



W. KESS BERG

Chief Technical Officer

Advanced Agrilytics
Indianapolis, Indiana

Without question, Kess is the best graduate student I have had and among the best to matriculate from the graduate programs in our department in my 37 years at Purdue.

— Jeffrey J. Volenec, Professor,
Department of Agronomy, Purdue University

W. Kess Berg has committed much of his life to furthering his understanding of agronomy and supporting its advancement — resulting in his creation of an entrepreneurial enterprise that met a critical need to characterize field environments.

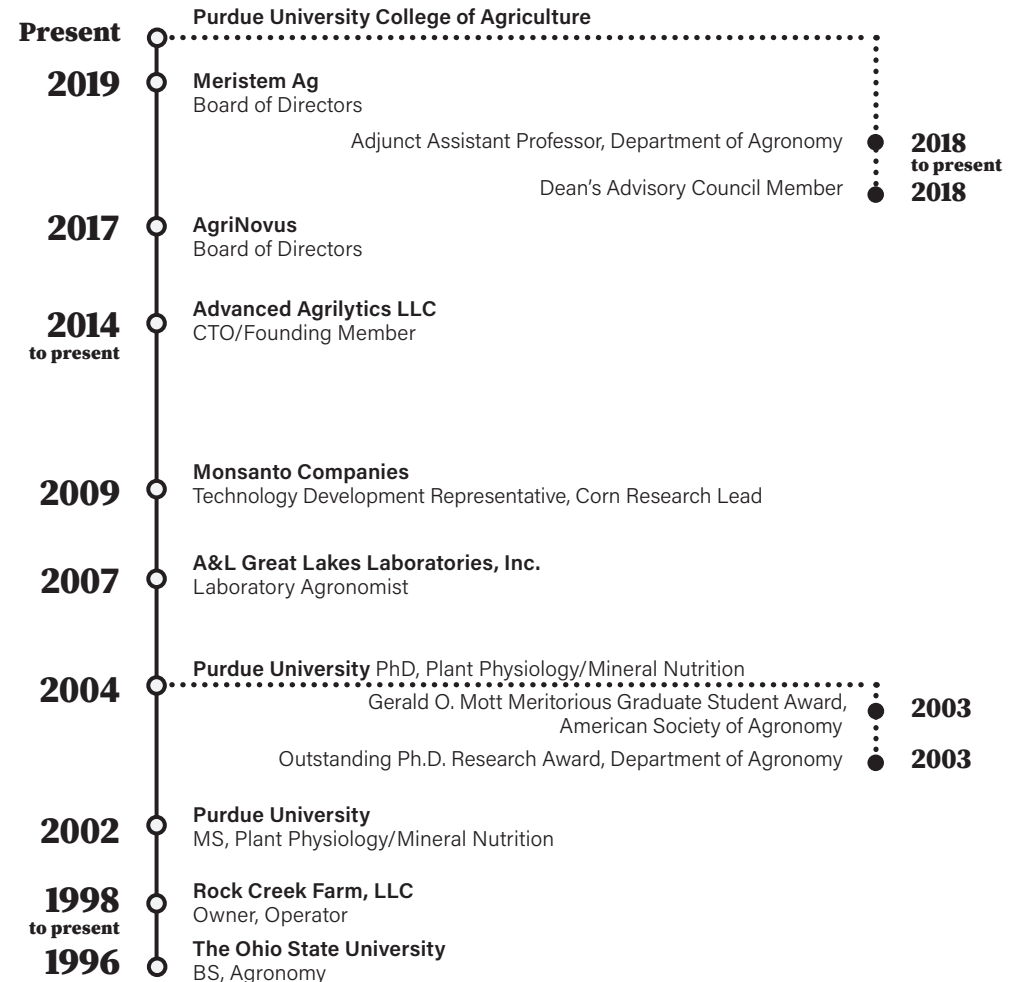
While at Purdue, Berg joined the research lab of Jeffrey Volenec, a professor of agronomy. There, Berg earned his M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees in 2002 and 2004, respectively. Volenec described Kess as “the hardest working student that I have ever witnessed” and called providing an assistantship for Berg “the best investment my program ever made.” Berg’s extensive work in Volenec’s lab included both field and laboratory analyses aimed at understanding the underlying physiological and biochemical factors that affect agronomic performance.

After receiving his Ph.D. from Purdue, Berg became a laboratory agronomist at A&L Great Lakes Laboratories in Fort Wayne. He then moved to Monsanto, initially working as a technology development representative and quickly rising to a leading role in corn research. In that capacity, Berg led efforts aimed at exploiting interactions among genotype, environment and management by matching

adapted corn hybrids with site-specific nitrogen management strategies. The company soon offered Berg’s findings as the FieldScripts Integrated Farming Systems program.

