



FUTURE SOLVERS CULTIVATION CHALLENGE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2023

An agricultural pitch competition where students across Minnesota develop innovative ideas that address challenges facing our region



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO
CENTER FOR INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP





FUTURE SOLVERS

CULTIVATION CHALLENGE

WELCOME

Emcee: Dr. Shane Bowyer

Director of the Center for Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Associate Professor of Management

Remarks from Sam Ziegler

President of GreenSeam

FINALIST PRESENTATIONS

Next Generation Growers

All C&S Farm

ReGen Farmstead

Crop N' Cows Event Center

Tropical Wine Hub

Black Squirrel's Creek

PEOPLE'S CHOICE VOTING

[Pollev.com/FS](https://pollev.com/FS)

PANEL

Dr. Aaron Budge

Associate Dean of the College of Science, Engineering &
Technology

T.J. Brown

Agribusiness instructor at South Central College

AWARDS

FUTURESOLVERS FINALISTS

Next Generation Growers –Minnesota State Mankato

Morgan Robinson

Agribusiness & Food Innovation

Erica Johnsrud

Marketing

Megan Cumming

Agribusiness & Food Innovation

Carter Braa

Management



All C&S Farm –Bethany Lutheran College

Megan Torner

Business Administration

Clever Nieto Lazo

Business Administration

Allison Etheridge

Business Administration



ReGen Farmstead –Minnesota State Mankato

Hope Kilmer

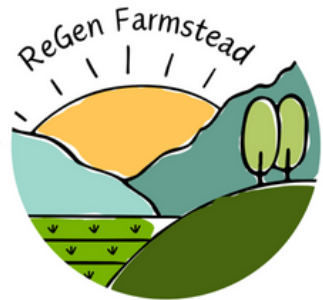
Finance

Iyanna Booth

Management

Hannah Lundborg

HR Management



FUTURESOLVERS FINALISTS

Crop N' Cows Event Center –South Central College

Hunter Conrad

Agribusiness Sales

Logan Kremmin

Agribusiness Production

Frederick Powers

Agribusiness Sales

Zachary Hermanson

Agribusiness Production

**CROPS N' COWS: A FAMILY
EVENT CENTER**

The Tropical Wine Hub –Minnesota State Mankato

Jack Wohnoutka

Management

Abby Lundquist

Marketing

Izzy Leonard

Management



TROPICAL WINE
HUB

Black Squirrel's Creek –South Central College

Kati Danielson

Agribusiness

Katee Clough

Agribusiness

Kaden Ernst

Agribusiness

Wyatt Saemrow

Agribusiness



FUTURE SOLVERS JUDGES

Andrew Herr –President of GAT Farms

GAT Farms is a holding company for investment into farmland, agriculture inputs, animal production and food processing.

The company was founded by Glen Taylor, and carries his initials to ensure we maintain a focus on our purpose.

GAT Farms makes strategic long-term investments into businesses that create sustainable, good paying jobs in small agriculture communities.



Andrew first entered the ag industry as an intern with Rembrandt Enterprises, Inc (REI) in 2004, and started their Pet Care Division in 2007. He went on to become the Pet Food Division General Manager at REI. He also worked as President of IsoNova Technologies, and as CEO of International Dehydrated Foods, Inc., prior to joining GAT Farms in 2020.

Education: bachelor's degree in Animal Sciences (minor in Agriculture Business) from Penn State, master's degree in Agriculture Economics from Purdue University and a master's in Business Administration from Indiana University.

Andrew currently resides in Mankato, MN with his wife, Sara, and their three children. Outside of the office, his interests include investing, sports, traveling and spending time with his family.

FUTURE SOLVERS JUDGES

Gary Koch –VP of Christensen Farms

Gary Koch serves as Vice President and General Counsel, overseeing the business, development and legal matters of Christensen Farms. Gary also serves on the Board of Directors and serves as the Trustee to the Christensen Family Trusts. In addition, he is one of the representatives from Christensen Farms that serves on the board of Triumph Foods, Christensen Farms' integrated pork processing partner.



Gary's focus has been to support the company's drive for excellence in undertaking its core businesses. Whether it be in the areas of live production, its integrated platform or ancillary investment of resources, a consistent focus on excellence will lead to continuous innovation and improvement. This will provide a platform for opportunities for development and growth; for the company, people and business partners.

