



REUTERS EVENTS™

WOMEN AS CHANGE MAKERS IN FOOD & AGRICULTURE

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Select interviews completed by Catherine Early, a freelance journalist and editor specializing in the environment and sustainability.

She writes for titles including Reuters Events, China Dialogue, the ENDS Report, BBC Future Planet and Geographical. She was highly commended in the 2023 Aviva Investors' Sustainability Media Awards in the freelancer of the year category.

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Bayer Ecosystem Services helps companies across the agriculture supply chain reach their greenhouse gas emissions targets and gain a better understanding of the benefits of regenerative agriculture. From Scope 3 reductions and low carbon labeling to facilitating the purchase of carbon credits, Bayer Ecosystem Services ensures companies' efforts to lower their greenhouse gas footprint make a real and measurable impact.

Bayer is at the forefront of setting global protocols for how carbon sequestration is measured and for verifying the impact of sustainable practices. With a mission of "Health for All, Hunger for None," its products and services are designed address challenges presented by a growing and aging global population.

For more information, go to www.bayer.com/en/agriculture/climate-change.

EXECUTIVE FOREWORD

It is an honor to introduce the Reuter's Trailblazing Women Report for International Women's Day. This report features an incredibly talented group of women leaders who are actively engaged in the transformation of agriculture. While we come from different backgrounds and experiences, we share a common goal of creating a more resilient and sustainable food production and delivery system to meet the challenges of a changing world. As VP of Operations for Bayer's Digital Farming organization, I'm excited about how the innovations in precision and digital tools have allowed us to help farmers adopt and maintain regenerative practices on their farms, as well as support companies in achieving their sustainability goals to reduce carbon emissions throughout the food value chain.

Another common thread we share as women in agriculture, is that collaboration and innovation are essential ingredients in our journey toward a more sustainable future. In what has been a traditionally male-dominated industry, it only makes sense that a more diverse workforce brings new perspectives to increase creativity – the key driver of innovation. The transformation needed within food and agriculture requires a multidisciplinary effort – and these leaders are making that happen.

As you'll see, the women featured here have acknowledged the importance of mentors – the fathers, mothers, teachers, and colleagues (especially other women) – who encouraged us to step forward and be heard. These mentors inspired and challenged us to believe in ourselves and to trust our instincts in pursuing a career in agriculture. Whether it be in agronomy, business operations, marketing, plant breeding, data science, human resources, or financial services, together we can continue our progress toward a more regenerative approach to farming. And we also need to become mentors ourselves, so that we can inspire the next generation of women leaders.

I recently had the chance to spend time with a corn and soybean grower in Illinois who talked about farming – not as a job or career, but as a lifestyle – and as someone who believes in the benefits of using regenerative farming practices. When asked why, he answered, "These are all things that give back to the earth, because she has given so much to us." I can think of no better reason for the work we do.

Kelly Gillespie

VP Operations, Digital Farming
Bayer



Nici Bush

*Vice President Innovation, Science
& Technology*
Mars

In her role as Vice President, Innovation, Science and Technology for Mars, Nici directs the world class team of technical experts, scientists and innovators who bring breakthrough thinking to the people and the pets Mars serves, while continuing to deliver our commitment to quality. Nici is a member of the global Mars Leadership Team and has oversight of Research and Development (R&D), including Science and Technology, Innovation, Quality and Food Safety, Scientific and Regulatory Affairs, the Mars Global Food Safety Center and the Mars Advanced Research Institute. Nici takes immense pride working in the consumer goods industry for a business that lives into the purpose of "The world we want tomorrow starts with how we do business today". She believes deeply that the world we want tomorrow is a world where everyone thrives, society is inclusive, and the planet is healthy.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

Every IWD, I'm reminded of the achievements that women have made and yet how far we still must go to attain equity in business and society. It's also a call - for men and women - to think about how we can support the next generation of female leaders. I want to create an environment of sustained inclusion where everyone feels valued and can achieve their full potential.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

Working in food and agriculture has always inspired me. It's a privilege of offering safe and delicious products to millions of people and pets around the world. It's also a huge responsibility, which is why I'm committed to pushing boundaries for innovative thinking and driving investment in cutting-edge science and technology to find solutions for some of the industry's most pressing challenges, from reducing greenhouse gases to reimagining packaging and ensuring food is safe for all.

How can women (and men!) better support other women in the industry?

