The World’s New Normal

Geopolitical strategist and Annual Meeting speaker Peter Zeihan has lived in the world of international affairs throughout his career. With a newly published book – The Absent Superpower – Zeihan has once again distilled the complicated issues of geopolitics to help leaders in agriculture and business see their industries from a new point of view, in preparation for an ever-changing climate.

Mr. Zeihan is a frequent guest on national and international television news shows such as CNN, ABC, and Fox News. He has been quoted in major print and online publications including the New York Times, Forbes, the Wall Street Journal, AP, Bloomberg, MarketWatch and many others.

Mr. Zeihan is returning to the Minnesota AgriGrowth Annual Meeting and Conference on Thursday, November 9 and we wanted to share his new insights and predictions over the next few weeks. Make sure and check back in coming weeks, and as always, Mr. Zeihan’s predictions will give you pause for thought.

Keep an eye on your email to see more of our conversation with Mr. Zeihan. But, to get the best of all his predictions you need to attend the Annual Meeting and Conference. Register now to attend the conference.

We are starting our interview series with Mr. Zeihan with a very top of mind issue for everyone in ag and the agribusiness world – free trade.

“Never underestimate Americans’ ability to turn quickly and take off in a new direction, the United States is what created this global structure.” – Peter Zeihan

ON NAFTA

AgriGrowth: NAFTA is a great example of a trade agreement that was very beneficial to the Midwest, and as you know, there has been a lot of anxiety of the future of international trade agreements. What do you see in the future with international competitors?

Peter Zeihan: Brazil, the former Russian states and most of the major production countries that have become significant exporters of corn, wheat and soy in the last 30 years, have done so because the global system has been calm, global transportation has been safe and inexpensive, and global credit has been accessible. We are on the edge of a financial catastrophe that is global, and which will bring all of that to an end, and removes those producers from the international production space.

The path that President Obama started, and President Trump is continuing, makes a world where those old realities are no longer true. For the American farmer to be able to take advantage of that environment, and where the security at home is good, is phenomenal.

ON TRADE RELATIONSHIPS

AgriGrowth: Which U.S. geopolitical relationships have seen the most significant changes during the first year of the Trump Administration?

Peter Zeihan: On Trump, things have shifted, but not away from what Obama did, but really digging in and doing what Obama did more quickly and aggressively. The big debate that we had during the 2016 election wasn’t should we or should we not pull away from the national system, but how quickly. I have no doubt that American agriculture will be the industry that benefits the most.
OPENING REMARKS:
Devry Boughner Vorwerk
GLOBAL CORPORATE AFFAIRS, CARGILL

Devry Boughner Vorwerk oversees the company's global branding, communications, corporate responsibility and government relations efforts. She also has served as Director of Cargill’s International Business Relations.

Prior positions include Senior Policy Advisor at Akin Gump, the Economic Advisor at U.S. International Trade Commission in the Office of Industries, and she was a Senior Economist in Agricultural Affairs at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative.

PANELIST:
Lesly Weber McKnitt
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY, NATIONAL CORN GROWERS ASSOCIATION

Lesly McKnitt manages trade and biotechnology issues in her position as the Director of Public Policy for the National Corn Growers Association.

Prior to joining NCGA, she served as Chief of Staff of Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services. She previously served as Chief of Staff of the Farm Service Agency (FSA), the Farm Journal Foundation, and was a senior legislative associate with Oldaker, Belair & Wittie, LLP.

PANELIST:
Randy Spronk
PAST PRESIDENT NATIONAL PORK PRODUCERS COUNCIL

Spronk served as president of the National Pork Producers Association in 2013 and has been involved with the Minnesota Pork Producers Association, serving as president in 1999. He is currently on the executive committee of United States Meat Export Federation (USMEF) in addition to serving on an Ag Advisory committee to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. He holds a BS degree in animal science from South Dakota State University.

PANELIST:
Jeff Nawn
DUPONT PIONEER’S GLOBAL GRAIN TRADE AND BIOTECH AFFAIRS LEAD

Jeff Nawn is DuPont Pioneer’s Global Grain Trade and Biotech Affairs Lead, a position he has held since 2012. In this role Jeff is responsible for managing the company's strategic relationships with international grain handlers, as well as directing Pioneer’s global industry and biotech affairs advocacy efforts.

Prior to joining DuPont Pioneer Jeff was with the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service including positions as an Attaché in Tokyo and Mexico City. Before that he worked in finance in Chicago, and was also a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Moldova.
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2017
8:15 AM TO 5:30 PM (CST)
MINNEAPOLIS CONVENTION CENTER | MINNEAPOLIS, MN

In November of each year, AgriGrowth holds its annual Meeting and Conference, drawing nearly 500 attendees, including leaders from across the spectrum of Minnesota’s diverse food and agricultural sector, state and federal government officials, and academia.

