

AGceptional CONFERENCE

**YOUR
BRAND
YOUR
STORY**

NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE

YOUR BRAND, YOUR STORY

17TH ANNUAL AGCEPTIONAL CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2025

8:00 -9:00 AM

Check-In, Coffee & Conversations

Breakfast will be provided

9:00-10:45 AM

Opening Session

Welcome & Opening Comments

Video Presentation

Sponsored by Farm Credit Services of America

Tribute to the AgCeptional Spotlight Award Recipient

Keynote Speaker

The Power of Why, Teri Trask

10:50-11:40 AM

Red Workshop Session

11:45-12:30 PM

Lunch & Networking

12:45-1:35PM

Main Stage Session

Map of My Kingdom, Sponsored by UFARM/ Peoples Company

1:45- 2:35 PM

White Workshop Session

2:40-3:15 PM

Closing Session

Prizes and Closing Comments

All meals sponsored by The Nebraska Soybean Board





Logan Consbruck
NECC Alumni

Liz Doerr
Pork Producer & Office Administrator,
Retired Zoning Administrator

Roxanne Dusel
Farm Wife/ Grain Producer

Traci Ebel
Substitute Teacher, Ag & FFA
Supporter

Kimberly Fehringer
USDA Rural Development Loan
Specialist Midwest Region

Karen Grant
Farmer/ Livestock Producer

Karmen Hake
Farmer/ Livestock Producer, Previous
AgCeptional Coordinator

Jill Heemstra
Ag Program Director at NECC

Peggy Hintz
Livestock Producer/ USDA FSA County
Executive Director

Clare Hornung
Recruitment Specialist for UNL College of
Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources

Agnes Kurtzhals
Communications Associate- AMM
Department at UNL's Haskell Ag Lab

Susan Littlefield
Farm Broadcaster with the American Ag
Network

Hilary Maricle
State Executive Director USDA/ FSA

Corrine Morris
Retired Dean of Ag, Math & Science at
NECC

Deb Neidig
Producer

Kathy Neidig
Cattle Operation & Business Owner

Courtney Nelson
Precision Agriculture Trainer at
NECC

Joan Ruskamp
Farmer/ Cattle Feeder

Connie Sixta
Dean of Science, Technology, Agriculture,
& Math at NECC

Tara Smydra
Farmer/ Real Estate Investor

Madisen Unsel
Randa Red Angus, USDA NRCS Soil
Conservationist

Rylee Wagner
Communications Consultant, AFAN &
Owner of Wild Arrow Farms

Ashley Weinrich
Executive Assistant of Science,
Technology, Agriculture, & Math at NECC

Whitney Winter
Llama Producer/ Ag Communication/
Journalist

*A woman in agriculture can take the lead
whatever the challenge, whatever the
need.*

*She'll rise to meet demands of the day
in her own unique phenomenal way
She's much more than just exceptional
Yes, She is what we call AgCeptional.*

*A story to tell, a lesson to learn.
AgCeptional women are taking their turn.
The seeds they plant grow tall and strong.
They've been ignored for far too long.
Let's give credit where credit is due,
AgCeptional women are making it
through.*

*They make it through good times, they
make it through tough.
They make sure there's more than enough.
They work, they give, they laugh, they love.
They stand tall when push comes to shove.
Let's give credit where credit is due,
AgCeptional women are tried and true.*

*The barn, the field, and tractor too.
Office, industry, business or school.
The garden, garage, yard, or home.
Wherever they are, let it be known.
The difference they make is felt, it's real.
We cannot act like it's no big deal.*

*They make it through good times, they
make it through tough.
They make sure there's more than enough.
They work, they give, they laugh, they love.
They stand tall when push comes to shove.
Let's give credit where credit is due.
AgCeptional women are tried and true.*

~Written by Corrine Morris

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Central Rooms, 9:45-10:45 AM



Teri Trask lives in Cedar Falls, Iowa, though Nebraska will always be home. Raised on a farm near Norfolk, she credits her 4-H roots and country school education for inspiring her passion for purposeful work.

She is the owner of T2 Training, an ICF-certified Executive Coach, Facilitator, Speaker, and Consultant. A University of Northern Iowa graduate with both BA and MA degrees, she also trains in UNI's College of Business and partners with Franklin Covey, specializing

in The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Her career spans education, banking, and leadership development, where she's known as an "Enthusiologist Extraordinaire" for her energy, optimism, and no-nonsense approach.

