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OABA Industry Conference Highlights Momentum and Opportunity for Ohio Agribusinesses in 2026

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Feb. 3, 2026) – More than 325 OABA members and industry professionals gathered for collaborative learning and networking at the 2026 Industry Conference, held January 26-28 at the Hilton Columbus at Easton Hotel. With the theme "Seize the Momentum," the conference focused on helping agribusiness professionals take advantage of opportunities and tackle challenges head-on. Through engaging sessions led by experts from across the country, attendees explored new ideas, learned practical strategies and left ready to drive their businesses forward in an ever-changing ag landscape.

"The 2026 Industry Conference really captured the momentum happening in Ohio agribusiness," said OABA President and CEO Melinda Witten. "Bringing together industry leaders, experts and professionals created valuable insights and connections, giving our members the tools to tackle challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. I'm excited to see how what was learned and the relationships built here will help move our industry forward in 2026 and beyond."

The conference addressed key topics in today's agriculture industry, including economic and market outlooks, public policy priorities, soilborne and foliar crop diseases, fertilizer and nutrient management, livestock markets and health, the role of artificial intelligence in agriculture, biofuels trends, regulatory updates and more.

Notable speakers at the three-day event included Arlan Suderman, StoneX Financial, Inc.; Eric Snodgrass, Nutrien Agronomy; Jennifer Coleman, The Directions Group; and Lisa Woodke, Start of the West.

ODA Director Brian Baldridge addressed attendees during the OABA Annual Meeting and Luncheon, sharing his insights on the state of Ohio agriculture and key priorities for the year ahead.

OABA recognized three individuals with OABA Awards of Excellence during the luncheon: Steve Ramseyer of Deerfield Ag Services received the 2026 Excellence in Customer Service Award, Travis Kimmel of Advanced Agrilytics received the 2026 Achievement as an Emerging Leader Award and Jed Bookman of Sunrise Cooperative received the 2026 Excellence in Safety & Stewardship Award.

John Ward, of Marysville, Ohio, and David C. Barrett, of Columbus, Ohio, were named OABA Honorary Members, recognizing individuals who have demonstrated exemplary service to Ohio's agribusiness industry and OABA.

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During the annual meeting, OABA announced newly elected and re-elected members to the Board of Directors, including Ann Staugler, vice president of Big K Mills; Eric Barnes, owner of Farmers Alliance LLC; Adam Conrad, general manager of Axis Seed; and Eric Rife, sales support manager at Becks Hybrids.

OABA also announced its newly elected officers, with Nick Franks of Tyler Grain & Fertilizer elected president and Clark Carroll of Gerald Grain elected vice president. Grant Gates of Morrall Companies, LLC, who served as president for the past two years, will remain on the Board of Directors as immediate past president.

Photos from the event can be found on the OABA Facebook page.

The 2027 OABA Industry Conference will be held January 25-27, 2027, 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. For more information, visit oaba.net.