

<b>Tuesday, February 3</b>	
7:00 am - 8:40 am	GLPs in Practice (Optional, Pre-registration required)
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Registration and Breakfast (starts at 6:30 am for Embassy Suites patrons)
9:00 am - 9:05 am	Opening and Welcome
9:05 am - 9:15 am	USDA-ARS Update
9:15 am - 9:45 am	State of IR-4
9:45 am - 10:15 am	Workplace Communication: Best Practices
10:15 am - 10:30 am	BREAK
10:30 am - 11:00 am	Intranet Update
11:00 am - 11:20 am	IR-4 Impact on Growers: Prior to Request
11:20 am - 12:00 noon	The Life of a Project: Request to Registration (Part 1)
12:00 noon - 1:00 pm	LUNCH
1:00 pm - 1:40 pm	The Life of a Project: Request to Registration (Part 2)
1:40 pm - 2:00 pm	IR-4 Impact on Growers: After Registration
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm	National SOPs
2:30 pm - 3:00 pm	BREAK
3:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Lab/Field Breakout Sessions
5:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Hors d'Oeuvres Reception
<b>Wednesday, February 4</b>	
8:00 am - 10:00 am	Lab/Field Breakout Sessions
10:00 am - 10:30 am	BREAK
10:30 am - 12:00 noon	Lab/Field Breakout Sessions
12:00 noon - 1:00 pm	LUNCH
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	GLP Reboot: Strengthening Your Compliance Skills
3:00 pm - 3:30 pm	BREAK
3:30 pm - 5:15 pm	Awards and Closing Ceremony
<b>Thursday, February 5</b>	
Optional Charleston Field Tour ( <i>pre-registration was required; fully booked</i> )	



# NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

February 3-5, 2026

## SCHEDULE

Embassy Suites Charleston Convention Center - Charleston, SC

### Agenda Key

Time of Session*	General Session (Ballroom C1/C2/C3)	
	Field Session	Lab Session
	▼	▼

\*Times are all Eastern Standard Time

### Tuesday, February 3, 2026

7:00 am - 8:40 am	<p><b>GLPs (Good Laboratory Practices) in Practice</b> <i>(Optional; pre-registration was required.)</i></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> IR-4 Quality Assurance Unit</p> <p><b>Description:</b> An overview of different situations that you may come across and how to properly address them according to GLP standards.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 &amp; 7</p>
8:00 am - 9:00 am	<p><b>Registration Open &amp; Breakfast</b> (Breakfast service begins at 6:30 a.m. in the hotel Atrium for Embassy Suites patrons)</p>
9:00 am - 9:05 am	<p><b>Opening and Welcome</b> (Ballroom C1/C2/C3)</p>
9:05 am - 9:15 am	<p><b>USDA-ARS Update</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Joe Munyaneza, PhD</p> <p><b>Description:</b> An update from ARS National Program Leader.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>
9:15 am - 9:45 am	<p><b>State of IR-4</b></p>

	<p><b>Speakers:</b> IR-4 Management</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Gain an understanding of the current landscape and direction of the IR-4 Project. This talk will cover recent accomplishments, key challenges, and strategic priorities across research, regulatory, and funding initiatives. Discover how IR-4 is adapting and supporting specialty crop growers, and understand the vital role this team plays in IR-4's mission.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>
9:45 am - 10:15 am	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Workplace Communication: Best Practices</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Donna Bouffard</p> <p><b>Description:</b> This session will focus on communication etiquette in a digital workplace. We will cover best practices for email and chat, as well as tips for active listening, respecting time, and being a productive participant in both physical and virtual meetings.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>
10:15 am - 10:30 am	<p style="text-align: center;">– <b>Break and Refreshments</b> (Ballroom Foyer C)</p>
10:30 am - 11:00 am	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Intranet</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Hannah Ross</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Tour the IR-4 Intranet, learn what's new since the site's launch, and hear what intranet content will soon migrate off of ir4project.org. Time for questions, feedback, and content ideas will be provided.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>
11:00 - 11:20 am	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IR-4 Impact on Growers: Prior to Request</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Mike Bledsoe, PhD, Village Farms, CLC Representative</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Hear about the work that growers must put in behind the scenes before a project is prioritized, and why the IR-4 Project is so important to the specialty crop industry.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>
11:20 am - 12 noon	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>The Life of a Project: Request to Registration (Part 1)</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Dr. Kari Arnold; Jimmy Byrtus; Will Meeks; Alex McFall, PhD</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A panel of IR-4 Team members will showcase their roles in the life of an IR-4 residue project. This section will highlight developing priorities, protocol writing, conducting field trials, and the analytical phase.</p>