It's not enough to simply hire more women— we need to go further. Acknowledging barriers and accelerating inclusion, so women feel supported, valued and heard. Allyship, especially from men, is key for women to feel included and to create an empathetic and inclusive environment where future female talent can thrive.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

I've been fortunate to have fantastic role models and mentors – starting with my mum who was a science teacher at my school. Moreover, though, having sponsors who are willing to put their credibility behind you is truly transformative and helps women to progress into leadership.

What steps can the food & agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

There needs to be investment in listening, training, and creating safe spaces for all. At Mars, we conducted our #HereToBeHeard global listening study to help create a more inclusive society in which everyone can reach their full potential. 10,319 women from 88 countries issued a call for change. We discovered key themes to break down barriers such as equal career opportunities, gender-equal learning, more women in power, and promoting mental and physical wellbeing.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

During early career stages, we may feel we have to be one person at work to fit in and another at home, and that's exhausting. My advice? Recognize that we don't have all answers, celebrate vulnerability as a strength and allow your voice to be heard. Businesses always thrive when diverse perspectives are embraced and valued.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

I'm most excited about the new possibilities that science and technology are opening up. Today, multidisciplinary research teams are transforming food and agriculture through applied technologies and capabilities, such as synthetic biology, bioinformatics and precision fermentation. At Mars we are collaborating with academia and industry partners to drive ground-breaking nutrition research, reimagining packaging for recyclability, and developing new ingredient and digital solutions to lower our carbon footprint.


KELLY GILLESPIE

VP Operations,
Digital Farming
Bayer

Kelly Gillespie has served as VP Operations for Bayer's Digital Farming organization since August 2023, where she leads multiple teams to scale best practices that ensure effective interface with external partners and stakeholders across Bayer, centrally focused on driving value to farm customers.

Prior to her current role, she served as VP of Digital Ecosystems Services, where she established a team that designed, managed, and accelerated the delivery of technology to advance agricultural carbon markets and the company's role in helping farmers around the world transition to, expand, and maintain regenerative farming practices that can increase farm productivity while decreasing agriculture's environmental footprint.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's a day to really think about all the women in my career that have been mentors or coaches, and all those that have come before me in the food and agriculture sector. Also, from a science perspective - I had some influential science teachers when I was a kid.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

The impact that this industry has on the daily lives of people all across the world just can't be understated. The industry has the ability to provide healthy, nutritious food in the right quantity, for all kinds of diets and lifestyles. Food is a basic human need - when you think about it, it's an immense responsibility.

The industry faces many challenges. Climate change is affecting our ability to produce food, and we also need to think about building equity in supply chains around the world. How we work together on those challenges is exciting.

How can women (and men!) better support women in the food and agriculture industry?

Food, and agriculture in particular, is still pretty male-dominated. There's a lot of amazing women at Bayer and in the broader industry, but it is a sector where we need to support each other. This is especially the case with new hires, we need to help coach women, for example, through mentorship programmes.

One area that's really undervalued is sponsorship - when senior leaders are making decisions about hires or advancements, they need to make sure that they have women in mind. That sponsorship component of who's in the room and who's advocating for the people to take on bigger responsibilities is an area where both male and female senior leaders are working to improve.

Did you have any particular role models or mentors?

Yes - my professor in my PhD program. My professor at the University of Illinois, Lisa Ainsworth, was absolutely instrumental in supporting me and helping me with work-life balance, how to be successful in science, and how to collaborate. To this day, she exemplifies a strong, collaborative, intelligent scientist working to understand and improve agriculture's resilience to climate change.

What steps can the food and agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

All of us have unconscious bias in decisions we make every day. The way to fight against it is conscious inclusion. We all need to be better at consciously making sure that women and minorities have a chance to demonstrate their skills when decisions about hiring or building a group to work on an important project are being made - this is something that every single one of us can do.



Kelly Gillespie on a recent visit with farmer Josh Curry of Illinois

What advice can you share for younger women or minorities coming into such a male dominated industry?

