

2022 Iowa Farmers Market Association Speaker Bios & Contact Information

Steve Ahrens has served as the Executive Officer for Davenport's Riverfront Improvement Commission since 2006. The Riverfront Improvement Commission is a City Council-appointed, eleven-member Commission, which has provided stewardship of Davenport's nine miles of publicly owned riverfront since 1911. Prior to 2006, Steve served on the Davenport City Council from 2001-2005, serving as the Chairman of the Finance Committee. He also served as the Alumni Director for St. Ambrose University from 1999-2006. Steve received his Bachelor of Arts degree – with a Public Administration and Political Science double major – from St. Ambrose University in 1997. In 2007, Steve received his Master of Business Administration. Steve is active in the community and shares great enthusiasm for Davenport's future.

Lorrie Beaman is in her 5th year as Executive Director of the Freight House Farmers Market in Davenport. Lorrie has a demonstrated history of working in the leisure industry, and sales. Skilled in Team Building, Nonprofit Management, Event planning, and Community Partnering. Strong business development professional with a Bachelor's degree focused in Recreation Administration from Texas State University.

Donna Brahms serves as the President of the Iowa Farmers Market Association. She has been an active board member for several years. Donna and her family own and operate 3 Bee Farms – an orchard, fruit, and vegetable farm with onsite farmstand, as well as an agritourism destination. The business originated in 1993 with honey being the main product along with beeswax by-products. In 2009, Mike and Donna purchased the Glen Robin Orchard. Since the purchase, the orchard has become a place for family gatherings, agri-tourism and education, fall fun including the pumpkin patch and corn maze, and a hot spot for local produce.

Josh Dansdill is the Business Development Projects Director for Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation & Development. He has completed regional food systems analysis and planning, provided direct marketing and planning assistance to dozens of farmers markets and hundreds of vendors, and helped facilitate regional and statewide local food system planning, discussion, and project implementation. He has successfully written and received multiple federal, state, local, and private grant projects while at the RC&D. He currently serves on the Iowa Farmers Market Association Board and is serving as Board Chair for the Decorah Farmers Market for the past 7 years, Dansdill has a B.A. in Business Management from Luther College.

Kelly Foss is the Director of The Downtown Farmers' Market in Des Moines. Holding this position since 2000, she is passionate about continuing to advance the development of The Market while offering encouragement and training to hundreds of local entrepreneurs, growers and artisans. As she grows Des Moines' Downtown Farmers' Market Kelly has made it a priority to be an advocate for all farmers markets. She has been recognized for her work connecting communities to the health, social and economic benefits of farmers markets and related causes, sharing her experience by leading educational workshops, speaking at conferences and networking with advocates across the country and by serving on the Board of Directors with the Iowa Farmers Market Association, Farmers Market Coalition, Prairie Rivers of Iowa and the Iowa Farm-to-Table Task Force.

Guest speaker **Anna Hankins** is the co-owner and operator of Over the Moon Farm and Flowers LLC, alongside her partner Shae Pesek. From June through September, the farm grows specialty cut flowers for the Cedar Rapids Farmers' Market and an over 120-member flower bouquet subscription. Over the Moon delivers flower bouquets weekly to businesses and individuals in Buchanan, Delaware, Jones, Johnson, and Linn County. Additionally, Over the Moon raises meat chickens, turkeys, and pork that they sell directly to consumers through a robust Meat CSA (monthly subscription box). Anna is passionate about having a strong communications and marketing strategy of her own, as well as sharing tips and tricks with others. She does contract social media consulting and education and most recently led a series of trainings through the Iowa Valley RC&D. Besides her own farming endeavors, Anna is an active member of Practical Farmers of Iowa, the National Young Farmers Coalition, and the American Pastured Poultry Association. Prior to co-founding her own direct-to-consumer farm business, Anna graduated from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a Bachelor of Science in Farming and Food Systems from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture.

