

2018 Iowa Farmers Market Association Speaker Bios

Aubrey Alvarez is the co-founder and Executive Director of Eat Greater Des Moines where she works to help build connections throughout the food system ensuring everyone has access to quality food. Partnerships and connections are key to the work of Eat Greater Des Moines. Aubrey is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa (Bachelor of Arts in health promotion) and Drake University (Masters in public administration). She is also a member of the leadership team for the Iowa Hunger Coalition, the Iowa Food Waste Stakeholder group, Partnership for a Hunger Free Polk County, Hunger Free Dallas County Initiative, and the Regional Food System Working Group Steering Committee. She is a 2015 graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute.

Ivan Hankins was raised on a farm in Mahaska Co., and attended school in Oskaloosa and Twin Cedars, graduating from Oskey High in 1976. His search for higher education was put aside by his desire for adventure. So in 1977 Ivan joined the United States Marine Corps. After his Honorable Discharge, six years later, Ivan returned to Iowa, was hired by the Dept. in 1986 for the Weights and Measures Bureau. His duties consisted of LP (propane) meter, and scale inspections, a field he's still involved with to this day. If asked, he'll say he has fortunate to have knowledge in all areas of Weights and Measures. He's attended schools and training offered by the National Institute of Standards and Technology, (NIST) and the National Conference on Weights & Measures (NCWM). After serving a time as Bureau Chief, Ivan accepted the position as Technical Coordinator/Program Planner for the Bureau. He currently serves as National Chair of the Specifications and Tolerance committee, and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors with the NCWM. Ivan understands his duty to the people of the State of Iowa and believes in the Weights and Measures motto "That Equity May Prevail". At present Ivan and his wife LaDawn live in Waterloo.

Rachael Kinnick is the Executive Director of the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce, the organization which oversees the management and operations of the Grinnell Farmers Market. She has been with the organization for over 5 years and has launched a number of programs during her tenure to help grow and promote the Grinnell Farmers Market and the importance of supporting local farmers.

Mike Koenecke has been the manager of the Lakes Area Farmers Market since 2000. His wife, Jan, has been the secretary/treasurer since 2004. Their market is located in Spirit Lake in the heart of the Iowa great lakes region. In any given year the market has between 30 and 40 vendors. The Koeneckes have also been vendors since 1996 and sell produce, cut flowers, and some crafts including quilted postcards. They also manage a Facebook page for the market.

Aryn McLaren is the Director of Programs at the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative where she oversees design, implementation, and evaluation of the initiative's activities and programs. In 2016, Aryn helped launch the statewide program, Double Up Food Bucks. Double Up helps low-income Iowans eat more fresh fruits and vegetables while supporting family farmers and growing local economies. Aryn received her undergraduate degree in biology from Grandview University and her masters of public health degree at Des Moines University.

Mike Naig grew up on a farm near Cylinder, Iowa in the Northwest corner of the state. He is a graduate of Buena Vista University in Storm Lake with degrees in biology and political science. Naig is married to his wife Jamie and together they have three boys. Naig has spent his entire career working in agriculture, having served in public policy roles for state and national agribusiness trade associations as well as in private industry. As Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Naig assists in management responsibilities for the Department, focused on the areas of Policy, Budget and Personnel. He also supports the Department's efforts to be accessible for Iowans by traveling regularly to represent Secretary Northey at meetings and events across the state.

Paul Ovrom is the State Horticulturist for the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship. He has worked for the Department for ten years and in his current position for the last three years. Among other duties, Paul is “Principal Investigator” for the State’s Produce Safety Rule Grant Program. Paul has two undergraduate degrees from ISU (botany and hort) as well as a Masters in forestry. Paul lives in the Des Moines metro area with his wife, Stephenie, and a son and daughter. He and his son do part time seasonal landscaping in Des Moines and his daughter makes him join her in running half marathons.

Lojean Petersen has been the Ames Main Street Farmers' Market Manager for six years. Before managing the Market she and her husband farmed in Northwest Iowa where they were vendors at the Old Market in Omaha. They no longer farm but have a passion for supporting our local farmers and building up the Farmers' Market movement.

Kurt Rueber is an 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 attending the IFMA Workshop for a few years now and welcomes lots of questions.

Ted Strait is the manager of the Maquoketa Farmers Market. He is part of an all-volunteer group whose mission became to create a new farmers market to serve their community. This required involvement with *every* aspect of starting a market with nothing more than an idea. Research, education of state and federal laws and rules, fundraising, procurement of fixed assets, transportation and storage of those assets, site selection, day and time selection, publicity, vendor solicitation and selection, writing rules and regulations, writing a market manager job description, and much, much, much more. This year will mark Ted’s fifth year as the official market manager, mostly because no-one else will raise their hand to volunteer to be the boss.

Mike White is a Viticulture Specialist for Iowa State University Extension & Outreach and is a team member of the ISU Midwest Grape & Wine Industry Institute. Mike provides technical assistance and educational training to vineyards and wineries in Iowa and neighboring states and has been working with the cold climate wine-grape industry since 2000. Mike received an A.S. degree from Iowa Western Community College in Council Bluffs, IA and holds a B.S. and M.A. from Iowa State University. He is a Certified Crop Advisor and Certified Professional Agronomist through the Agronomy Society of America and a Certified Specialist of Wine through the Society of Wine Education.

**2018 Iowa Farmers Market Association Workshop
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