I like to remind people that are newer in their career that when men compare their own experience with a job posting, they tend to apply as long as about 50% of the qualifications match. Women on the other hand want their qualifications to match about 90% of the requirements in a job posting before they feel comfortable applying. Being a hiring manager myself, I know that when I write a requisition, sometimes it's aspirational. So the advice I give is go for it! If it turns out that the qualifications you're missing were key, you're no worse off than you are today, and you got some valuable

feedback about what you can work on. You have to step outside your comfort zone because you never know what you're going to be able to achieve.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

Agriculture is on the brink of a transformation in terms of precision. The digital technology that companies like Bayer are providing to farmers is allowing them to use all the tools at their fingertips in a much more precise way, in order to be even better stewards of the land and the environment. It's going to be exciting to see how this unfolds.



MARY JANE MELENDEZ
*Chief Sustainability & Global
 Impact Officer*
General Mills

Mary Jane leads the company's sustainability and global impact efforts and is responsible for advancing collaboration and integration across the organization to achieve companywide targets. Her favorite General Mills product is Oui yogurt.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

International Women's Day is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women globally. Personally, it means taking time to recognize the women in my life who I admire – from the women on my team and in the General Mills network, to the amazing women that are friends or family.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

Helping others and leaving the world a better place are north stars for me personally and professionally. I am grateful to have found a career that allows me to do just that. At General Mills, I help advance strategies that build people and planet resilience. I also get to partner with others – inside and outside our company – that are passionate about making a difference.

How can women (and men!) better support other women in the industry?

Prioritize open dialogue, collaboration, and transparency. Our industry grows and our collective impact deepens when we work together. As much as possible, encourage an environment where we can connect with peers, learn from each other, and support one another. We're stronger together than we are apart.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

My late mother was a role model my entire life and I credit her, and my father, with inspiring my career journey. During my childhood they personified what it means to be attentive to the needs of others and that example became a lesson that has informed the way I work and lead.

What steps can the food & agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

Societies, economies, and businesses thrive when we are all included, protected, and respected. At General Mills, we put people at the center of everything we do. Beginning with employees extending across our entire value chain – from the farmers who grow our ingredients to the families and communities we serve.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

If you are in the room, you belong in the room. You have the right skillset and knowledge needed to handle the task at hand, so be confident. You'll be amazed at what happens when you trust your instincts and believe in yourself.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

We have the incredible opportunity and responsibility to help solve today's food and agricultural challenges to create a thriving and more resilient planet. It's not only a business imperative, but a humanitarian imperative to invest in Mother Nature. I am certain that as an industry, as we collaborate and work together, we will continue to create meaningful change.



CARRIE RICHARDS-PRELIP

Co-Owner

Richards Regenerative

After years of research on the health benefits of pastured meats and clean eating, siblings Carrie, Noelle & Tom started Richards Regenerative in 2012, with the cattle from their 4th generation family ranch in California.

In 2016, Carrie & her family moved to the ranch and transitioned the operation to a regenerative grazing system, making sure to take a "soil first" approach. The ranch has continued to thrive since making the choice to prioritize soil health, and so has their business selling into retail stores, schools, hospitals and large chains like Shake Shack.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It brings up how far we've come - it's nice to have a day to remember that there was a time when women couldn't do everything that men could do. I think it's an important day for us to celebrate and be a part of.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

We've had a family ranch since 1941. I used to be a wedding and portrait photographer but I felt that wasn't giving enough back to the world. When I decided to move back into the family business it was overwhelming, but it felt like the right thing to do, and at the right time. Everyone is questioning our food system: it really hits home when people ask for advice on what to buy and where to buy it. I feel good that I'm part of the change that we need.

How can women (and men!) better support women in the food and agriculture industry?

Support the Farm Bill. I've applied to a lot of grants, and they've been really, really helpful especially for adapting conservation practices. A lot of agricultural folks get stuck in our ways, and grants and funding help us try new things that may be better for the planet and for our business.

Did you have any particular role models or mentors?

When I took over the ranch, I absorbed everything I could from my dad and my grandfather, but I knew that I needed more because I wanted to run the place regeneratively.

When I started learning about better practices for conservation, I met some really amazing ranchers that have been doing this a lot longer than I have. I met Will Harris of White Oak Pastures at a conference and he's been a really big influence, and someone that I can bounce ideas off.

What steps can the food and agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

There is a lot of motivation in the California government to include everyone in farming and ranching, and help people transition to organic or regenerative farming. There's a lot of financial support, which is wonderful, but people that are trying to get into this industry need educational and technical assistance as well as financial support.

What advice can you share for younger women or minorities coming into such a male dominated industry?

