1. “Board Performance and Assessment: Measuring and Developing for Effectiveness”
   Brett Kleffner, Land O’Lakes / United Suppliers, St. Paul, Minnesota

   For most ag industries throughout the U. S., this has been one of the more popular topics among board of directors, however the problem has been finding an effective facilitator to cover the subject. The topic is that hot! In co-ops, one of the common expressions is that as directors get elected to boards they take on the mentality, “Well, I am replacing Joe on the co-op board, so I’ll attempt to serve as Joe did until I am told otherwise.”

   With dollars much bigger today and risk at an all-time high in the industry, many are suggesting the bar be raised. This presenter, who hit it a home run with the Amarillo DDP group back in February 2017, will attack this subject with his usual style of group interaction. He's colorful, experienced, and can certainly talk the co-op language since he works for one of the premier food companies in the world, which also happens to be an ag co-op. The topic cannot be covered in one setting, so Brett will take more than an hour on the first day of the conference and come back the second day to deliver the knock-out punch!

2. “Megatrends: Identification and Seizing the Moment”
   Dr. John Penson, Regents and Stiles Professor in Agricultural Economics, Texas A&M University

   Every five to seven years at this conference, we attempt to provide a presenter that can deliver a snapshot of what is in store for agribusinesses in the future. In short, try to provide a picture of the business landscape and trends for the next five to seven years even though we can't see them present day. Some call this type of presenter a “futurist”. With this segment, we’ll go beyond that level. Not only will this noted macroeconomist attempt to look into the future and see what others can't regarding obstacles and challenges of co-op boards the next few years, but he will also explore, how boards can take this information and begin to address them head-on before it's too late.

   Dr. Penson, although he was not necessarily raised on a farm because his dad was senior vice president of Sears and Roebuck in downtown Chicago, did spend his growing up years working on farms where he resided near DeKalb, Illinois. He has his BS and MS from Southern Illinois University and his PhD from University of Illinois all in agricultural economics. He has been teaching at A&M for 42 years: macroeconomics in agriculture, rural financial markets, and introduction to agricultural economics. In fact, he wrote the book he uses in his introductory agricultural economics class and it is also used by 80 other universities around the world. This setting should set the stage for a blockbuster session! This session should allow you to return home and instead of addressing month to month issues, tackle more of the big picture items before they become major challenges.
3. **“Your Role as a Partner, Board Manager, and Leader” (not confirmed)**

Although the speaker is not confirmed, we are in hopes that this innovative co-op general manager, can bring a fresh array of observations to the key objectives of this conference. Those key objectives are: to provide tools for the board chair to better manage the remaining director team, 2) provide ideas so as to serve as a better partner with the general manager (*without getting involved in management*) as the two navigate a very risky and big dollar industry, and 3) to provide refresher tips to allow the board chairs to set the climate, culture, and direction for the company. The topic is being approached from a real-life situation with this co-op general manager, rather than from a theory standpoint. Should make for many nuggets of information that you can take back to your community.

4. **“Directors Matter --- Building Blocks to Significance”**  
**Dr. John Park, Roy B. Davis Co-op Chair, Texas AgriLife Extension, College Station**

This presentation was recently given to a group attending a Plains Cotton Cooperative Association meeting in Rockport, Texas. The approach was unusual, captivating, and had the folks falling all over themselves from the get-go. One of the features of this Board Chairmen’s Conference is to provide tools that will allow a board chair to better manage the team of co-op directors. This exercise, not really a speech but more of an interactive skit, will make a huge impression on how to better assemble a co-op board team and how to keep them moving as one cohesive unit. Furthermore, it will impress upon the team, the significance of each and every director. If you need tips to achieve greater stability and buy-in from the entire director group, this is your session!

5. **“Legal Challenges: The 101st Edition”**  
**Gary McLaren, Attorney, Phillips and McLaren, Lubbock, Texas**

A number of years ago, it was suggested in conference evaluations that co-op attorney Gary McLaren attend this conference. It was felt by many that there were some issues the board chairs needed to deal with privately regarding their remaining board of director team such as confidentiality, getting too involved in management, directors dealing with the staff, and many others. Ever since that first-time effort, Gary has been a fixture at this conference. He is back to take on the latest version of legal cases before his office, but especially those that involve the director team. As usual, a can't miss session!