

The Next 5 Years Executive Conference

Facilitation Guide



September 10, 2025

Sanctuary Events Center
670 4th Ave N
Fargo, ND 58102

About the Conference



Agriculture is a narrative of transformation and progress. Over the past century, significant shifts in markets have been driven by demographics, politics, technology, geopolitics, government policy, environmental factors, and other influences.

Change is an inherent feature of our markets.

Approximately five years ago, a small group initiated discussions about the numerous changes occurring or anticipated in global agricultural markets. This dialogue led to the establishment of the Next 5 Years Executive Conference.

Although the conference occurs more frequently than every five years, its primary aim is to highlight the necessity of preparing for the ongoing, daily changes. It underscores the importance of aligning organizational strategies with these evolving dynamics.

In the face of more questions than answers, this conference seeks to spark strategic conversations that will guide organizations and the region through the evolving landscape of the next five years.

While no single entity has all the answers, identifying challenges and opportunities will contribute to building more resilient communities and organizations, thereby positioning our region for success both now and in the future.

Our Mission, Guiding Principles, & Ground Rules

Purpose Statement: The Next 5 Years Executive Conference was created to “***Strengthen the region’s agriculture*** by engaging organizational leadership teams in discussion on big-picture, impactful issues.”

Foundational Principles: Fundamental ideas guiding conference discussions are:

- Forward-thinking
- Maximize Opportunities
- Strengthen Resiliency
- Increase Prosperity
- Position for the Future

Fundamental Guidelines:

- Use your imagination
- Look at situations from multiple perspectives
- Be open-minded
- Listen to others
- Be concise

Purpose Questions: “What do you currently think is going to be the biggest change in your segment of the industry within the next five years?”.

High Level Agenda



8:30 - 9:00 AM	Welcome - Steve Olson, Facilitator, Steve Olson Consulting, LLC
9:00 - 10:20 AM	“Blinding Chaos, Leading Through Change,” Vance Crowe <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question and Answer• Table Discussions• Report Out
10:20 -10:35 AM	Break
10:35 – 12:05 PM	“Geopolitics and It’s Impact on Agriculture,” Jacob Shapiro <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question and Answer• Table Discussions• Report Out
12:05 - 12:50 PM	Lunch - Networking Hour
12:50 – 2:10 PM	“The SAF Opportunity” Erin Heitkamp <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question and Answer• Table Discussions• Report Out
2:10 – 3:30 PM	“The Big Shrink: Adapting to shifting population and demand,” John Newton <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question and Answer• Table Discussions• Report Out
3:30 – 3:45 PM	Break
3:45 – 4:15 PM	Industry Panel <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Question and Answer• Table Discussions• Report Out
4:15 – 4:40 PM	Closing Conversation
4:40 - 5:00 PM	Closing Comments - & Steve Olson, Facilitator, Steve Olson Consulting
5:00 - 6:00 PM	Post-Conference Reception

Flow for the Day

Speaker → Q&A → Table Discussion → Report Out → Networking Break

Thank you to our sponsors that have been so supportive through this entire production process. This conference wouldn't have been able to happen without each of you. Thank you for your willingness to learn and understand about the situations that we will face in the next 5 years.



Main Conference Sponsors:

Platinum	The logo for ADA AG, featuring a stylized green and orange 'A' inside a circle, followed by the text 'ADA AG' in green and orange.	The logo for AgCountry Farm Credit Services, featuring a green four-leaf clover icon followed by the text 'AgCountry' in bold and 'Farm Credit Services' in a smaller font.	
Gold	The logo for Steve Olson Consulting, featuring a blue circle with 'SOC' inside, followed by the text 'Steve Olson Consulting' and 'Agricultural & Organizational Strategists' below it.		
Silver	The logo for the Midwest Council on Agriculture, featuring a blue square with 'M' and 'W' inside, followed by the text 'Midwest Council on Agriculture'.	The logo for NDSU AGRICULTURE, featuring the text 'NDSU' in blue and 'AGRICULTURE' in a smaller font to its right.	The logo for RIVERVIEW, featuring a green stylized 'R' inside a circle with the word 'RIVERVIEW' below it.
	The logo for gevo, featuring a green and blue stylized flower icon followed by the text 'gevo'.	The logo for Terrain, featuring a blue grid icon followed by the text 'Terrain'. Below it, in small text, it says 'Terrain is offered by: AgCountry Farm Credit Services, American AgCredit, Farm Credit Services of America, Frontier Farm Credit'.	
Bronze	The logo for Minnkota Power COOPERATIVE, featuring a blue and green stylized 'M' icon followed by the text 'Minnkota Power COOPERATIVE'.	The logo for PRIME 46, featuring the text 'PRIME 46' in blue.	

About the Facilitators



Steve Olson

CEO | Steve Olson Consulting, LLC



Steve Olson, Steve Olson Consulting, LLC (SOC) 35+ year career in food and agriculture includes 19 years as chief executive for five poultry organizations. His consulting firm helps leaders, teams, organizations, and industry sectors make future-focused decisions positively impacting their stakeholders. He specializes in moving organizations forward by facilitating strategic planning, priority-setting, designing and facilitating conference agendas, keynote speaking, workshops that enhance the audience's experience by tapping into their knowledge. For more information visit: Steve@SteveOlsonConsulting.com; SteveOlsonConsulting.com; and LinkedIn.

Jonathan Shaver

Group Facilitator and Leadership Coach | Envision Partners



Jonathan Shaver, Ph.D., Envision Partners, Jonathan brings 15 years' experience as a facilitator, leadership coach, and trainer specializing in assisting agricultural technical staff transition into leadership roles. His coaching is based on his expertise and experience as college-level agronomy and biology professor, and a private-sector plant genetic and breeding scientist. For more information visit: EnvisionPartnersllc.com, and Jonathan@EnvisionPartnersllc.com.