I was never treated differently, but I could see how it would be intimidating when you roll up to a ranch and it's a bunch of cowboys and horses! I would say reach out to the farms and ranches that are doing the practices that you think are really important - if they're organic or regenerative they are probably of the mind that everybody is welcome. There's lots of amazing agricultural employers out there, and ranches and farms that are doing wonderful things, but there's also not so great people, so if you don't like the vibe, don't take the job.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

I'm excited because people finally know what regenerative is, and that people care about where their food comes from. We're getting our product out there to people - they can try it and learn about what we do. I'm excited that I'm part of the change, even just a teeny tiny piece of it.



AMY TU
President - International
Tyson Foods

Amy Tu leads the Company's international business with over 18,000 team members globally. She is responsible for Tyson's international growth, its strategy, and global operations. Amy leads a diverse team across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Central and South America, Australia and the United States.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

In our current external environment, I believe that it is especially important to not only recognize the incredible achievements of women but to also focus on how much more there is to do in our communities, our workplaces and our world. The atrocities against women are exacerbated by war and are a stark reminder that we have much to do in our communities to elevate women rather than break women down. As a leader, I know that I have a special responsibility to continue to do what I can to advance equality for women and for those less fortunate in our workplaces and in our communities.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

Our company's purpose is "Tyson Foods. We feed the world like family." From my earliest days as a child, I can vividly remember the many times our family gathered around the dinner table promptly at 5 p.m. to eat fresh, hot food cooked by my mother (or sometimes my father) while recapping the day's events. On special occasions when we had large extended family gatherings, I fondly remember the endless feast of food, the laughter that ensued as the cooks in the family battled for best dish of the evening, and the cacophony of loud chatter, which always reached a crescendo around the last fried dumpling!

While stories, memories and life events are all very different from family to family, we all share something in common and that is food. The tasty shrimp wontons that only mom can make, the dark chocolate brownie with an extra something that only dad knows about, or the steamy bowl of chicken congee that grandmother makes when you are not feeling well. Food nourishes our soul, comforts what ails us and bonds us together.

For the thousands of women and men in our supply chain, from farmers to growers, to operators, to team members, thank you for bringing families together.

How can women (and men) better support other women in the industry?

We must continue to find constructive opportunities to be heard, to develop lasting, positive relationships and to build on the progress already made.

It takes a team. So, what's incredibly disappointing is seeing women unsupported by other women, even enjoying the process of seeing a woman fall. And when it happens, men will notice and remark. The unique sisterhood that we have is shattered when there is a desire to win as an individual rather than lift each other up. We must work harder and with positive intent to support women, if we ever want to see more women CEOs, women lawyers or women entrepreneurs.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

On this day, I like to reflect on all the women who were meaningful to me and to my personal and professional development. Most of all, I think about my mother – a larger than life social butterfly who once flew airplanes and lived in multiple countries before landing in small town U.S.A. with my dad. It didn't bother her to put aside her aspirations and focus entirely on her family, who was settling into an unfamiliar community; who were immigrants with English as a second language; who worked tirelessly to source Chinese food or ingredients where few existed. She took extraordinary steps to find ways to prepare familiar but adapted recipes like Peking duck and scallion pancakes and to introduce new foods, like fried chicken and mashed potatoes. But whatever recipe she chose, my mom always brought the family together and reminded us that no matter what challenge we faced we should always handle it with respect, with integrity and with thanks for our health, our community and our family.

Remembering how she took care of us in good times and bad times left me with long-lasting memories that are foundational to who I



am. These memories are of a strong, resilient woman who overcame adversity and built enduring relationships in an unfamiliar and uncertain environment.

So, no matter what the circumstance, it's how you come out of it, not whether you come out of it.

What steps can the food and agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

I believe that it starts with what each of us can do every day because that small gesture that you act on can be meaningful to someone else. If everyone did just one thing to remove a barrier, then collectively, we would be able to move our market to be more diverse, more equitable and more inclusive. Every day matters. Every action matters. Every outcome matters.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industry, like agriculture and food?

Only you can define who you are as a person. No one else should or can. So, actively participate and contribute as a team member. That means experiencing and learning through others, listening with positive intent and actioning with thoughtfulness. Above all, help others.

As Gloria Steinem said, "The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights." I am so lucky to have had so many women and men who have inspired me to continually persist and gracefully insist.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

I love that food can bring people together. We have a unique opportunity to not only ensure that the world is fed with affordable, quality products but also evoke enduring memories of those meaningful times in our lives.