	<b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3	
<b>12 noon - 1:00 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b> (Ballroom C4)	
1:00 pm - 1:40 pm	<p align="center"><b>The Life of a Project: Request to Registration (Part 2)</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Jimmy Byrtus, Scott Muir, Tom Pike, Cristina Marconi</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A panel of IR-4 Team members will showcase their roles in the life of an IR-4 residue project. This section will highlight QA audits, final report writing, the submission process, and the project timeline.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	
1:40 pm - 2:00 pm	<p align="center"><b>IR-4 Impact on Growers: After Registration</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Berry Tanner, National Watermelon Association, CLC Representative</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Hear how the IR-4 Project has impacted U.S. watermelon growers, and why the work done by IR-4 is critical to helping support specialty crop growers.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	
2:00 pm - 2:30 pm	<p align="center"><b>National SOPs</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Martin Beran</p> <p><b>Description:</b> A crash course on everything IR-4 National SOPs: where to find them, the review process for new and updated SOPs, training, and how to incorporate these at individual sites.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	
<b>2:30 pm - 3:00 pm</b>	<b>– Break and Refreshments</b> (Ballroom Foyer C)	
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<p><b>Application Types (&amp; eFDB)</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Rob Welker, Jennifer Fisher, Wilfredo Robles, Jimmy Byrtus, Philip Moore</p> <p><b>Description:</b> An overview of different application types used in IR-4 residue field trials, including concept, how to make accurate calculations, and how to enter application data in the eFDB.</p>	<p><b>Method Adaptations from Reference to Working Method</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Alex McFall, PhD</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Guidelines and best practices for building robust, efficient methods from accepted references. Tips and tricks for common equipment substitutions, increasing sample throughput, and incorporating the latest analytical chemistry</p>

	<b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3	techniques. <b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm Lab Session  4:00 pm - 4:45 pm Field Session	<b>Trials Saved &amp; Lessons Learned</b> <b>Speakers:</b> Leona Horst, Marylee Ross, Tom Pike <b>Description:</b> Ways FRDs have learned to save trials and helpful tips learned over the years on conducting trials in the greenhouse or field, as well as providing insight into how Study Directors evaluate the impact of issues in the field on the integrity of a study. <b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3	<b>Beyond Compliance: Catching Errors and Improving Laboratory Data Quality</b> <b>Speaker:</b> Yavuz Yagiz, Debbie Carpenter, PhD, Sherita Normington <b>Description:</b> This session will focus on strategies to strengthen data integrity and prevent issues that could jeopardize our studies, including good documentation practices, common QA findings, document control, and how to address problems when they arise. <b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7
4:45 pm - 5:00 pm Field Session	<b>Workflow of Document Transfer to IR-4 HQ</b> <b>Speakers:</b> Juliet Thompson <b>Description:</b> Discussion of GLP paperwork associated with field trials transferred to HQ. <b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3	
<b>5:30 pm - 7:30 pm</b>	<b>Reception</b> (2nd Floor Foyer and Meeting Rooms 4 & 5)	


## Wednesday, February 4, 2023

<b>7:00 am - 8:00 am</b>	<b>Registration &amp; Breakfast</b> (Breakfast service begins at 6:30 a.m. in the hotel Atrium for Embassy Suites patrons)	
8:00 am - 10:00 am Field Session  8:00 am - 9:00 am Lab Session	<b>Electronic Field Data Book (eFDB) General Training</b> <b>Speakers:</b> Philip Moore, Jimmy Byrtus, Jane Forder <b>Description:</b> The iAdvantage	<b>Chromatography Strategies for Pesticide Testing: Choosing the Right Column and Cleanup Approach</b> <b>Speaker:</b> Nicole Saikin, Account Manager, Phenomenex

