



2025

AAPCO SPRING CONFERENCE

*SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
IN ORDER OF PRESENTATION*

MONDAY
March 3, 2025

GRETCHEN PALUCH

Dr. Gretchen Paluch currently serves as the Pesticide Bureau Chief for the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship. In this role she is responsible for directing Iowa's pesticide regulatory programs, which include the distribution and use of pesticides in a manner to safeguard human health, plants, crops, food, feed, water and other environmental resources of Iowa's citizens, farmers, and industry workers. Iowa's pesticide regulatory programs include retail dealer licensing, commercial and private applicator certification testing and licensing, pesticide product registration, use/misuse complaints, worker protection, and compliance assistance/outreach. Gretchen earned her PhDs in Toxicology, Entomology, and Statistics from Iowa State University and currently serves as President-Elect for the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials.

KIMBERLY NESCI

Kimberly Nesci serves as the Director of the Office of Pest Management Policy (OPMP). In this role, she leads the coordination of USDA policy on pesticides, biotechnology, integrated pest management, and other related pest management topics. Ms. Nesci joined USDA in January 2022 and brings over 25 years of experience in pesticide regulation to OPMP. Prior to joining USDA, Ms. Nesci served in multiple leadership positions in EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP). Ms. Nesci holds a Master's degree in Entomology from the University of Maryland.

STEVEN DWINELL

Steven Dwinell, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets, was appointed Director of the Division of Public Health and Agricultural Management at the end of September 2022. Steve previously worked for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), beginning in 1992 in the pesticide regulatory program. Over his career, Steve has worked as an Agricultural Extension Agent, as an environmental consultant, in the pest control industry, and led several agricultural, structural pest control, and vector control regulatory programs.

Steve has a Masters in Agricultural Entomology from the University of Florida and is a Board-Certified Entomologist. He is a past president of Association of Structural Pest Control Officials (ASPCRO) and has served as co-chair of the Managed Pollinator Protection Plan Committee and Endangered Species Act Workgroup for the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO). He is currently chair of the State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG), the national committee coordinating state lead pesticide agencies and the US EPA.

Steve lives in Orwell, Vermont in a colonial built in 1800 with his wife and five rescue dogs and one cat. Their house is on East Creek, and they enjoy daily walks to watch the cascades and the changing seasons.

AMY BROWN

Amy Brown is the Chief of the Bureau of Scientific Evaluation and Technical Assistance, Agricultural Environmental Services (AES) Division of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. As Chief of the Bureau, she oversees the worker protection, pesticide registration review, scientific

evaluation, and entomology and pest control sections. She has worked for the department for 26 years. Prior to working in the AES division, she worked in the Food Safety division, as the technical program manager for the State Pesticide Residue Regulatory Program. She holds a B.S. in Chemistry from Florida State University. She is also a Certified Public Manager. She is the Chair of the Florida Coordination Council on Mosquito Control and is also Chair of the Association of American Pesticide Control Officials (AAPCO)'s, State FIFRA Issues Research and Evaluation Group (SFIREG)-Pesticide Operations and Management (POM) Working Committee.

HOTZE WIJNJA

Hotze Wijnja joined the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources in 2008 as an Environmental Chemist. He serves as one of the technical specialists for the agency to support various programs, including pesticides and plant nutrient management. Within the Division of Crop & Pest Services, he is responsible for reviews and assessments of impacts to human health and the environment in support of the pesticide regulation in Massachusetts. Since 2010, he served several terms on the SFIREG-EQI working committee and currently serves as committee chair.

His background is in agriculture and environmental chemistry with degrees from universities in his native Netherlands and the University of Connecticut. In his spare time, he enjoys baking, brewing, gardening and other outdoor activities.

KEVIN KERN

Kevin Kern serves as the Pesticide Registration Specialist with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) since October 2020, after working as a pesticide field inspector with MDARD for 18 years. During this time, Kevin has been very active in all aspects of MDARD's pesticide programs, including complaint investigations, certification exam administration, federal and state registration inspections, training of new inspection staff, and industry outreach initiatives. Prior to coming to MDARD, Kevin worked for Michigan State University, as well as a short stint in agribusiness. Kevin grew up on a small farm in the Thumb area of Michigan, and graduated from MSU with a bachelor's degree in Zoology in 1996 and a master's degree in Horticulture in 2000. Kevin has served on the AAPCO Endangered Species Act Workgroup since its inception in 2022, and also serves as chair of SFIREG Endangered Species Strategy Implementation working committee (ESI).

