

## Vardges Hovhannisyan

*Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics*

At the University of Wyoming, I teach Agribusiness Marketing (AGEC 4050), Agricultural Finance (4500), and Consumer Behavior and Price Analysis (5740). In my experience, the most successful classes are those in which there is a high level of student participation. My teaching strategy is to encourage classroom participation by carefully organizing each lecture. With clear organization, students are more likely to believe they understand the framework of the class and will therefore be willing to ask questions about sections they do not understand. Through my teaching experience I have come to realize that teaching is also a learning experience. I learn from students who have the freedom to explore and to think about problems in new ways and bring fresh ideas to the table.

A native of Armenia, I received my BS and MS degrees from the Armenian State University of Economics and the Armenian National Agrarian University, respectively. While working on my MS degree, I also worked as a Lecturer at the Agribusiness Teaching Center (ATC). Here I had the opportunity to teach Marketing of Agricultural Products, Agribusiness Management, Agricultural Economics, Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. The ATC is a unique educational program in Armenia established by the USDA, Texas A&M University, and Armenian State Agrarian University (<http://icare.am/atc/>). This program is western-structured, English-taught and offers bachelors and masters degrees in Agribusiness.

During my time at the ATC, I travelled worldwide, participated in various international conferences and became more interested in a research/academic career. I took my PhD in agricultural and applied economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison specializing in industrial organization of food marketing systems and consumer economics. My dissertation addresses the renewed concerns about the potential for the exercise of market power by large agribusinesses and food retailers in the face of continued rise in retail concentration. I also worked as a Research Fellow in the Department of Applied Economics at the University of Minnesota before moving to the University of Wyoming in August 2015.

While holding a faculty position at the ATC, I had the opportunity to work closely with many agribusinesses in Armenia, such as wineries, fruit and vegetable processors, cheese makers, and water bottlers. I provided them with marketing assistance in the form of market research concerning import substitution development and export marketing. Furthermore, I reached out to dairy marketing cooperatives operating in remote regions of Armenia. Specifically, I delivered a series of lectures to dairy farmers with the goal of alleviating some of the fundamental problems regarding different aspects of food production and marketing. Also, I placed many of the ATC students in internship programs with these agribusinesses and dairy cooperatives, where the students had a great opportunity to obtain hands-on experience about the daily operations of these businesses.



Some of my current research projects at the University of Wyoming focus on market power in the US food retail industry, retail cost pass-through in the food marketing system, consumer food demand and food preference changes in China, household demand for horticultural products in the US, and cigarette demand and its dynamics in the US. In the near future, I plan on exploring new fields relating to consumer choice and health outcomes, farm productivity and sustainability analysis, as well as Wyoming-specific problems such as food deserts and implications thereof for consumer welfare. My publications have appeared in *Agribusiness: an International Journal*, *Agricultural Economics*, *American Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, *Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics*, and *Journal of Dairy Science*. ■

*Dr. Hovhannisyan can be reached at (307) 766-2386 and [vhovhann@uwyo.edu](mailto:vhovhann@uwyo.edu).*



# Student

## Profiles of AgEcon

In the Agricultural and Applied Economics Department, we're very proud of our students. In this special section we're profiling those who were awarded scholarships for the 2016 Brand of Excellence banquet. 49 scholarships were awarded to ag business majors, and we asked some awardees to respond to four questions. As you'll see, there is plenty of achievement, dedication and enthusiasm. As alumni and stakeholders, it is your contributions that support these students' fine efforts.