In 2014, Berg left Monsanto to start Advanced Agrilytics, LLC. He formed the company out of a necessity to characterize the environments within a field at a sub-acre level and understand how the environment can affect crop performance. The evidence-based system Berg and his staff developed provides farmers opportunities to maximize productivity and return on investment while simultaneously protecting the environment. In 2019, the company’s success caught the attention of Paine Schwartz Partners, a private equity firm specializing in sustainable food chain investing. Thanks to the firm’s additional infusion of resources, Berg was able to expand Advanced Agrilytics’ customer base throughout the Corn Belt.

Berg continues to farm in Ohio and Indiana. He also remains connected to Purdue, serving on the College of Agriculture’s Dean’s Advisory Board since 2018 and supporting the Department of Agronomy.





RACHEL CUMBERBATCH

Director, International and Regulatory Affairs

Animal Health Institute (AHI)
Washington, DC

Dr. Cumberbatch has made outstanding contributions to global agriculture and to society. She is an exceptional role model — providing inspiration for diverse individuals seeking careers in this field.

— Alan Mathew, Professor,
Department of Animal Sciences, Purdue University

In her current role with the Animal Health Institute, Rachel Cumberbatch advocates for legislation and policies to advance the development and application of animal medicines.

As an undergraduate student at Purdue, Cumberbatch served on the University's Board of Trustees. In 2007, she earned her bachelor's degree in Animal Sciences and was the recipient of the Flora Roberts Award, presented annually to the top outstanding senior woman at Purdue for her scholarship, leadership, character and service to the university community. Cumberbatch went on to attend veterinary school at Purdue and earned her DVM in 2011.

After working in clinical veterinary medicine, Cumberbatch transitioned to policy through an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2013. There, she focused on communicating science to a diverse collection of audiences.

In 2015, Cumberbatch became an AVMA Congressional Fellow serving in the Office of Minnesota Senator Al Franken, where she

supported the Senator by providing scientific input on healthcare issues. She played an active role in bipartisan policy negotiations and drafting legislation related to infectious disease outbreaks and chronic disease. Two years later, Cumberbatch accepted her current position as Director of International and Regulatory Affairs at the Animal Health Institute (AHI).

In 2016, Cumberbatch was honored with a Department of Animal Sciences Distinguished Alumni award. In 2020, her achievements in animal health industries and global food systems were recognized when she was named the 2020 Book Harmon Fellow. Cumberbatch was also honored as a Rising Professional by the Purdue University Old Masters program in 2016. Dr. Cumberbatch graduated from Lebanon High School and was a 10 year Boone County 4-H member.





JING-KE WENG

Associate Professor of Biology
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jing-Ke is a phenomenal scientist with a strong vision for the future of plant sciences. His career is blossoming, he is a leader in his field, he has secured high levels of funding for his diverse projects, and he has founded his own company demonstrating the vision of basic to applied sciences.

— Clint Chapple, Distinguished Professor, and Andrew Mesecar, Head, Department of Biochemistry, Purdue University

Jing-Ke Weng has held a deep interest in plants' metabolism of natural products throughout his career. He has conducted studies that have provided essential insight into plant chemistry and enzymology during his Ph.D. research and structural biology during his post-doctoral training.

