

**2026 WPVGA & UW Division of Extension, Grower Education Conference**  
**Tuesday, February 3, 2026**  
**Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, Stevens Point WI**

Time	General Session - Expo 1 and 2		
7:30 - 8:20 am	Registration & Visit Associate Division Industry Show (Show open 8:00am)		
8:20 - 8:30 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks - <b>Mr. Tamas Houlihan, Executive Director, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, Antigo, WI</b>		
8:30 - 9:00 am	Breeding for Disease Resistance, Shape, Flavor and Nitrate Dynamics in Beet, Carrot and Onion - <b>Dr. Irwin Goldman, Professor and KWS Chair, Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences, Madison, WI</b>		
9:00 - 9:30 am	U.S. Agricultural Policy Updates: Implications for Farm Economics and Conservation - <b>Dr. Jeff Hadachek, Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, University of WI, Madison, WI</b>		
9:30 - 10:30 am	Morning Break - Visit Exhibit Hall/Poster Session		
10:30 - 11:00 am	Partnership in Practice: McCain's Regenerative Agriculture Journey in Wisconsin - <b>Ms. Kelly Verhaalen, Agronomist &amp; Ms. Chelsea Zegler, North American Agronomy and Sustainability Manager, McCain Foods, Plover, WI</b>		
11:00 - 11:30 am	The Conservation of Endangered Species and Agricultural Working Lands: What does success look like? - <b>Ms. Sarah Warner, Pesticides and Species Conservation Biologist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Madison, WI</b>		
11:30am - 12:00pm	The Evolving Role of Extension in a Changing Agricultural Environment - <b>Dr. Karl Martin, Dean of the Division of Extension, University of WI, Madison, WI</b>		
12:00 - 1:15 pm	Lunch Break: WPVGA Awards		
Breakout Sessions	Expo 1 - Agricultural Fundamentals (101)	Expo 2 - Disease and Pest Management	Woodland/Trillium - Rural Partnerships Symposia
1:30 - 1:50 pm	<b>Yi Wang</b> - Potato Irrigation Management	<b>Richard Lankau</b> - Can We Use the Soil Microbiome to Predict Fumigation Efficacy?	<b>Aseem Singh</b> - Driving Efficiency and Sustainability: Results from Multi-Year Nitrogen Trials in Central Wisconsin
1:50 - 2:10 pm	<b>Paul Mitchell</b> - Partial Budget Analysis	<b>Emma Terris</b> - Investigating how Landscape and Gene Expression Shape Colorado potato beetle Cross-Resistance	<b>Guolong Liang</b> - Quantifying Nitrate Leaching: Baby Step to Ninja Level
2:10 - 2:30 pm	<b>Amanda Gevens</b> - Potato Disease Basics: From Seed to Storage	<b>Maria Caraza-Harter</b> - Breeding for Resistance to the Colorado Potato Beetle	<b>Clare Doss &amp; Matt Ruark</b> - Nitrogen Mineralization Patterns and Crop Rotations
2:30 - 3:30 pm	Afternoon Break - Visit Exhibit Hall/Poster Session		
Breakout Sessions	Expo 1 - Agricultural Fundamentals (101)	Expo 2 - Bringing Value to Ag	Woodland/Trillium - Nutrient Management
3:30 - 3:50 pm	<b>Russ Groves</b> - Scouting and Thresholds for CPB, Aphids and Leafhoppers	<b>3:30 Christopher Hasse, Excel Engineering</b> - Benefits of Soil Moisture Sensors for Irrigation Management  <b>3:45 Aida Bise &amp; Sarah Agena, Noble Community Clinics</b> - Healthy Communities, Healthy Workforce: Bringing Value to Agriculture through Accessible Rural Health Care  <b>4:00 Tony Solis, Thunderstruck Farms</b> - Practical Fabrication Solutions for Farm Efficiency  <b>4:15 Liga Astra Kalnina, VM Agritech</b> - New Product: Curezin® A New Broad-Spectrum Fungicide	<b>Paul Mitchell</b> - Economics of Nutrient Management and Nutrient Loss
3:50 - 4:10 pm	<b>Matt Ruark</b> - Fertility Fundamentals		<b>Francisco Arriaga and Evan Freed</b> - Patterns of Nitrate and Contaminant Leachate
4:10 - 4:30 pm	<b>Jeff Endelman</b> - Potato Breeding and Genetics		<b>Steven Hall</b> - Testing Unconventional Practices to Decrease Nitrate Leaching from Potato
4:30 - 8:00 pm	Wisconsin Seed Potato Improvement Association and WPVGA Associate Division Reception		

