

# GLOBAL DAIRY 24 OUTLOOK CONFERENCE

*Meet our Speakers*



## **ALYSSA BADGER**

Vice President, Global Operations & Insights, **HighGround Dairy**

Alyssa started her career at the Board of Trade managing a firm that had a primary focus in grains. The nucleus of her position centered around order entry and research development. From there, Alyssa's enthusiasm for commodities grew which led her to move to West Texas and assist in hedging for the largest originator of U.S. cotton to textile mills worldwide. Alyssa has been back in Chicago for more than seven years with HighGround as the Director of Global Operations, overseeing the market intelligence and advisory business units. Alyssa's risk management background, as well as working closely with New Zealand and other international dairy companies, provides HighGround a unique value-add perspective.

[Find Alyssa on LinkedIn](#)



## **BETTY BERNING**

Contributing Dairy Economist, **HighGround Dairy**

Betty Berning is HighGround's Contributing Dairy Economist, providing commentary on the domestic dairy markets. Betty has extensive experience in the agricultural supply chain and has held a wide variety of roles including Senior Dairy Buyer at General Mills, Loan Officer at Farm Credit, Extension Educator at the University of Minnesota, and has worked on her family's dairy farm in Central Minnesota. These experiences have enabled her to understand both the challenges farmers face as well as the decision-making processes of food companies and consumers. Her passion is writing, teaching, and presenting on dairy to interested audiences everywhere. In her free time, she repairs things that her three sons break, hones her sandwich making skills, and regularly visits her family's dairy where her sons' energy is put to good use. Occasionally she catches an episode of the Golden Girls on her couch with a glass of pinot noir.

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## **CURTIS BOSMA**

Vice President, Producer Services, **HighGround Dairy**

Curtis was raised on his family's dairy farm in Tipton, California. In 2007, his family started another dairy farm in Northwest Illinois. Having these two farms in his family has helped Curtis develop an understanding of the economic differences between California and the Midwest for dairy inputs, outputs, and the milk marketing orders. Prior to joining HighGround, Curtis interned at a dairy brokerage firm where he assisted traders on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. He graduated from Calvin College earning Bachelor of Science degrees in Finance and Economics.

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## STU DAVISON

Senior Manager, Global Market Insights, **HighGround Dairy**

A true Kiwi dairy farmer at heart, Stu hails from a long line of dairy farmers in the Waikato region of New Zealand, often regarded as the heart and soul of the country's dairy industry. His upbringing in a family deeply entrenched in successful farming ventures instilled in him a strong foundation of business acumen and a keen awareness of the global dairy market's importance. Stu's journey into the world of agriculture and finance began with his studies at Lincoln University. Afterward, he dedicated eight years to hands-on dairy farming, gaining invaluable insights into the practical aspects of the industry. This combination of education and real-world experience uniquely positions him to understand the intricacies of dairy farming, from both financial and operational perspectives.

Prior to joining HighGround Dairy, Stu spent three years leading the NZX Dairy Insights team, where he made significant contributions to the dairy industry's knowledge base. His expertise in data analysis and market trends garnered him a reputation as a trusted authority. Stu's passion for New Zealand agriculture, combined with his financial market savvy, allows him to view the global dairy market from a privileged vantage point. His perspective is a valuable asset as he crafts unique insights for one of the world's most influential dairy exporting markets, as well as across all key international dairy regions.

[Find Stu on LinkedIn](#)



## ALEX GAMBONINI

Senior Manager, Advisory Services, **HighGround Dairy**

Originally hailing from Petaluma, California, Alex was raised on her family's dairy farm, fostering her love for the industry from a young age. She pursued her education at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, where she earned her bachelor's degree in Dairy Science and Agricultural Business. Later, she furthered her studies at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, obtaining a master's degree in Applied Economics. During her time in Minnesota, Alex conducted research focused on dairy farm profitability, showcasing her dedication to understanding the economic aspects of the industry.

Following her academic pursuits, Alex gained valuable experience working for the USDA within the California Federal Milk Marketing Order for three years. This experience provided her with unique insights into the intricacies of milk pricing and pooling, enhancing her understanding of dairy market dynamics.

[Find Alex on LinkedIn](#)



## ERIC MEYER

President & Founder, **HighGround Dairy**

Eric Meyer is a seasoned dairy risk management and sourcing professional with more than 20 years of experience including tenure at Downes-O'Neill LLC, Sara Lee Corporation, FCStone & Winona Foods before founding HighGround Dairy in 2012.

