Dr. Johansson worked in the U.S. government for 23 years. In the early 1990's, he was a Peace Corps aquaculture extension agent working with farmers in Zaire and Gabon; later as a government economist, he was a Senior Economist with the White House Council of Economic Advisers in the mid-2000's; and finally, he finished his government career as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Chief Economist. There he was responsible for developing the first Trump Administration's programs for farmers affected by the trade war with China as well as the farm assistance program for the COVID disruption of ag markets.

**Jeff Dobrydney**  
Senior Vice President, Head of Futures & Options  
JSG Commodities

Jeff has been with JSG Commodities since 2005, when he started as an Assistant Trader. Born and raised in Milford, CT, and a graduate from Jesuit schools Fordham University and Fairfield Prep, Jeff has solidified his role within the Sugar trading community covering both the USMCA and World futures markets which includes penning a daily report. He is now the Sr. Vice President of JSG and Heads the Futures & Options desk that executes trades for Sugar, Cocoa, Coffee and Grains for a wide array of clientele. Jeff also served as the President of the Sugar Club of New York and is a featured speaker at the annual Datagro conference in New York. A resident of Trumbull, CT, with his wife and two girls, Jeff also serves as President and Head Coach of the Connecticut Timberwolves, a 501(c)3 travel softball program and is the principal trumpet player of a local church.

**José Orive**  
Executive Director  
International Sugar Organization

José Orive is currently the Executive Director of the International Sugar Organization, a post he assumed in January 2014. He was unanimously reappointed to serve a second period through 2021 and again for a further third term of four years through 2025. Mr. Orive has actively engaged in the transition to a sucro-energetic world and spearheaded the vital task of conjugating biofuels for decarbonization and generation of energy with the nutritional role that sugar plays in nutrition through a balanced diet.

Previously Mr. Orive was the Executive Director of the Central American Sugar Association (AICA) for 19 years, where he was responsible for negotiations for the private sugar industry, with emphasis on coordination of joint actions on priority issues, clearinghouse for information relevant to the sector, publications, participation in international forae.

Since 2010, he also was a partner in ARTLEX law firm in charge of large corporate clients, distribution contracts and environmental issues and arbitration. Prior to that, Mr. Orive was honored to be a partner at ARIAS & MUÑOZ, a Central American law firm, where he worked for 10 years in corporate, M&A, environmental matters and government affairs/lobbying.

He holds a Law Degree from Francisco Marroquín University in Guatemala and obtained a Masters in International Law from Georgetown University Law Centre. Soon after graduating in 1985, Mr. Orive took up the post of Minister Counselor for Economic & Commercial Affairs, Embassy of Guatemala, Washington, D.C.

Mr. Orive is married with two sons.

**Cassie Bladow**  
President & CEO  
U.S. Beet Sugar Association

Cassie Bladow is President & CEO of the U.S. Beet Sugar Association. She works to advance the unified objectives of America's sugarbeet cooperatives. Cassie provides leadership in navigating issues of importance to the 8 manufacturers of beet sugar in the U.S., which operate 20 processing facilities. She previously served the association as director of government affairs, then vice president. She served as Chair of the industry-wide American Sugar Alliance in 2024.

Cassie has served as an advocate for agriculture throughout her career. Prior to rejoining the U.S. Beet Sugar Association, she served as chief of staff for Senator John Hoeven. Through various roles on Senator Hoeven's staff, she worked to represent the interests of constituents in North Dakota. She played a crucial role in developing policy for farmers and ranchers through two Farm Bills and Senator Hoeven's role on the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee.

Cassie resides in northern Virginia with her husband, Shaun, and son, Theodore. She grew up on a sugarbeet farm in northwestern Minnesota, which her family still operates. She graduated from North Dakota State University.

**Rob Johansson, Ph.D.**  
Director of Economics & Policy Analysis  
American Sugar Alliance  
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**Randy Green**  
Principal, Watson Green LLC  
Consultant, Sweetener Users Association

Randy Green, the owner of Watson Green LLC, has seen food and agriculture policy from all sides, having served in both the executive and legislative branches of government and in the private sector. Over his career, he has been closely involved in the development of several multi-year farm bills, as well as major legislation and regulations affecting derivatives, food safety, animal health and human nutrition.