Teri and her husband, Lynn, lead an active lifestyle and enjoy visiting their four children and three grandsons across the country.

The POWER of WHY

When you know your WHY, you can navigate the WAY ... and even enjoy it! Join Teri Trask, Enthusiologist Extraordinaire, for an opportunity to tap into your why and focus on moving your head, heart, and feet in the same direction. Get ready to strap on your "It Starts With Me!" growth goggles, embrace your own value and live your best life!

MAIN STAGE SESSION

Central Rooms, 12:45-1:35 PM

Sponsored by UFARM/Peoples Company

Map of My Kingdom, a one-woman play written by national award-winning writer, Mary Swander, explores the real-world challenges of farmland transition. Commissioned by Practical Farmers of Iowa, the play brings to life real stories of families wrestling with inheritance, stewardship, and the legacy of the land. At the center is Angela Martin, a lawyer and mediator whose work spans families in deep conflict to those who planned ahead and avoided it. Her stories reflect the emotional and practical weight of land ownership and the difficult decisions that come with passing it on.

This compelling performance sheds light on a topic many hesitate to confront. By sharing these experiences, Map of My Kingdom encourages open conversation, early planning, and a deeper understanding of how land decisions shape families for generations.

NOTES

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EXPAND &
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RED WORKSHOPS

Boots, Bales, and Biopsies: Women's Health on the Farm,

Hannah Guenther, UNL Rural Health Extension Educator

Rural Nebraska faces some of the highest cancer rates in the country, and women—often the gatekeepers of health in their homes—play a powerful role in changing that story. Boots, Bales, and Biopsies is a down-to-earth, empowering session designed specifically for women in agriculture. We'll cover what every rural woman needs to know about cancer prevention and early detection, including:

1. When and how to get screened
2. Understanding environmental exposures common in ag life
3. The surprising connection between sleep, stress, and cancer risk
4. Simple, realistic lifestyle changes that support long-term health

Blending both medical recommendations and holistic wellness strategies, this program equips women with the knowledge and tools to advocate for themselves and their families.

How to sample feedstuffs & alfalfa and how the heck to read the results?!

Mikayala Schlick, Ward Labs

Ever feel like feed test results are written in a foreign language? You're not alone. In this hands-on session, we'll cover the right way to sample feedstuffs and alfalfa so your results are accurate and meaningful. Then, we'll break down lab reports step-by-step—turning confusing numbers and abbreviations into clear, actionable information you can actually use to make better feeding decisions. Whether you're new to feed testing or just want a refresher, you'll leave with practical tips, a better understanding of the science behind the numbers, and the confidence to make sense of any report that lands in your hands

She Built This, Women- Owned Ag Businesses, Panel Discussion

From pasture to product, women across agriculture are building thriving businesses that blend grit, creativity, and innovation. In this panel-style breakout, you'll hear from four inspiring women who have taken their agricultural roots and grown them into unique enterprises—two running direct-to-consumer beef and pork operations and two creating niche products through flower farming and handcrafted raw milk soap bars. They'll share their journeys, lessons learned, and the strategies that helped them turn ideas into profitable, sustainable ventures. Whether you're dreaming of diversifying your farm income or launching a new ag-based business, this session offers real-world insight and encouragement to build something of your own.

Kara Wondercheck, Wondercheck Farms; Melissa Doerr, Grackle Grove; Jordan Classen, Classen Land & Cattle- Mercantile; Trisha Bayne, Jewell Lane