Eric's extensive hedging and procurement experience for both small boutique firms and large multi-national corporations gives him a unique insight into the dairy market. He has a strong reputation of creating insightful educational programs and content, specifically HighGround's comprehensive dairy market intelligence, industry-leading analysis that is read by subscribers across the globe.

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## TOM BAILEY

Executive Director: Consumer Foods & Foodservice, **Rabbobank**

Born in the US and raised in New Zealand, with ties close to his family farm in Illinois, Tom has spent his life close to the food industry. His journey to Rabobank's senior consumer foods analyst has taken him across the globe, from roles in the dairy industry of New Zealand to investment planning in Japan and China, and more recently the fast-paced consumer food market of the US.

Today, Tom advises Rabobank and their clients on the evolving consumer landscape and its impact on the food industry. With a finger on the pulse of CPI, food innovation, food trends, investments, and consumer well-being, he has established himself as a thought leader, with regular publications, media appearances, and a regular on the stages of major food industry events

[Find Tom on LinkedIn](#)



## AMANDA DUROW

Vice President, **CoBank**

Amanda Durow is Vice President in the Corporate Agribusiness Banking Group at CoBank, one of the largest private providers of credit to the U.S. rural economy. She is focused on lending to dairy processing and agribusiness companies. Amanda serves as chair of CoBank's dairy processing and production center of excellence. She also was recently appointed to the U.S. Dairy Export Council operating committee in January 2024. Amanda has a BS in animal science with dairy industry emphasis and MBA in finance from the University of Minnesota. Amanda and her family are fifth generation dairy and crop farmers in Minnesota.

[Find Amanda on LinkedIn](#)



## JEFF GOODWIN

President & Chief Executive Officer, **Pivotal Ingredients**

Jeff is the president and CEO of Pivotal Ingredients, a company that sources and produces dairy ingredients to enhance the performance of nutritional products. Prior to founding Pivotal, Jeff served as the Chief Commercial Officer at Westland Milk Products, the second largest dairy cooperative in New Zealand. He has also held significant roles such as VP of Global Operations at James Farrell and Company, Regional Director at Glanbia Nutritionals, and General Manager at Olam International. Jeff is a graduate of Griffith University and currently resides in Australia with his wife and three boys. Some of Jeff's recent accomplishments include commissioning the first commercial venture for grass-fed A2 milk in New Zealand and developing the New Zealand grass-fed standard. He has successfully launched new product lines for Mead Johnson and Wyeth, as well as providing support to Friesland Campina on various international projects. Jeff also introduced cream cheese to the Chinese market for the Australian dairy leader Bega. He has led numerous global ingredients launches, established partnerships worldwide, and possesses deep experience in hedging and risk management, global logistics, as well as dry and wet blending processes.

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## JING HAGERT

Vice President, Human Nutrition Ingredient Sales, **Milk Specialties Global**

Jing Hagert joined Milk Specialties Global in 2008 in an international sales support role and progressively worked her way to VP of Human Nutrition Ingredient Sales. Jing has been instrumental in MSG's growth, especially overseas with exports going to 36 countries on six continents. Along with business development, she also focuses on growing MSG's lactoferrin and extruded protein business. Born in China and raised in Minnesota, Jing graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in applied economics and a minor in marketing.

[Find Jing on LinkedIn](#)

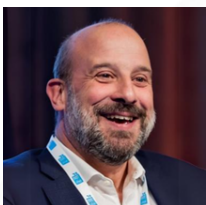


## DANNY KOOLHAAS

Director of Ag Services, Senior Vice President, **Wells Fargo**

Danny Koolhaas is the Director of Ag Services for Wells Fargo Bank and a Senior Vice President. He has served in this role since 2016. Danny leads a National Team of Advisors who perform collateral valuations, inspections, and cash flow budgets and a centralized team that monitors borrowing bases and creates trend reports for our Food, Beverage, and Hospitality Team. Prior to his time with Wells Fargo Bank, Danny was a Chief Financial Officer for a large dairy producer and heifer raiser in the Central Valley of California. Danny holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting and Finance from Dordt University in Sioux Center, Iowa.

[Find Danny on LinkedIn](#)



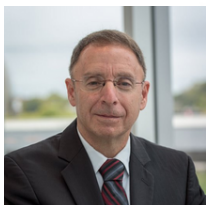
## CHRISTOPHE LAFOUGÈRE

Managing Director, **GIRA Group**

Christophe Lafougère has worked for the food & drink market consultancy and research firm GIRA for more than 30 years. He is now the CEO of the group. He specializes in strategic consultancy to many major dairy companies.

