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On the Horizon: 2025 OABA Industry Conference Prepares Agribusinesses for the Future

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Feb. 4, 2025) – More than 350 OABA members and industry professionals gathered for collaborative learning and networking at the 2025 Industry Conference, held January 28-30 at the Renaissance Columbus Westerville-Polaris Hotel. With the theme 'On the Horizon,' the conference focused on equipping agribusiness professionals with the tools and insights needed to navigate future challenges and innovations. Through insightful sessions led by industry experts from across the country, attendees explored emerging trends, technological advancements, and key issues shaping the future of Ohio's agribusinesses.

"The 2025 Industry Conference truly set the stage for what's on the horizon in Ohio agribusiness," said OABA President and CEO Melinda Witten. "By bringing together industry leaders, experts and professionals, this event fostered invaluable insights and connections, equipping our members to navigate upcoming challenges and opportunities. I'm excited to see how the knowledge and relationships built here will drive our industry forward in 2025 and beyond."

The conference addressed key topics in today's agriculture industry, including global and Midwestern crop outlooks, H2A labor considerations, the effects of weather and non-point source pollution on cropping intentions, legacy phosphorus, the evolving customer landscape, renewable energy trends, grain warehousing regulations, storage space demand, strategies for fostering a behavior-based safety culture, achieving broader insurance coverage with lower premiums, and more.

Notable speakers at the three-day event included Joe Lardy, CHS Global Research; Chuck Benson, BASF US Agricultural Solutions; Aaron Wilson, Ohio State Climatologist; and Greg Logue, Crestcom International.

At the Annual Meeting on Jan. 29, OABA recognized Andrea Jenkins of Centerra Co-op with the 2025 Excellence in Customer Service Award, Ben Hastings of Centerra Co-op with the 2025 Achievement as an Emerging Leader Award and Randy Digby of Legacy Farmers Cooperative with the 2025 Excellence in Safety & Stewardship Award as part of the OABA Industry Excellence Awards.

Eric Parthemore, of Marysville, Ohio, and David Wurm, of Tiffin, Ohio, were named OABA Honorary Members, recognizing individuals who have demonstrated exemplary service to Ohio's agribusiness industry and OABA.

During the annual meeting, OABA announced newly elected and re-elected members to the Board of Directors, including Seth Gerber of Gerber & Sons, Inc., Andrew Gladden of Luckey Farmers Inc., and Rhoda Warnock of Coshocton Grain Company.

The 2026 OABA Industry Conference will be held January 26-28, 2026, at the Hilton Columbus at Easton Hotel.

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About OABA

The Ohio AgriBusiness Association is the leading advocate for Ohio agribusiness by creating a sustainable business climate through collaborative policy leadership, continuous education and effective communication. OABA is a membership-based state trade association which includes the manufacturers and wholesale/retail suppliers of plant nutrient and protection materials, the grain warehousing and marketing industry, the feed and seed industry, as well as companies providing equipment, financing, insurance, consulting, and other products and services for the agribusiness industry. OABA is also the administrator of the Ohio Certified Crop Adviser Program, 4R Nutrient Stewardship Certification Program and Ohio Agricultural Council. For more information, visit oaba.net.