Randy came to Washington in the 1980s to work for the late Representative Charles Stenholm (D-TX) and later served the late Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN.) on the staff of the Senate Agriculture Committee. With the exception of a stint as a deputy under secretary of agriculture, Randy served on the agriculture committee staff continuously from 1989 to 1999. The last two years he was chief of staff.

In 1999, Randy entered the private sector to represent agricultural and food industry clients at the firm now known as Watkinson Miller. Earlier in his career, he managed government relations for the American Soybean Association and was director of the Wheat Export Trade Education Center.

In 2013, Randy and Lisa Watson formed Watson Green LLC, a firm centered on food and agriculture policy and public affairs. With Lisa's retirement at the end of 2022, Randy continues to operate the company.

Randy and his wife of 41 years, Mary, have five grown children and four grandchildren.

**The Honorable Stephen Vaden**  
Deputy Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Judge Stephen Alexander Vaden was appointed as the Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture on July 7, 2025. Alongside Secretary Brooke L. Rollins, Deputy Secretary Vaden leads the Department's operations and implements policies that support America's food and farm systems. A native of Union City, Tennessee, Deputy Secretary Vaden brings expertise in agricultural policy, law, and rural development. Previously, he served as a judge on the U.S. Court of International Trade and as General Counsel of USDA. Throughout Deputy Secretary Vaden's time as General Counsel, he led successful Supreme Court litigation, advanced regulatory reform, and supported the implementation of the 2018 Farm Bill. He is a graduate of Yale Law School and Vanderbilt University. A public servant with strong agricultural roots, Deputy Secretary Vaden is committed to revitalizing rural America and ensuring an abundant, affordable, and resilient U.S. food supply.

**Jim Simon**  
General Manager  
American Sugar Cane League

Jim Simon possesses a genuine interest in agriculture and its people. Sugar and rice production along with other agricultural interests have been part of his family for several generations. He received his Bachelor of Science degree from the Louisiana State University College of Agriculture. In 2016, he was selected as LSU College of Agriculture's Outstanding Alumnus.

He has served as Chairman of the Board, or Committee chairman of several civic organizations in his hometown of New Iberia, Louisiana.

He is recognized as a national sugar industry leader as he is a Past-Chairman of the Board of the Sugar Association. He is a representative on the American Sugar Coalition, a group that monitors U.S. sugar trade related issues. He is also a past Chairman of the U.S. Department of Agriculture Sweetener Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee.

In June 2004, after a career in banking, Jim joined the American Sugar Cane League as its General Manager. He monitors research activities and coordinates the federal and state lobbying activities, and deals with environmental, trade, and other industry issues, as well as social and cultural issues which have a daily impact on the Louisiana sugar industry.

**Neil Juhnke**  
President & CEO  
Michigan Sugar Company  
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**Ryan Weston**  
President & CEO, Florida Sugar Cane League;  
Washington Representative, Rio Grande Valley Sugar Growers

Ryan joined the Florida, Texas and Hawaii Sugarcane Growers in 2006. He advises and provides strategic planning for his growers, mills and refineries (Domino, C&H and U.S. Sugar) on domestic sugar policy, international trade, nutrition and other issues that impact the sugar industry and agriculture production. He represents the industry before Congress and the Administration and at trade ministerials in the U.S and abroad such as those held in Brussels, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City and Geneva. He has worked with the House and Senate Leadership to ensure passage of several Farm Bills, including the 2014 Farm Bill during which Ryan worked to defeat five votes that would have altered the sugar program.

Ryan serves on the board of the American Sugar Alliance which represents all U.S. sugar production and most U.S. sugar refining interests. He serves on the Commodity Futures Trading Commission's Agriculture Advisory Committee and the Department of Agriculture and United States Trade Representative's Agricultural Trade Advisory Committee (ATAC) for Sweeteners.

Ryan worked for the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Agriculture for over 10 years and organized more than 50 hearings and completed two Farm Bills. He specialized in farm and conservation programs, trade agreements, derivatives trading, rural development, crop insurance, pesticides, energy and specialty crops. He staffed Committee Members during negotiations for the Commodity Futures Modernization Act of 2000, the 2002 Energy Conference and the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002 Conference in addition to the 1996 and 2002 Farm Bill Conferences.

