

# 2021 MCIA Annual Meeting—Speakers

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## **Andy LaVigne**

**President and CEO, American Seed Trade Association**

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Andrew W. LaVigne is currently the president and CEO of the American Seed Trade Association. He joined ASTA in February 2006. Andy has had a 30-year career in government relations, industry representation, public affairs advocacy, and management. His core areas of expertise include agriculture, food policy, and international trade. Prior to joining ASTA, Andy was the executive vice president/CEO of Florida Citrus Mutual, representing citrus growers on issues affecting their business. Previous to joining Florida Citrus Mutual, Andy spent four years as Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association's (FFAA) president and executive director. FFAA is a non-profit, agricultural trade organization representing companies that specialize in crop protection and plant nutrition products. Before his position at FFAA, Andy spent eight years in Washington, D.C. working in the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He served as legislative director for Congressman Charles Canady, Agriculture Committee staffer for Congressman Tom Lewis, and on the staff of USDA Secretary Ed Madigan. Andy is a native of Florida with a BA degree in political science, with a minor in economics, from the University of Florida.



## **Denise Thiede**

**Section Manager, Seed, Noxious Weed, Hemp, and Biotechnology,  
Minnesota Department of Agriculture**

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Denise Thiede is the section manager for the seed, noxious weed, hemp, and biotechnology programs at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). Denise is a Minnesota native with a biology degree from St. Olaf College, a master's in plant biology from University of Illinois, and a Ph.D in ecology and evolutionary biology from Michigan State University. She has had responsibility for the Seed Regulatory Program at MDA since 2017. As the seed control official in Minnesota, she has represented MDA at the Association of American Seed Control Officials meetings and interacts with the USDA Seed Regulatory and Testing Division. Denise is also a professional member of the Society of Commercial Seed Technologists. Her experience includes oversight for testing services for labeling seed as well as genetic testing for hybrid purity, trait purity, and adventitious presence. She is familiar with seed certification, having collaborated with MCIA for many years. Since she started in her role at MDA, Denise has facilitated the development of mobile software for seed inspections and formalized the advisory committee that guides the program. She also collaborates with University of Minnesota Extension agronomists to limit the spread of Palmer amaranth in Minnesota.



## **Brent Turnipseed**

**Assistant Department Head, Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science,  
South Dakota State University and Manager, SDSU Seed Lab**

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Dr. Brent Turnipseed is the assistant department head of Agronomy, Horticulture, and Plant Science at South Dakota State University and manager of the SDSU Seed Lab. Brent joined SDSU in 1991 as an instructor and has served in many roles over the course of nearly 30 years. His instructional responsibilities include teaching four undergraduate courses, coaching a crops judging team, serving on graduate committees, advising undergraduate students, and serving on several departmental committees. Brent is a graduate of Mississippi State University where he earned undergraduate, master's, and Ph.D. degrees in agronomy. His scientific research has been published in numerous peer-reviewed journals. From 2006–2009 Brent served as the president of the Association of Official Seed Analysts.