



Plant Food Association of North Carolina

Exciting Program of Speakers and Topics Coming to the PFANC Winter Conference – January 3-4, 2024

Dr. Jeffrey Dorfman:

Expectations In the Global Economy

Dr. Dorfman will join us at the PFANC Winter meeting to share insights and analysis of the global economy with attention on inflation and its impacts to the agricultural sector. He will cover the budget considerations for NC farmers going into the 2024 growing season.

Jeffrey Dorfman is the Hugh C. Kiger Distinguished Professor of Agricultural and Resource Economics at North Carolina State University. In this role, he will teach, perform research on the broad area of the economics and management of the food industry, and fill an extension role assisting growers, industry, and policy makers on topics of pricing, marketing, management, and policy issues. Previously, he spent four years as State Fiscal Economist of Georgia and 34 years as a professor of economics at The University of Georgia where he taught classes on the economics of the food industry, microeconomics, macroeconomics, and food policy. He has written four books, including a textbook on the economics and management of the food industry, and about one hundred scholarly articles. He was a regular columnist for Forbes and RealClearMarkets.com and a frequent economic expert on television and radio shows before being appointed state economist. Dr. Dorfman is a fellow of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and a former editor of the American Journal of Agricultural Economics (AJAE). A 2021 paper he co-authored was selected as the Outstanding AJAE Article of the Year.

Lee Wicker:

Why Doesn't Our Government Love Farmers Anymore

Lee's presentation, entitled "Why Doesn't Our Government Love Farmers Anymore" speaks to the government run farm labor programs and will delve into the insurmountable challenges of affording the persistent spikes in the

government controlled H2A program. The recently announced Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AERW) for 2024 increased by 90 cents per hour to a level of \$15.81 for such tasks as cropping tobacco and digging sweetpotatoes. In addition, the US Department of Labor has recently released rule changes for what is referred to as the “big six codes” Within this structure a farmer may be subject to a required wage of \$29 per hour for truck and tractor drivers, \$24 per hour for mechanic work, etc. In his remarks Lee will explain this detail and its impacts.

These changes are the top priority and concern of farmers as we prepare for 2024. Lee will provide detailed information as to how and why this challenge continues to plague farmers.

Wicker began his career in agricultural labor programs 30 years ago with the NC Employment Security Commission. Since 1997 he has served as Vice President for the North Carolina Growers Association of NC.(NCGA)

NCGA is the largest provider of H2A workers. The association functions as a joint employer with its farmer membership. In the capacity Lee holds, he provides oversight for the application processes and inbound procedures of nearly 10,000 temporary H2A workers entering NC to conduct seasonal work on the diversity of the state’s farms.

Lee also has responsibility for the NCGA policy engagement efforts. He is a frequently requested presenter on the topic of farm labor across the country and at the highest levels of government.

Dr. Ron Heiniger:

Using Nutrient Management Techniques to Obtain Improved Yields and Address Climate Impacts

Dr. Heiniger has addressed our PFANC conference many times over the years. He will join us to report on some of the latest data surrounding nutrient management for corn. He will also share reports on trials related to using bacteria in corn relative to nitrogen efficiency and work that are conducting pertaining to changes in canopy temperatures. There is also data related to monitoring carbon and how we can refute many false accusations aimed at crops and climate change.

Dr. Ronnie W. Heiniger received a Ph.D. in Crop Ecology and Simulation Modeling from Kansas State University in 1994. He has received the Gerald O. Mott

Meritorious Research Award from the Crop Science Society of America for modeling grain fill in sorghum. Dr. Heiniger's applied research programs in the areas of precision agriculture and remote sensing at North Carolina State University have received national recognition. In addition to his research work, Dr. Heiniger is the Corn Extension Specialist for North Carolina.

Dr. Heiniger is located at the Vernon G. James Research and Extension Center, a modern research facility in eastern North Carolina. This facility in the agricultural center of North Carolina provides easy access to laboratories, greenhouse, and field space.

###