

Mario A. Ortez

Virginia Tech

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Email: omario@vt.edu

EDUCATION:

Ph.D. Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN	2022
MSc. Agricultural Economics, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS	2015
BSc. Agribusiness Administration, Panamerican Agricultural School Zamorano, Honduras	2011

FIELDS OF CONCENTRATION:

Agribusiness, Finance, Price Analysis, Consumer Demand, Farm Management

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

Collegiate Assistant Professor of Agribusiness & Entrepreneurship <i>Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural Economics</i>	2024-Present
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James A. and Renae C. Pearson Collegiate Faculty Fellow (Endowed Fellowship) <i>The Kohl Centre at Virginia Tech, Department of Agricultural Economics</i>	2024-Present
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PRIVATE SECTOR EXPERIENCE:

Co-investor and Farm Owner. <i>Specialty Coffee</i> . Nicaragua	2015- 2023
Investment Associate. <i>Teays River Investments</i> . Zionsville, IN	2022 – 2024
Beef Pricing Manager. <i>JBS USA</i> . Greeley, CO	2017-2019
Beef Pricing Analyst. <i>JBS USA</i> . Greeley, CO	2016-2017
Corporate Trainee. <i>JBS USA</i> . Greeley, CO	2015-2016

Internships:

<i>Teays River Investments</i> . Zionsville, IN	2021
<i>The Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) Group</i> . Chicago, ILL	2014
<i>INVESA</i> . Nicaragua	2012
<i>Nahuel Foundation</i> . Ecuador	2011
<i>Group of Agro-Exporters Non-Traditional of Panama</i> . Panama	2011

GRANT ACTIVITIES

Pilot Benchmarking System for Virginia's Farmers and Nonindustrial Forest Private Landowners Virginia Cooperative Extension PIs: M. Ortez , S. Schons, S. Chakravarty, L. Wang, G. Amacher, & J. Sullivan \$120,000	2025-2026
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Liquidity Initiative: Experiential Finance Education for Virginia Verified Beef Success PIs: M. Ortez \$6,258	2025-2026
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Enhancing Dairy Sector Resilience through Data-Driven Infrastructure and Forecast Modeling The Dairy Alliance PIs: M. Ortez & M. Cary \$60,000	2025-2026
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Financial Tools for Today's Agribusinesses: Empowering Opportunities USDA-NIFA PIs: M. Ortez , J. Bovay & L. Wang \$75,000	2025-2026
Assessment of domestic and export market opportunities for Virginia soybeans Virginia Soybean Board PIs: M. Ortez , O. Isengildina Massa & J. Grant \$50,000	2024-2025
Flourishing Main Street Buena Vista: Thriving community through thriving businesses Main Street Buena Vista PIs: M. Ortez , M. Cary & L. Wang \$8,800	2025
Data-Science for grain marketing: Planting progress and Crop Condition Interactive Dashboard Virginia Corn Board PIs: M. Ortez , M. Cary & L. Wang \$9,000	2025-2026
Agribusiness Experiential Learning: Global Agribusiness Case Study Competition CALs Global Seed Grants PIs: M. Ortez & L. Wang \$10,000	2025

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Journal Articles:

Jung, J., Laura Barrett, N. Widmar and **M. Ortez**. Public Perceptions of Universities as Public Entities during the COVID-19 Pandemic Era. *Sage Open*, 15(3). ([LINK](#))

Neuhofer, Z., J. Lusk and **M. Ortez**. Demand for Plant-Based Meat Alternatives and the Role of Habit Formation and Variety Seeking. *Journal of Agricultural and Applied Economics*. Published online 2025:1-27 ([LINK](#))

Smith, M., **M. Ortez** and N. Widmar. Quantifying popular discussion of ESG in online media, comparing the USA to the UK. *The Journal of Impact and ESG Investing (Accepted)*.