ANNIE-FRANCE GRAVEL

Annie-France Gravel has been leading Health Canada's Pesticide Compliance Program as National Director from Montreal since 2018. With a background in management, social sciences and environmental studies, she has worked in compliance and enforcement for 15 years. Prior to that, Annie-France has worked in environmental health risk communications and with Environment Canada in the areas of multipartite ecosystem management, community engagement, and funding programs. Her career started in Quebec City, led her to Vancouver and Halifax and she also toured the United States with Cirque du Soleil.

PATRICK WADE

Patrick Wade joined NASDA in November 2024 as Director of Public Policy. In this role, he leads Plant Agriculture & Pesticides and Rural Development & Financial Security policy issues on behalf of the secretaries, commissioners, and directors of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. In 43 states and the territory of Puerto Rico, the state departments of agriculture are co-regulators with EPA on pesticide regulations.

Patrick previously served as Policy Director for Texas Grain Sorghum Producers, where he led the trade association's policy development and state government affairs efforts. Patrick earned bachelor's degrees in Economics and Government from the University of Texas at Austin. He currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

ALLISON CUELLAR

Allison Cuellar is the Coordinator for the Structural Pest Control Service at the Texas Department of Agriculture with over 16 years with the agency. Allison has a master's degree in Public Affairs from the LBJ School of Public Affairs at University of Texas at Austin. She serves as President for the Association of Structural Pest Control Regulatory Officials (ASPCRO), co-chairs ASPCRO's Integrated Pest Management in Schools Committee and serves as a member of the Termiticide Label Review Committee for ASPCRO. Allison has been a licensed applicator for over a decade.

GENE MERKL

KACI BUHL

Kaci Buhl, MS is an Associate Professor of Practice at Oregon State University (OSU). She leads the Statewide Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP), working to educate professional pesticide applicators in collaboration with state agencies and NGOs. On the national level, Ms. Buhl is the Deputy Director of the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC), which creates pesticide-related videos, manuals, exams, and other resources for farmworkers, pesticide handlers, and licensed applicators. She studied Integrated Pest Management (IPM) at Michigan State University and previously coordinated the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC).

KEN EVERETT

Ken Everett is the Deputy Director of Enforcement over the Enforcement Headquarters and Enforcement Regional Office branches. Ken has worked for DPR over 25 years, starting in the Pesticide Registration Branch and then moving to the Enforcement Branch where he eventually became the Manager of the Northern Regional Office before becoming the Deputy Director. Ken is a graduate of Chico State with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Science. After College, he became Field Manager for a Grapevine Nursery in Sonoma County and later a Farm Manager for a wholesale fruit and nut tree nursery in Placer and Sutter counties.

AMY SULLIVAN

Amy Sullivan is an Administrator for the Pesticide Inspector Residential Training (PIRT) program, a cooperative agreement with the US EPA and NASDA. She has served as AAPCO's Executive Secretary since 2014 and is an Advisory Board Member for the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) with UC Davis. Previously Amy was the Certification and Training Assessment Group's (CTAG) Executive Secretary with Michigan State University; she began her career with the Montana Department of Agriculture working in various pesticide program areas and as the Technical Services Bureau Chief. Amy received her bachelors degree in biology-botany from the University of Montana, Missoula. She enjoys living with her family on Maryland's Eastern Shore, where she grew up.

LISA BLECKER

Lisa Blecker is the Pesticide Safety Educator at Colorado State University (CSU) and Faculty member in the in the department of Agricultural Biology. In this role she oversees the revision of study guides and exams for applicators seeking their private and commercial applicator certifications, delivers continuing

education programs for pest management professionals, delivers worker protection standard trainings, and teaches an undergraduate course, AB 410 Understanding Pesticides. Lisa is currently the Administrator for the Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP), a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, providing professional development opportunities for pesticide regulatory officials in states, tribes, and affiliated territories.

She has also served as an advisory board member for the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) since 2016.

