

# The Power of Partnership

building an agri-value ecosystem in Saskatchewan

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## Ag-West Bio 2021 Annual Meeting

June 24, 2021 1:00pm - 4:00pm hybrid event (Online and at Boffins Innovation Place)

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**Karen Churchill** (*Moderator*)  
*President and CEO, Ag-West Bio*

Dr. Karen Churchill has served as president and CEO of Ag-West Bio since 2019. Karen's past roles have included: Research Fellow for the South Australian Research and Development Institute in Australia; Product Development Scientist at M&M Mars in the UK; Global Quality Projects Manager for Cargill Malt; and Director of Research and Market Support for Cereals Canada. Karen co-led the National Wheat Research Strategy with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, working to address regulatory issues affecting agricultural trade. Her current advisory roles include the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture, and the North American Agricultural Advisory Network.

She is also a director on the boards of the Agri-Food Innovation Council and Protein Industries Canada. Karen earned a Bachelor and Master of Science degrees in Agriculture from the University of Saskatchewan and a PhD in Food Science and Nutrition from the University of Minnesota.

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## SPEAKERS

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**Jodi Banks** *Deputy Minister, Trade and Export Development*

Jodi Banks is the Deputy Minister of Trade and Export Development.

Jodi has over 27 years of experience in the public sector. She has worked at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture; Intergovernmental Affairs, Saskatchewan Executive Council; and the International Engagement Division of the Ministry of Trade and Export Development.

Jodi has a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from the University of Regina and a Master of Public Administration from the Johnson-Shoyama School of Public Policy, University of Regina.





**Chris Barker**

*Director of Research and Business Development, P2IRC*

Chris Barker is the Director of Research and Business Development for the Plant Phenotyping and Imaging Research Centre (P2IRC). Following the completion of a M.Sc. in Applied Microbiology from the University of Saskatchewan in 1995, Chris led project management activities with local start-up companies, BioSTAR and MetaMorphix.

Prior to joining the Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS) Chris was the Chief Scientific Officer for Genome Prairie where he was responsible for the organization's strategic research and partnership agenda. In this role, Chris provided leadership, oversight and coordinate the development and management of Genome Prairie's collaborative research initiatives.



**Deanna Herman**

*Academic Chair, Sciences, Natural Resources & Co-op Education,  
Saskatchewan Polytechnic*

Deanna Herman has been with Saskatchewan Polytechnic for 21 years in a number of roles, and is currently Academic Chair of Sciences, Natural Resources and Co-operative Education, overseeing curriculum and research in a number of program areas, including the Agriculture and Food Production diploma, to be launched in Moose Jaw in Fall 2022.

She holds a Master's degree in Communications and Technology from the University of Alberta



**Volker Gerdts**

*Director and CEO, Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO)*

Dr. Volker Gerdts is the Director and CEO of the Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization (VIDO), located at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon, Canada. He previously served as Associate Director of Research of VIDO from 2007 until 2018.

Gerdts is also a Professor for Veterinary Immunology in the Department of Veterinary Microbiology at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. He received a DVM in 1994 from Hanover Veterinary School and a German PhD equivalent from the Federal Research Institute for Animal Health, Island of Riems and Hanover Veterinary School, Germany in 1997. He has served in various administrative roles and served on various editorial boards and national and international scientific review panels.



**Cameron Kupper**

*Vice President, Business Development, Bioriginal Food & Science Corp.*

Since joining Bioriginal in 1994, Cameron has had the opportunity to work in various facets of their business including Operations, New Product Innovation and Sales & Marketing to help our business grow into what it is today. Today as Vice President, Business Development, he is responsible for opening new markets, launching new product categories while providing technical support for their Sales & Marketing team.

Connecting with people to develop strong relationships is foundational to everything Cameron does both professionally and personally. Outside of work, Cameron enjoys spending time with family, enjoy travelling, playing sports and being actively involved in volunteer engagements and mentoring.



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## PANELISTS

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**Shannon Hood-Niefer**

*Vice President, Innovation and Technology, Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc (Food Centre)*

Dr. Shannon Hood-Niefer has worked in the food industry for over 20 years gaining experience in developing new food products, assisting entrepreneurs start food companies, and implementing innovative solutions in food companies.

As the Vice President of Innovation and Technology, her primary role is to strategize technologies to be adopted and to help food companies work with non-traditional ingredients and innovative solutions. She is passionate about agriculture and the role food plays in health, community, family, and entertainment.



**Jay Robinson**

*Director of Agri-Food Technology, Ag-West Bio*

Jay Robinson is Director of Agri-Food Technology for Ag-West Bio. He also owns and manages Peacock Industries, a 35-year-old crop protection manufacturer with markets across the Americas. Jay founded two companies: BioFume Technologies and MustGrow Biologics.

Jay was CEO of AgPharm Consulting, which provided investment, consulting and guidance to start-up, growth stage and multinational companies. He invested in and helped to secure capital and spearhead strategy and business development for an RNAi herbicide technology company called Stem Shock, leading to the company's acquisition by Terramera. Jay also served as Commercial Director for Lallemand; he was Director of Global Strategy and Business Development for Pathway Biologic; and a member of the board and a special advisor to Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre, Future Farms Facilitator, and Pathway BioLogic.





**Brent Sukenik**

*President and Chief Executive Officer, Innovation Place*

Brent Sukenik was appointed Acting President and Chief Executive Officer for Innovation Place in October 2020, first joining the company in 2002 as the Corporate Controller and in October 2014 appointed Chief Financial Officer.

Prior to joining Innovation Place, Brent worked for PricewaterhouseCoopers as an Audit Manager. Brent holds a Bachelor of Administration designation from the University of Regina and is a Chartered Professional Accountant (CPA, CA).



**Steven Webb**

*Executive Director and CEO, Global Institute for Food Security (GIFS)*

Steven joined the Global Institute for Food Security as Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer in 2019, following a 23-year career with Corteva Agriscience (formerly Dow AgroSciences) in Indianapolis, Indiana, United States. As Research and Development Director of External Technology at Corteva, he led many research collaborations with private sector companies, research institutes and universities around the globe. He also developed and deployed Corteva’s external innovation partnership process for driving new products and technologies to accelerate innovation across the seed, crop protection and digital platforms.

He earned a PhD in immunochemistry (1998), a Master’s degree in biochemistry (1992) and a Bachelor of Science degree in microbiology (1990) from the University of Guelph, Ontario.