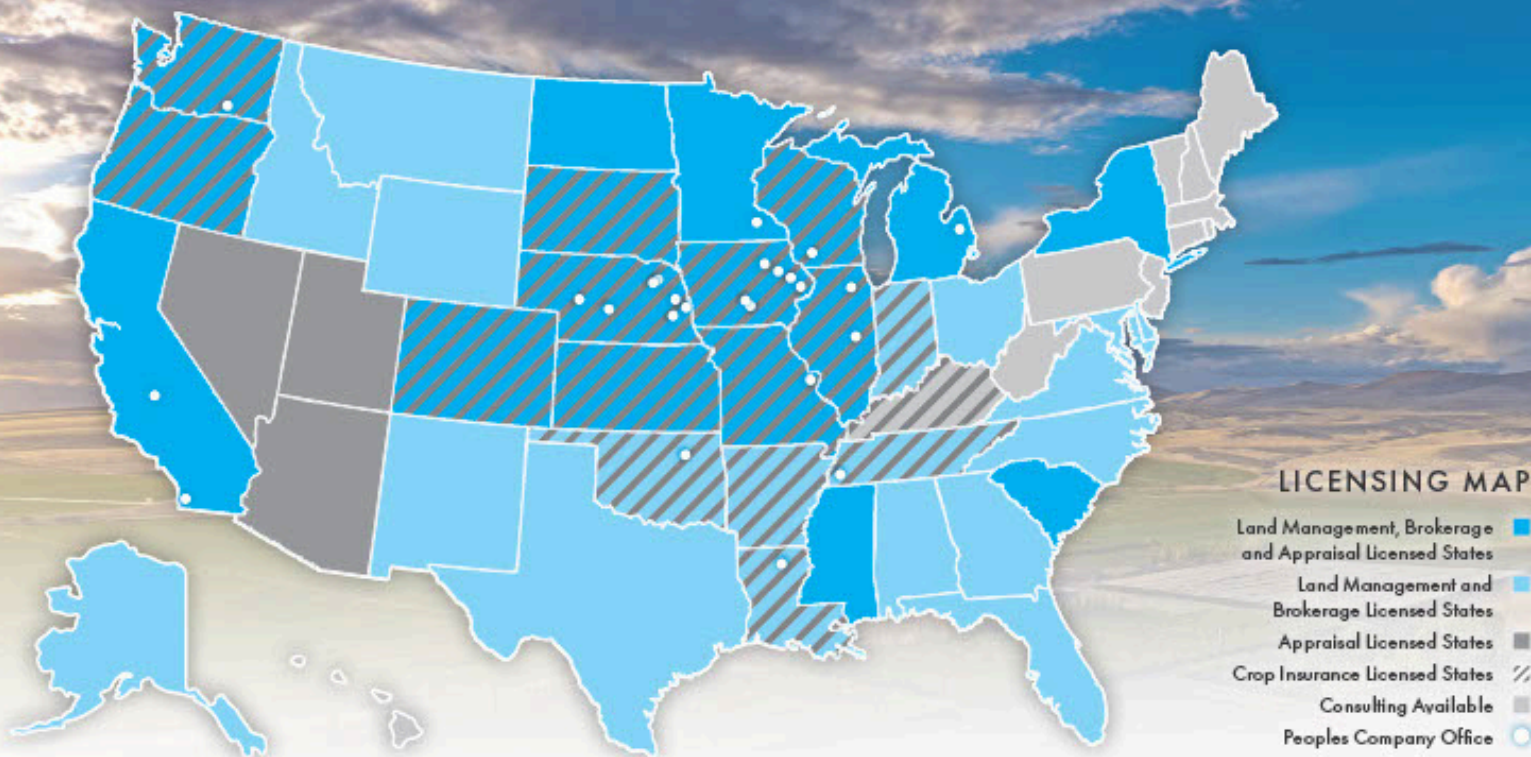
Theres a new accounting software in town: Ambrook

We've all heard of Quicken and QuickBooks—but what if there was an accounting tool built specifically for farmers and ranchers? Meet Ambrook, a next-generation platform that goes beyond bookkeeping to give you a clear picture of your operation's financial health. In this session, you'll see how Ambrook can simplify recordkeeping, track enterprise-level profitability, and help you make more informed business decisions. Whether you're a spreadsheet veteran or still keeping receipts in a shoebox, this is your chance to discover an ag-focused tool designed to work the way you do.

How to Save Your Farm From the 5 Most Common & Costly Mistakes, *Garrett Ruskamp, Owner Pioneer Farmer*

Farming isn't just about working the land—it's about making smart choices that keep the farm running for the next generation. In this down-to-earth session, we'll talk through five things that can really help—or hurt—your operation. From knowing your numbers to making big decisions with confidence, you'll walk away with practical tips to keep your family farm strong and sustainable.

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WHITE WORKSHOPS

Leaving A Legacy That Matters,

Shawn Beaudette, Lammlli, Locke, & Beaudette Attorneys At Law

Your farm is more than land and buildings—it's your life's work, your family's history, and your legacy. But how do you ensure it continues in the right hands, with your values and vision intact? This breakout session will explore practical tools and strategies for successful farm transition planning. Whether you're years away from retiring or in the middle of succession discussions, you'll walk away with actionable ideas to protect your legacy and set the next generation up for success.