Prior to starting her role at CSU, Lisa was the Pesticide Safety Education Program (PSEP) Coordinator with the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management Program for 10 years. She previously spent 8 years working in IPM Programs at the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension and the University of Idaho IPM Center. Lisa has also worked with National Association of State Departments of Agriculture Research Foundation (NASDARF) to co-write the National Soil Fumigation Manual. Lisa received her master's degree at CSU in a joint program with the U.S. Peace Corps. She spent two years as a Peace Corps volunteer in Panamá during this master's program and gained skills that have been invaluable to her career in Cooperative Extension.

Through these experiences, Lisa has had opportunities to collaborate with many pesticide safety counterparts, and to interact with state lead agency personnel working in certification and training, worker protection, and enforcement programs.

TUESDAY

March 4, 2025

CARY GIGUERE

Cary was with the Vermont Agency of Agriculture for 30 years and served as the Director of the Public Health Ag. Resource Management Division which over saw Pesticide, Feed, Seed, Fertilizer, Nursery, Vector Management and Hemp programs. He ended his career with the State of Vermont after an additional 3 Years with the Vermont Cannabis Control Board helping develop that regulatory structure. Currently Cary works with Amy Sullivan and the NASDA team administering PIRT Trainings.

HARRIS WALTERS

Harris Walters is an Environmental Toxicologist for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. He has served in this role for over ten years. Harris primarily conducts ecological risk assessments to aid the State of Florida's pesticide registration activities. Additionally, he oversees the department's efforts associated pesticide interactions involving endangered species, surface waters, and non-target organisms. Prior to joining the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Harris worked for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection where he worked on a variety of Clean Water Act initiatives related to toxicology bioassays, aquatic macro-invertebrate communities, aquatic plant assemblages, habitat assessment, and contaminant sampling. He graduated from Berry College, majoring in biological science with a focus on ecology.

CLAYTON MYERS

Dr. Clayton Myers is an entomologist with USDA's Office of Pest Management Policy. Dr. Myers and the OPMP team work closely on endangered species issues with EPA and FWS, and USDA is a member of the ESA Inter-Agency Working Group. Dr. Myers has a background in IPM and grew up on a family farm. Before joining USDA-OPMP, he spent nearly a decade at EPA's Office of Pesticide Programs working in

BEAD and RD, specializing in benefits analyses, IPM impacts, and pesticide usage characterization to inform regulatory decisions.

DILLON GABBERT

Dillon Gabbert is the Director of State Regulatory Affairs at CropLife America and RISE, where he supports member organizations by monitoring and engaging on pesticide regulations affecting the pesticide manufacturing industry. A proud Virginia Tech alumnus, Dillon began his career as an Environmental Fate chemist, conducting laboratory studies on pesticide active ingredients. He later transitioned into state registrations, working on turf and ornamental, as well as professional use pesticide applications. Passionate about supporting agriculture and fostering safe and healthy environments, Dillon is dedicated to engaging on regulatory topics that benefit farmers, industry professionals, and communities.

KIM BROWN

Kim Brown started with the University of TN Extension team in March of 2022 located in Jackson, TN at the West Tennessee Research and Education Center. Kim has worked in pesticide safety education for more than 15 years, spending the majority of that time working as the Pesticide Safety Education Coordinator for the LSU AgCenter from 2012 – 2021. Prior to working with the LSU AgCenter, Kim was the assistant pesticide safety education coordinator at Auburn University. She earned her B.S. from Auburn University in Agronomy and her M.S. from Louisiana State University in Plant, Soils and Environmental Science.

ANDREW MARTIN

Andrew Martin began his career in pesticide applicator certification with Purdue Pesticide Programs, where he served as a Curriculum Development Specialist. In that capacity he was responsible for pre-certification training, including classroom instruction and manual development, for Indiana's commercial pesticide applicators. He is currently an Assessment Specialist with the Office of Indiana State Chemist, providing technical support for Indiana's pesticide applicator certification test construction projects.

SUZANNE FORSYTH

Suzanne Forsyth is the Director of the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative (PERC) housed at the University of California Davis Continuing and Professional Education. Over the years she has led other EPA cooperative agreements such as the Pesticide Educational Resources Collaborative – Medical (PERC-med), the Tribal Pesticide Program Council (TPPC), and the Pesticide Regulatory Education Program (PREP). She also served as a research chemist for a pesticide registrant. Through these experiences she has gained over 30 years of experience serving stakeholders with an interest in promoting the safe use of pesticides and to help prevent pesticide exposure to applicators and handlers, workers, and their families.