He also supervises all Gira's consulting and research activities in the dairy sector among which the annual Gira Dairy Club which he creates 13 years ago. The Gira Dairy Club whose members include a considerable number of the world's top dairies (including some US/Canadian dairy companies) is a unique qualitative and quantitative forecasting base for all the main dairy/ingredients production, consumption and trading countries of the world, and it covers all the issues influencing milk production & dairy commodities in the short & medium term. 2023 results have just been published end of September.

[Find Christophe on LinkedIn](#)



## DREW LERNER

Senior Ag Meteorologist, Founder & President, **World Weather Inc.**

Drew Lerner is President and Senior Agricultural Meteorologist of World Weather, Inc. Drew has been forecasting international weather for 43 years. He began his meteorology career in 1978 as he participated in an international effort to collect data and improve weather forecasting for the Asian Monsoon. Since then, Drew has been supporting the agricultural industry by providing detailed short and long range weather predictions for each major crop area in the world. His daily assessments of crop and weather expectations supports commodity market trade and helps many companies make better agricultural business decisions. Drew started World Weather, Inc. in 2001 after leading Global Weather Services in the late 1990s. World Weather, Inc. is based in the Kansas City area and supports an expanding group of clientele residing in North and South America, India, Europe, Africa and Australia.

[Find Drew on LinkedIn](#)



## NICK MORGAN

Managing Director, **Nutrition Integrated**

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Nick Morgan, Managing Director of Nutrition Integrated, works closely with businesses across the sport, active and lifestyle nutrition sectors. He is passionate about using data alongside an in-depth understanding of science, the consumer and the market to underpin business strategy and drive innovation. Nick began his career as an exercise physiologist in elite sport before working at GSK and subsequently establishing his own business in 2010.

[Find Nick on LinkedIn](#)



## NANCY QIAN

James J. O'Connor Professor of Economics, **Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University**

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Nancy Qian is the James J. O'Connor Professor of Economics at Kellogg. She co-directs the Global Poverty Research lab, and founded China Econ Lab, an independent international organization that promotes rigorous research about the Chinese Economy. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from MIT and was a Harvard Academy post-doctoral fellow at Harvard University's Weatherhead Center of Government. She was an Associate Professor at the Dept. of Economics at Yale University prior to Kellogg. Nancy has native fluency in Chinese (Mandarin, Shanghainese) and English, working ability of Japanese, Spanish and rudimentary Russian.

Professor Qian's research investigates the drivers of long-run economic, culture and political evolution. She has studied the causes and consequences of formal institutions, such as elections, and cultural norms, and gender preference and racial identity. She uses theory-driven frameworks and empirical evidence to resolve historical puzzles, such as the causes of the Great Chinese and Soviet Famines, or the presence of local democracy within autocratic regimes. Her work spans many current and historical contexts such as China, the United States, former Eastern Bloc countries and sub-Saharan Africa... [Click here to read more.](#)

[Find Nancy on LinkedIn](#)



## BILL WAVRIN, DVM

Owner, **Sunny Dene Ranch LLC**

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A veterinarian and dairy farmer, Bill operates in partnership with his brother Sid on a dairy and crop farm in Eastern Washington, a crop farm in Central Oregon, and a dairy farm with farmstead cheese processing operation in Western Washington. Along with dairy farming, Bill is still a practicing veterinarian and consults on dairies in Washington State, Idaho and Texas. Bill has served on boards including church, school, bank, professional veterinary organizations, and a large dairy processor.

Bill grew up on the family fishing resort in Northern Minnesota. He came to the Pacific Northwest through an internship while attending The University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine. After graduating, Bill moved to Southern California for his first job in private dairy practice. He came back to a Western Washington practice in 1989 and in 1990, he and his wife Laurie made the move to Eastern Washington where they started a large animal veterinary practice, the dairy farm, and an animal pharmaceutical business. The Ferndale Farmstead cheese operation is in its eighth year of processing and marketing upscale cheese.

[Find Bill on LinkedIn](#)



# CHRISTINA ZUIDERVEEN

Managing Partner, **Black Soil Dairy, LLC**

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Christina grew up on dairy farms in both California and Michigan. She moved to Iowa in 2012 with her husband, Nate. They now have 3 children. They milk 2,700 cows at their home place in Iowa but also work with her brother in SD. At all 3 sites, they milk about 15,000 cows. Christina has served on the Central Plains Dairy Association board and currently serves on the Iowa State Dairy Association Board and school board of their Christian School. In 2021 Christina also had the privilege of testifying before the Senate Ag Subcommittee on milk price reform as well as the USDA hearing in 2023.