

# **AUTOMATION FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE: TECHNOLOGY, TOOLS, & TRENDS**

**Round Table Meeting July 2025**







**Shari Rogge-Fidler**

**President and CEO  
Farm Foundation**



**Cheri De Jong**

**Board Chair  
Farm Foundation**

# **WELCOME ADDRESS**



# **Round Table Fellows and Honorary Life Fellows**

# Meet the Farm Foundation Team



**Shari Rogge-Fidler**  
President and CEO



**Todd Price**  
Vice President  
Operations



**Tim Brennan**  
Vice President Programs  
and Strategic Impact



**Karl Binns**  
Director of  
External Affairs



**Morgan Craven**  
Director of Programs  
and Events



**Jordyn Landberg**  
Director of Marketing  
and Communications



**Katie Merkle**  
Programs and Events  
Manager



**Ellen Prather**  
Marketing and  
Design Coordinator



**Liz Wilkin**  
Administrative  
Associate

# **July 2025 Round Table Planning Committee**

**John Foltz, Chair  
Zach Balin  
Rich Hendershot  
Dave Hyde  
Urban Lehner**

**Dan Maycock  
John Power  
Wendy Powers  
Shannon Schlecht  
Mary Snapp**





# Farm Foundation Board





**Welcome Guests**



# **FARM FOUNDATION UPDATES**



# OUR MISSION AND VISION GUIDE OUR WORK

## MISSION:

To **build** trust and understanding at the intersections of agriculture and society.

## VISION:

To **build** a future for farmers, our communities and our world.