— Don McLeod, Interim Head,  
Agricultural and  
Applied Economics

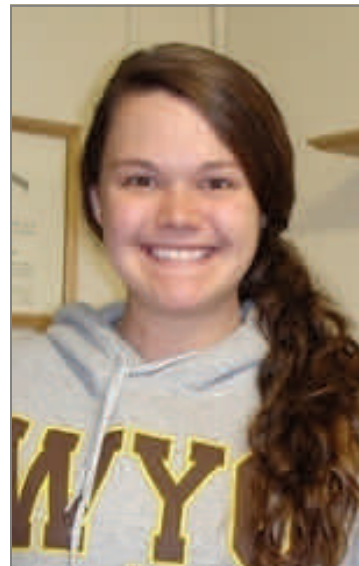
### Shelby Gaddis: The Amanda and Oscar Schmale Scholarship

**What is your background? Where are you from?** I come from a small-town agricultural background, in Conyers, Georgia, where most people (including my family) farmed for personal reasons only. Growing up, our primary source of food came from my grandfather's garden that we all pitched in to harvest. We canned and froze our fruits and vegetables so we could have them throughout the winter when the garden was dormant.

**What would you like to do with your life?** I would like to work as an agronomist for an agricultural cooperative. Supplying farmers with the materials they need in order to provide for sustenance for our country is a vital role that cannot be overlooked or discounted.

**Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** I chose Ag Business at the University of Wyoming because I potentially wanted to work with ranchers rather than farmers. Since becoming a part of the UW family, I've realized my passion is truly driven by the correlation of my family background in farming.

**What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** The class that has intrigued me the most while being at UW is *Forage Crop Science* (PLNT 4700) taught by Dr. Islam. This was one of my first classes I took upon coming to UW, and it was such a great introduction to agronomic concepts. It really aided me in discovering my niche within the world of agriculture. ■



### Selena Gerace: Andrew and Connie Vanvig Graduate Scholarship



I was born and raised in Mt. Shasta, California. I went to Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington for my undergraduate degree and majored in Politics. After that I lived and worked in various parts of Oregon and Washington (mostly, Eugene, Oregon and Orcas Island, Washington).

After graduating, I plan to pursue my interest in facilitation and collaborative problem solving of environmental and natural resource issues.

I chose AgEcon at UW because a good friend of mine (Anna Scofield) graduated from this program and had a great experience. I have long been interested in economics and agricultural issues and when I decided I wanted to go back to school, Anna highly recommended AgEcon at UW.

In addition to my studies, I am also teaching an introductory class on Farm and Ranch Business Management this semester, which is proving to be one of the most gratifying experiences of my graduate school career. I am learning a lot about farming, ranching and teaching. ■

### Chelsea Anglen: UW Jack Radichal Scholarship

1. I am from the small town of Fort Bridger, Wyoming where I was born and raised on a Commercial Cattle Ranch. I love the Ag industry and what it has taught me.

2. I would like to be a veterinary pharmaceutical sales representative.

3. Wyoming has always been home and I am a couple generations in at UW and figured I would continue the tradition, and Wyoming has a lot to teach a person.

4. The ability that UW has to be able to let students have hands-on experiences inside and

outside of classes, and the real life lessons that are learned. ■





# Showcase



## Scholarship Awardees

### Emily Sikorski: Harris International Research Endowment

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I spent most of my childhood on a farm in Western North Dakota, but moved to Pinedale, Wyoming when I was 12. I attended school there until my high school graduation in 2013. I have always been surrounded by farming and other agricultural activities.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** I have a passion for agriculture, especially international agriculture. I hope to find a job that allows me to be actively involved with international agricultural activities. I am currently searching for a job in the corporate agriculture industry. One day I hope to own my own business, working both domestically and abroad.

**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** Agricultural Business (International Agriculture concentration) was exactly what I was looking for in a college major. It integrates economics, agriculture, foreign languages, politics, and a variety of other fields of study that I find fascinating. Throughout my time at UW I have found that this interdisciplinary nature of the major as well as its integration of theoretical and real-world elements keep my studies consistently interesting. Another major factor for my choosing a major in the department of Ag & Applied Economics was the enthusiasm and helpfulness of many faculty members within the department. It is a fantastic department filled with individuals that care about each student's success.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** I have taken many intriguing classes while at UW. Several of the most notable include Nicole Ballenger's *International Ag Trade, Markets & Policy*; Chian Ritten's *Gender, Race & Economics*; Justina Floy's *Agricultural Law* class; and Mary Katherine Scott's *Literature of the Americas*. Perhaps the most beneficial experiences that I have had during my education at UW have been my experiences abroad. Since coming to college, I have had the privilege to travel abroad (for course credit) three times. I completed two summer research projects (one in the Yucatan, Mexico and one near Lake Atitlan in Guatemala) and spent one semester studying economics in Utrecht, Netherlands. I enjoyed each of these experiences immensely and found them incredibly enriching, both academically and personally. ■



