



AWC EAST 2025 Conference Agenda Sheraton Fallsview, Niagara Falls, Ontario

Sunday, November 23, 2025

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| 11:30 - 7:30 pm | AWC Registration Open - Level 3, Sheraton Fallsview |
| 12:00 - 5:30 pm | Cider Canada Tour – Register online https://www.cidercanada.ca/awc-cider-tour
Transportation and Lunch included
Depart Sheraton Fallsview Hotel lobby 12:00 noon
Return to Sheraton Fallsview Hotel lobby 5:30 pm |
| 1:00 - 5:00 pm | Table Talk 5.0 by FEAD - Great Room A, 3rd Level
Register for free online: https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/table-talk-50-tickets-1685256701159?aff=oddttdtcreator
For more info: https://www.fead.ca/tabletalk-east |
| 1:00 - 5:00 pm | Boots on the Ground: Helping at the next level - Great Room B, 3rd Level
– Included in your AWC registration
Lauren Van Ewyk, CEO, National Farmer Mental Health Alliance, Courtright, ON
What does helping someone really look like?
This workshop is intended to give you the skills needed to have those tough conversations about mental health through an actions-based approach. Using case study, role-play and life application, participants will tackle the barriers to mental wellness and find ways to support others who may be struggling. |
| 5:30 - 6:30 pm | New! Movie Time! - Great Room C, 3rd Level
Special showing of <u>We Lend a Hand: The Forgotten Story of the Ontario Farmerettes.</u>
– Included in your AWC registration |
| 7:30 - 9:00 pm | Spotlite on Students: Student Sponsor Networking Reception - Fallsview Studio C, 3rd Level
The Importance of Networking and Building Strong Relationships
All students and sponsors are welcome.
– Included in your AWC Registration |

Monday, November 24, 2025

7:00 - 8:00 am

General Registration, Continental Breakfast and Networking – 3rd Level

All workshops will be held on the 5th Floor of the Sheraton Fallsview Hotel

Stream A Workshops

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 1 – Strategy Room 5, 5th floor

7 Ways To Beat Burnout: Without Quitting Your Job

Beverly Beuermann-King, CSP, Mental Health and Resiliency Expert, R 'n' B Consulting Corp - Work Smart Live Smart, Little Britain, ON

Are you feeling constantly hustling, overwhelmed, exhausted, yet unsure how to break the cycle, without sacrificing your career? Burnout doesn't just zap your energy—it's like carrying an ever-growing backpack of stress that weighs you down and makes every step harder. Constant pressure can lead to mental exhaustion, health challenges, and strained relationships—but dropping everything isn't the only solution.

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 2 - Upper Fallsview Studio A

"Not That Gate, The Other Gate!" - Adapting Communication To Different Personality Styles in Agriculture

Ashley Nicholls, Founder, DiSC Facilitator, REACH Agriculture Strategies, Foothills, AB

This session explores how personality styles influence the way we give, receive, and interpret instructions - especially in fast-paced or high-pressure settings. This session will help you recognize communication blind spots and build tools to connect more clearly and effectively with every member of your team.

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 3 – Upper Fallsview Studio B

Growing your Small Business

Rachita Rachita, Account Manager Small Business, TD Business Bank, Stoney Creek, ON

Patricia Catallo, WE Banker, TD Business Bank, Saint-Catherines, ON

Hear from bankers who interact with business owners daily top 5 best practices and a deep dive into what your banker is looking for when you are borrowing.

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 4 - Strategy Room 7

Excellence in Customer Service: Building a Client-Centered Approach

Carole Spicer, Founder and Owner, Spicer Facilitation, Pasadena, NL

This workshop explores the core principles of client-centered service, its key characteristics, and how to cultivate a service culture rooted in dignity, fairness, and respect. Whether you're in frontline service, management, or support roles, this workshop will equip you with the tools to elevate your service delivery and strengthen client satisfaction.

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 5 - Strategy Room 3

Don't Sweat it! - Navigating Your OWN Journey Through Menopause

Dr. Gail Cunningham, Mother, FarmHer, Veterinarian, Entrepreneur, Menopause Coach, Touch of Humanity Inc., Kelsey, AB

Living in Perimenopause/menopause is a bit like waking up to see what weird and unexplained thing will happen with your body today. Tired of aches, pains and hot flashes, I dug into the new world of Menopause. I will share my journey, including symptoms, how to have meaningful conversations with your physician about treatment options and daily strategies to feel your best. There is no one-size-fits-all!!!