Ryan and his wife, Carmen, live in Arlington, Virginia. Ryan was raised on a cattle ranch near Springview, Nebraska, where he enjoys working whenever possible. He graduated Magna Cum Laude from Nebraska Wesleyan University with a major in finance and a minor in political science. Carmen is an elementary school teacher in Virginia.

**Courtney Gaine, PhD, RD**  
President & CEO  
The Sugar Association

Courtney Gaine, Ph.D., R.D., is the President and CEO of the Sugar Association in Washington, D.C. Prior to her appointment in January 2016, Dr. Gaine served as the Vice President of Scientific Affairs. Before her positions at the Sugar Association, Dr. Gaine served as senior science program manager at the North American branch of the International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI North America), a public, nonprofit scientific foundation that advances the understanding and application of science related to the nutritional quality and safety of the food supply. Prior to ILSI, Dr. Gaine held positions of project director, nutrition and wellness, at the nonprofit organization Convergence and science manager at FoodMinds, a public relations firm. She began her career in academia as an assistant professor at East Carolina University. A native Washingtonian, Dr. Gaine obtained her Ph.D. in nutritional sciences and biochemistry and bachelor's degree in dietetics from the University of Connecticut, where she was also a co-captain of the UConn women's basketball team.



**Nancy Beck, Ph.D.**

Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Dr. Nancy Beck is the Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP). OCSPP implements key statutes such as the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act, the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, the Toxic Substances Control Act, and the Pollution Prevention Act. She has a Ph.D. in toxicology with over twenty-five years of applied public health experience seventeen of which were in government, including over a decade of work as a scientist in the Office of Management and Budget's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) and senior leadership positions at the EPA and on detail to the White House within the Office of Management and Budget and the National Economic Council (NEC). She also served as Director of Regulatory Science at Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP prior to returning to EPA for a third time in January 2025.

**Rob Johansson, Ph.D.**

Director of Economics & Policy Analysis  
American Sugar Alliance  
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**John Newton**  
Executive Head  
Terrain

John Newton, Ph.D., is the Executive Head of Terrain. Guiding the team's endeavors, he has more than two decades of experience using data to address agriculture's challenges.

John has a deep understanding of how governmental policy and risk management programs impact the financial outcomes of America's farming and ranching families. He previously held positions as the Republican Chief Economist for the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry, Chief Economist at the American Farm Bureau Federation and at the National Milk Producers Federation, as an economist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and as an award-winning faculty member at the University of Illinois. In 2021, John received the Distinguished Alumni award from The Ohio State University, where he earned his Ph.D. in agricultural economics and master's degrees in applied economics and macroeconomics.

**Rob Johansson, Ph.D.**  
Director of Economics & Policy Analysis  
American Sugar Alliance  
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**Carrie Vicenta Meadows**  
Vice President of Government Affairs  
U.S. Beet Sugar Association

Carrie Vicenta Meadows serves as the Vice President of Government Affairs for the U.S. Beet Sugar Association. Carrie has spent her career working on agricultural policy. Prior to joining the U.S. Beet Sugar Association, Carrie served as the Agriculture Advisor to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Andrew Wheeler. As a senior advisor at EPA, Carrie led the office that served as the primary advocate and liaison for U.S. agriculture at EPA. Before joining EPA, Carrie was a 16-year veteran of Capitol Hill where she held positions including Chief of Staff to Congressman Dan Newhouse (WA-04), and Legislative Director and agricultural policy advisor to Congressman Bob Goodlatte (VA-06). Carrie is a native of Lynchburg, VA, and a graduate of James Madison University.

**Kristi Boswell**  
Public Policy Counsel  
Alston & Bird

With her farm roots and more than a decade of agricultural policy experience, as Counsel at the law firm Alston & Bird, Kristi provides agricultural and food clients insights and solutions on legislative and regulatory issues impacting farm businesses and rural America. Before joining Alston & Bird, Kristi served as a senior advisor to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where she implemented the secretary's priorities and advised the secretary on decision-making. Kristi also held a policy role at the White House, where she served as the agricultural voice in drafting H-2A regulatory reforms and immigration legislation. Before her time in government, she served as the director of congressional relations at an agricultural trade association, where she advocated Congress for legislative change for farm members.