### Lindsey Soule: Farm Credit Services of America Land-Grant Scholarship

**1.** I grew up on a farm and ranch in Harrisburg, Nebraska. We run a cow-calf operation and farm millet and wheat. I love where I come from and am glad to have been raised in such an environment as I learned what work ethic was, and how to become responsible even for things that weren't entirely your fault. I learned that if something didn't go your way, then you better not stop: there is always a way, just search for it. I was taught that working hard will get you where you want to be in life and that's exactly what I am doing. I am working full-time while attending school full-time in order to better my education and secure a career that will give enjoyment and last a lifetime.

**2.** After graduation I would like to work for either Farm Service Agency or Farm Credit Services of America. I am very interested in helping people in agriculture and I enjoy trying to help people make the best of financial situations, as I am an agriculture business management major with a minor in finance.

**3.** I chose ag-business at UW because within the major there are so many opportunities for jobs after graduation. I wanted flexibility on what I could possibly make my career. Choosing this major has opened so many doors into careers that I believe I would enjoy.

**4.** I would have to say the class that intrigued me the most was John Ritten's *Advanced Farm and Ranch Management* class. I had no clue what to expect when I signed up for that class, and I would have to add that it was probably the hardest yet most satisfying class I have taken in my time at the University of Wyoming. I thought all the things he taught us in that class would be very useful in the career that I choose, and if I don't use it in my professional career, then I can use it in my personal operations on the farm and ranch. There are so many management decisions that get overlooked if you don't have the basis of this class. This class also tied everything that I had learned in my time at UW together. ■





# UW

# Student

## Profiles of AgEcon

### Holly Dyer: Mary Mead Graduate Fellowship for Women in Agriculture

1. I am from Logan, Utah. Growing up, I have always been drawn to the lifestyle and work of farms and ranches although none of my immediate family members worked in agriculture. However, hearing stories about my great grandfather's successful turkey farm (now cattle ranch) in Missouri and my other grandfather's greenhouse business intrigued me to learn more about the agricultural industry. I started my undergraduate career studying business administration at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. After a couple years there, I decided to take a gap year and do some volunteer work around Europe. Upon my return to the States, I transferred to Utah State University in Logan and received my bachelor's in Environmental and Natural Resource Economics from their College of Ag.



2. After graduate school I hope to work in agriculture or natural resource management. With a career in resource management as an Extension agent or for a conservation district, I hope to improve conservation policy to better fit producer needs. I also hope to explore water rights and economic policy by getting my feet wet (pun intended) as a research associate for a water brokerage firm or an environmental consulting company.

3. AgEcon at UW chose me. While I was searching for potential fellowships or internships available after I completed my summer job as a wrangler, I was forwarded an announcement from a former professor at USU saying Dr. Ritten at UW was in need of a student. I came to visit, learned more about the thesis topic, and decided it was too good of an opportunity to pass up!

4. The friendships I have made with my fellow classmates along with the support from the AgEcon faculty have made my time at UW incomparable to any other program imaginable. The strong sense of community within the AgEcon department has not only pushed me academically, but continues to inspire me to chase dream jobs, question the world we live in, and have fun while working hard to make a difference. ■

### Logan Case: The Amanda and Oscar Schmale Scholarship

1. **What is your background? Where are you from?** Being born in Southwestern Idaho, agriculture was instilled in my lifestyle at a very young age. Working the family farm/ranch outside of Wilder, Idaho was, and still is, the main focus of my time spent in Idaho. The area in which I live in while in Idaho is one of very high agriculture production. There was always work to be done whether on the family place or a neighboring farm/ranch. I attended high school in Parma, Idaho where I was a highly competitive wrestler and held several leadership positions, including Student Body President. I started taking college credit classes throughout high school, many of which were ag-oriented. A successful wrestling program at UW got my attention and although I didn't become a UW wrestler, I found myself just as intrigued by the ag program offered.



