

PRESS RELEASE

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Columbia Grain™
CULTIVATING GROWTH™

Columbia Grain is Cultivating Growth for Women in Agriculture

CGI sponsors StrongHer Together, a conference for women in agriculture this November, giving back to women in their communities and always looking to propel the career goals of their female team members.

PORTLAND, OR (NOVEMBER 2022) — From the combine to the boardroom, women in agriculture are helping to pave the way for a better future. Columbia Grain is committed to ensuring women are educated, encouraged, and empowered to succeed in their agricultural careers. They do this through their sponsorship of conferences like StrongHer Together and by cultivating the growth of their female team members across their corporate footprint as an inclusive employer.

This November, CGI is a silver sponsor of the first-ever [StrongHer Together Conference](#) at the Montana Agricultural Center in Fort Benton, Montana from November 15-17, 2022. Shandel Fouts, Accounting Clerk and Grain Buyer at CGI's Harlem, MT facility, has been instrumental in CGI's participation in this event, which offers sessions such as mental health for agriculture, agricultural accounting, social media marketing, and balancing ranch life. Fouts is honored to be a part of a conference where women in ag can meet to learn, connect and celebrate each other.

"The idea for this conference began with two rural women seeing a need for a women in agriculture conference in central Montana," says StrongHer Together founder Stacey Bronec. "Agriculture is the biggest industry in this area...we wanted to create an event for women to network."

Shandel Fouts started working at CGI in 2011. She grew up working on her family farm and began as a part-time employee with CGI, buying, settling, probing and dumping trucks, as well as loading trains. In June 2021, she began working at CGI full-time as an accounting clerk and grain buyer.



Shandel Fouts in Harlem, MT

"Working at Columbia Grain has helped me gain an understanding for the whole process. Before coming to work here I could help seed and harvest the crop, but I didn't understand the marketing end of things



or much about the quality and grading aspect,” said Fouts. “Over the last 11 years, I have developed some amazing relationships with neighbors, producers, and coworkers.”

Elevator Manager of the CGI Oakes, North Dakota facility, Abbey Quandt echoes a similar sentiment and appreciates the leadership training she’s received from her employment with CGI.

Quandt manages a shuttle loading facility for Columbia Grain, which handles corn, soybeans and occasionally spring wheat. She manages buying, accounting, sampling and grading, loading the shuttles and more.

“Columbia Grain has helped further my agriculture career by investing in me,” said Quandt. “I’ve had the opportunity to take part in their Vistage program, a CEO coaching and peer advisory organization for small and midsize business leaders.”

Grain Buyer, Amanda Beale, works at CGI’s Clarkston, WA facility and enjoys working with growers to cultivate strong relationships.



Abbey Quandt in Oakes, North Dakota



“I strive to help the grower achieve their best margins possible on the farm while mitigating their risk. My main goal is creating a profitable crop year for both the grower and CGI,” said Beale. “CGI has helped me further develop my career in the grain industry by providing me with learning opportunities and experience each day. With a constantly changing economy and market, my job at CGI is never boring. The excitement and risk behind grain marketing keep me on my toes, but I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

Amanda Beale in Clarkston, Washington

“Columbia Grain is dedicated to advancing the efforts of women in agriculture and closing the gender gap,” said the President and CEO of Columbia Grain, Jeff Van Pevenage. “Women are a driving force in agriculture and we are committed to cultivating their career growth.”

About Columbia Grain International

Since 1978, Columbia Grain International™ (CGI) has been *Cultivating Growth™* as a global leader in the origination, processing, logistics, and distribution of high-quality bulk grains, pulses, edible beans, oilseeds and organics for U.S. domestic and worldwide export markets. Headquartered in Portland, OR, CGI’s reliable supply chain spans the western region of the US, ensuring abundant ingredients for all of its partners, thanks to their trusted relationships with their farmers throughout the fertile croplands of Washington, Idaho, Montana and North Dakota, well known for its high-quality wheat, feed grains, canola and pulses. CGI is an owner of Montana Specialty Mills, who operates an organic and non-GMO oilseed crushing facility in Great Falls, Montana, a mustard seed facility in Conrad, Montana, and most recently Montana Craft Malt —providing specialty malt



barley from Montana farmers to the craft brewing world. Today, they are vertically integrated, operating assets including grain elevators, processing plants and agronomy centers to support their farmers, which stretch the northern tier of the United States. With multiple touchpoints across the food supply chain, CGI provides trusted solutions and cultivates high-quality ingredients from their local farmers for a farm to table philosophy that nourishes the world, safely.

For more information, visit [Columbia Grain International](#) online, For media inquiries, contact Christina Madrid at Christie & Co, www.christieand.co, by phone (805) 576-7102 and/or email christina@christieand.co.

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