8:00 - 9:15 am

Workshop 6 – Strategy Room 2

AI, Agents and Reinventing the Future of Work

Karla Congson, CEO, Agentiiv, Toronto, ON

This hands-on session demystifies AI, raises awareness of the critical developments related to this transformational technology and equips participants with actionable tools for both business and life. It's not about theory—it's about unlocking your ability to engage, delegate, and innovate with the help of AI.

8:00 – 9:15 am

Workshop 7 – Strategy Room 1

Zoom Out and Build Your Dream Life

Nafisa Mahabub, Program and Operations Lead, FEAD, Saskatoon, SK

Domenique Mastronardi, President, Beck's Broth, Guelph, ON

This session will give you space to step back from day-to-day business and envision the life you truly want - personally, professionally, and financially - then map out actionable steps to get there. Through grounding exercises and guided journaling, you'll leave with a focused plan and renewed clarity for the next 1,5,10 years!

9:15 - 9:30 am

Quick Coffee Break

Stream B Workshops

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 1 – Strategy Room 5

Stop Letting That Difficult Person Ruin Your Day: Effectively Handle Negative and Difficult People For Better Productivity and Less Drama

Beverly Beuermann-King, CSP, Mental Health and Resiliency Expert, R 'n' B Consulting Corp - Work Smart Live Smart, Little Britain, ON

Are you constantly drained by difficult individuals in your workplace? Do challenging personalities derail your day, leaving you frustrated and overwhelmed? It's time to take action and reclaim your energy and productivity.

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 2 – Upper Fallsview Studio A

"Not That Gate, The Other Gate!" - Adapting Communication To Different Personality Styles in Agriculture

Ashley Nicholls, Founder, DiSC Facilitator, REACH Agriculture Strategies, Foothills, AB

This session explores how personality styles influence the way we give, receive, and interpret instructions - especially in fast-paced or high-pressure settings. This session will help you recognize communication blind spots and build tools to connect more clearly and effectively with every member of your team.

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 3 – Upper Fallsview Studio B

Trauma: Helping Others Transform the Hard Things in Life

Lauren Van Ewyk, CEO, National Farmer Mental Health Alliance, Courtright, ON

Over 70% of women have experienced trauma at some point in their life. Trauma that is not transformed is trauma transferred. Join Lauren as we learn about trauma and how we can thrive despite it!

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 4 - Strategy Room 7

Harvesting Financial Success: Strategies for Farm & Financial Stability

Rose Ray, Financial Advisor, Co-operators, Coldwater, ON

A farm takes comprehensive and strategic strategies to maximize profitability, manage risks, and ensure long-term viability. Rose will discuss how to create a positive environment for the transfer of the farm to the next generation.

My Journey into the Agricultural Sector

Michele O'Sullivan, Owner/Operator, Hutchinson Maple Syrup, Oro-Medonte, ON

My presentation will take you through our start-up into the agricultural sector of making maple syrup and now growing Christmas Trees. How my passion for maple syrup had us grow from producing maple syrup as a hobby to now running it as a business.

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 5 – Strategy Room 3

"Can I See Your Patch?" -REAL talk on Perimenopause and menopause treatment/support options and preparing for the discussion with your healthcare professional.

Dr. Gail Cunningham, Mother, FarmHer, Veterinarian, Entrepreneur, Menopause Coach, Touch of Humanity Inc., Kelsey, AB

In order to navigate their peri/menopause journey, women need the KNOWLEDGE of what is available to them. We will look at current guidelines, treatment/support options and how to prepare for the conversation with your healthcare provider to get the support you need and DESERVE.

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 6 – Strategy Room 2

From spark to startup: Turning your ideas into a thriving business

Azrah Manji-Savin, Co-Founder, Syzl, Toronto, ON

Starting a business doesn't have to be overwhelming—every successful company begins with a simple idea and a clear next step. In this workshop, you'll learn the fundamentals of entrepreneurship and walk away with tools to transform your vision into a business that works for you.