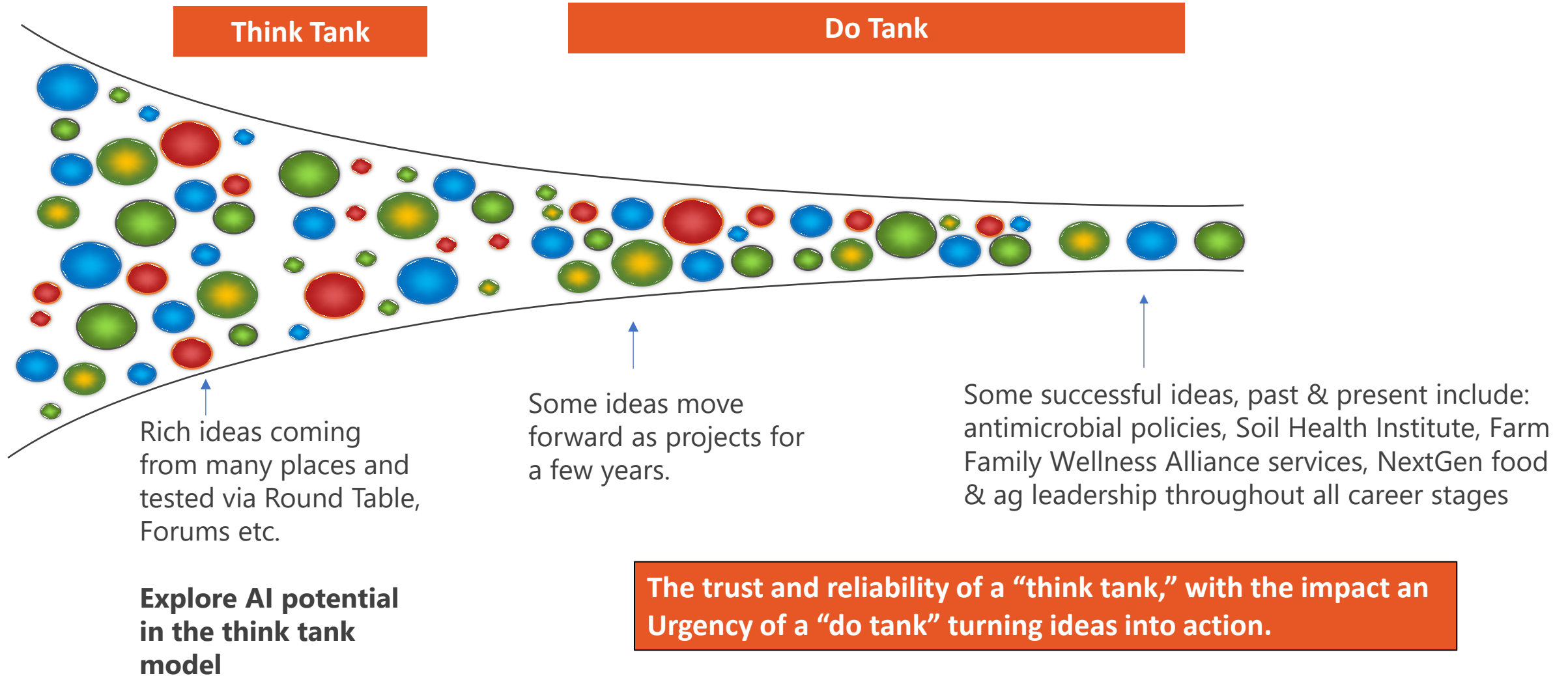


**Farm Foundation is an  
accelerator of practical  
solutions for agriculture.**

**We accelerate people and  
ideas into action.**



# Accelerator Funnel: Think Tank/Do Tank



# Anchored with a 90+ year old rich history

Founding Era 1930s & 40s	Post Founder Era 1950s & 60s	Integration 1970s & 80s	Modern Era 1990s through 2015	Current & Future What's Next?
<p>"...to improve conditions of life for the farming and rural population with adequate economic returns, social, educational and cultural advantages." ~Founding vision, Legge &amp; Lowden</p>	<p>"Be the yeast... stimulate action where research leaves off...with regional cooperation." ~Taylor</p> <p>Rural communities, economics and policy focus</p>	<p>Foundation for American Agriculture (FFAA) founded in 1945 by Dana Bennet</p> <p>FFAA dissolved and integrated into Farm Foundation in 1974-75 as a key program</p>	<p>Mission: "to improve the economic and social prospects of agriculture and rural communities"</p> <p>Shifts with Round Table governance.</p> <p>Legge Lowden Trust established in 2009 to support Farm Foundation.</p>	<p>2020: Accelerator</p> <p>Vision: Building a future for farmers, our communities and our world</p> <p>Mission: Building trust and understanding at the intersections of agriculture and society</p>

Sources: Farm Foundation: 75 years as a catalyst to agriculture and rural America; Farm Foundation Board Minutes; 2020 Strategic 5 Year Plan



# Celebrating key accomplishments over last 5 years!

- Launched refreshed branding, vision, mission
  - Increased and highlighted impact
    - Scale through collaborations, Farm Family Wellness Alliance and Global Forum on Farm Policy and Innovation
    - Global reach, 32+ countries via Forums
  - Round Table Program innovations and impact focus
  - Expanded NextGen programs across the value chain, with over 250+ alumni
  - Launched Innovation and Education Campus with 100-200 visitors/year
  - Increased project revenue (\$) 4x. Diversified and increased donors (#), ~5x restricted and ~75% unrestricted
  - Increased awareness of Farm Foundation, 3x increase across all social media platforms
- 

