

2024 MCIA Annual Meeting—Speakers



Anthony Cortilet

Seed, Weed, Hemp, and Biotechnology Section Manager, Plant Protection Division, Minnesota Department of Agriculture
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Anthony Cortilet is the manager of the Seed, Weed, Hemp, and Biotechnology Section of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Plant Protection Division. Tony has oversight of all four programs, but focuses on Noxious Weed and Industrial Hemp. Recently, he has been very busy helping establish the Office of Cannabis Management.



Conner Danielson

FFA Member and Ridgewater College Student
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A recent graduate of ACGC High School in Grove City, Conner Danielson is currently studying in the Agriculture Power and Equipment Technician program at Ridgewater College in Willmar. He plans to graduate in the spring of 2025.

Conner grew up on a small hobby farm where he raised hay for his cattle and learned the value of hard work. He has a passion for farming; he currently rents 11 acres and plans to expand to 35 acres next year.

He also works for a farmer, helping farm around 1,000 acres. There, he started in the chicken barn, taking care of the chicks. He moved up to helping in the field by rock picking and running the grain cart. As time went on, he was able to prepare the land for planting. He has had opportunities to plant, combine, do tillage and side dressing, drive a semi-truck, and maintain equipment.

Conner has worked at a repair shop as well, learning how to work on equipment of many types and sizes. This experience has helped with his college studies.



Jade Estling

Co-owner, Estling Farms, Inc.
Owner, Northern Agronomy and Precision Services
estlingfarms@hotmail.com

Jade Estling farms with his dad along the south shore of Lake of the Woods. They typically harvest 6–8 different crops a year. Over the years, the farm has produced 20+ species. His family are long-time cooperators with the UMN and industry in the research and development of new products and crop management practices.

Jade is also the owner of Northern Agronomy and Precision Services, working with growers on variable rate fertilizer mapping and application, surface and subsurface drainage, and aerial and drone imagery.

Jade holds a BS degree in agronomy and precision ag from the University of Minnesota Crookston.



Kelsey Henke

Sales and Office Manager, Anderson Seeds of St. Peter

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Kelsey Henke is currently the sales and office manager at Anderson Seeds of St. Peter. Her main role is to oversee all aspects of wholesale and retail seeds sales. She handles the accounting, customer service, and many other aspects of the office work. Before being employed by her family's seed business, Kelsey worked for United Farmers' Cooperative, MCI, and BioDiagnostics.

Kelsey graduated with high honors from South Central College, Mankato, in 2012, earning an associate degree in applied science in agribusiness service and management.

Currently, Kelsey is a county and state 4-H volunteer, the secretary of the Nicollet/Sibley County Corn & Soybean Growers Association, and is a member of the MCI Board of Directors.

Kelsey and her husband, Jeremy, reside in Gaylord, where in her free time she enjoys quilting, embroidering, and spending time with her family and friends.



Betsy Jensen

Instructor, Northland Community and Technical College

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Betsy Jensen is a farm business management instructor at Northland Community and Technical College in East Grand Forks, and farms in Stephen, where her family have Jensen Farms and Jensen Seed Company.

She writes the Taming the Bulls and Bears column for *Prairie Grains* magazine, where she has discussed her struggles with grain marketing.



Roger Wippler

MCI Foundation Seed Services Manager, Retired

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After a 34-year career with the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association, Roger Wippler recently retired from his position as Foundation Seed Services manager. Roger grew up on a hobby farm near Randall, Minnesota. His love for agriculture began when he was old enough to help area farmers by picking rocks, stacking hay bales, and milking cows. He went on to study landscape technology at Brainerd Area Vocational and Technical Institute and agriculture education at the University of Minnesota. After stints as an energy auditor, landscaper, and educator, in 1989 he joined MCI. Roger has been involved in the Association's longstanding efforts to diversify its services, leading the development of the Variety Licensing Program. He has also been something of an ambassador for the Association, helping to maintain and strengthen its relationships with partner organizations such as AOSCA, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the University of Minnesota, and commodity groups. He's also done public outreach for MCI by staffing the Certified Seed exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair. Outside of MCI, he has served as a UMN Extension Master Gardener for 24 years. In his leisure time, Roger enjoys spending time with his family and pursues a variety of outdoor activities, including hunting and fishing.