MEGAN ROCK

Chief Sustainability Officer
CHS Inc

Megan is a sustainability and corporate responsibility professional and leader with expertise in build out roles and rebranding existing programs. Her experience includes financial services, manufacturing and food and agriculture industries, corporate philanthropy, supply chain transparency, human rights, DEI, environmental compliance, carbon, and innovation.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's a much-needed day to celebrate women and an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come, but also to recognize how much more work there is to do.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and ag industry?

It's the best job in the world. I'm part of the global and complex system to feed the world.

How can women (and men) better support other women in the industry?

Please give women a voice and listen to what we're saying. We may be at the table and we have a chair in 2024, but we need to be heard in the conversation. Men, especially those in high-level leadership positions, can play this very important role of making sure our voice is heard.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

My grandmother: I think about the respect she earned from her community for being present, thoughtful, and genuine. It's a reminder to first be human before anything else. Professionally, my fellow Chief Sustainability Officer in agriculture, Rob Coviello at Bunge. When I worked for Rob, he was the person who gave me the encouragement and confidence I needed to have my voice heard. I also learned how to connect sustainability to strategy.

What steps can the food and ag industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

We need to be intentional about how and where we recruit. We also have to recognize the work doesn't stop at hiring: Inclusion and equity need to be intentional, purposeful and timely. Change takes time, but we are talking about the livelihoods of women and minorities today and the ability to bring their best selves to work and contribute to the success of an organization today. We can only do that if the industry is intentional and purposeful about its actions and moving quickly. We can't afford to lose another generation of opportunity for women and minorities.

What advice can you share to young women or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

Always remember you belong. Have confidence and don't be afraid to advocate for yourself and for those that may not be able to advocate for themselves.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

As a 20-year sustainability professional, I see the threads of sustainability in almost every conversation. There are so many potential opportunities for growers in new and existing markets for low-carbon and climate-smart commodities.



JOHN LEWIS
PARTNERSHIP

JEMIMA JEWELL

Head of Agriculture & Responsible Sourcing

John Lewis & Waitrose (John Lewis Partnership)

Jemima Jewell is Head of Agriculture and Responsible Sourcing at the John Lewis Partnership, working across Waitrose and John Lewis. Her role is focused on ethics and sustainability in the supply chain, collaborating with commercial & sourcing teams to maximise positive impact to people, planet & animals, whilst minimising risk.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's an opportunity to highlight issues that are relevant every day. There are so many sector and countries where gender equity remains a challenge, and it's a huge opportunity waiting to be grasped. International Women's Day makes space for those important conversations - and even more importantly, action!

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

It's an immense privilege. The food sector is at the heart of all our lives - everyone, everywhere, needs and deserves good quality, nutritious food. Being able to work in the food industry, for a business that is really serious about protecting and respecting the people who work in the supply chain, the animals that we raise for food, and the natural environment on which that all depends is a source of constant inspiration for me. I am lucky enough to meet and interact with true experts in their field - farmers, suppliers, colleagues, NGOs - which means I'm on a constant learning journey. The Sustainable Markets Initiative Agribusiness Taskforce is a prime example of learning from others with a common goal: in this case mainstreaming regenerative agriculture.

How can women (and men!) better support other women in the industry?

Mentoring (from any gender) is a huge thing. Having a trusted relationship with someone where you can be honest about how you want to develop, and get a real feeling of 'someone in your corner' is really significant, especially in an industry where women might be relatively underrepresented. I've definitely felt 'imposter syndrome' at various stages of my career and one-to-one support is key to tackling that. I try to pay that forward now whilst still being on a massive learning journey myself!

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

So many women have inspired me during my career - too many to name! I would call out Nicola Waller though. She was the head of buying for meat, dairy & eggs when I joined Waitrose, and has been

a mentor over the years. She has a direct, no-nonsense approach that is also constructive, inclusive and kind. I saw her lead through tricky situations and thought 'I want to be more like that!'.

What steps can the food & agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

Recognise and actively call out that strength in any team, organisation or industry comes from a diversity of perspectives and experiences - so seek those out.