2. **What would you like to do with your life?** As no one can really be sure what the future holds, I can only plan to the best of my ability and see where God guides me. I plan to start a career with a larger agricultural company, such as Simplot or Seminis Seeds, and do my best to apply the principles and practices I learned in my college studies to contribute to my community. I hope to someday return to the Treasure Valley of Idaho where I can

continue a career and raise a family.

3. **Why did you choose Ag Business at UW?** I have a strong passion for agriculture and industries within, and this passion brought me to commit to an Ag Business degree at the university. I would like to use this degree field to contribute to the ag world, and more specifically a larger agricultural company.

4. **What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** As challenging as it was for me, I found Advanced Farm/Ranch Management to be a very useful class. From finding the most efficient level of production to determining where to allocate resources to become the most profitable in a business, this class brought it all. A valuable part of my experience at UW has been the many supportive connections made with faculty and students. ■

### Taylor Kirkbride: Henry Petz Scholarship Fund and Farm Credit Services of America Land-Grant Scholarship

I am from Meriden, Wyoming where I grew up on the family ranch. Regarding my future, what I do know is that I want to be involved in agriculture because it is a passion of mine. I'm not quite sure if that will mean working at the production level, in the government, or for agriculturally-based companies. I could see myself promoting agriculture and helping people in all three.



I chose AgBusiness because I have always been good with numbers, and economic concepts are very interesting to me. I chose Wyoming as the place for my education because many family members are alumni and I knew that the College of Agriculture here was a quality program. Many classes have been intriguing to me during my time at the University of Wyoming. I would have to say that my top three classes would be

*Agribusiness Management (AGEC 4060), International Ag Trade, Markets and Policy (AGEC 4880), and Community Economic Development (AGEC 4660).* ■





# Showcase



## Scholarship Awardees

### Sachintha Mendis: Glenn P Roehrkasse Scholarship

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I'm from Hambantota, a city in the Southern Coastal Region of Sri Lanka. I received my Bachelor's degree in Agriculture with a specialization in Agribusiness Management from Wayamba University of Sri Lanka and then worked as a research assistant while doing a M.Phil. in Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agribusiness Management, Wayamba University.



**2. What would you like to do with your life?** I understand that there is an immense pool of knowledge yet to be researched especially in a developing nation's context. Thus, I plan to pursue a PhD as it will provide a strong foundation for me to thrive and conduct fruitful researches in the future and to become a researcher/academic with a strong potential to address areas with issues and improve agriculture, agribusiness and households conditions especially in the sector of food business. Apart from that, I have a long list of attractions around the world which I want to travel and explore one day.

**3. Why did you choose AgEcon at UW?** When I was short listing universities to apply to, I heard that UW offers one of the best AgEcon programs in the US. Further, I got to know about the potential research areas I could work on in UW, the friendliness of staff, the pleasant studying/working environment, the facilities provided by the university, etc. Also, because I'm from the tropics, I wanted to move to a place where I could experience winter as well.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** Learning more about the application of economic theories in real world and squeezing day-to-day situations into models are very interesting. While the economics-related courses provide the foundation of identifying those situations, statistics related subjects improve the skills of analyzing. I think I'm so fortunate that I was advised to try a Minor in Statistics by Prof. Rashford. ■

### Maira Bunker: Woodrow and Glyda May Scholarship and Student Enrichment Fund

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I grew up on a farm/ranch in the small community of Wheatland, Wyoming, the youngest of seven children. My mother operated the beef production operation while my father managed the Brown



Company, a farm equipment dealership. Living in a small town and growing up in the country offered opportunities and privileges not found in town and for that I am grateful and hope I can give my future family the same.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** I would like to return to Wheatland to help run and hopefully some day co-manage Brown Company with my brother-in-law as well as help with other business ventures such as the family farm, my partner's ice business and maybe even book keeping for his plumbing business. I would like to be able to offer my children the same opportunities I was given and help others in need.

