

# 2026 Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference

MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM EVENT CENTER, MANKATO, MN



## DAY ONE

Monday, June 15, 2026

11:00 AM *Registration Begins - Lunch Available*

11:30 AM *Welcome and Introductions*

NOON *Lead Like Your Favorite Self*

Rachel Eslick, Mae We All Growth and Development



It's easy to get caught up in doing what "looks right"— chasing achievement, saying yes to every opportunity, and trying to meet others' expectations. But there are moments when you pause and ask: Is this actually what I want? Is this aligned with who I want to be?

When you're not grounded in the favorite version of yourself, it can show up as overthinking, hesitation, and missed opportunities to lead and connect with confidence.

This interactive workshop is designed to change that.

Grounded in research on decision-making, confidence, and behavior change, this session will give you practical frameworks and real-world application to help you gain clarity on your values, strengths, and direction and, more importantly, how to consistently act on them.

*Young Leaders in Agriculture Conference  
Presented by Minnesota Pork Board and Compeer Financial*

You'll work through real scenarios, strengthen how you communicate, and learn how to make decisions with confidence and intention. The focus isn't just on reflection — it's on building tools you can apply immediately in your leadership, career, and life.

This isn't a one-time conversation, it's a set of strategies you can continue to use long after the session ends.

**3:00 PM**                      **BREAK - Hotel Check-In**

**3:45 PM**                      **Career Networking Event**

A networking event designed to connect you with industry professionals and explore career opportunities.

**6:00 PM**                      **DINNER**

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## **DAY TWO**

**Tuesday, June 16, 2026**

**7:00-7:45 AM**              **BREAKFAST**

**8:00 AM**                      **Somebody Who Cared™**



**How Relationships Shape Influence, Leadership, and the Way We Show Up for Others**

Vanessa McNeal, Keynote Speaker and Leadership Coach

Most people think compassion is just a feeling. Vanessa knows it's a skill—and right now, we need it more than ever. Drawing from her own story of adversity and the ordinary people who changed everything for her, Vanessa makes one undeniable case: leadership isn't built on titles. It's built on trust — real relationships where people feel genuinely seen and valued.

Through three transformative pillars — Dare to Notice, Get in the Ring, and The Magic Question — Vanessa gives emerging leaders a living, portable framework for building vulnerability-based trust, honoring diverse perspectives, and showing up in ways that leave a lasting mark. You'll leave with the clarity, the courage, and the one question that will change how you lead, how you serve, and how you see every person around you.

**9:30 AM**                    **BREAK**

**10:00 AM**                    **People > Politics:**  
**Why Critical Thinking, Curiosity, and Leadership Still Matter**  
MN Senator Aric Putnam, (14, DFL)

Politics can feel exhausting, performative, or easier to tune out altogether - especially as a young leader trying to focus on building a meaningful future, career, and life. But whether we engage or not, politics continues to shape our communities, industries, opportunities, and relationships in significant ways.

This session isn't about telling you what to think politically. It's about challenging you to think more deeply and engage more intentionally. Together, we'll explore why critical thinking, curiosity, leadership, and humility matter in today's political climate and why valuing people over politics must prevail if we want more productive conversations, stronger communities, and strong leadership moving forward.

At a time when division often feels easier than understanding, you'll be challenged to ask better questions, think beyond sound bites and headlines, navigate disagreement without losing your cool, and consider what it looks like to lead with both conviction and curiosity.

**11:00 AM**                    **Advocacy in Action: Engaging with Purpose and Impact**  
Lauren Servick, Director of Public Policy Strategy and Sustainability,  
Minnesota Pork

**12:00 PM**                    **LUNCH**

**12:45 PM**                    **Understanding Yourself to Lead Others Well**  
Katrina Klooster and Leah Reinert, Katrina Klooster Coaching

This interactive Enneagram workshop explores self-awareness as a powerful tool for leadership, career success, and healthy collaboration. Led by business partners Leah Reinert and Katrina Klooster, the session will help participants better understand how personality shapes communication styles, confidence, conflict navigation, and the way we work with others. Through conversation, reflection, and practical application, attendees will gain insights they can immediately use in both professional and personal relationships.

**2:45 PM**                    **BREAK**

**3:15 PM**                    **Perspectives from the Field – Allied Industry Leaders**  
Moderator: Kate Maddock, Director of Farmer Outreach, MN Pork  
Daryl Timmerman, Compeer Financial  
Greg Krahn, Elanco  
Jill Johnson, Topigs

**4:30 PM**                    **Service Project – Ronald McDonald House Upper Midwest**  
**Snack Bags**

Since 2020, the Ronald McDonald House – Upper Midwest has been a charitable partner of choice for Minnesota pig farmers. With the mission of keeping families close to each other and the care and resources they need, RMH-UM provides a warm welcoming community of support and respite for families with seriously ill or injured children. Through our YLAC service project, we will help the RMH-UM put the needs of children and family first.

**6:15 PM**                    **Depart for the Wow Zone**

**6:30 PM**                    **Wow Zone – Dinner, Bowling, Golf, and Laser Tag**

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## **DAY THREE**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2026**

**7:45 – 8:30 AM**            **BREAKFAST**

**8:30 AM**                    **Taste What Pork Can Do – An Interactive Pork Fabrication**  
**Workshop**

Neal Hull, National Pork Board  
Lindsey Loken, Blondies Butcher Shop

From primal cuts to consumer trends, this interactive pork fabrication workshop will take you through the carcass – head to foot – while exploring the story behind each cut and the marketing opportunities that bring pork to life for today’s consumers.

Led by Neal Hull and Lindsey Fulton, the session blends industry insight, hands-on butchery knowledge, and real-world retail experience into a dynamic conversation around pork merchandising, consumer engagement, and value creation across the carcass.

As Neal and Lindsey break down the animal in real time, participants will gain a deeper understanding of where cuts originate, how they are positioned in the marketplace, and the evolving consumer narratives shaping demand. With their combined backgrounds and authentic approach, expect a workshop that is practical, engaging, and fun from start to finish.

**10:00 AM**

**No Bad Days**

Hunter Pinke



Life hits you and how you respond determines your path forward. Draw from North Dakotan Hunter Pinke's experience of going from Division I football player to a chest-down paraplegic at age 22. Pinke gives tangible examples on how to choose joy and live out your dreams with no bad days.

**11:00 AM**

**Closing Comments**