9:30 - 10:45 am

Workshop 7 - Strategy Room 1

Zoom Out and Build Your Dream Life

Nafisa Mahabub, Program and Operations Lead, FEAD, Saskatoon, SK

Domenique Mastronardi, President, Beck's Broth, Guelph, ON

This session will give you space to step back from day-to-day business and envision the life you truly want - personally, professionally, and financially - then map out actionable steps to get there. Through grounding exercises and guided journaling, you'll leave with a focused plan and renewed clarity for the next 1,5,10 years!

10:45 - 11:00 am

Quick Coffee Break

Stream C Workshops

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 1 -

Navigating Stress in Agriculture – Strategy Room 5

Megan Burnside-Poitras, Interim Senior Strategic Communications Advisor, AgWO, Agriculture Wellness Ontario, Toronto, ON

Rebecca Posthumus, In the Know Program Coordinator, Agriculture Wellness Ontario, Toronto, ON

Focusing on stress management, this workshop addresses the unique pressures farmers face, offering techniques to recognize, manage, and mitigate stress. It introduces practical tools for day-to-day mental resilience, guiding participants to navigate stress effectively while fostering a proactive approach to wellness.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 2 - Upper Fallsview Studio A

Level up Your Connections: Tips to Networking

Sydney Mohr, Marketing Communications & PR Specialist, FoodGrads, Waterloo, ON

Sydney explores why networking is essential for career growth and how to build meaningful professional relationships. This session covers practical strategies, digital tools like LinkedIn, and exercises to help you confidently connect and thrive in your industry.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 3 – Upper Fallsview Studio B

Collaboration Over Rivalry: Building Bold Alliances in Business

Doreen Ashton Wagner, Founder/Executive Director, Business Sisters | Consœurs en Affaires, Alexandria, ON

A discussion about how collaboration creates resilience. Even when women collaborate across perceived competition lines, they build stronger networks and greater visibility—especially important in underrepresented industries.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 4 - Strategy Room 7

Harvesting Financial Success: Strategies for Farm & Financial Stability

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Michele O'Sullivan, Owner/Operator, Hutchinson Maple Syrup, Oro-Medonte, ON

My presentation will take you through our start-up into the agricultural sector of making maple syrup and now growing Christmas Trees. How my passion for maple syrup had us grow from producing maple syrup as a hobby to now running it as a business.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 5 - Strategy Room 3

Stand Out! Show up as your BEST self and leverage your personal brand to achieve success!

Meghan Pedros, Manager, Learning Strategy & Development, Wealth Management, TD Bank Group, Toronto, ON

There are many feelings of uncertainty in the world (the "outside noise") which can affect our mental health and productivity as a result. Now is the time to shift priority, take control and focus on ourselves in how we "show up" everyday. Join us as we identify basic but important fundamentals to build your confidence and enhance your personal brand through the art of networking and personal development planning.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 6 - Strategy Room 2

No Dumb Questions: A Beginner's Guide to AI for Business Owners

Azrah Manji-Savin, Co-Founder, Syzl, Toronto, ON

Get a clear, jargon-free explanation of today's AI landscape and what technologies like ChatGPT, copilots, and business agents actually mean for food and agriculture entrepreneurs. You'll learn practical use cases where AI adds real value, from planning to sales, while also developing the skills to evaluate AI tools responsibly, protect your data, and adopt this technology with confidence.

11:00 - 12:00 noon

Workshop 7 - Strategy Room 1

Navigating Working Life as Spouses

Nicole Davis, Strategic HR Consultant, UnCommon Farms47, Calgary, AB

Running a farm with your spouse blurs home and work. This session offers practical HR tools to align on purpose and roles, reduce conflict, and protect both the relationship and the business.

12:00 - 1:00 pm

Lunch Buffet - Great Room A, 3rd Floor

1:00 - 1:15 pm

Welcome – Great Room C

Dianne Finstad, Communications Specialist, Red Deer, Alberta

1:15 - 1:45 pm

GRIT: What is it? Why do we need it? Who has it? How to get it?

Anne Miner, President, Dunvagen Group, Founder of Women with GRIT, Woodstock, ON

GRIT is a term rarely applied to women and yet without it, little can be accomplished. Angela Duckworth defines GRIT as 'passion and perseverance in pursuit of a long term goal(s); GRIT is not a trait, it is not something you are born with, it is a skill that can be learned and applied. Learn about GRIT and how it can support your success in pursuit of long term goals.