**Jamison Cruce**  
Washington Representative  
American Sugar Cane League

Jamison Cruce is a Washington Representative for the American Sugar Cane League, advocating for Louisiana's sugarcane growers and processors in D.C., and is the president of Cruce Capitol Consulting LLC. Most recently, Cruce led government affairs for the USA Rice Federation and previously worked for the American Farm Bureau Federation and the Georgia Peanut Commission. A native of Suches, Georgia, he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture from the University of Georgia and a Master of Business Administration degree from Louisiana State University Shreveport. Cruce and his wife, Elise, reside in Alexandria, Virginia, with their son, Walker.

**Carley Esser McLean**  
Republican Professional Staff  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

Carley Esser McLean currently serves as professional staff for the U.S. Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee under Chairman John Boozman of Arkansas. She leads the Title I commodity programs, disaster programs, and crop insurance portfolios.

Formerly, she was the senior legislative assistant for Missouri Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler.

Other experience in the industry includes the U.S. Grains Council in their Global Strategies department, a stint with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and extensive involvement with the National FFA Organization and Agriculture Future of America (AFA) organizations.

McLean graduated with a degree in Agricultural Education from the University of Missouri where she was able to work with agriculturalists across her home state.

**Mike Schmidt**  
Democratic Senior Advisor  
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

Mike Schmidt is a Senior Advisor for Ranking Member Amy Klobuchar at the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry. Schmidt rejoined the Committee from USDA in 2023, where he most recently served as Senior Advisor in the Office of the Secretary. Schmidt previously worked for the Committee as Senior Professional Staff during the 2018 Farm Bill and led the commodity and crop insurance teams. Schmidt held several positions at USDA in the Obama Administration, including Associate Administrator for Policy and Programs in the Farm Service Agency. At USDA, Schmidt was also responsible for implementation of 2014 Farm Bill programs related to commodities, dairy, conservation, and risk protection. Schmidt is a graduate of Virginia Tech and has a master's degree from the University College London.

**Clark Ogilvie**  
Democratic Special Counsel  
House Agriculture Committee

Clark Ogilvie is Deputy Staff Director of the Democratic staff of the House Committee on Agriculture. He returned to the Committee in May 2023. This is his third time on the Committee having served from 2005—2014 and from 2018—2019. During those previous times, he has worked on the past three Farm Bills, the Dodd-Frank Act, and the 2008 reauthorization of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC). In addition to working on the Committee, Clark Ogilvie served for 2 ½ years as Chief of Staff of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) and two years as General Counsel for the Farm Credit Administration (FCA). He has a law degree from George Washington University and a B.A. from Rhodes College.

**Trevor White**  
Republican Professional Staff  
House Agriculture Committee

Trevor White serves as Policy Director on the House Committee on Agriculture for Chairman Glenn ‘GT’ Thompson (PA-15). Prior to this role he was Senior Professional Staff handling the commodity policy, crop insurance, disaster aid, credit, and agricultural labor portfolios for Chairman Thompson and his predecessor Chairman K. Michael Conaway (TX-11).

Before joining the Committee in March of 2017, Trevor spent over 8 years working with Combest, Sell and Associates, an agriculture policy focused lobbying firm. Trevor was raised on a cotton farm in New Home, Texas. He holds a Bachelor’s degree in Agricultural Economics from Texas Tech University and a Master’s degree in Applied Economics from Johns Hopkins University.

**Rep. John Moolenaar (R-MI-02)**

Chairman, House Select Committee on Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party; Member, House Committee on Appropriations

Congressman John Moolenaar represents the hardworking residents of Michigan's Second Congressional District.

As Michigan's only member of the House Committee on Appropriations, Moolenaar is dedicated to holding the federal government accountable to taxpayers. He strongly believes in fiscal responsibility and has been fighting to make the economy work for Michigan families and seniors. As a member of the committee, he serves on the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies; and the Subcommittee on National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs.

Moolenaar also serves as Chairman of the House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In this role, he leads efforts to stop the CCP's economic and national security threats. Under his leadership, the committee has made significant strides in countering the CCP's malign influence and raising awareness about the threats it poses to the American people.

During his time in Congress, Moolenaar has focused on improving the lives of Michiganders. He has introduced legislation to hold the VA accountable to our veterans; to help rural residents get better internet; to improve the care our seniors receive; to stop taxpayer dollars from going to our nation's adversaries; and to support hardworking Michigan farmers.