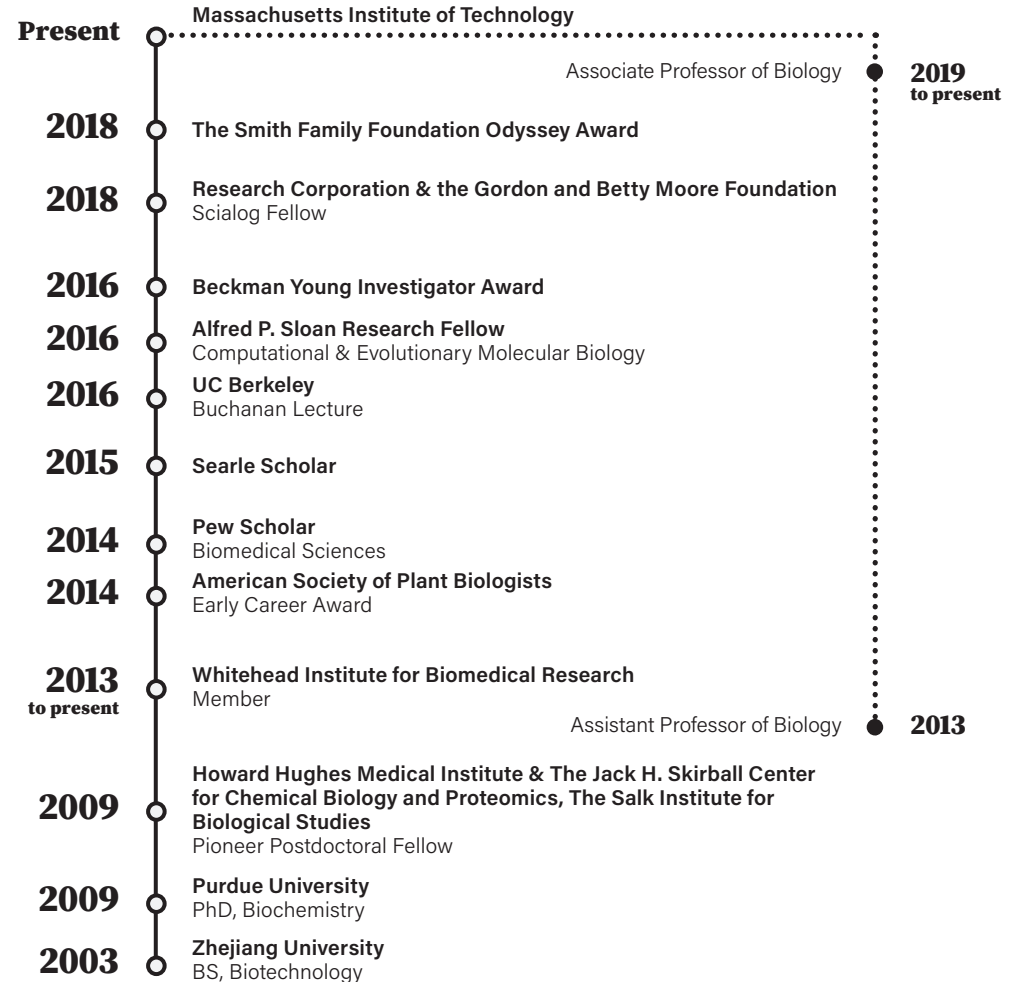
“By every measure, Jing-Ke is the best scientist to receive his Ph.D. from my laboratory, and I believe him to be the very best I have ever known at Purdue University,” says Clint Chapple, distinguished professor of biochemistry. During his graduate career, Weng discovered and outlined the biosynthetic pathway for a group of four previously unknown compounds.

After earning his Ph.D. at Purdue in 2009, Weng completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Salk Institute, studying the structural biology of enzymes involved in plants' secondary metabolism. In 2013, Weng was hired as an assistant professor of biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). There, he established a laboratory at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research. Since 2013, 50 new papers have come out of his lab and he was promoted to the rank of associate professor in 2019.

Weng's current research program covers metabolic chemistry, with increasing interest in its potential applications. Current funding for his work includes projects on elucidating the pathway for production of sporopollenin (crucial to plant protection and propagation) and how fireflies make luciferin, which enables them to glow. He is also making strides in human therapeutics.

Weng sits on the advisory boards of several prominent companies, including Inari Agriculture. He is a member of the editorial boards of *Trends in Biochemical Sciences* and *The Plant Cell*. Weng has received the Smith Family Foundation Odyssey Award, Beckman Young Investigator Award, American Society of Plant Biologists Early Career Award and many other honors.

Weng recently co-founded DoubleRainbow Biosciences, whose goal is to use proprietary genomic and metabolomic platforms to decipher chemistry, engineer metabolism, enhance life and deliver medicines.





AMANDA WUESTEFELD

Director – Division of Fish and Wildlife
 Indiana Department of Natural Resources
 Indianapolis, Indiana

Amanda has earned career success to which most professionals can only aspire. She has been actively involved with natural resources conservation in Indiana since the inception of her career and will likely influence the direction of Indiana’s conservation work for years to come.

— Robert G. Wagner, Professor and Head,
 Department of Forestry & Natural Resources, Purdue University

Amanda Wuestefeld has dedicated her nearly 30-year career with the Indiana Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to protecting natural resources for Indiana and its residents.

Wuestefeld originally started with the IDNR as a summer-season interpretive naturalist for the Indiana Division of State Parks. She graduated in 1996 with a degree in Wildlife Science from the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources (FNR) at Purdue University. In 1997, Wuestefeld began work as an information specialist with IDNR.

Wuestefeld was quickly promoted to a position directing programs in Aquatic Resources Education and later served as director for the Hoosier Outdoor Heritage program. During her work with those programs, Wuestefeld educated the public on issues involving the protection of aquatic resources, organized Indiana’s State Wildlife Action Plan, and increased the recruitment of hunters and anglers.

In 2016, Wuestefeld became the assistant director for the Division of Fish and Wildlife — a role she held for three years before becoming the first female division director within the IDNR.

Wuestefeld has consistently been recognized for her successes in engaging her community and making positive contributions to natural resources. Keep Indianapolis Beautiful presented her with its Partners in the Environment’s Significant Contributions Award in 2002. The Environmental Education Association of Indiana awarded Wuestefeld the Joe Wright Recognition of Excellence Award in both 2005 and 2008. The following year, the Indiana Bowhunter Association named Wuestefeld its DNR Employee of the Year for her efforts to recruit and educate new hunters.

Wuestefeld remains involved with Purdue Forestry and Natural Resources through her work with the IDNR.