Suzanne graduated from the University of California Davis with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Toxicology and earned a Master of Public Health from the University of California Berkeley. She lives on a 5-acre hobby farm outside of Davis, which she shares with her three Salukis, a farm cat, and periodically her college-aged daughters who come home on breaks.

CARMINA HANSEN

Carmina is a Bilingual Pesticide Specialist with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. She received her B.S. in Food Industry Engineering, Monterrey Institute of Technology and Higher Education (ITESM), México and M.S. Animal Science, University of Nebraska – Lincoln.

Carmina's work experience includes three years of research and development experience in the food industry and nine years of Pesticide Regulatory, Education and Training with an emphasis on the Worker Protection Standard. During her tenure at NCDA&CS she has assisted inspectors with WPS inspections and investigations; has collaborated with state and national groups in the development of educational materials for inspectors, farmworkers, and pesticide applicators; has translated and reviewed translations for different audiences, including pesticide regulatory and educational purposes. She is a current member of the Pesticide Educational Resource Collaborative (PERC) Advisory Board, an Ex-Officio member of the NC Governor's Advisory Board on Hispanic/Latino Affairs, a member of the NC Governor's Interagency Working Group for New Americans created by the office of Public Engagement and Inclusion, is a member of the Health Equity Research Assembly (HERA) Advisory Group from NCDHHS and is an active member in the NC Farm Workforce Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Working Group.

JENNA GIBBS

**WEDNESDAY
March 5, 2025**

SARAH HOVINGA

With 20 years of diverse experience in biopesticide and agrochemical R&D, Sarah focuses on advancing regulatory science in digital agriculture, with an emphasis on precision application of pesticides, including drones, and digital labeling. Sarah studied at the University of California, Davis (B.S., Biological Sciences, and B.A., Spanish) and at California State University, Sacramento (M.S., Biochemistry). She co-chairs the CropLife America Drones Working Group, is Vice Chair of the Unmanned Aerial Pesticide Application System Task Force (UAPASTF), co-leads Digital Labeling efforts at CLA, and serves as co-chair on the EPA Label Reform Pesticide Programs Dialogue Committee (PPDC). Sarah additionally regularly participates in emerging technology forums at forums such as CropLife International, OECD, CERSA, the American Chemical Society, and the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers. Sarah lives in the Sacramento area of California with her husband and young daughter and is an avid gardener.

TAYLOR WETLI

HAL AMBUTER

Hal was born and raised in Boston Massachusetts and has a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Tufts University.

His first job was with The Procter & Gamble Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. He worked in the Product Development group with responsibility for Era Laundry Detergent and Cascade Dishwashing Gel. After 7 years, he moved northeast to Cleveland, Ohio to work for The B.F. Goodrich Company. Although Goodrich is known for its tires, Hal worked in their Specialty Chemical division (now a part of Lubrizol), developing polymer thickeners and emulsifiers (under the Carbopol and Pemulen brand names) for a wide variety of household cleaning products. He traveled much of North America and Western Europe to meet with customers and present new applications and innovations at various trade conferences.

In 2000, he and his family relocated to New Jersey to work for Reckitt Benckiser, a global consumer products company, working in their R&D regional development center. In 2003, he transitioned into Regulatory and Government Affairs responsible for their North American Hygiene products, with primary focus on the Lysol brand. His responsibilities were to ensure that the company's products and

registrations were in full compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations and to work with the various government agencies and trade associations on new regulations.

In May 2024, Hal began the next chapter in his career as the Head of Global Regulatory Services and Digitalization for Arxada. His current responsibilities are to digitalize and centralize all regulatory and supporting documents into one searchable and AI-capable connected database.

Hal married his college sweetheart, Cherwyn, the month after they graduated from Tufts. Cherwyn is a classical pianist, accompanist, and teacher. They have 3 children who have all ventured off to their careers in Michigan, Oregon, and Montana. Hal and Cherwyn have lived in Vernon, NJ since 2001, which is in northern NJ and a part of the state with mountains, a wide variety of wildlife and outdoor activities (skiing, hiking, golf, etc.).

