

2025 International Livestock Congress

**EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING SOUND
SCIENCE AND THE VALUE OF
ANIMAL AGRICULTURE TO SOCIETY**

MARCH 4-5, 2025

NRG CENTER | HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA



Speaker Bios

Tuesday, March 4

2:20 – 2:40 pm

Frederic Leroy, Ph.D.

- Dr. LEROY Frédéric graduated as a Bioengineer from Ghent University in 1998 and obtained a PhD in Applied Biological Sciences at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in 2002, where he now holds a professorship in food science and (bio)technology. His research deals with animal-sourced foods, food processing, nutrition, and interdisciplinary 'food studies'. He is a member of academic non-profit societies such as the Belgian Association of Meat Science and Technology serving as president; Belgian Society for Food Microbiology serving as president; and the Belgian Nutrition Society. On a non-remunerated basis, he also serves on the Scientific Board of the World Farmers' Organization and FAO/COAG Sub-Committee on Livestock. Leroy is one of the founders of the Dublin Declaration of the Societal Role of Livestock.

2:40 – 3:00 pm

Pedro Carvalho, Ph.D.

- Dr. Pedro Carvalho is an Assistant Professor and Feedlot Specialist at AgNext. Prior to his time at AgNext, Pedro was an Assistant Professor and Feedlot Specialist at UC Davis, located at the Desert Research and Extension Center. Originally from Brazil, he received his bachelor's degree in Animal Science from the Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul – Brazil. After working in the beef industry in Brazil, Pedro moved to the U.S. to receive his master's degree in Animal Science from the University of Illinois and his doctorate in Animal Science from Penn State University. In his current position, he conducts applied research projects in feedlot systems and in methods to enhance beef cattle production, i.e., antimicrobial alternatives in feedlot diets, beef on dairy crosses, and different dietary and implant programs for calf-fed Holstein and Holstein cross.

3:00 – 3:20 pm

Keith Belk, Ph.D.

- Keith Belk serves as Professor and Holder of the Monfort Endowed Chair at Colorado State University. Previously, he served as Head of the Department of Animal Sciences at CSU. He earned B.S. and M.S. degrees from CSU, and a Ph.D. from Texas A&M University. He worked in the private sector as a buyer for Safeway, Inc., and at USDA-AMS in Washington, DC, as an International Specialist. At CSU since 1995, he has authored or co-authored >260 peer-reviewed scientific journal articles. He served as State Meat Extension Specialist between 1995 and 2000, on the Editorial Board for the Journal of Animal Science in 1997-2000,

on the Board of Directors (2003-2005) and President (2009-2010) for the American Meat Science Association. Dr. Belk currently serves on the Board of Directors for the International Stockmen's Educational Foundation and on the Academic Advisory Committee for the North American Meat Institute Protein PACT.

3:20 – 3:40 pm

Eric Mittenthal, Ph.D.

- Eric Mittenthal is the Chief Strategy Officer at the Meat Institute, previously serving as the organization's vice president of public affairs and vice president of sustainability. He leads the Meat Institute's Protein PACT strategy focused on implementing a framework for continuous improvement throughout the industry and a commitment to greater transparency to meet consumer and customer expectations. Eric joined Meat Institute from the International Food Information Council (IFIC) where he worked closely with food industry communications leaders, led IFIC's efforts in connecting with journalists and influencers and launched many of IFIC's successful social media platforms. Eric moved to Washington D.C. following a career as a television reporter and producer in several markets around the country including Atlanta, Jacksonville, NC and Idaho Falls, ID. He graduated from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and also received a Master's degree in Biomedical Sciences from Eastern Virginia Medical School in Norfolk, VA.

4:10 – 4:30 pm

Justin Ransom, Ph.D.

- Dr. Justin Ransom is the Senior Director of Sustainable Food Strategy at Tyson Foods where he works across the business to develop sustainability programs that drive real impact. Justin's technical expertise in Animal Science and Food Safety has enabled food companies to make strategic decisions that both align with customer expectations and grow value chain profitability. This remains true today as he works to advance Tyson Foods in their mission to create a more sustainable food system for current and future generations, harnessing the power of science, strategic partnerships, and data-driven insights. Justin has a B.S. in Agriculture Communications from Texas Tech University, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Animal Science from Michigan State and Colorado State University.

Wednesday, March 5

8:00 – 8:30 am

Charlie Arnot

- Charlie Arnot is recognized as a thought leader in food and agriculture. He is highly regarded as both a writer and sought-after speaker who engages audiences across the globe. Charlie has more than 25 years of experience working in communications, public relations and issues management within the food system. He is the founder and president of Look East, an employee-owned consulting firm. He also serves as CEO of the Center for Food Integrity, an international non-profit organization dedicated to building consumer trust and confidence in today's food system. One client said of Charlie's work, "others help

us talk about our business, you help us think differently about who we are and what we do.” His commitment to excellence, innovation and integrity have positioned him as a trusted counselor to CEOs, government leaders and executives, and a respected industry advisor on critical issues within the food system. Charlie is frequently sought out by media for his insight on food and agriculture issues and has been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Fortune, Time, NPR, CNBC, The National Journal, Entrepreneur, Yahoo health, Huffington Post, Grist and dozens of trade publications globally.

8:30 – 9:00 am

Laura Fischer, Ph.D.