	<p>eNotebook system will be discussed in depth for the 2026 field season, including topics such as what is new for 2026, common QA findings, eFDB Guidance Document updates, and time for Q&amp;A.</p>	<p><b>Description:</b> A look at pesticide testing chromatography using HPLC, focusing on selecting the optimal column phase and dimensions, along with effective sample cleanup strategies for accurate pesticide testing.</p>
<p>9:00 am -10:00 am Lab Session only</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	<p><b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7</p> <p><b>Trace Level Quantitation of Pesticide Residues using LC-MS/MS</b></p> <p><b>Speaker:</b> Mengyuan Zhu, Sr. Field Application Scientist, Thermo Fisher Scientific</p> <p><b>Description:</b> This presentation will demonstrate the outstanding performance of the LC-MS/MS workflow featuring the Thermo Scientific™ TSQ Quantis™ Plus mass spectrometer for trace-level quantitation of pesticide residues in agricultural crops. Optimizing the MS parameters and troubleshooting MS problems for targeted pesticide analysis will be highlighted.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7</p>
<p><b>10:00 am - 10:30 am</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>– Break and Refreshments (Ballroom Foyer C) –</b></p>	
<p>10:30 am - 12:00 pm Field Session</p> <p>10:30 am - 11:30 am Lab Session</p>	<p><b>Electronic Facility Files Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Philip Moore, Jimmy Byrtus</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Open discussion regarding electronic facility files, forms, and what will be helpful moving forward for FRDs.</p> <p>*Please note the Facility Files aspect of eFDB is only provided to IR-4 FRDs (and is currently optional for those users). It is not provided to Canadian or Contract Research FRDs, who have few IR-4 sponsored trials annually;</p>	<p><b>Method Development - Roundtable Discussions</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b> Joel McCray; Alex McFall, PhD; Stephanie Long; Fabiola Zuno</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Hear from fellow IR-4 chemists on difficult projects/methods and the strategies used to work through them. Time for group discussion and feedback will be provided.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7</p>
<p>11:30 am - 12 noon Lab Session</p>		<p><b>Analytical Summary Report (ASR) Prep</b></p>

	<p>therefore, those attendees may not benefit from this session.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	<p><b>Speakers:</b> Riza Punongbayan, Tey Montalvo</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Using templates, databases, and automated software shortcuts for efficient report writing.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Meeting Rooms 6 + 7</p>
<b>12:00 pm - 1:00 pm</b>	<b>Lunch</b> (Ballroom C4)	
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	<b>GLP Reboot: Strengthening Your Compliance Skills</b>	
	<p><b>Speakers:</b> IR-4 Quality Assurance Unit</p> <p><b>Description:</b> An interactive discussion on GLP compliance.</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	
<b>3:00 pm - 3:30 pm</b>	– <b>Break and Refreshments</b> (Ballroom Foyer C) –	
3:30 pm - 4:15 pm	<b>Awards</b>	
	<p><b>Speakers:</b> IR-4 Management and RFCs</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Presentation of Regional/National Awards, winner of bingo card, and winners of superlatives contest(s).</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	<b>Closing Ceremony</b>	
	<p><b>Speakers:</b> Matt Hengel, Martin Beran, Leona Horst, Nicole Soldan</p> <p><b>Description:</b> Carefree and Comical Comprehension Competition on Crops, Chemistries, and Compliance Among Cool Colleagues</p> <p><b>Location:</b> Ballroom C1/C2/C3</p>	

## Thursday, February 5, 2023

<b>6:30 am - 7:15 am</b>	<p><b>Breakfast</b></p> <p>Breakfast service begins at 6:30 a.m. in the hotel atrium for Embassy Suites patrons; we encourage participants to get there early!</p>
7:15 am - 5:00 pm	<p><b>Charleston Field Tour</b></p> <p> Pre-registration was required. Transportation and lunch will be provided.</p>
<p><i>*Buses to depart promptly at 7:30 am!</i></p>	

**Description:** Dive into the rich agricultural heritage of the Lowcountry on this field tour. We'll start by exploring the revival of the region's culinary staple, heirloom rice seed production, at Bohicket Farms. Next, explore America's only major tea farm guided by an agronomist at the historic Charleston Tea Garden. The midday stop features presentations and lunch at the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, complete with a demonstration of spray truck technology. Finally, enjoy an educational talk on beekeeping and the vital role of pollinators in our food system at Boone Hall Farm.

## Notes:

### 👁️ Don't Miss This 👁️

#### 📶 Conference Wifi

Network: **CACCC3**

Password: **nec2026**

🕒 **Breakfast** begins at 6:30 a.m. daily in the Atrium (for Embassy Suites patrons).

📱 **Posting to Social Media?** We encourage you to follow and tag IR-4, and use **#IR4NEC** to share your experiences.



#### 🚜 Field, Lab and QA Stickers

Identify lab teammates by flask stickers on their nametags, field teammates by tractors and QA teammates by magnifying glasses.

#### 🎀 First Timers Ribbon

Be sure to greet the first-time attendees, identified by ribbons on their name tags.

#### 🍇 Claw Machine

Answer questions in sessions and win tokens to use in the claw machines on the registration desk!

### Vote for Photo Superlatives

Don't forget to vote for your teammates' photos in categories like Best Critter, Coolest Crop, Best Work Photo, and Emergency Photo! Scan to vote:



### Post-Conference Survey

Scan to complete our post-conference survey. Your feedback helps us plan future events. Thank you in advance for submitting your survey!