SCOTT MUELLER

Scott Mueller is the Head of Business Development at Compass Regulatory where he leads the commercialization of Compass' services including regulatory assistance, product database development and partner adoption of the API's to access the database. Scott was previously with CDMS as a member of the management team for 20 years. He started his career after graduating from Kansas State University with a BS in Economics and Business Administration, with The Dow Chemical Company. Scott resides in Kansas City.

TIM DEPPEN

Tim is the Program Manager for a series of database systems for the Center of Environmental and Regulatory Information Systems (CERIS) at Purdue University. Tim's career started as a state employee with the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Plant Health Division where he worked with the Emerald Ash Borer Invasive Species Program and the Pesticide & Fertilizer Regulation Section. After fifteen years with the department, he made the decision to join CERIS with his focus on updating and improving the National Pesticide Information Retrieval System (NPIRS), Accepted Labels State Tracking And Repository (ALSTAR) and developing the Program for Regulatory, Reporting, and Certification Services (PRRCS). Tim holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Agricultural Education from the Ohio State University.

TOBY PRIMBS

Toby Primbs has been with the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) for over 17 years. Primbs worked in ODA's Plant Program doing inspections, worked in ODA's Regulatory Lab as a chemist, and then spent a decade working on enforcement cases among other roles with ODA's Fertilizer Program. On Jan. 1, 2020, Primbs shifted roles at ODA and became the Pesticide Compliance Program Manager. Primbs background is rooted in chemistry. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in biochemistry from Boise State University (BSU) and subsequently completed a doctoral degree from Oregon State University (OSU) with support from an EPA STAR Graduate Fellowship, where he studied the environmental fate and transport of chemicals (including pesticides) in the environment. Before BSU and OSU, he worked in construction, landscaping, restaurants, and on farms. He is native to the Pacific Northwest, which has included living in various parts of Eastern and Western Oregon, throughout Idaho, and Northern California. He has had a passion for agriculture since he was young and lived on the family farm for part of his youth, where they had vineyards and cattle.

OTTO OEMIG

Otto Oemig has been with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) for over 10 years. Otto worked as the Special Pesticide registration Program manager before moving into his current position as the Pesticide Programs Unit Supervisor in 2017. Otto oversees pesticide registration, pesticide special registration, Clean Sweep grant program, WPS, and the pesticide

certification and licensing programs. Otto grew up on a small dairy farm in Wisconsin and worked as a crop scout at a local cooperative through high school and college. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in Agronomy from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. After college he worked as a crop consultant on a number of specialty and row crops before joining DATCP.

FAYE GOLDEN

Faye Golden is the Director of Governmental Affairs for Cook's Pest Control (Decatur, AL). Prior to joining Cook's Pest Control, Faye was the Program Director for the Pesticide Management Section of the Alabama Department of Agriculture.

Faye currently serves as President of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA). She is a recipient of the FMC Legislative Day Award, the PCT Crown Leadership Award, and the Woman of Excellence Award in Georgia and Tennessee. Faye is a Past-President of the American Association of Pesticide Safety Educators (AAPSE). AAPSE aims to improve public health and the environment through involvement in education, outreach, and research which directly benefits pest management professionals, policy makers, and the public. In June 2024, Faye received the AAPSE Fellow Award- the highest recognition bestowed by AAPSE for superior service to AAPSE and achievement in education, certification, and public service.

Faye is a graduate of Auburn University at Montgomery with a B.S. in Biology (Environmental Science) and a M.S. in Education from Alabama State University.

BONNIE RABE

Bonnie M. Rabe is currently the Managing Director of Government Relations with Rollins where she started in September 2017. She provides regulatory assistance to the Rollins family of companies as well as works to develop beneficial relationships between the industry and regulators at the state and federal level. She is currently the NPMA State Policy Affairs Representative (SPAR) for Georgia and a member of the Public Policy Committee.

Previously, she worked for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture (NMDA) for 27.5 years and retired as the Director for the Agricultural and Environmental Services Division. As AES Director, she oversaw the pesticide compliance, plant industries, and feed, seed, and fertilizer programs. Bonnie began her career as pesticide inspector with the pesticide compliance section. She is a graduate of NMSU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Entomology and a Master of Science degree in Agricultural Extension Education.

She has been married to her husband Jeff for 34 years and they have two adult children, Jacob and Jenna, who live in NM and AZ. They are patiently waiting on grandchildren...