Ortez, M, Taylor Thompson, Valerie Kilders, and Nicole Olynk Widmar (2024). Quantifying Demand and Willingness to Pay for Local Food Production. *Q Open*, Volume 4, Issue 1. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M, Tor N. Tolhurst, Nathan M. Thompson, Nicole Olynk Widmar (2023). Not all Beef-Cut Price Shocks are Alike: Disentangling Supply and Demand Shocks in the US Beef Market. *Journal of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association*. 1–16 ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M, Nicole Olynk Widmar, Mindy Lyn Mallory, Christopher Allen Wolf, Courtney Bir (2022). Online media in dairy markets: a US dairy futures market study. *Agricultural Finance Review*. Vol. 83 No. 1, pp. 168-185. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M, Nicole Olynk Widmar, Nathan M. Thompson, Yuan H. Brad Kim (2022). Valuation of dry

and wet aged beef by U.S. consumers. *QOpen*. Volume 2, Issue 1. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M., Nicole Olynk Widmar, Nathan M. Thompson, Yuan H. Brad Kim (2022). What do U.S. consumers care about regarding beef and its supply chain?. *Meat Science*. Volume 187. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M., Nathan M. Thompson, Nicole Olynk Widmar (2021). Filet Mignon: It's What's for Dinner? COVID-19 Impacts on the Relative Wholesale Prices of beef cuts. *Choices*. 4th Quarter 2021. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M., Courtney Bir, Nicole Olynk Widmar, Jonathan Townsend (2021). Dairy Product Purchasing in Households with and Without Children. *JDS Communications*. 2(1), 7-12. ([LINK](#))

Highlight: this publication was deemed of broad relevance by the American Dairy Science Association and on January 15, 2021 a Press release ([LINK](#)) was dispatched from their desk about our findings which generated a variety of media attention both in the U.S. and overseas.

Ortez, M., C. Bir, N.O. Widmar, C.A. Wolf (2020). Perceptions of Prominent Animal Welfare and Veterinary Care Organizations in the United States. *Animals*. 10(3), 472. ([LINK](#))

Bir, C., **M. Ortez**, N.O Widmar, C.A. Wolf, C. Hansen and F.B. Ouedraogo. Familiarity and Use of Veterinary Services by US Resident Dog and Cat Owners. *Animals* .10 (3), 483. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. and G.T. Tonsor (2016). Structural Change and Forecasting of Agricultural Commodity Realized Volatilities. *International Journal of Business and Applied Social Science*. 2:1-18. ([LINK](#))

Academic Articles in Progress

Ortez, M., M. Smith & N. Widmar. Public Perceptions of “Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)” Investments. *Journal of Consumer Policy (R&R)*.

Ortez, M., M. Smith & N. Widmar. Retirement in the United States: Knowledge, Perceptions and Trust. *The Journal of Retirement (R&R)*.

Ortez, M., S. Stuart & G. Mashange. Returns and volatility of stocks in the Agrifood sector: The case of the S&P Food & Beverage Select Industry Index. *The North-American Journal of Economics and Finance (Under Review)*.

Ortez, M., & C. Fiechter. Do Broad Equity Markets Influence U.S. Agricultural Producer Sentiment? Evidence from the Ag Economy Barometer. *Agricultural Finance Review (Under Review)*.

Ortez, M. Agri-food Finance as Strategy: Integrating Financials into an Experiential Capstone Course in Agricultural and Applied Economics. *Applied Economics Teaching Resources (AETR) (Under Review)*

S. Stuart & **Ortez, M.** Profits on a Platter? The Interconnectedness of Food Price Inflation and Agri-Food Stock Market Returns. *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy (Invited; in preparation)*.

Nisnik, M., Fishman, T., **Ortez, M.**, Shepon, A., & Makov, T. Global flows, losses, and circularity of sugar from cultivation to end users. *Nature Foods (Under Review)*.

Cary, M. & **Ortez, M.** Gone with the Wind: Renewable Energy Projects and Population Change. *Energy*

Economics (Under Review).