# 2026 WPVGA & UW Division of Extension, Grower Education Conference

Wednesday, February 4, 2026

Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, Stevens Point WI

Time	General Session - Expo 1 and 2		
7:30 - 8:15 am	<b>Registration &amp; Visit Associate Division Industry Show (Show open 8:00am)</b>		
8:15 - 9:00 am	Potatoes USA - Delivering Flavor: How Potatoes USA is Driving Demand through Culinary Innovation - <b>Chef RJ Harvey, RDN CEC, Culinary Director, Potatoes USA, Denver, CO</b>		
9:00 - 9:30 am	Healthy Grown for Whole Farm Management; Historic Success and Future Trajectory - <b>Mr. Jeb Barzen, Ecologist, Private Lands Conservation, LLC and Mr. Andy Diercks, Vice President, Coloma Farms, Coloma, WI</b>		
9:30 - 10:00 am	Distinguishing and Managing Potato Tuber Blemish Pathogens - <b>Dr. Amanda Gevens, Professor and Associate Department Chair, Department of Plant Pathology, University of WI, Madison, WI</b>		
10:00 - 11:00 am	<b>Morning Break - Visit Exhibit Hall/Poster Session</b>		
11:00 - 11:30 am	Aerial Application Technology; Past, Present and Future - <b>Mr. Damon Reabe, Owner, Reabe Spraying Service, Plover, WI</b>		
11:30am - 12:00pm	WPVGA/State Legislative Issues Update - <b>Ms. Jordan Lamb, Attorney, The Welch Group</b>		
12:00 - 1:15 pm	<b>Lunch Break</b> National Potato Council Update - <b>Mike Wenkel, Chief Operating Officer, National Potato Council, Washington, DC</b>		
Breakout Sessions	Expo 1 - Potato Storage and Varieties	Expo 2 - Crop Health	Woodland/Trillium - Wisconsin Muck Meeting
1:30 - 1:50 pm	<b>Todd Forbush</b> - Impact of the AIM Act on Potato Storage Refrigeration	<b>Inna Popova</b> - Development of Plant-Based Pesticides for Crop Protection	<b>Dr. Mike Thornton</b> - Onion Development and Abiotic Factors (Smoke) That Influence Crop Health
1:50 - 2:10 pm	<b>Deana Knuteson</b> - Healthy Grown-Expanding Markets and Increasing Acres	<b>Sean Schoville</b> - Factors Influencing Colorado Potato Beetle Abundance and Insecticide Resistance	
2:10 - 2:30 pm	<b>Amber Walker</b> - Update on Elite Potato Varieties Grown in Central Wisconsin and Associated Storage Success at the UW Storage Research Facility	<b>Wynne Aldrich</b> - Innovation Hub: Building Resilient Potato Fields through Fumigation Alternatives and Soil Health	<b>Dr. Amanda Gevens</b> - Peeling Back the Program: What's Working for Onion Disease Control
2:30 - 3:30 pm	<b>Afternoon Break - Visit Exhibit Hall/Poster Session</b>		
Breakout Sessions	Expo 1 - Disease and Pest Management	Expo 2 - Water Use and Quality	Woodland/Trillium - Wisconsin Muck Meeting
3:30 - 3:50 pm	<b>Peter DiGennaro</b> - Screening Potato Cultivars Against Nematodes and Nitrogen	<b>Mallika Nocco and Logan Ebert</b> - Advancing Evapotranspiration Estimates in Central Wisconsin	<b>Dr. Matt Ruark</b> - Managing Nutrients on Muck Soils
3:50 - 4:10 pm	<b>Dennis Halterman</b> - Breeding for Early Blight Resistance in Potato	<b>Erika Borgardt and Kevin Hedinger</b> - Evaluation of Nitrate Leaching and Groundwater Recharge: Work in Progress	
4:10 - 4:30 pm	<b>Aurelie Rakotondrafara</b> - Plant Viruses: Can they be beneficial to the plants?	<b>Chuck Bolte</b> - When Water Flows on the Antigo Flats - What Happens?	<b>Dr. Jed Colquhoun</b> - Precision Weed Management in Muck Grown Onion
<b>5:15 p.m. Social Hour   6:00 p.m. WPVGA Associate Division Banquet</b>			

**2026 WPVGA & UW Division of Extension, Grower Education Conference**  
**Thursday, February 5, 2026**  
**Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, Stevens Point WI**

Time	General Session - Expo 1 and 2
8:00 - 8:30 am	Potato Breeding and Genetics - <b>Jeff Endelman, Professor, Department of Plant &amp; Agroecosystem Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
8:30 - 9:00 am	Updates on Potato Foliar Disease Management in Wisconsin – <b>Amanda Gevens, Professor and Associate Chairperson, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
9:00 - 9:30 am	Looking to the Future: Seed Potato Testing Advancements - <b>Brooke Babler, Associate Research Program Director, WSPCP Program, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
9:30 - 10:00 am	Neonicotinoid Alternatives; Management Programs to Limit CPB and Colonizing Aphids - <b>Russ Groves, Professor and Associate Chairperson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
10:00 - 10:15 am	<b>Morning Break</b>
10:15 - 10:45 am	A Look into the Future of Potato Weed Management - <b>Jed Colquhoun, Professor, Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
10:45 - 11:15 am	Artificial Intelligence-Driven Technologies for Sustainable Potato Production – <b>Yi Wang, Associate Professor, Department of Plant and Agroecosystem Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
11:15 - 11:45 am	How Late is Too Late for Nitrogen? - <b>Matt Ruark, Professor, BCS Chair and Dairy Innovation HUB Director, Department of Soil Science and Environmental Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison</b>
11:45am - 12:00pm	Thank You and Concluding Remarks - <b>Tamas Houlihan, Executive Director, Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association</b>
12:00 pm	<b>Adjourn - Thanks for your Attendance and Participation</b>
12:30 pm	<b>WPVGA Annual Meeting</b>

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