

Mark Anfinrud

Mark was born in Grafton, ND while his father was a pastor in St. Thomas, ND. In 1965, the family moved to Aneta, ND where Mark grew up. During high school and college, he worked on a local farm, sparking a lifelong passion for agriculture. Mark earned a Bachelor's degree in Agronomy and an Master's degree in Sunflower Seed Technology from NDSU, launching a career that began at Interstate (a subsidiary of VanderHave) in 1986, where he began as Quality Control Manager and completed training as Registered Seed Technologist. Mark planted the first Dutch pre-selection sugarbeet research trials in the U.S. in 1989 under the direction of Chris Middelburg. As the research program grew with the addition of germplasm from Holly Hybrids, SES in Belgium, and Seedex, the testing identified valuable adapted genetics for North America. In 2005, SES (Belgian) and VanderHave officially joined to create SESVanderHave (SV), a subsidiary of Florimond Desprez. Mark became the Product Manager and worked closely with U.S. and Canadian sugar beet growers. Mark represented SV on the Board of Directors for West Coast Beet Seed (WCBS) and served as President for two terms. He also supported the SV seed production teams in Oregon, Idaho, and Washington



with stecklings produced in Oregon and Arizona. Mark finished his nearly four decade career as U.S. Quality Control Manager, where he completed his legacy of progress and success on December 31, 2024. Mark married Lois, a farmer's daughter from Rock Lake, ND, who supported and encouraged Mark's faith and passion for planting seeds of success in every corner of his life. Together they have three children and now five grandchildren.

Karen Fugate

Karen served as a Research Molecular Biologist at the USDA-ARS Sugarbeet Research Unit in Fargo, ND from 1998 to January 2025, investigating the physiological factors that influence sucrose yield of the crop. Over the past 26 years, she conducted basic re-search into the metabolic factors that influence sucrose accumulation during production, and perhaps, more notably, the internal and external factors that cause sugarbeet roots to lose sucrose and processing quality during storage. Originally from Ohio, Karen received a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry from Capital University, a Master's degree in Biological Chemistry from the University of Minnesota, and a PhD in Horticulture & Crop Science from The Ohio State University. Before joining the USDA, she conducted molecular and physiological research during two postdoctoral appointments and worked as a Pharmaceutical Research Chemist with the Upjohn Company in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Karen's publications include 75 peer-reviewed manuscripts, four book chapters, and over 30 extension reports and proceedings. She has been a member of ASSBT since 1998 and a fixture at the annual



MIBST Beet Sugar Agricultural School as an instructor of sugarbeet physiology. Karen is both honored by this award and appreciative of the opportunity to work with the many fine people in the sugar beet industry and research community.

AWARDS: MERITORIOUS

DOI: https://assbt.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ASSBT-Vol-58-Nos-1-2-Awards_Web.pdf

Nick Klein

Nick grew up in northern Michigan and earned two Bachelor of Science degrees in Mechanical Engineering and Product Design Engineering from Ferris State University. His professional career started in the automotive industry where he gained global experience with assignments in Japan and Mexico. He then joined the sugar industry in 2009.

Over the past 16 years Nick has held positions as Process Engineer, Factory Superintendent and Factory Manager (Bay City Factory). Then in 2020, he took on the role of Director of Engineering over-seeing factory improvements and was the chief engineer leading Michigan Sugar's single largest capital investment in company history with its new state-of-the-art \$109 million Molasses Desugarization plant.

In 2022, Nick accepted the role as Vice President of Operations.

Nick has an immense level of pride for our industry and the people he has had the opportunity to work alongside of. Nick also serves on Beet Sugar Development Foundation's board of directors and executive committee, has instructed for the past seven years the Technical Sucrose



Recovery course at the MIBST process school and is our past President for the American Society of Sugar Beet Technologists.

Nick and his wife Megan have three children: Cayla, Kate, and Beckett. His family enjoys downhill skiing together and attending their children's sporting events, including diving, softball and hockey.

AWARDS: HONORARY MEMBER

Peter Regitnig

Peter Regitnig spent his early years in southern Ontario before moving to western Canada as a teenager. After working on a farm during his high school years, he enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba where he received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

He started his career in the sugar industry in September 1984 as a research agronomist for the Manitoba Sugar Company in Winnipeg. After closure of the Winnipeg sugar factory in 1997, Peter moved further west to Taber, Alberta to continue in his research agronomist position as part of the company now known as Lantic Inc. His research activities have included official variety trials, fertility trials, pesticide trials, general agronomy work and pile storage investigations.