Medeiros, J., J. McMechan, J. Elmore, W. Roger, **M. Ortez**, C. Proctor, & O. Ortez. Hybrid and seeding rate effects on corn yield and economic return across eight site-years in Nebraska. *Crop, Forage, & Turfgrass Management (Under Review).*

Ortez, M., M. Smith, N. Widmar, & O. Isengildina Massa. Weathering the Market: Investigating Weather-Online Media's Association with U.S. Agricultural Futures. *In preparation.*

Mair, M., **M. Ortez**, M. Smith & N. Widmar. Early Warnings from the Web: Monitoring Online Data to Anticipate Corn Crop Conditions. *In preparation.*

Hughes, M., C. Fiechter, Mintert, J., Langemeier, M. & **M. Ortez**. Economic Uncertainty and Farmer Sentiment Uncertainty. *In preparation.*

Ma, Y., C. Fiechter, & **M. Ortez**. Market Signals and Farm Mood: Recency Bias and Price Expectations. *In preparation.*

Ac Pangan, W. **M. Ortez**, M. Cary, & Y. Zhang. Regional Corn Yield Forecasts: Vegetative Indexes and Crop Conditions. *In preparation.*

Duong, T., **M. Ortez**, M. Cary, Mills, B. & K. Stephenson. Log term effect of THI fluctuation on dairy productivity: A Remote Sensing Approach. *In preparation.*

Ortez, M., & C. Fiechter. Supply Chain Signals: Farmer Sentiment and Stock Market Performance Across the Food System. *In Preparation*

Ortez, M., M. Smith & N. Widmar. Understanding gen-AI adoption in US in different work environments (at home, hybrid, in person). *In preparation.*

M. Smith, N. Widmar, & **Ortez, M.** Understanding Why People Value Working from Home or Hybrid Workplace Flexibility. *In preparation.*

M. Smith, N. Widmar, & **Ortez, M.** Working Habits: Variations between working environments. *In preparation.*

Ortez, M. & M. Cary. To contract or to direct hire? U.S. Patterns of Immigration and Their Impact on Farm Labor. *In Preparation.*

Book Chapters

Decidedly Nontraditional Insights into Decision Making and Management. *Purdue University Press*. In production.

Chapter(s) Contributed: In Favor of differentiation; Thoughts on Value, Cost and Price

Looking Back to Learn from Market Insights . *Purdue University Press*. In production.

Chapter(s) Contributed: Consumers' Knowledge and Willingness-to-Pay for Wet-Aged and Dry-Aged Beef

Other Publications

Ortez, M. & M. Smith (2025). Investigating Public Perceptions of the Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG)

Investment Framework using Online Media Data, by Region in the United States. *Consumer Corner*. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2025). From Hype to Habit: The Story of Plant-Based Meat Products Unfolds. *Campus to Commonwealth*. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2024). The economics of technological adoption: Thoughts from the 2024 GAP Report™ Launch. *Kohl Insights*. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2024). The economics of technological adoption: Thoughts from the 2024 GAP Report™ Launch. *Kohl Insights*. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2024). Q & A with Allison Crittenden '16. *Kohl Insights*. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2022). Consumers' Knowledge and Willingness-to-Pay for Wet-Aged and Dry-Aged Beef. *Letter 15*. Purdue's Consumer Corner. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2022). Food Production and Population Growth: A Cautionary Tale. PAER-2022-17. Purdue Agricultural Economics Report ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2021). Divergent Market Movements on Varying Beef Cuts. *Letter 38*. Purdue's Consumer Corner. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2021). A Gentle Critique of Agricultural Supply Theory. *PAER-2021-5*. Purdue Agricultural Economics Report ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M., Nguyen C., & Neuhofer, Z. (2021). Sustainability, productivity, and market access of smallholder sugarcane farmers: The Case of Central America. *PAER-2021-7*. Purdue Agricultural Economics Report ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2020). In Favor of Differentiation. *Letter 14*. Purdue's Consumer Corner. ([LINK](#))

Ortez, M. (2020). Thoughts on Value, Cost and Price. *Letter 26*. Purdue's Consumer Corner. ([LINK](#))

EDITORSHIP ROLES

Lead Editor. Purdue Agricultural Economics Report-Graduate Student Research Issue (2022). ([LINK](#))

Guest Editor. Purdue Agricultural Economics Report-Graduate Student Research Issue (2021). ([LINK](#))

TEACHING ACTIVITIES

Virginia Tech

Foundations of Agribusiness (Undergrad)

Applied Economic Forecasting (Grad)

Applied Economic Analytics (Grad)

Fall 2025

Spring 2025

Fall 2024

Applied Problem Solving (Undergrad)

Spring 2025

For this Capstone "Experiential-Learning class" I developed a network of professional partners, including investment professionals, entrepreneurs, investors, city administrators, and policymakers, to provide real-world, high-impact projects for agribusiness students, fostering collaboration with industry leaders.