**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** As a fourth generation agriculturalist, I learned many life lessons growing up and wanted to continue my education in something pertaining to the family businesses to help them grow and grant me the opportunity to raise my children in the agricultural lifestyle. Being at UW afforded me the pleasure of going home to help with farm and ranch duties.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** I loved *Ag Banking and Finance* as it has helped me understand just how much it takes to make sure operations continue to function. *Feeds and Feeding* was also valuable to me as my family custom feeds cattle in addition to our own. The connections made in my ag classes will be valuable down the road. ■





# UW

# Student

## Profiles of AgEcon

### Catelyn Cornils: CHS University Scholarship and the A F Vass Memorial

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I grew up on the family farm and ranch in Western Nebraska that was homesteaded by my great-grandfather in 1909.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** After college graduation, I hope to get a job that I enjoy and that can challenge me, but that will allow me to be a productive member of society, perhaps at a local bank or farm credit agency that will allow me to help the farmers in my local community to thrive and grow. I would like to find a job that is close to home because I would like to help my father on the family farm in Nebraska.



**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources best suited my interests of business and agriculture. I find business to be fascinating. I love numbers and the financial fields. However, growing up on the family farm, I have become to develop a passion and love for agriculture as well. Majoring in agricultural business at the University of Wyoming allows me to combine and pursue both of these interests.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** I believe that the whole college experience has been valuable in my life. I have learned so much while attending the University of Wyoming, both inside and outside of the classroom. Each class I have taken I believe will help me in my future endeavors, from learning how to keep track of my personal finances to being able to understand the commodities and futures market. Going to college has forced me to come out of my shell. I have gained more confidence, not only in myself, but also in the decisions I make. College has also forced me to grow up. The discipline I have developed will be useful for the rest of my life. It has showed me that if you work hard and put forth the effort, your devotion and time will pay off in the end. I am thankful that I chose the University of Wyoming to continue my education, as the experience I have had and the things I have learned have molded me into a well-rounded adult. ■

### Tevyn Baldwin: Hyatt Memorial and National Western Courtney Davis Memorial Honoring Clifford Hansen

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I grew up on a farm/ranch in the Panhandle of Nebraska. My parents have a cow/calf operation with several center pivots on which they raise annual forage, sugar beets, and corn.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** After graduation I will be working for Platte Valley Bank in Scottsbluff, Nebraska as a Credit Analyst and training to be an Ag Loan Officer. I also plan to take a more active role in helping on my parents' ranch. I would like to eventually take over the operation or start out on my own.

**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** I started as a double major in Rangeland Ecology and AgBusiness at UW, but I came to learn that while I had an interest in range, my true passion lies with farm/ranch management.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** The best class I have taken at UW was *Rural Banking*, taught by Bill Biles. I thoroughly enjoyed the course and learned more than I have in any other class. The year I took this class was the turning point when I realized that I had a real interest in ag lending and began considering it as a future career. ■





# Showcase



# UW



## Scholarship Awardees

### Kaila Willis: Joe and Arlene Watt Agriculture Scholarship

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I grew up and continue to work on my family's cattle ranch located between Laramie and Wheatland. My three siblings and I attended school in Wheatland. I went on to Sheridan College for my first two years, where I played basketball, before transferring to UW.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** I don't have a chosen career path yet, but I will be starting the Ag Econ graduate program here at the University next semester. I would like to stay in the Wyoming and Colorado region, so I hope to create more career opportunities with the completion of grad school.