Think about removing barriers in the widest possible way - for example in international supply chains, programmes that recognise and embrace the huge knowledge that women farmers bring, whilst also tackle systemic issues such as access to markets.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

Don't be afraid to stand up for what you believe in. The industry is an incredible place. There is a huge amount of wisdom to learn from. There are also things that need to change, and being part of and helping drive that change can be daunting at times. Approaching conversations from a point of curiosity, whilst also being clear about the value you can add from your own perspectives is important.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

I believe that there is rightly a recognition of farmers and farming as a critical part of the solution to the world's dual crises of climate change and nature loss. Regenerative farming, for example, has potential to be a really significant part of the climate action we need to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but right now, the economics of the transition to regenerative farming are too risky for many farmers. As part of the Sustainable Market Initiative's Agribusiness Task Force there is huge energy surrounding the need to transform the way we produce and consume food in service of this. I'm very fortunate to work for a company where that need is right at the centre of our plans.


JESS MCGHIE

Senior Manager Global Sustainability
McCain

Jessica McGhie is a Senior Global Sustainability Manager at McCain Foods, a multinational frozen food company. She helps lead the sustainability agenda with a focus on the transition to regenerative agriculture, multi-stakeholder partnerships, ESG reporting and commercial engagement.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

It's a moment to reflect, take note, look around and see the achievements and experiences of women happening daily, and then ask yourself how you can lift up those women around you.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

This industry is a really exciting place to be, both in terms of challenges and opportunities. A big one is the changing climate. I work alongside our agriculture teams on smart and sustainable farming, and there's a big focus on regenerative agriculture. This change is hard for the food sector, but it's our responsibility to really think about our growers, our consumers, as well as the planet so we succeed.

How can women (and men!) better support women in the food and agriculture industry?

If you have the opportunity to give a platform to younger females, from participating in a meeting or giving a presentation, it can make a big difference to that person.

McCain has a women's employee resource group and a women in agriculture group, which are a really good way to network and advocate to improve women's representation. We need to be better at attracting women into the industry across the whole value chain, including scientists, engineers, researchers and economists.

Did you have any particular role models or mentors?

I have worked with many really inspiring female and male leaders in different roles in my career and they've given me the confidence to aim higher into those leadership roles. Things that seemed really

terrifying at the time, such as a challenging project, or being on a panel, were a really great way to build confidence and connect with others in industry.

What steps can the food and agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

Female farmers account for around 43% of global agricultural workers, but they lag male counterparts in terms of productivity due to lacking access to resources and knowledge. Women are also disproportionately more affected by climate change. It's really important for companies to help fill that gap and provide the right support. McCain is encouraging all our growers to implement regenerative farming practices, and making sure we provide training and financial support to all.

What advice can you share for younger women or minorities coming into such a male dominated industry?

A quote from a book called "Why has nobody told me this before?" by Dr. Julie Smith, stuck with me. It's around courage proceeding confidence. In the workplace, when you've experienced moments of doubt, you need to speak up even if you don't feel confident. See your differences as strengths - we need different perspectives.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

Emerging innovations are really fascinating - from suspended solar panels, to soil DNA barcoding, to see and spray technology. We're going to be testing some of these latest regenerative practices in our two Farms of the Future - we want to make those mistakes so that our growers don't.


MARGARET HENRY

*VP Global Sustainable & Regenerative
Agriculture*
PepsiCo

Margaret's career has focused on improving sustainable food systems in government, NGOs and the private sector in places as varied as Brazil, the U.S. and India. She currently works on PepsiCo's Positive Agriculture agenda, shaping its strategy for partnerships, to expand climate resilience, and partner with farmers to expand the uptake of regenerative farming practices around the world. She believes that the most enduring change comes about when aligning diverse partners with different expertise, and driving outcomes through finding shared value from the farmer to the environment to the consumer.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

This annual celebration marks an opportunity to highlight the role women play in influencing global economies, industries, and communities. From a food systems perspective, many may not realize the integral role women play in getting our food from the field to the table – making up approximately 43 percent of the labor force for agriculture in developing countries.

Women in agriculture have a powerful story to tell and continue to live as best practice examples in resilience and leadership. On this International Women's Day, I'd like to celebrate all the incredible female farmers and farm laborers we support around the world at PepsiCo, who continue to join us in our PepsiCo Positive (pep+) sustainability journey as we help transform the way the world farms.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

Growing up on a dairy farm in Kentucky, this work has always been close to my heart. I've seen first-hand the grit, dedication and pride that goes into taking care of your own farm and how that hard work directly translates to helping employ others, protect natural resources, and feed families around the world. Being a part of the agriculture industry is truly unparalleled because we are contributing to work that touches every single person on the planet.