Prior to joining CF, Gary was in private practice in Minnesota for over 30 years. In addition to CF, Gary represented many companies engaged regionally and nationally in production agriculture, as well as companies in allied industries. Gary's prior private practice was in the general practice of law to include corporate, commercial, regulatory and litigation matters.

Gary holds his bachelor's degrees in economics, history and political science, as well as a Juris Doctorate in law, all from the University of Iowa.

FUTURE SOLVERS JUDGES

Heather Thielges -Partner at Eide Bailly

Heather joined Eide Bailly in 2001 and provides a wide range of public accounting services to clients. She specializes in business valuation and litigation support and often consults clients on matters of family law, including division of marital estates, child support and spousal maintenance. Heather also advises clients on tax compliance and planning matters, new entity formations, IRS and state tax representation, and multi-state taxation.



When you work with Heather, you can expect a very personal approach. She likes to get to know you as a person, not just a client, so she can gain a deeper understanding of your organization both financially and culturally. She also brings a holistic approach—looking at the big picture to provide options and solutions in a proactive manner.

When she's not consulting, you'll find Heather out taking advantage of the great Minnesota outdoors. She loves to camp, fish and relax by the campfire with a good book. On the flip side, she's also a self-identified adrenaline junkie, attracted to anything with death-defying heights or face-melting speed. You're going to like working with her.

FUTURESOLVERS JUDGES

Ryan Erickson –Senior Manager at AGCO

Ryan Erickson was raised on a farm in Ada, MN and developed a passion for the Ag industry, lean manufacturing, and talent development. He has spent the last 14 years working for AGCO Corporation, based out of the Manufacturing Plant in Jackson, MN, proudly manufacturing Fendt Tractors and Application Equipment.



Ryan joined AGCO in 2009 as a Project Manager for New Product Introductions. In 2011 he transitioned into the Manufacturing Engineering department as a Manufacturing Engineering Team Leader. In 2013 Ryan assumed the role of Manufacturing Engineering Program Manager for Tractor Assembly. In 2018 he was promoted to the Leadership Team as a Senior Manager. He has managed different functional teams, including IT, Continuous Improvement, (Industry 4.0) Smart Factory, and Manufacturing Engineering. He currently has responsibilities for Manufacturing Engineering, Smart Factory, and Continuous Improvement as well as leading the cultural improvements and yearly strategy setting for the site.

Before joining AGCO, Ryan worked at Westin Automotive Inc. as the Product Engineering Supervisor. Ryan is a graduate of Minnesota State University, Mankato with a Major in Automotive Engineering Technology and a Minor in Manufacturing Engineering Technology.

FUTURESOLVERS JUDGES

Sam Ziegler -President of GreenSeam

Sam Ziegler is the President of GreenSeam, LLC. He helped build the nonprofit agribusiness organization from the ground up with Greater Mankato Growth in 2015.

He was drawn into economic development with a vision to leverage the existing strength of agriculture to grow southern Minnesota's rural communities and businesses. Previously Sam spent 10 years representing

MN Soybean Farmers on the international level and provided guidance on new uses projects. He was fortunate to work with buyers and government officials from 20 different countries.



While he only moved a quarter mile from where he grew up, he has seen and experienced the values of his hometown and this state and has shared those values with many connections, across the world. Sam's international travels have taught him just how lucky we are to live in the GreenSeam. We have rich soil, abundant sunshine, and ample annual rainfall – which is envied by most places around the globe.

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FUTURESOLVERS JUDGES

Sam Ziegler -President of GreenSeam

Sam remains rooted in ag as a fourth-generation owner/operator of Ziegler Farms, which was founded in 1918, near Good Thunder, MN. Today the farm and subsequent tillable land consists of soybeans, corn and pigs. He continues to look for technology and innovation to be able to leave his farm to the next generation, even better than he received it. He has planted buffer strips near all watersheds, built terraces on the hillsides and planted cover crops on one-third of his farm. He is a graduate of South Central College in North Mankato, where he studied Ag Business and Production. Most importantly none of this would be possible without his wife Angie they have been married over 20 years, as she is an integral part of all the decisions. They are proud to have two young men; Noah and Alec.



MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, MANKATO

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