1:45 - 2:15 pm

The Multigenerational Advantage: Communicate, Collaborate, and Lead with Impact

Kristin J. Pronschinske, CEP, Owner and Founder, LookUp, LLC, River Falls, WI

This presentation explores how high-performing leaders harness generational diversity to drive innovation, engagement and results. Through strategic communication and inclusive leadership practices, Kristin will talk about how to unlock the full potential of multigenerational teams.

2:15 - 2:45 pm

Leader Panel Discussion

Building Teams and Cultures that Stick

In a fast-moving world, company culture isn't built by chance it is crafted with intention. The panel will explore how executives and owners can shape resilient and productive teams where employees feel seen, supported and motivated. How to build a company culture where people want to be part of it, for the long run. What it takes to create a workplace where everyone can thrive and no one gets left behind.

- How to foster a workplace where people feel valued and connected?
- How do you promote your purpose, mission and vision so that you can get buy-in from your employees?
- How to develop a long-term culture that stays true to your values even under pressure.
- How to lead with flexibility? Using situational leadership to tailor your approach to individual needs and strengths.
- Practical strategies to energize your team and align culture with everyday behaviours.
- Strategies to maintain employee loyalty. (Or is there such a thing anymore?)
 - **Nafisa Mahabub, Program & Operations, FEAD, Saskatoon, SK**
 - **Julie Dimitri, National Manager, Women in Enterprise, TD Business Banking, Toronto, ON**
 - **Lisa Charette, Director, indigenous and Sector Diversity Policy, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ottawa, ON**
 - **Samantha Klaver, Sales Engagement Manager, New-Life Mills, a division of Parrish & Heimbecker, Limited, Seaforth, ON**

2:45 - 3:20 pm	Rooted in Resilience: A Journey of Grit, Growth, and Mental Wellness Carole Spicer, Founder and Owner, Spicer Facilitation, Pasadena, NL In this powerful and personal talk, Carole shares her journey to mental wellness, highlighting the challenges and triumphs that shaped her path. She explores the characteristics of grit and offers practical strategies for building resilience, inspiring others to lead with strength, authenticity, and self-awareness.
3:20 - 3:50 pm	Coffee and Networking Break – Sponsored by FCC – 3rd Level
3:50 - 4:25 pm	Blending the Demands: Finding Balance between Work and Life Lauren Van Ewyk, CEO, National Farmer Mental Health Alliance, Courtright, ON There is a constant demand for you to be for everyone else, who they need you to be. Setting boundaries, communication and practicing self-care ensures you are able to blend the most critical aspects into the life you desire.
4:25 - 5:00 pm	How to Succeed in a Male-Dominated Space Mariah Moen, Director of Agriculture, Uniking Canada, Saskatoon, SK Mariah will give her perceptions on empowering women to advocate for themselves in agriculture – from sales to business to everyday life.
5:00 - 5:15 pm	Day Recap Dianne Finstad Communications Specialist, Red Deer, AB
5:15 - 7:00 pm	Reception and Networking - Sponsored by TD - 3rd Level
7:00 - 10:00 pm	Banquet - Great Room C Opening Comments Dianne Finstad, Communications Specialist, Red Deer, AB MP John Barlow, Conservative Shadow Minister for Agriculture and Agri-Food, Ottawa, ON/ Foothills, AB Denise Faguy, Director, Marketing and Operations, Farms.com, Guelph, ON Iris Meck, Founder of AWC, Iris Meck Communications Inc., Farms.com, Calgary, AB

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

7:00 - 8:20 am	AAFC Roundtable – Private Event, by invitation only - Fallsview Studio A .
7:30 - 8:30 am	General Registration Continues and Continental Breakfast – Great Room A
8:30 - 8:45 am	Welcome Message - Great Room C Dianne Finstad, Communications Specialist, Red Deer, AB
8:45 - 9:30 am	Branding Queens: The Five C's of Building a Brand Kim [Derrick] Rozdeba, Author, Rozdeba Brand & Company, Calgary, AB This presentation delves into the branding successes of five visionary branding queens, showcasing how they built their legacies through the Five C's: Commitment, Construct, Community, Content, and Consistency. It offers actionable insights and tools to create a brand that resonates with customers.
9:30 - 10:15 am	Rooted in Respect: Strategies to End Gossip and Grow Trust Beverly Beuermann-King, CSP, Mental Health and Resiliency Expert, R 'n' B Consulting Corp - Work Smart Live Smart, Little Britain, ON We've all seen how fast gossip can spread—and how much damage it can do to trust and teamwork. In this down-to-earth session, we'll talk about why gossip happens, how to stop it in its tracks, and what strong, respectful leadership looks like.
10:15 - 11:00 am	Coffee and Networking Break – Sponsored by Bunge

