

AI in Agriculture & Agribusiness

Keynotes & Workshops · Sidney Shapiro, PhD

Practical AI for growers, processors, and industry—where AI adds value and where human judgment stays central.

Agriculture and agribusiness are undergoing a major shift: precision agriculture, IoT, and AI are changing how growers and processors work—but the gap between hype and reality is wide. Growers and industry need clarity on where AI adds value, how to validate and govern it, and when human judgment remains essential. This topic draws on direct experience with potato industry training, grower associations, and food processors to deliver keynotes and workshops that are accessible, practical, and grounded in real use cases.

Key facts

- Precision agriculture and AI could help reduce fertilizer and pesticide use by 20–30% while maintaining or improving yields—but adoption depends on trust, connectivity, and support for growers to interpret and act on data.
- AI is already used in food processing for sorting, grading, quality prediction, and supply chain optimization; the next frontier is integrating field-level data with processing and market insights.
- Responsible AI in agriculture means keeping humans in the loop for high-stakes decisions (e.g. crop health, safety) and being transparent about what models can and can't do in variable field conditions.

Who it's for

- Grower associations and industry conferences
- Processors and agribusiness (e.g. potato, food)
- Scholarship and awards events (e.g. Rotary Ag)

What you cover

- AI and precision agriculture — sensors, data, and decision support: what's realistic today and what's emerging.
- AI in food processing and quality — sorting, grading, quality prediction, and waste reduction.
- Responsible AI in agriculture — governance, validation, and knowing when to keep humans in the loop.
- Where AI helps—and where it doesn't — clear expectations so field and office teams don't over-invest or under-use new tools.
- Training and literacy — helping growers and industry support staff understand AI so they can use it safely and effectively.

Sample engagements

- McCain Foods / South Alberta Potato Industry — AI training for growers, industry, and support organizations (multi-session program).
- Rotary Club of Lethbridge East — keynote at Rotary Ag Scholarship Awards Dinner, supporting Southern Alberta's next generation of agricultural leaders.

Formats

Keynote (45–60 min), training session (e.g. 3-hour), half-day workshop.

Sidney Shapiro, PhD, is Assistant Professor of Business Analytics at the University of Lethbridge. He delivers keynotes and workshops on AI, data analytics, and digital transformation for conferences, boards, and industry.

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