**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** I was undeclared when I transferred here after Sheridan, but with my ranching background I took a few ag classes. I considered majoring in Business or Finance, but decided I wanted to incorporate the ag side of business, finally landing on AgBusiness.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** One of my first ag classes I took at UW was *Feeds and Feeding*, which was what got me interested into declaring an ag major. It opened me up to the ag college, proving to be the place I wanted to be. ■



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### James Sturgeon: Andrew and Connie Vanvig Scholarship

**1. What is your background? Where are you from?** I am from a ranch near Garrett, Wyoming in the northern part of Albany County. I went to a rural school in Garrett first upon attending high school in Wheatland. After getting my associates degree in Ag Business with an Animal Science option from Eastern Wyoming College in Torrington, I came here to the University of Wyoming to get my four-year degree.

**2. What would you like to do with your life?** I plan to continue to work on the home ranch after college to start with. My college degree will hopefully give me well-rounded knowledge to help me out there. The AgBusiness degree also provides an outlet to fall back on, as I am interested in most agriculture-oriented professions. It looked to be a good option.

**3. Why did you choose AgBusiness at UW?** The program looked to be a very helpful one to get me started in AgBusiness. AgBusiness is closely related to my interest in the business side of agriculture on top of my interest for working in production agriculture. The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources is also very friendly and they seem to cater very intensively to the success of their students.

**4. What has been a class that intrigued you, or something that you found valuable in your time at UW?** Since I am a transfer student and this is my first semester here, I really haven't been here long enough to find out what I have found intriguing or valuable, but I do like the atmosphere of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. I am looking forward to taking the *Ag Commodities and Futures Trading* class that is offered next semester. Mostly I am interested in agriculture in general and all classes involved, but I am really into looking at economics and its applied form in ag economics. ■



# *In the Margins*

University of Wyoming  
Agricultural and Applied Economics, Dept. 3354  
1000 E. University Ave.  
Laramie, WY 82071

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## Leadership Change

Department Head Roger Coupal is on sabbatical leave for the fall 2016 semester and will be stepping down from the Head position in mid-2017 to pursue his community development research/teaching interests as a member of the faculty.

A new department head will be named soon to fill the position, likely beginning in fall 2017. Owing to the poor budget situation at UW, only internal candidates are being considered.

In the meantime, Professor Don McLeod is Interim Department Head. He may be reached at [dmcleod@uwyo.edu](mailto:dmcleod@uwyo.edu) or (307) 766-3116. ■

## Purdy Selected

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) welcomed eleven students to the 2016 Annual Meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, in September as part of NASDA's Next Generation Program. AgBusiness senior Rachel Purdy was there.

The program is a one-of-a-kind opportunity for collegiate students to learn about ag policy and public service careers.

"NASDA was an incredible experience. I interacted with and learned from leaders that are shaping agricultural policy for our country," said Purdy. She attended a forum on the aging population in ag and steps to resolve this issue and increase interest in agriculture, and visited the CLAAS plant at which the LEXION combines for the US and Canada are assembled. "The efficiency of the plant was astonishing. The technology being employed at the plant demonstrated how engineering and economics can work hand in hand to make the company more efficient. I also had the opportunity to tour Merck Animal Health's Elkhorn research facility. I was also very impressed with the efficiency of the facility."



of a discussion between Tom Vilsack (US Secretary of Agriculture), Ricardo Negri (Argentina Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries), and Nathan Guy (New Zealand Minister for Primary Industries). It was fascinating to hear about the challenges that the various countries are facing in agriculture and how they are handling them." ■

## Congratulations!

### Spring 2016 Graduates

|                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| Michelle Bartlett | Dalton Lockwood |
| Gina Byrd         | Emily Machol    |
| Michael Ducey     | Katelin Malm    |
| Brodie Eklund     | Carl Martin     |
| Rilee Erickson    | Molly Martin    |
| Kaylee Fegler     | Jessica Orton   |
| Jacob Fenning     | Lance Pruitt    |
| Caitlin Harris    | Brodey Serres   |
| Landon Hoffer     | Dillon Simonson |
| Morgan Jameran    | Dalton Trujillo |
| Mary Lenz         | Tyler Walter    |
|                   | Don Watson      |

"The highlight of the program was the Global Leaders Forum on Agriculture and Trade. The forum consisted

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