Moolenaar is also the Co-Chair for the Congressional School Choice Caucus with Senator Tim Scott (R-SC). As a parent, Moolenaar is proud to support parental rights and school choice in Michigan and across America.

Moolenaar brings years of leadership experience in the private and public sectors. He began his career as a chemist, after graduating from Hope College with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Moolenaar then worked in business development, and as a school administrator. Moolenaar has a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University. From 2003-2008, he served in the Michigan House of Representatives, and in the Michigan State Senate from 2011-2014.

Moolenaar and his wife, Amy, raised their family in Michigan and are blessed with six children and three grandchildren.

**Adam Herford**  
Chairman, Michigan Sugar Company  
Board of Directors, American Sugarbeet Growers Association

Adam Herford is a fifth-generation sugarbeet farmer from Huron County, Michigan. In partnership with his father Bill, brother Luke and cousin Brandon, he operates W.A. Herford & Sons Farms Inc. in Elkton, Michigan. The farm features alfalfa, dry beans, corn, wheat, soybeans, and 2,500 acres of sugarbeets, as well as a cattle operation.

As a Michigan Sugar Company grower-owner, Adam was elected to the cooperative's Board of Directors in January 2023 and currently serves as Board Chairman. He previously served on the Co-op Board of Directors from 2018 to 2022 and was Board Chairman from 2020 to 2021 and Board Secretary in 2019.

Adam earned his bachelor's degree in agribusiness management from Michigan State University in 2001. He serves on the Oliver Township Board of Trustees and has represented the farm as part of several statewide and community organizations, including nine years as a board member for the Huron County Farm Bureau and four years on the Michigan farm Bureau's Young Farmer Committee. He also has served on the Board of Directors for the American Sugarbeet Growers Association since 2018.

In his free time, Adam enjoys traveling.



**Luther Markwart**  
Executive Vice President & CEO  
American Sugarbeet Growers Association

Raised on a family dairy farm in eastern Michigan and grew sugarbeets for 9 years as a 4-H project. His grandparents and parents raised sugarbeets beginning in 1933.

Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Michigan State University.

Executive Vice President of the Farmers and Manufacturers Beet Sugar Association in Saginaw, Michigan 1979-1982, representing all sugarbeet growers in Michigan and Ohio. Executive Vice President of the American Sugarbeet Growers Association in Washington, DC since 1982, representing all sugarbeet growers in 11 states.

Advisor to the U.S. Congress, the Department of Agriculture, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, and other federal agencies that have direct or indirect impact on the domestic sugar industry.

Directly involved in the formulation and passage of the sugar provisions of the last nine farm bills (1981, 1985, 1990, 1996, 2002, 2008, 2014, 2018 and 2025).

Advisor to USDA and USTR for international trade negotiations, beginning with the International Sugar Agreement in Geneva in 1982; the North American Free Trade Agreement; the Uruguay Round of the GATT; the Doha Round of the WTO, and pending and ongoing regional and bilateral free trade agreements. Served six years on the USDA Agricultural Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) for Sweeteners, then served on the Agricultural Policy Advisory Committee as an advisor to Secretaries Ann Veneman and Mike Johanns and USTR Ambassador Zoellick. He was reappointed to the ATAC for Sweeteners in 2015 by USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack and USTR Michael Froman and currently serves on the committee. He was involved in the antidumping and countervailing cases against Mexico and the negotiated suspension agreements between the two countries.

Served eight terms as Chairman of the industry-wide American Sugar Alliance (1989/90, 1994/95, 2000/01, 2004/05, 2011/2012, 2015/16, 2017/18, 2021/22).

Served as Co-Chairman of the Sugar Industry Biotechnology Council since 2003 (22 years) leading the first successful introduction of sugar produced from genetically engineered sugarbeets or sugar cane in the world. 2017 recipient of the prestigious Savitsky Award for his leadership in introduction, adoption and defense of biotechnology in the beet sugar industry. The Savitsky award is the highest award given by the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists.

Member of the Agriculture CEO Council (Washington, DC) 2018 – present.  
Served as President of the Commodity Club of Washington, D.C., 1996/97

Served as President of the New York "Sugar Club," 2005/2006.

Contributing editor for sugarbeet trade magazines; The Sugar Producer and The Sugarbeet Grower.

He lives in McLean, VA, with his wife, Terri, and three children, Christian, Lauren and Megan.