

Kevin D. Walker, MS, PhD

From farming in the West to working within the agri-food industry, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, overseas, and academia, Kevin brings a lifetime of insider experience to food, agriculture and the environment. His range of experience includes leading the agricultural health and food safety directorate in the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture; directing the Center for Emerging Issues within the Animal Health and Plant Health Inspection; teaching the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary agreements (SPS) at the World Trade Organization; and addressing the relationship between food and society as a professor at Michigan State University. His present roles at MSU include teaching within the Online Master of Science in Food Safety and collaborative food- and environment-related research within the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.

During his time at Michigan State University, Kevin has collaborated with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the American Public Health Association, the Institute for the Future, and served on two Institute of Medicine, National Research Council committees of the National Academies. He also served as a board member with SSAFE, a food safety nonprofit comprised of large multinational companies including Nestlé, McDonalds, Coca Cola, Cargill, and Zoetis. He has also been invited to interact with additional multinational companies including Danone, Darden, Cargill, and Nestlé.

Prior to Michigan State University, Kevin led the Agricultural Health and Food Safety directorate within the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, collaborating with national governments in thirty-four countries from its headquarters in Costa Rica. In addition to programs aimed at improving health and food safety in countries, Kevin developed an Executive Leadership in Food Safety program that included leaders and mentors from more than 20 countries.

Before IICA, Kevin was the Director of the Centers for Emerging Issues, within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal Health and Plant Health Inspection Service. The Center analyzed and provided policy alternatives on emerging issues such as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy aka “mad cow disease,” E. Coli O157:H7 in ground beef, avian influenza, and tuberculosis in wild and domestic animals. Prior to USDA, he was a strategic analyst for Farmland Industries, then the largest farmer-owned cooperative in the United States.

Kevin has worked extensively with international organizations in agriculture, food, health standards and trade agreements. He is the original designer of the PVS instrument, which has been adopted by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and used in over 110 countries to improve sanitary infrastructure. He continues to teach at the World Trade Organization on the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary agreements in food and agriculture. He has also partnered with other organizations including the World Bank, the Salzburg Institute, the U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization, the Codex Alimentarius, the International Plant Protection Convention, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the Standards Trade and Development Facility.

While Kevin has received numerous awards and recognition, the most important for its impact on his career was selection into the Kellogg National Leadership Program of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.