The AgriGrowth Annual Meeting is described by many as the premier event for Minnesota’s food systems and ag industry—not to be missed!

MORNING PANEL: Agriculture and Trade:
Current issues and what’s at stake for U.S. agriculture

MORNING KEYNOTE:
Peter Zeihan, Geopolitical Strategist, Founder, Zeihan on Geopolitics. Author of the Absent Super Power and The Accidental Super Power

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT
Recipients have given significant contributions to strengthening food and agriculture.

AFTERNOON SESSION: US Economic Outlook in Agriculture
Dr. Michael Swanson, Senior VP and Agricultural Economist, Wells Fargo

AFTERNOON PANEL: 2018 Governor Candidate Forum

Hear directly from candidates on why they are running and what their priorities will be for agriculture and food if elected. Candidates confirmed thusfar:
• State Representative Erin Murphy (DFL)
• St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman (DFL)
• State Representative Matt Dean (GOP)
• Hennepin County Commissioner Jeff Johnson (GOP)
• Former Chair of the MN GOP Keith Downey (GOP)
• State Senator Dave Osmek (GOP)
• State Auditor Rebecca Otto (DFL)
• State Representative Paul Thissen (DFL)
AgriGrowth’s 2017 Annual Meeting and Conference is almost here! Each year I’m excited to see leaders from across Minnesota’s agriculture and food sector in attendance to network and hear from some top-notch speakers on relevant topics affecting our important sector. Before I share a little about the speakers and guests, I want to remind you about the ever-popular pre-conference reception. On Wednesday, November 8th, join us at Brit’s Pub in Minneapolis from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. Enjoy hors d’oeuvres, cash bar, and a great opportunity to network with a wide variety of professionals in the ag and food production sector.

**MORNING PANEL**

Opening this year’s Annual Meeting and Conference is a panel entitled “Agriculture and Trade: Current Issues and What’s at Stake for U.S. Agriculture”. This will be a high-powered panel addressing many facets of trade and how shifts in trade negotiations could affect Minnesota agriculture, food production and export markets.

**MORNING KEYNOTE**

Peter Zeihan is back! Members will remember Zeihan’s thought provoking keynote in 2015 and he is back to give our attendees an update on agriculture, energy, and the geopolitical global business climate. Peter Zeihan has lived in the world of international affairs throughout his career. With a newly published book – The Absent Superpower – Zeihan has once again transformed raw data into usable information to help agri-businesses stay ahead of the curve.

Mr. Zeihan is a frequent guest on national and international television news shows such as CNN, ABC, and Fox News. Mr. Zeihan will also be sticking around over the lunch hour to sign books and visit with attendees.

**AFTERNOON SESSION**

We will begin the afternoon session with a familiar face to us in agriculture, Dr. Michael Swanson, Senior VP and Agricultural Economist at Wells Fargo. Dr. Swanson will provide an overview of the current economic conditions as well as a future outlook for agriculture.

**AFTERNOON PANEL**

With 2018 shaping up to be an important state election for Minnesota agriculture, AgriGrowth will be convening its first-ever Governor Candidate Forum. This forum will include candidates from both sides of the aisle, and provide them an opportunity to share with attendees why they are running for governor, and what their priorities will be for agriculture if elected. As you can see from the agenda, we have a full slate of the top GOP and DFL candidates already confirmed. This will be a great opportunity to hear from candidates who may be Minnesota’s next Governor.

Overall, the speakers and panelists at this year’s Annual Meeting will deliver thought-provoking and decision driving information on some of today’s most relevant issues affecting Minnesota’s agriculture and food sector. Be sure to stick around and enjoy the post-conference reception, as many of the Governor forum candidates will stay to network and connect with AgriGrowth members and other attendees.

Lastly, AgriGrowth has the great privilege of convening and advocating on behalf of Minnesota’s agriculture and food sector. We greatly appreciate the engagement and support of our members throughout the past year. I also want to thank all sponsors and exhibitors who have already signed up for this year’s Annual Meeting and Conference. There is still time to sponsor or exhibit, so please contact Dana Ellis with Ellis International at: 612-240-5535, dana@ellisinternational.com.

Please keep an eye on your e-mail in the coming weeks, as we will be sending out more featurettes to our members on what you can expect to hear and see at this year’s Annual Meeting and Conference!

Reserve your spot today! Registration information and full conference agenda can be found at agrigrowth.org
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Minnesota AgriGrowth Council is a non-partisan, non-profit member organization representing the agriculture and food systems industry. Our strategic approach to policy development, issues management, collaboration and awareness fosters long-term sustainability, competitiveness and business growth. AgriGrowth’s diverse membership provides an informed and respected perspective for key influencers and consumers. AgriGrowth’s industry-wide perspective is essential in a state where agriculture and food is the second largest economic driver.