Facilitation Guide

Use the template below to take notes on the presentation and how you will incorporate this into your organization.



Blinding Chaos: Leading through Change | Vance Crowe, Legacy Interviews

Vance Crowe is a communications strategist that has worked for corporations and international organizations around the world. Crowe has spoken before more than 250,000 people, answering questions about some of the most sophisticated and controversial technologies in the modern age.

Vance helps organizations realize why the general public doesn't agree with their perspective and offers new ways to communicate effectively, resolve disagreements, and build rapport with critics and stakeholders.

Vance has worked for organizations as varied as the World Bank, Monsanto, the U.S. Peace Corps and even as a deckhand on an ecotourism ship. Vance is the founder of Legacy Interviews, a service that privately records the life stories of individuals and couples so they future generations can know their family history.

Vance is the recipient of the 2021 Association of Farm Manager and Rural Appraisers "Meritorious Communicators Award" and an appointed outside board member of FCS Financial a seven billion dollar agricultural lending cooperative in Missouri.

The Vance Crowe Podcast hosts guests from around the world with artists, psychologists, economists, farmers, ambassadors and heads of state. @VanceCrowe

Questions You Have	Actionable Ideas

Table Conversations

What is the impact of chaos on your day-to-day operations?	
What is the most important topic for your organization to gain clarity in order to be better prepared for the next 5 years?	
What did you hear today that has given you some direction or clarity?	

Notes

Report Out

What are 2-3 of your most energizing ideas?

- Use the template below to take notes on the presentation and how you will incorporate this into your organization.



Geopolitics and the impact on Agriculture | Jacob L. Shapiro, Perch Perspectives

Jacob oversees geopolitical analysis at CI, working with the CI research team to integrate geopolitics into CI's investment strategies. He also authors the "Global Situation Report," a weekly intelligence brief on the world's most important developments.

Jacob hosts CI's podcast series, "Cognitive Dissidents," which features interviews with a diverse array of foreign policy, technology, and global business experts. Jacob is a prolific writer and frequent keynote speaker at conferences and events, known for challenging consensus views whilst retaining a healthy sense of irony. Prior to joining CI, Jacob was Director of Analysis at Geopolitical Futures, which he co-founded with famed geopolitical strategist George Friedman. Before co-founding GPF, Jacob was Director of the Operations Center at Stratfor, the geopolitical intelligence firm.

Questions You Have	Actionable Ideas

Table Conversations

What trend surprised you the most?	
What is something useful that you want to share with a team member?	
Relative to these trends, what action(s) can/will your organization take?	

Notes



Report Out

What are 2-3 of your most energizing ideas?

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The Future of Sustainability | Erin Heitkamp, Gevo

Erin Heitkamp serves as VP, SAF and Carbon Solutions, for Gevo. In her position at Gevo, she develops sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)-based carbon solutions for SAF and SAF attribute aggregators, business aviation, OEMs, and commercial cargo and passenger carriers around the world. Ms. Heitkamp has over two decades of experience in the overlapping spaces of sustainability, policy, strategy, supply chain and business development across the aviation, fuel and food and agriculture sectors.

Questions You Have	Actionable Ideas

Table Conversations

How do you make decisions about sustainability investments?	
What is something that you used to believe about sustainable agriculture that you do not believe anymore?	
What action can you take to be more clear about the future of sustainability or carbon market's impact on your business?	

Notes



Report Out

What are 2-3 of your most energizing ideas?



The Big Shrink: Adapting to a shifting population and demand | John Newton, 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.

Questions You Have	Actionable Ideas

Table Conversations

What surprised you? What concerns you?	
What aspect of these comments has a direct impact on you or on your customers?	
What actions does/can your organization take?	

Notes



Report Out

What are 2-3 of your most energizing ideas?

Notes



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Facilitation Guide



Use the template below to take notes on the presentation, and how you will incorporate this into your organization.

Industry Panel

Discover an enlightening panel discussion featuring experienced farmers and industry professionals as they share their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the agricultural landscape over the next five years. These seasoned agriculturists will offer valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of farming, including changing climate patterns, technological advancements, market trends, and policy shifts. Explore how these resilient individuals plan to adapt and thrive in the face of uncertainty, ensuring a sustainable and prosperous future for agriculture. Whether you’re a fellow farmer, an agricultural enthusiast, or simply curious about the future of food production, this panel promises to shed light on the critical issues that will shape the farming industry in the coming years.

Questions You Have	Actionable Ideas

Table Conversations

What are the top impacts on this region’s farming in the “Next 5 Years”?	
What surprised you from their comments?	
How does the impact on farmers affect your business?	

What steps should your business take based on the farmer panel's feedback?	
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Key Takeaways

What did you hear from the industry panel conversation that has the most impact on your business in the "Next 5 Years"? What actions can/do you need to take because of what you have heard?



Report Out

From your table discussion, what are 2-3 of your most energizing ideas to share with the other group?

Taking Action: Conference Wrap Up



My top 3-4 action items are:

Within the next 24 hours I will share information I learn with:

(Reviewing your notes and sharing what you've learned with someone, within 24 hours, greatly helps you retain information. Research shows people forget 50% of what they learned within one-hour, 70% within 24 hours.)

Thank you for attending this year's Next 5 Years Executive Conference. We hope that you learned a lot and feel more prepared to handle the opportunities and situations that may arise within the next 5 years.

Please scan the QR code below to tell us about your conference experience!



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