# Updated Strategic Pillars: Being “THE” independent “Go To” accelerator of practical solutions

## Strategic Priorities: People, Place, & Pilots

**Leverage IEC for engagement:** e.g. summits, bootcamps, soil health center, and AI.

**Cultivate Community Culture** of Farm Foundation

**Innovate Round Table and Grow NextGen**, e.g. Beginning Farmers and NextGen Alumni

**Advance system change** using policy, education and innovation in updated thematic priorities

## Purpose

**Mission; Building trust and understanding at the intersection of agriculture & society**

**Brand as “THE GO TO” accelerator** of practical solutions for the diverse challenges of agriculture

**Deepen impact via people:** increase engagement opportunities with RT and NG

**Scale impact via collaboration:** second phase of FFWA and GFFPI and others

## Funding Priorities: Pilots/Innovation

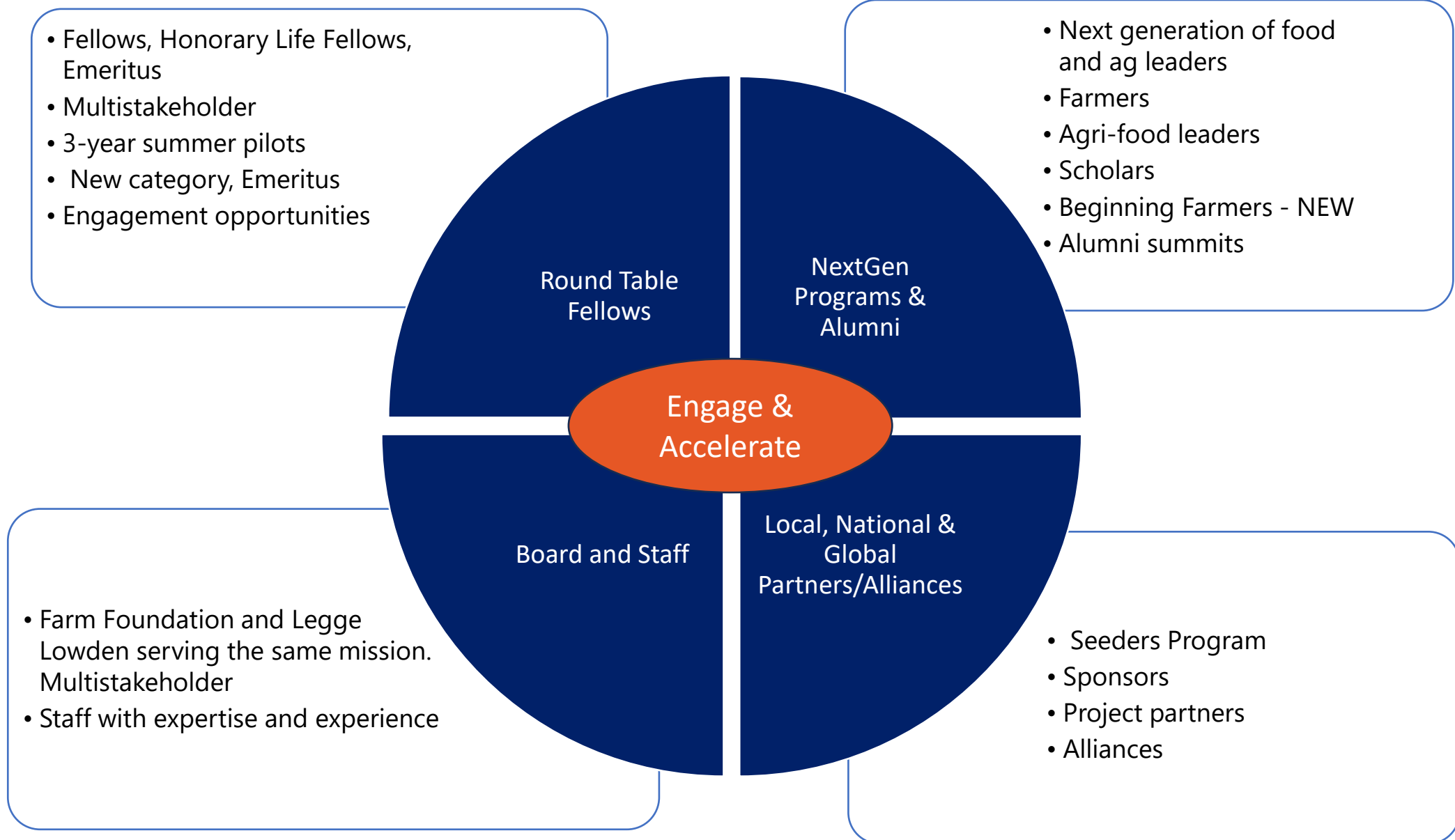
**Fund** NextGen, thematic priorities, and IEC priorities

**Nurture** existing and continue to **diversify** donors

**Innovate funding models:** 2026 consultant to explore

**Experiment further with earned revenue:** bootcamps, rentals, consulting

# Farm Foundation: Community of Influential Leaders



# Strategic Priorities For Our Work: Accelerating People & Ideas

## ■ Farmer and Rural Vitality

- Spin off admin and fundraising for Farm Family Wellness Alliance to American Farm Bureau, continue to engage as Alliance marketing partner
- Explore Summit ideas: policy innovation sandbox (consider use of AI via partnership) and rural vitality
- Collaboration with USDA, private sector and universities
- Leverage IEC for gathering