Theres a new accounting software in town: Ambrook

We've all heard of Quicken and QuickBooks—but what if there was an accounting tool built specifically for farmers and ranchers? Meet Ambrook, a next-generation platform that goes beyond bookkeeping to give you a clear picture of your operation's financial health. In this session, you'll see how Ambrook can simplify recordkeeping, track enterprise-level profitability, and help you make more informed business decisions. Whether you're a spreadsheet veteran or still keeping receipts in a shoebox, this is your chance to discover an ag-focused tool designed to work the way you do.

Rural Mental Health: Tips & Tricks on dealing with Anxiety & Stress,

Laura Stoltz LMHP, LPC

Life in rural communities comes with unique challenges—unpredictable markets, long hours, and isolation can take a toll on your mental well-being. This session will provide practical, easy-to-use tools for managing anxiety and stress, tailored to the realities of rural life. You'll gain actionable strategies you can put into practice right away, along with a fresh perspective on why caring for your mental health is not just important—it's essential. Whether you're facing a busy season, navigating personal challenges, or simply wanting to build resilience, this session will help you take care of the most important part of your operation: you.

Farming Reimagined: Thinking Outside the Box with Regenerative Practices,

Junior Pfanstiel, Outside the Box Agronomy LLC

The future of farming isn't just about producing more—it's about producing better. This session dives into regenerative agriculture practices that restore soil health, improve water retention, boost biodiversity, and build resilience for generations to come. We'll explore real-world examples, practical techniques, and innovative ideas that you can start implementing right away—whether you manage 10 acres or 10,000. Designed for forward-thinking producers, landowners, and ag advocates, this conversation is about more than sustainability—it's about leaving the land better than we found it.

Clarify Your Message: Story-Driven Marketing

Halle Ramsey, UNL Engler

People don't buy the best products; they buy the products they understand. Whether you're selling farm-to-table beef, marketing a side business, or simply trying to communicate your value in your community, clarity is everything. In this session, participants will learn a story-driven framework for positioning their customer as the hero and themselves as the trusted guide.

Farm to Fork: The Meat in the Middle,

Katy Wolff, Ph.D., CommonGround Volunteer

Ever wonder what happens to livestock once they leave the farm? In this session, we'll take a behind the scenes look at the journey meat takes before it ever lands on a consumer's plate. From how animals are processed, to the difference between inspection and grading, we'll walk through the steps of slaughter, fabrication, and packaging at a commercial level. We will also cover food safety rules and regulations that protect consumers every day. Come curious and leave with a clearer picture of the meat industry and a new appreciation for the systems that keep food safe and accessible.



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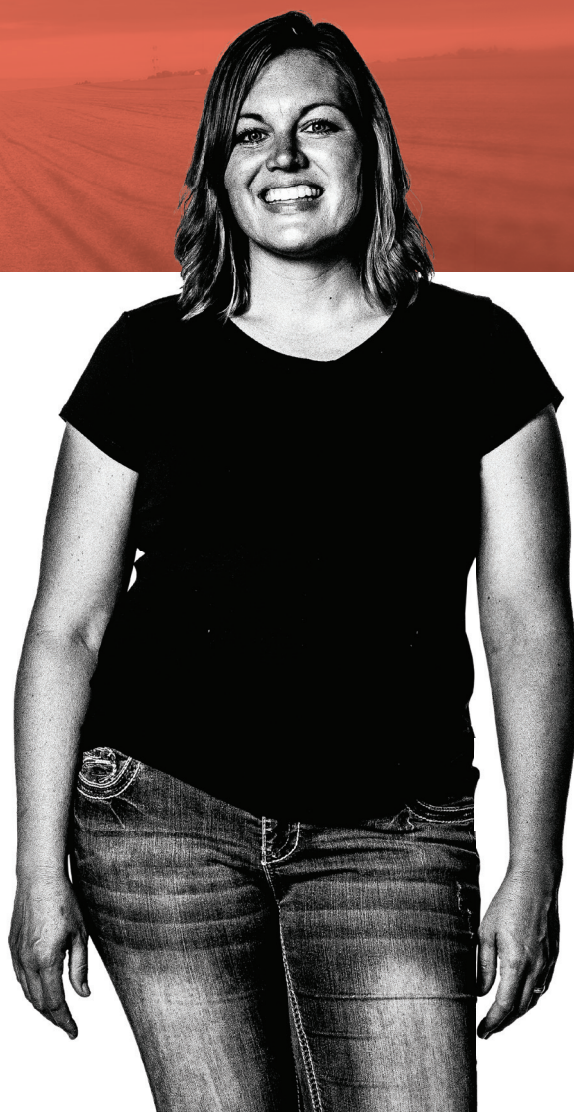
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I'M A
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FARMER

2024 SPOTLIGHT AWARD WINNER

Sarah Polacek



As we come together for this year's AgCeptional Conference, themed "Our Brand, Our Story," I'm honored to share this message with all of you who make this day so meaningful. This is a time to celebrate, connect, and engage in the conversations and stories that bring us together and inspire growth. Each of us brings our own brand, a personal journey, and our own story. Let's embrace it, honor it, and celebrate!