Today, I'm proud to work for PepsiCo, an agriculture company at its core. We source more than 30 agricultural crops and ingredients from approximately 60 countries. With our size and scale, my team and I have a chance to make a difference by helping build a more resilient, sustainable food system while also helping to enhance the lives of agricultural workers and their communities.

How can women (and men!) better support other women in the industry?

We need to lend stronger support to all women throughout the agricultural supply chain. For context, women own less than 15 percent of the world's agricultural land, and due to exclusion from training and access to resources, tend to produce 20-30 percent

less. Women's empowerment in agriculture is often regarded as "a problem to solve" and should be viewed as a solution to many of the agricultural challenges we face.

This level of change starts with elevating their stories to broaden awareness around the critical role women play. Next, we need to take a closer, more strategic look at how we design and offer training and resources to our female farmers. For example, in my experience, learning and networking opportunities across global markets have dominantly complemented the needs of male farmers – like hosting trainings strictly in-person and during the day with no childcare, a time when caregiving often takes priority for many female farmers who are also full time, default parents.

Local and cultural context also matters in the way we engage women across the industry. We have been walking this walk at PepsiCo in many ways, by investing in the capabilities of women in agriculture. For example, our demonstration farms continue to provide clear models of on-farm and supply chain interventions that place women's needs, priorities, skills, and unique knowledge at the center. In Vietnam, our demonstration farm is women-led and women-run, as part of our global partnership with USAID. The partnership also engages women in Colombia, India, and Pakistan to strengthen women's agricultural skills and access to resources within PepsiCo's supply chains.

There's also the PepsiCo Foundation's work with CARE, a global poverty-fighting organization. Together, we work directly with women to build their skills and confidence in sustainable agriculture practices, market engagement, gender equality, and food and nutrition security.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

First, my mother for many reasons including how she changed the trajectory of my family's farm and the field of sustainable agriculture. My mom had an active role in managing our family business and advocated for farm-to-farm organizing as a way to



share learnings and drive opportunities among our rural farming community. From an early age, I've watched her engage with stakeholders ranging from CEOs and Ministers of Agriculture to half-acre farmers with the same level of respect and listening.

Then there's the women on farms in markets like West Bengal and Indonesia, who PepsiCo partners with – they inspire me every day. The environmental obstacles and societal challenges these women handle with grace is astonishing. They continue to take push back and doubt and turn it into motivation to succeed. Their farms are thriving in the face of increasingly challenging weather, and take the time to pay it forward, joining us in training others in the community on key areas like climate-smart, drip irrigation.

What steps can the food & agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

In all that we do, we need to drive equitable opportunity for everyone. PepsiCo was built on the foundation that we thrive because of our diversity, and we believe we have a responsibility and unique opportunity to help address societal challenges. To meet our pep+ ambitions and contribute to a better workplace and world, including those in our agricultural supply chain, we continue to help address inequalities for historically marginalized people and underserved businesses and communities.

When it comes to agriculture, women rarely have equal access to opportunities and assets such as financing, land rights and education. An initial, critical step to removing barriers would be openly acknowledging the richly diverse perspectives and skills women bring to the field and how women continue to positively influence their communities. We also need to prioritize providing female farmers with economic, cultural, and agronomic support. These three things are key to building more sustainable, regenerative farms, as well as inclusive, equal markets for female farmers to successfully compete in.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

From my own experience, I've seen women in many industries, specifically agriculture, often work twice as hard to be recognized half as much. Together, we must use all the voice and agency we have to be heard, to drive respect among our peers, to create and claim opportunity, and importantly, support one another by embracing a responsibility to lay down a smoother path for the women right behind us.

As a mother to boy-girl twins, it's my hope that when they enter the workforce, my daughter will have all the same opportunities to succeed that my son will. I hope she doesn't face the visible and invisible barriers so many generations before her have. And I hope that the millions of girls in the communities that PepsiCo touches can envision themselves as leaders and innovators in agriculture.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

There's a lot of aspects that excite me. I'd start by highlighting how as PepsiCo, we're dedicated to supporting women in agriculture because it's the right thing to do for women and for our business. We openly acknowledge that to become the company we want to become for the future, engaging women and other vulnerable populations throughout our agricultural supply chain is a prerequisite to succeed. I'm proud to be a part of these global efforts and experience first-hand how PepsiCo is becoming an even more "gender aware" business in terms of how we drive progress against our Positive Agriculture agenda.