## ■ Technology

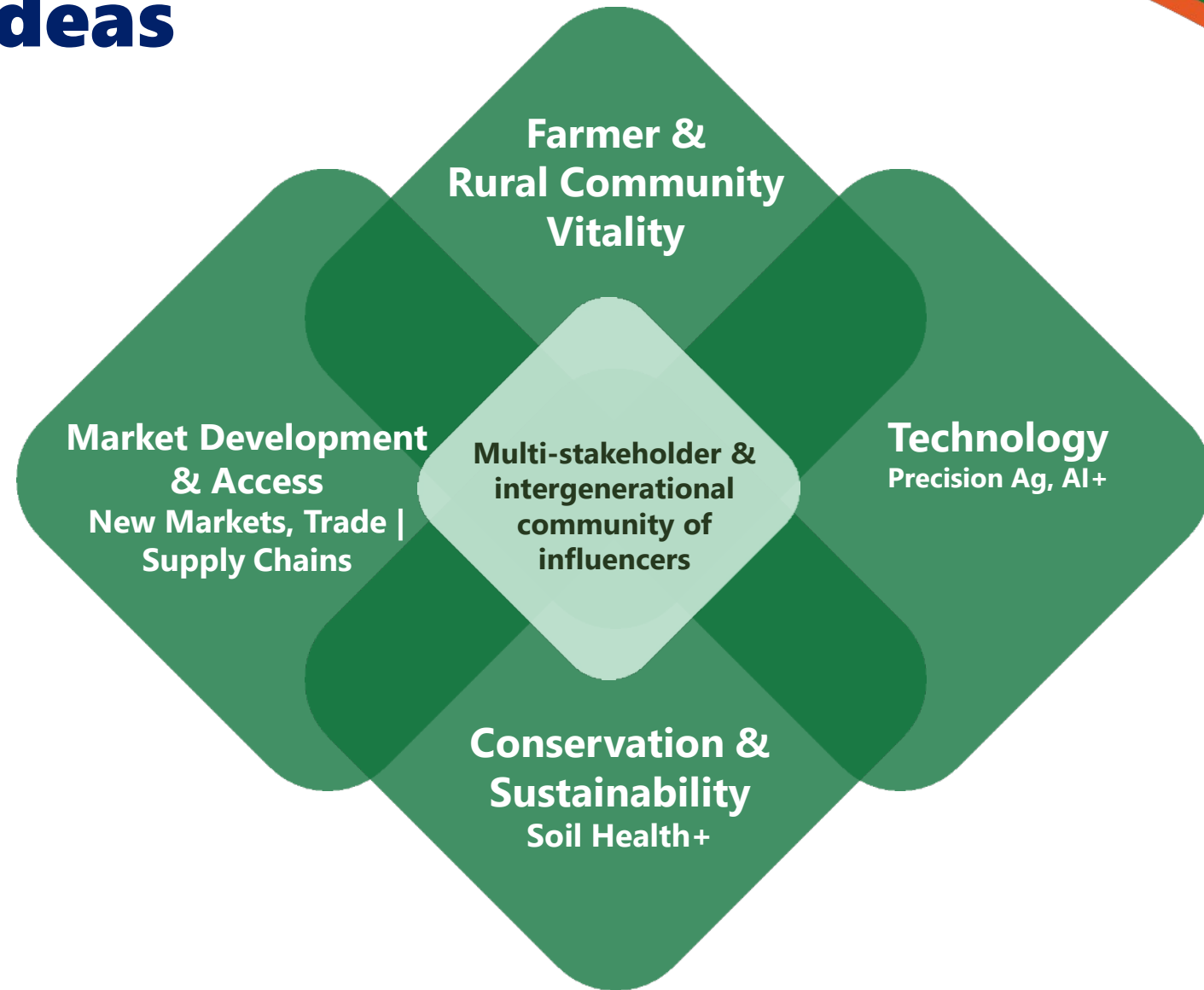
- Leverage IEC and Forums: Precision Ag and AI
- Collaborate with rotating partners in field and immersion room
- Discontinue data interoperability work in 2026

## ■ Markets

- New markets for farmers
  - At IEC “show and tell” opportunities
  - Consider additional links for rural vitality above
- Collaboration/alliance - continue GFFPI engagement 1-2/year