- Dr. Laura Fischer is an Assistant Professor at Texas Tech University, where she specializes in agricultural communications with an emphasis on audience analysis, segmentation, and strategic communication. Her work focuses on empowering agricultural and natural resource professionals to connect with diverse audiences, inspire trust, and foster positive attitudes toward these critical industries. Through her research, teaching, and outreach, Dr. Fischer equips stakeholders with tools to craft effective, audience-centered messages that bridge the gap between science and society. Her expertise lies in understanding audience perceptions and tailoring communication strategies to resonate with specific groups, ultimately promoting informed conversations about agriculture and natural resources. Dr. Fischer received her B.S. in Animal Science & M.S. in Agricultural Education and Communications from the University of Florida, and her Ph.D. in Agricultural Communications and Education from Texas Tech University.

9:00 – 9:30 am

Hillary Makens

- Hillary Makens is the Senior Executive Director of Issues Management and Public Relations at the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association (NCBA). She joined NCBA and the iconic *Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner.* brand in January of 2017. In her current role, Hillary leads the Issues and Reputation Management, Earned Media and Social Media teams, and their collective consumer communications strategy. Prior to working at NCBA, Hillary spent more than a decade working as a journalist in local television newsrooms.

9:30 – 10:00 am

Michael Uetz

- Michael Uetz’s passion for the meat industry started on his family’s ranch in North Dakota and grew during his time working for the National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. Determined to ensure the long-term viability of animal agriculture and to help farming and ranching families like his own achieve success, he co-founded Midan Marketing along with Danette Amstein. Eternally curious about what drives consumer behavior, Michael enjoys overseeing the customer insights and research side of Midan. As an international keynote speaker and champion for agriculture, he has become a respected thought leader in the meat industry, lecturing on consumer trends at the World Meat Congress, National Grocers Association Show, Beef Improvement Federation Symposium and World Pork Expo. When he isn’t meeting with agency partners, you can find him on a cattle drive in the North Dakota Badlands, riding a quarter horse on his Indiana farm or in cutting competitions.

10:35 – 11:05 am

Anneline Padayachee, Ph.D.

- Dr. Anneline Padayachee is on a mission to bust food and nutrition myths. To her, food is more than just filling bellies, and nutrition isn't limited to weight loss or fitness trends. It's about food security, sustainability, the economy, and national health. Nutrition fuels every cell in our bodies, shaping everything from DNA repair to disease outcomes. Anneline believes that knowing better means doing better—for researchers, farmers, the food industry, consumers, and policymakers alike.
- With an Honors degree majoring in epidemiology and a PhD in nutritional food science, Anneline has practical experience bridging industry, research, and academia. She's internationally recognized for her expertise in food processing, digestive health, and nutrition equality, and she translates science into actionable strategies for farmers, industry leaders, and consumers. Her accolades include being named a Future Food Leader by FIAL, Australia's Best Performing Science Communicator, and one of the country's Top 50 cutting-edge female scientists. Anneline is also a professional member of the Nutrition Society of Australia, a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology (AIFST), sits on the Australian Academy of Science's National committees for Nutrition and Agriculture and Food, and is recognized as a Global Expert with the International Science Council.
- Her personal journey of overcoming life-threatening health challenges cemented her belief in the power of food, nutrition, and farming to drive health outcomes. Today, Anneline is a sought-after speaker, consultant, and writer, passionately advocating for food's role in better health and nutrition equality. Learn more at www.dranneline.com.

11:05 – 12:00

Melissa San Miguel

- Melissa is the President of Red Flag, USA. She develops and executes advocacy and communications strategies that help some of the world's leading businesses and associations navigate their most critical challenges and opportunities, with a particular passion for impacting policy and perception in food and agriculture. Before joining Red Flag, Melissa was Senior Director for Global Strategies at the Grocery Manufacturers Association (now the Consumer Brands Association) in Washington, DC. She began her career in the U.S. diplomatic corps, serving in Honduras, Jamaica and Brazil before returning to Washington for various trade and economic roles, including as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment. Melissa holds a bachelor's degree in politics from Princeton University and a master's degree in public policy from the University of California at Los Angeles.

1:30 – 3:00 p.m.

Charlie Arnot

- Charlie Arnot is recognized as a thought leader in food and agriculture. He is highly regarded as both a writer and sought-after speaker who engages audiences across the globe. Charlie has more than 25 years of experience working in communications, public relations and issues management within the food system. He is the founder and president

of Look East, an employee-owned consulting firm. He also serves as CEO of the Center for Food Integrity, an international non-profit organization dedicated to building consumer trust and confidence in today's food system. One client said of Charlie's work, "others help us talk about our business, you help us think differently about who we are and what we do." His commitment to excellence, innovation and integrity have positioned him as a trusted counselor to CEOs, government leaders and executives, and a respected industry advisor on critical issues within the food system. Charlie is frequently sought out by media for his insight on food and agriculture issues and has been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Fortune, Time, NPR, CNBC, The National Journal, Entrepreneur, Yahoo health, Huffington Post, Grist and dozens of trade publications globally.

4:30 – 5:00

Alexa Lamm, Ph.D.

- Dr. Alexa Lamm is a Professor of Science Communication in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Communication and Education at the University of Georgia. She is known for facilitating two-way discussions between scientists, stakeholders, and end users of agricultural scientific advancement with the intent of using science to inform decision-making and policy formation. She is a noted scholar having authored/co-authored 250+ peer-reviewed journal publications and a book on the human dimensions associated with agricultural science technology adoption. She has been internationally recognized on many occasions with her work conducted in over 35 countries. She received the 2020 Borlaug CAST Communication Award, was named a Fellow of the American Association for Agricultural Education in 2022 and a Fellow of the Association for International Agricultural and Extension Education in 2018.