Industry-wide, it excites me to see increased recognition and prioritization around the critical role women play in our global food system, which I can only hope will lead to greater financial investment in female farmers, more impactful training and resources that are tailored to our female audience, stronger policies to support both women's land rights and climate-smart practices, and more.


ELIZABETH MICALLEF
General Manager in Canada
Bunge

Elizabeth Micallef joined Bunge in 2002 and currently serves as General Manager in Canada. With more than 35 years of experience in the foodservice & food ingredients industry, she has led teams in commercial excellence, customer service, food science and transformation initiatives. Passionate about people development, she leads by example and builds collaborative, highly skilled teams with a customer's needs, based bias. Elizabeth holds a Bachelor from the University Guelph with BSc and Certificate in Conversational French Sheridan College.

What does International Women's Day mean to you?

This is a day to reflect on how far we've come in understanding and valuing women's inclusion. It's also to celebrate the determination and achievements of remarkable women across the globe who have helped raise awareness of aspirations and, most importantly, women's rights. Nevertheless, it's important to acknowledge there is work yet to be done. As society, we need to continue building a more equitable environment and atmosphere for acceptance, empowerment, achievement, and support.

What does it mean to you to work in the food and agriculture industry?

Agriculture and the food industry has been part of my whole life. My family used to own farms and bakery shops. This allowed me to have a comprehensive view on the connections between the farm and the growth of products to the making of food and to learn to respect the whole process. My upbringing helped me both understand the importance of the commercial role I play today, but also respect the depth of commitment required by our farmer-partners to produce the raw ingredients. The values of honouring the land, protecting the environment and having the privilege to provide food to end consumers, are important priorities passed down to me from prior generations. Nowadays, at Bunge, it is amazing to collaborate with customers to develop innovative solutions to meet evolving dietary needs and trends, satisfying the diverse tastes of consumers around the world.

How can women (and men!) better support other women in the industry?

Collaboration is key. By sharing experiences, knowledge, and guidance, women can help each other navigate professional and personal challenges. It takes a strong commitment to your female peers' successes to make a difference, but sometimes men and women underestimate the supportive role they can play. Each of us has the power to foster an environment where acceptance and support are commonplace.

Who has been your role model or mentor as you progressed to leadership roles?

I have been fortunate to have both men and women in my life who have deliberately or sometimes unwittingly helped my successes. My

father had a passion for agriculture (and tractors) and believed his daughters could do whatever they set their mind to. My mother was the first in her family to seek employment outside of the traditional role of housewife and frankly rocked her leadership space. My Sisters moved into roles in the STEM space role modeling for myself and their children that women can take roles outside of tradition. There have been others who were quiet cheerleaders and showed confidence even during times when I thought I couldn't do it, but they believed I could – they know who they are! That kind of support builds personal confidence and helped me to be passionate about women in STEM & Agriculture.

What steps can the food & agriculture industry take to remove barriers for women and minorities to drive a more diverse, equitable and inclusive market for all?

The industry can push for more diversity in hiring and not settle until there's a broad spectrum of candidates. During the process, have a diverse team to interview, which allows you to pressure test your own assumptions and bias. The real test though is after hiring. Creating an environment where everyone belongs, and feels valued for their unique talents and diversity of thought. It takes courage, but businesses who get this right benefit greatly.

What advice can you share to young women, or minorities coming into a male dominated industries like agriculture and food?

Don't be afraid to ask for help and mentorship. If you are turned down by someone, don't quit. There are others out there who are pulling for you. Believe in your skills and surround yourself with those who will push and support you on the road forward. Push yourself and others for better.

What excites you about the transformation of global food and agriculture right now?

In my 35-year career I have seen more women in food and agriculture leadership roles and loving it. Along side this, women are running farms, privately-owned successful businesses in adjacencies to agriculture, and being supported by other men and women. Additionally, women's groups are coming more to the forefront. These groups have diverse audiences, presenters, and forums to allow for conversation, collaboration, and commitment. It's super exciting to feel the supportive energy. It's a great time to be in our global food and agriculture industry!