## ■ Sustainability/soil health and water

- Increase soil health and water engagement opportunities at IEC





# Innovation and Education Campus





# Future of US Agrifood System: Voices at the Table

## Farmer/Producers/Land



### Inputs/Equip

Jason Brantley/John  
Deere  
Heidi Spahn/Corteva  
Steve Coulter/Koch

### Producers/land:

AG Kawamura – CA/produce  
Larkin Martin - south  
Matt Moreland – row crops  
Aaron Clark - organic  
Christine Hamilton - ranch  
Jonah Kolb - land  
Beth Sauerhaft - land

## Processor/ Manufacturer



### Processors/Supply Chain/Transport:

Jillian Wishman/Bay State Milling  
Gail Tavill/OSI

## Distributor



## Retailer/ Food Service



### Retail/food/CPG:

Beth Hart/McDonald's  
Kristin Kroepfl/Food Lion  
Margaret Henry/PepsiCo

## Consumer



**Finance:** Todd VanHoose/Farm Credit/retired, Ron Meeusen/Cultivian, Larry Page/Lewis & Clark, Janine Sekulic/BMO & farmer

**Academia:** Jay Akridge, Trey Malone, Jennifer Ifft, Sunghun Lim

**Tech/Innovation:** Mary Snapp/Microsoft, Adam Greenberg/IUNU, Bailey Stockdale/Leaf, Kellee James/Argus, Karen Carr/tech lawyer

**Gov/Policy:** Sec. Johanns and Sec. Vilsack, Darci Vetter, Rick Ortman (dairy) and Mya Price (food security)

**Conservation:** Kris Johnson, The Nature Conservancy



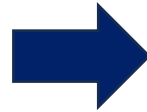
# Farm Foundation's Future Food System

## Key Takeaways

Convergence emerged around **three strategic imperatives**:

**(1) Change policy making environments.**

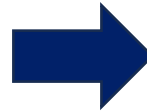
Participants noted that the current agricultural policy landscape is characterized by procedural rigidity and compliance-driven mandates, which leave little room for **innovation**.



Possible **innovations and actions** for further exploration:

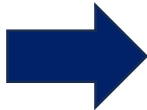
Establish controlled environments for **policy experimentation, "policy innovation sandboxes,"** that allow adaptive learning in a risk-mitigated setting.

**(2) The revitalization of rural communities**, not merely as sites of production but as complex socio-economic systems requiring integrated investment; and



**Integrated approach to policy making**, national and local, bottom up and top down. Integrate social, economic and ecological. **Opportunities for innovation in how to convene differently and highlight what's working.**