11:00 - 12:00	Bridging Tradition and Innovation: How Women Are Shaping the Future of Agriculture in Ghana Nelly Elinam Kurd-Marckay, Quality and Food Safety Manager-West Africa, Bunge, Tema, Greater Accra, Ghana This presentation explores how Ghanaian women in agriculture are creatively blending traditional knowledge with modern innovations to lead transformative change across farming, processing, and entrepreneurship. It also highlights how mental health resilience plays a vital role in enabling these women to adapt, lead, and thrive in a changing agricultural landscape. Anne Sarfo, Founder/ CEO, Annes Perfections, Tema, Greater Accra, Ghana Anne will discuss how women-led enterprises are redefining agriculture, not just farming, but a complete value chain from field to finished product. By merging traditional crops and recipes with modern processing and branding, we're building stronger, healthier, and more inclusive food systems.
12:00 - 12:10 pm	Morning Recap Dianne Finstad, Communications Specialist, Red Deer, AB
12:10 - 1:45 pm	General Lunch & Student Sponsor Lunch - Sponsored by FEAD – Great Room A
1:45 - 2:15 pm	Finding confidence and building confidence in others: Life Lessons Managing a Strawberry Farm Jordan Eyamie, Farm Manager, Webster Farm, Cambridge, NS This talk will highlight my learnings while managing a medium-scale farming operation.
2:15 - 2:45 pm	You're outstanding in your field, but you don't have to be out there by yourself. Courtney Stevens, Owner & Chief Creative Officer, Wilmot Orchards, Newcastle, ON You're amazing at what you do, but you don't have to do it alone. I'll be sharing from my experience how building the right support into your business you'll be able to focus on your zone of genius.
2:45 - 3:15 pm	Coffee Break and networking – Sponsored by Cargill
3:15 – 3:45 pm	Leader Panel discussion: Smart Strategy: How AI is Powering the Business of Agriculture AI is no longer just for the field — it's revolutionizing the business behind agriculture. From supply chain optimization to market forecasting, financial planning, customer insights, and product development, agri-businesses are using AI to stay competitive and agile in a rapidly evolving global market. • What AI platforms do you use in your day-to-day work, why and how • How AI is transforming logistics, distribution, and inventory in agri-business • Leveraging AI for sales trends, customer behaviour, and demand forecasting • AI-driven tools for financial analysis, risk assessment, and decision-making • Enhancing marketing and customer engagement through AI insights • Skills women need to lead in the AI-powered future of agri-business • Real challenges and barriers to implementation — and how to overcome them - Karla Congson, CEO, Agentiiv, Toronto, ON - Azrah Manji-Savin, Co-Founder, Syzl, Toronto, ON - Lindsay Toth, Membership and Marketing, FEAD Canada, Saskatoon, SK - Karen Rossit, Foodservice Sales Director, Bunge, Oakville, ON
3:45 - 4:15 pm	Voice · Value · Credibility: Leading from Any Seat in Agriculture Nicole Davis, Strategic HR Consultant, UnCommon Farms, Calgary, AB Leadership resilience isn't about stamina - it's about strategy. When you lead with an authentic voice and a clear understanding of your value - whether on the farm or within agribusiness - you earn trust, shape outcomes, and create change.
4:15 - 4:45 pm	Why Me? Why Not Me? Why Not YOU! Mayor Cathy Burghardt-Jesson, Mayor, Township of Lucan Biddulph, Lucan, ON I never set out to enter politics. This wasn't a path I planned. It has been a path full of challenges and opportunity. It's a path I will be forever grateful I took! I want to share my story to encourage others - especially women, who may feel politics is "not for them" - to consider taking a step on the path I took. I want to reinforce that your voice matters more than you think, and sometimes, the best leaders are the ones who never expected to lead.

4:45 - 5:00 pm

Closing Comments

Dianne Finstad, Communications Specialist, Red Deer, AB