Peter's first ASSBT meeting was in New Orleans in 1989, and he has been a member since. He has served the society as secretary-treasurer, Canada regional director, general program chairperson, agricultural program co-chairperson and as a session leader at various meetings. He has



also been part of several committees and has presented numerous papers at biennial meetings.

Peter married Sheryl in 1984, the year he started at Manitoba Sugar, so both marriage and career have spanned 40 great years.

Gary Secor

Gary Secor is a Professor of Plant Pathology at North Dakota State University (NDSU) in Fargo, ND. He is a native of Bozeman, MT and has a Bachelor's degree in Zoology and Master's degree in Botany from Montana State University, and a PhD in Plant Pathology from the University of California at Davis. In 1971 he began his career in Montana as a technician director of the first potato virus testing lab in the U.S. Gary has worked during his 47-year career with Agricultural Experiment Station at NDSU. His potato work concentrates on disease discovery, diagnosis, management, variety development and grower education. In 2000, he was asked to develop a research program with sugar beets and the sugar beet industry of ND and MN. He gladly accepted this new adventure that has become one of the best decisions he made. His work has concentrated on *Cercospora* leaf spot management, documenting and monitoring fungicide resistance, and *Fusarium* wilt. Dr. Secor has advised many graduate students and enjoys working with the domestic and international sugar beet



industry. He has received a number of awards from the potato and sugar beet industries for his work. In addition to his work, he enjoys lake time puttering, family and international travel.

Viviana Rivera-Vargas

Viviana Rivera is a native of Santiago, Chile. She received her Bachelor's degree in Agronomy from the University of Chile in Santiago. She began her professional career in the seed industry while attending University of Chile, initially during summers and later as field agronomist, working with sunflower, corn, safflower, and canola winter nurseries. After moving to Fargo in 1994, she worked part-time at Mycogen seed company in Breckenridge, MN in sunflower breeding. She worked with the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Seed Department as a lab technician for wheat variety identification and certification, and also as part-time lab assistant in the potato and sugar beet disease program in the Plant Pathology Department. She received her Master's degree in Plant Pathology and has continued as a research assistant and lab manager for the potato and sugar beet pathology research program with Dr. Gary Secor. Her work with sugar beet has focused primarily on fungicide resistance in *Cercospora beticola*, developing the protocols that are adapted worldwide, and maintaining the largest culture collection of *Cercospora beticola* in the world. In addition, she identified a new *Fusarium* pathogen of sugar beet, identified a new bacterium of sugar beet,



determined conditions for germination of *Cercospora* spores, and helped develop new additions to the *Cercospora* leaf spot prediction model. She has presented research work at international meetings and served as an advisor and trainer of numerous graduate students. In 2019, Viviana was awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the sugar beet industry of Minnesota and North Dakota.

John Weiland

John grew up in Rochester, MN and graduated from the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1984 with a Bachelor's degree in Biochemistry, a discipline he applied to his early molecular biology training at the University of Utah working in mouse molecular genetics. After completing a PhD at Oregon State University on plant viral genetics in 1992, John joined the USDA Cereal Crops Unit and later the North Dakota State University Plant Pathology department in Fargo, ND, where he studied factors causing crop disease by viruses and fungi. The combined viral and fungal emphasis was prescient when John joined the USDA Sugarbeet and Potato Research Unit in Fargo in 1996, a time with significant disease pressure in Minnesota and North Dakota from *Cercospora*, *Rhizoctonia*, *Aphanomyces*, and the virus newcomer to the region, Rhizomania, was present.

Accomplishments from John's laboratory include the

production of molecular diagnostic tools, tagging of disease resistance genes, the discovery and cloning of emerging viruses in the U.S., and evaluating non-GMO methods for virus control in sugarbeet in both the crown and root of the crop.

John's greatest joy during these years was discussing a disease in a beet field and trying to solve the problems of the season. Additionally, John is proud of his involvement in educating students who today are employed at local Red River Valley establishments such as the Mayo Clinic, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and private and public research centers globally.



40 YEARS IN THE INDUSTRY

Amalgamated Sugar Company

Mervyn K. Baird
Vicki Burnett
Susan K. Griffin
Christopher Mejia
Steve Penrod

American Crystal Sugar Company

Katherine M. Borgen
Tamara A Frison
Kevin E. Miller

Lantic, Inc.

Peter Regitnig

Michigan Sugar Company

Allan Makovics
Richard Nadolny
Daniel Schwab

Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative

Gary Muller

Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative

Donald Harazin
Allan Rosaasen
Tim Scharfencamp
Randy Wertish

Spreckels

Miguel A. Plancarte

Western Sugar Company

Connie Lopez
Lori Schaffer

Other

William Gough