

GLOBAL DAIRY 25 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 ten 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.

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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.

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ERIC MEYER

President & Founder, **HighGround Dairy**

Eric Meyer is a seasoned dairy risk management and sourcing professional with more than 22 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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BILLY SCHMITZ

Trade Analyst, **Five Rivers Cattle Feeding**

Billy Schmitz, a Colorado native, grew up in Longmont, CO, and earned a B.S. in Agricultural Business with a minor in Range Management from the University of Wyoming in 1997, where he played football under Coach Joe Tiller. He later completed an M.S. in Ag Economics at Colorado State University in 1999, focusing on marketing and agricultural pricing under Dr. Stephen Koontz. Billy began his career at Ulrich Farms, where he worked in cattle production, feeding, and farming. In 2005, he joined CattleFax as an analyst, and in 2006, he became Assistant General Manager with Five Rivers Cattle Feeding, working at both Kuner and Gilcrest Feedyards. In 2010, he transitioned to his current role as Head Analyst/Risk Manager for Five Rivers, where he has made significant contributions to the industry.

Billy has served on various state and national marketing committees and is a board member of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. He also teaches a marketing and trading class at CSU and supports the Beef Sticks for Backpacks program. Billy lives in Johnstown, CO, with his wife, Mollie, and their two children, Carlie and Bo. In his free time, he enjoys reading, skiing, golfing, and hunting.

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ŁUKASZ WYRZYKOWSKI

Managing Director, **IFCN Dairy Research Network**

Łukasz Wyrzykowski serves as the Managing Director of IFCN AG – The Dairy Research Network, headquartered in Kiel, Germany. With an impressive tenure exceeding 13 years in the dairy industry, Mr. Wyrzykowski has adeptly navigated various roles within IFCN, notably as the Director of Dairy Sector Analysis and as a Dairy Market Analyst. His extensive expertise encompasses a comprehensive understanding of dairy market development patterns, value chain analysis, and the intricate dynamics of milk and feed price production behaviors. Furthermore, he possesses a profound capability in both short- and long-term forecasting, which has proven invaluable in guiding strategic decision-making within the sector.

He has successfully directed international teams, managed diverse projects, and provided consultation services to prominent companies throughout the global dairy supply chain. Under his guidance, IFCN continues to uphold its commitment to excellence, fostering informed decision-making and sustainable growth within the dairy sector on a global scale.

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