Aryn McLaren is the Director of Healthy Food Incentives at the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative where she oversees the design, implementation, and evaluation of Double Up Food Bucks and Produce Prescription programs. In 2016, Aryn helped launch the statewide SNAP-incentive program, Double Up Food Bucks, that has since expanded to over 100 sites including retail grocery stores, farmers markets, farm stands and mobile markets. Double Up Food Bucks helps low-income Iowans eat more fresh fruits and vegetables while supporting family farmers and growing local economies. In 2021, utilizing a food is medicine model, Aryn helped develop the Healthiest State Initiative's fruit and vegetable incentive program to include a delivery model focused on primary care intervention. In partnership with Broadlawns Medical Center, a year-round produce prescription program was launched shifting the focus of chronic health condition treatment from medicine to food. Engaging two of the largest retail grocery chains in Iowa; Hy-Vee and Fareway grocery stores, program participants can easily access fresh fruits and vegetables year-round. Aryn received her undergraduate degree in biology from Grandview University and her Master of Public Health degree at Des Moines University.

Mike Naig grew up helping his dad and uncle run their crop and livestock farm in the northwest corner of the state near Cylinder, Iowa. He is still involved in the operation today. Mike graduated from Buena Vista University in Storm Lake with degrees in biology and political science. He and his wife, Jaime, have three boys, Mitch, Zach and Joe. Before becoming Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, Mike had been active in agribusiness for over 13 years, serving in public policy roles for state and national trade associations and in the private industry. Mike joined the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship as the Iowa Deputy Secretary of Agriculture under Bill Northey in 2013. His experience working alongside Secretary Northey showed him the importance of being accessible to Iowans to better represent their interests and be responsive to their needs. In a state where agriculture is the leading economic driver, Mike is committed to leading efforts to protect consumers, expanding economic opportunities for Iowans, continuing to build partnerships on land stewardship and water quality initiatives, and advocating in Iowa and around the globe on behalf of the hard-working men and women who keep us fed and fueled.

Paul Ovrom is the IDALS Ag Diversification & Market Reporting Bureau Chief and serves as the State Horticulturist. Paul has worked for the Department since 2007. Paul has managed the FDA/FSMA Produce Safety Rule Grant Program, the Iowa Sensitive Crops Registry, and the Iowa Farmers Market Nutrition Program. He co-manages the Capitol Complex Farmers Market. Paul also manages a seasonal landscaping company. He is a past president of the National Association of Farmers Market Nutrition Programs and serves on several horticulture-related state, regional, and national boards. Paul has two undergraduate degrees (botany and horticulture) and a Master's in forestry, all from ISU.

Kurt Rueber is a Senior Environmental Specialist with the Food and Consumer Safety Bureau which is a part of the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals. One of Kurt's tasks at his job is working with markets and vendors on understanding Iowa's food and consumer safety laws. Kurt has been a great asset to the state's specialty crop growers and farmers market managers, answering a myriad of "licensing" questions. Kurt has been attending the IFMA Workshop for a few years now and welcomes questions.

Bob Shepherd has been a farmers' market and diversified farming advocate most of his adult life. Bob served as a founding member of the Iowa Farmers Market Association and is currently serving on a second "round" as a member on the IFMA board. He has served as the Washington Farmers Market manager since 1988 and was instrumental in moving the market to its current central downtown location. The market has grown over the years and now has between 40 and 50 vendors. Bob has used much of his travel time to explore farmers markets in other parts of the country, and has enjoyed bringing home insights to share with his market vendors and advisory board - as well as with other managers in Iowa.

Tenesha Stubblefield is the Consumable Hemp Program Lead at the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, Food and Consumer Safety Bureau. Tenesha has worked for DIA for over 5 years, starting as a retail food safety specialist in Southwest Iowa. After her first year, Tenesha began training in the manufactured foods program, and is one of 2 inspectors in Iowa trained to conduct full scope preventive controls inspections. In February of 2021, Tenesha accepted the role of consumable hemp program lead, and continues to work with manufacturers, retailers, inspectors, and the public, to educate on Iowa's Consumable Hemp program.

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