

# Nebraska Cooperative Council 2026 Director/Manager Workshop



## Leading Through Unpredictable Times

### AGENDA

- 7:15 am CT Registration check-in opens / Hot breakfast buffet begins
- 8:00 am Headwinds and Tailwinds: Fertilizer, Inputs & Biofuels..... Jacqui Fatka
- 9:15 am Balancing Decision Making and Uncertainty .....Trey Malone
- 10:30 am Break
- 10:45 am 2026 Mid-Terms and Washington Outlook .....Duane Simpson
- 12 noon Lunch
- 12:45 pm Navigating Volatility and Opportunity.....Kenneth Zuckerberg
- 2:00 pm Adjourn

### DATE:

Thur, Nov 19, 2026

### LOCATION:

Younes Conference  
Center-North, Kearney

### REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

Nov 3, 2026

*Let your cooperative know  
you'd like to attend so they can  
register you*

### FACILITATORS



**JACQUI FATKA ...** Jacqui Fatka is lead economist for farm supply and biofuels in CoBank's Knowledge Exchange research division. Over the past 20 years, she's honed her expertise in ag policy, biofuels, trade, regulations, ag labor, climate-smart agriculture and farm management.

Prior to joining CoBank, Jacqui wrote thousands of articles as an agriculture journalist and staff editor at Feedstuffs, Farm Futures and most recently at Agri-Pulse. She cultivated her love of ag policy during a college internship with the Iowa Pork Producers Association, working in Sen. Chuck Grassley's Capitol Hill press office. Jacqui has also served as a consultant for Iowa Industries of the Future, an effort to bring together major players in the biorenewables industry.

Jacqui earned a bachelor's degree in journalism and mass communications and a minor in agriculture education from Iowa State University. She grew up on a diversified grain and livestock farm in southwest Iowa and now lives on a small acreage in central Ohio.

**TREY MALONE ...** Trey Malone is an agricultural economist and the Boehlje Endowed Chair for Managerial Economics in Agribusiness at Purdue University. His research helps agribusiness leaders navigate strategic risk and uncertainty, drawing on managerial economics to inform how firms make high-stakes decisions around investment, structure, and competitive positioning. He has published more than 80 research articles in outlets including Food Policy, the Journal of Business Venturing Insights, and the American Journal of Agricultural Economics.



Dr. Malone and the students he has advised have collectively earned dozens of awards and fellowships, including the Emerging Scholar Award from the Southern Agricultural Economics Association, Farm Journal's 40 Under 40, and the

Presidential Award for Excellence in Research and Communication from the Food Distribution Research Society. His research has been funded by agencies such as the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the World Wildlife Fund.

Before joining Purdue, he held faculty positions at the University of Arkansas and Michigan State University. He earned his master's and doctorate degrees from the Department of Agricultural Economics at Oklahoma State University and his bachelor's degree from the Helzberg School of Management at Rockhurst University.

Dr. Malone previously served as Agricultural Economics Fellow for Sustainable Food Systems at the Farm Foundation and as Managing Editor of the Agricultural & Resource Economics Review. He currently serves as North American Managing Editor of the International Food and Agribusiness Management Review and as a Board Member of the International Food & Agribusiness Management Association.

A popular keynote speaker for industry audiences, he frequently leads strategy sessions with many of the largest firms in the agribusiness sector. His insights have been featured in major outlets including the New York Times, TIME, CNBC, CNN, USA Today, Fast Company, and Popular Science.



**DUANE SIMPSON ...** Duane Simpson was named the President and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives (NCFC) in May 2025. As the organization's chief executive, Duane leads NCFC's efforts to advance the interests of America's farmer cooperatives by promoting sound agricultural policy, enhancing rural economic development, and ensuring market access for co-op members. His leadership is focused on modernizing NCFC so it can drive innovation, sustainability, and long-term success across the cooperative landscape.

Duane brings to NCFC a distinguished career in public affairs, agricultural policy, and executive leadership. Prior to joining the Council, he served as Vice President, Head of Agricultural Affairs & License to Operate for North America, Australia, and New Zealand at Bayer Crop Science. He guided policy strategy and external engagement across those countries, enabling regulatory and public acceptance of agricultural technologies while aligning commercial goals with societal expectations. He also was instrumental in the successful integration of Monsanto and Bayer following their historic merger.

He earned his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, graduating magna cum laude from Fort Hays State University. He has completed executive education programs in agribusiness at Harvard Business School and in strategic leadership at the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) in Switzerland.

Duane lives in Falls Church, Virginia, with his wife Lisa and their daughter Hailey, who will begin her studies at Florida State University in the fall.

**KENNETH ZUCKERBERG ...** Ken is Director of Global Research for CHS Market Advisors, LLC, where he leads a team of commodity analysts providing macroeconomic, geopolitical, and sector-specific intelligence across global grains and oilseeds, agronomy—including fertilizer and crop inputs—and biofuels, including ethanol and renewable diesel.



Ken's work focuses on translating complex market, policy, and geopolitical developments into actionable insights for executives, commercial leaders, member-owners, customers, and stakeholders. Each month, he publishes *The Executive Briefing*, a concise, insight-rich commentary applying forensic-style analysis to the forces shaping corporate strategy, commodity markets, and risk management.

Prior to joining CHS in November 2023, Ken served as lead industry analyst and research strategist at CoBank, covering grains, farm supply, biofuels, and agri-food technology. Ken holds a Bachelor of Science in Finance from the University of South Florida and a Master in Law from the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, and is a graduate of Wharton's General Management Program.