This event unites us around our shared passion for agriculture, it serves as a powerful reminder of the relationships, values, and experiences that define our agriculture community and it reminds us that we are more than farmers, ranchers and individuals in agriculture, we are friends, neighbors, mentors, and supporters, connected by a common purpose and a deep respect for the land, the work, and each other.

Over the years, I've witnessed countless moments at this conference that have stayed with me from the smiles exchanged between friends, laughter filling the room, tears shed in moments of recognition, and heartfelt embraces that speak volumes without a word. These moments reflect the authenticity, care, and strength that define who each of us are.

Having the opportunity to return to this conference year after year has deepened my appreciation for the values we uphold from hard work, humility, resilience, and connection. I leave each year feeling reenergized and reminded of why this work matters.

When I attended the AgCeptional Conference in 2010, I had the privilege of witnessing Bonnie Schultz receive the AgCeptional Award as its very first recipient. Bonnie was one of my instructors during my time as a student in the Agriculture Department at Northeast Community College, and I remember feeling deeply moved in that moment, both emotional and inspired. It was more than a celebration of her accomplishments, it was a powerful testament to the impact of hard work, passion, mentorship, and dedication to agriculture. I remember sitting there thinking what an incredible honor this was, and how meaningful it must be to know that your work makes a difference in the lives you have reached. I quietly wondered what it might feel like to receive such recognition one day, but at the time, it felt like a distant dream, something reserved for truly remarkable individuals whose impact reached far and wide.

Fast forward 14 years, and I was completely overwhelmed when my coworkers, husband, and friends surprised me with the AgCeptional Spotlight award in 2024. I was in disbelief as my first response was, "No, it can't be me." As the moment sank in, I felt deeply honored and found myself reflecting on how what once felt like a distant dream had now become reality.

I also found myself pondering not only on that moment, but about the many inspiring individuals I get to share this honor with, individuals like Karen Grant, Lisa Lunz and Hilary Miracle to name a few, whose stories and contributions continue to shape the agricultural landscape in powerful ways. Each of them has reminded me of the strength, resilience, and passion that defines who we are in the agricultural community. Thank you. The recognition was humbling and I'm incredibly grateful to be part of a community that celebrates the work and dedication of those in agriculture.

In my role as a 4-H educator, I'm fortunate to have the opportunity to share my own story while also learning from the stories of the youth, families, and community members I work with. Every interaction, whether it's a conversation at a county fair, a school enrichment program in a classroom, or a moment of encouragement adds meaning and purpose to the work I do. It reminds me that impact isn't always loud or immediate, but it's often built slowly, through relationships, consistency, and a genuine desire to serve and advocate for agriculture.

Being part of this community and witnessing the recognition of those who have given so much of themselves to agriculture continues to inspire me. It's a reminder that every story matters, and that the work we do, however ordinary it may feel, does leave a lasting mark, a brand that holds true to who we are and what we stand for. You are all AgCeptional!

Finally, I am deeply grateful for the unwavering support and love from my husband, Jeremy, whose belief in me often exceeds my own. His encouragement has been a constant source of strength. To my three children, thank you for your love, patience, and understanding. It's exciting to witness their love for agriculture each and every day. I appreciate the love they give in every hug they share. I'm also incredibly thankful for the support of my family, friends and colleagues. Their kindness, encouragement, and presence in my life mean more than words can express. Thank you all for walking alongside me on this journey.

Lastly, I'm beyond proud to celebrate the 2025 AgCeptional Spotlight Award recipient. This moment moved me in ways I didn't expect and was an unforgettable experience. Truly enjoy the moment and from the bottom of my heart, Congratulations!



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The organization's top focus is to provide technical assistance and educational opportunities on grazing land management and land stewardship.

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6-10 a.m.



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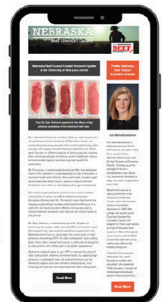
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