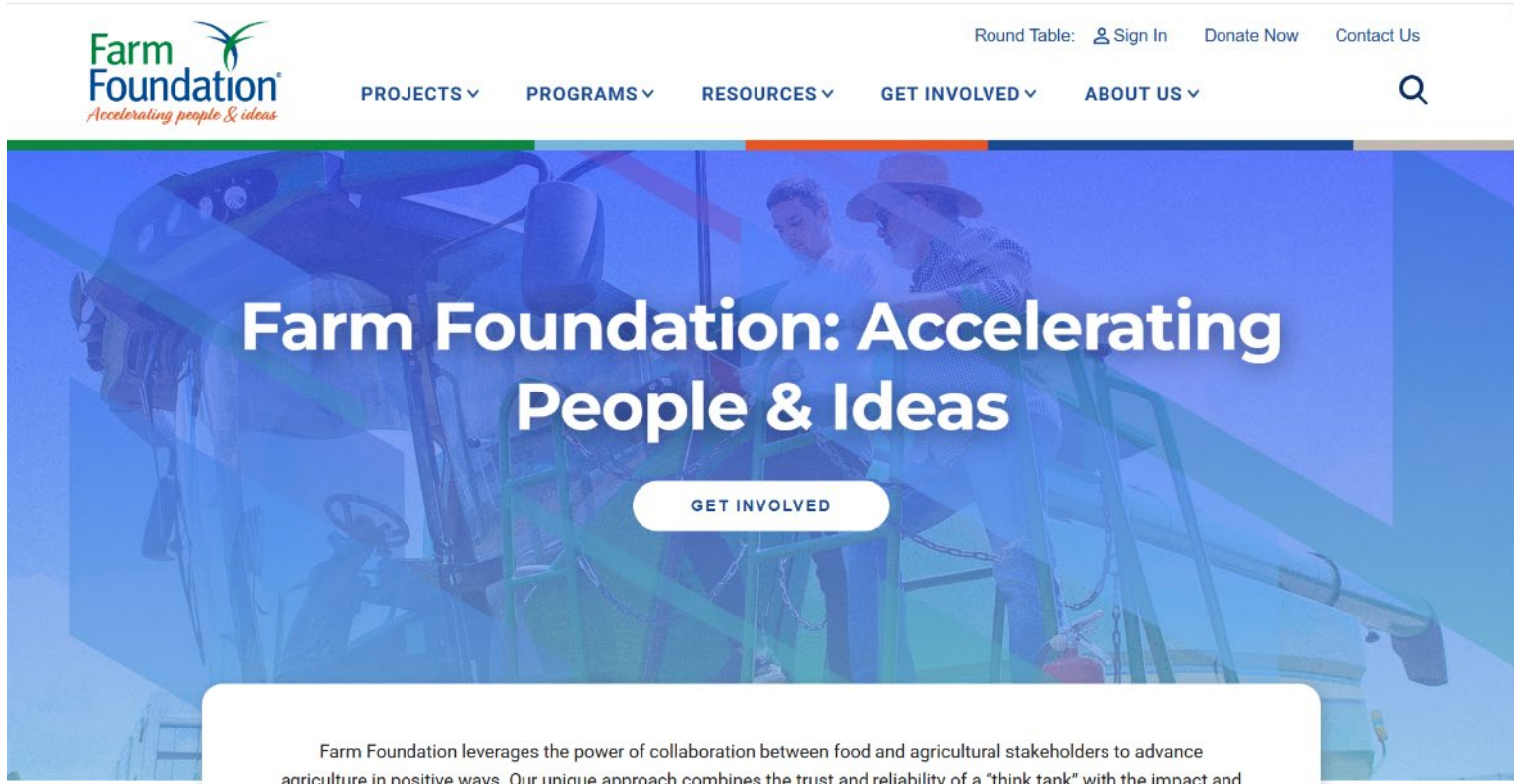
**(3) The reengineering of extension systems** to operate as modern, trusted, and community-embedded institutions.



**Innovations** such as **mobile advisory platforms, leveraging AI, peer-to-peer farmer training networks,** and integrated extension hubs that combine agricultural, environmental, and rural development services.

# Connect with us!

## Join us in increasing our impact!



[www.farmfoundation.org](http://www.farmfoundation.org)



[@farm-foundation](https://www.linkedin.com/company/farm-foundation)



[@thefarmfoundation](https://www.facebook.com/thefarmfoundation)



[@thefarmfoundation](https://www.youtube.com/thefarmfoundation)



[@farmfoundation](https://twitter.com/farmfoundation)



# **OPENING KEYNOTE: AUTOMATION FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE FOR AGRICULTURE: TECHNOLOGY, TOOLS, & TRENDS**

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# **Rob Dongoski**

**Global Lead, Agriculture and Food, Partner  
Kearney**





# **PRIMER: AI Economy**

**Round Table Meeting July 2025**





# **Mary Snapp**

**Vice President Strategic Initiatives  
Microsoft**



# **SESSION ONE:**

# **AI in Action: Transforming Farming and Food Systems**

**Round Table Meeting July 2025**



# SESSION ONE SPEAKERS



**Brian Carroll**  
COO and Co-Founder  
Grand Farm



**Elizabeth Fastiggi**  
Chief Product Officer  
Idealyst Innovations



**Shail Khiyara**  
CEO  
SWARM

# QUESTION AND ANSWER

*Please submit your questions on the meeting app or use one of the microphones.*



**Mary Snapp**  
Microsoft



**Brian Carroll**  
Grand Farm



**Elizabeth Fastiggi**  
Idealyst Innovations



**Shail Khiyara**  
SWARM

**1) Go to App 2) Go to Your Agenda 3) Find the Session 4) Q&A Tab**