Additionally, I pioneered the integration of investment and financial planning into the agribusiness curriculum, equipping students with skills in market analysis, strategic decision-making, and financial analysis.

The Kohl Centre at Virginia Tech

[Agri-Food Finance \(AFF\) Fellowship](#)

Drawing on my private sector background and the Kohl Centre's advanced analytics focus, I co-created this unique, year-long fellowship at Virginia Tech. This initiative offers highly competitive CALS students practical exposure in agribusiness through industry projects, field visits, and customized seminars.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

Farm Management (Undergrad)

Spring 2020, 2021 & 2022

Joint with Indiana University's Kelly School of Business
Agribusiness Strategy (Grad).
Quantitative Managerial Decision Making (Grad)

Spring 2021
Fall 2020 & 2021

Guest Lectures Delivered:

Small Business Management, *Virginia Tech*
Research & Prof Dev Seminar, *Virginia Tech*
Marketing Agricultural Products. *Virginia Tech*
Introduction to Data Analytics. *Purdue University*
Agribusiness Management. *Western Illinois University*
Agricultural Finance. *West Virginia University*
Dairy Markets and Economics. *Purdue University*
Careers in Agribusiness and Ag Econ. *Purdue University*

Spring 2025
Spring 2025
Fall 2024
Spring 2024
Spring 2023
Spring 2023
Spring 2022
Fall 2021

STUDENT ADVISING

Graduate Advising

Duong Ta (Ph.D.)
Bwema Ombati (Ph.D.). MOU Between VT and Egerton University, Kenya
Sara Cox (MSc./MBA) Joint between Purdue and Indiana University's Kelly School of Business

Undergraduate Advising

Kealyn Greenwell. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Research Study Supervisor*
Billy Stoneman. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Research Study Supervisor*
McKenzie Marker. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*
Alex Brandon. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*
Miru Yim. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*
Colby Crutchfield. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*
Michele Mickelwait. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*
Diego Cuadra. *Kohl Centre Fellowship. Agri-food Finance Fellow (AFF) Supervisor*

EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

In the news:

- The Week. *Why are beef prices rising? And how is politics involved?* October, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- Yahoo Finance. *Beef prices are spiking, but protein-obsessed shoppers keep coming back.* September, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- Meatingplace. *High Priced Beef: What's the Future?.* September, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- Digital Journal. *Science: Increased risk of red meat diet.* August, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- AGRI-VIEW. *Beef love persists despite prices.* August, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- VT News. *Experts discuss factors driving beef prices so high.* August 2025. ([LINK](#))
- Newswise. *Experts Discuss Factors Driving Beef Prices So High.* August, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- CVILLE Right Now. *Beef prices high at Charlottesville stores as U.S. cattle herd is at a record-low.* June, 2022. ([LINK](#))
- California Ag Network. *Experts Discuss Factors Driving Up Beef Prices.* August, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- IFAMA. *Our Rising Stars.* July, 2025. ([LINK](#))
- VT News. *Virginia Tech's Kohl Centre, Virginia Soybean Association partner to provide student experiential learning opportunities.* December, 2024. ([LINK](#))
- VT News. *Agricultural productivity growth falls short of meeting global demands, Virginia Tech report says.* October, 2024. ([LINK](#))

- COWSMO. Study shows that American consumers find dairy products are an important part of a healthy diet fed to children. June 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Hoard's Dairyman. *Those with kids buy more higher fat dairy*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- AGPROUD. *Weekly Digest: Kids drive family milk, dairy purchases*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Oklahoma State News. *Dairy products continue to be popular purchase in households with children*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- EurekAlert. *Dairy product purchasing differs in households with and without children*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Food Technology & Manufacturing. *Study: Households with children buy more higher-fat milk*. January 2021. ([LINK](#))
- News Medical Life Sciences. *Survey: Households with children purchase higher-fat and larger quantities of dairy products*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Dairy Industries International. *Dairy product purchasing differs in households with and without children*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Med India. *Households with Children Purchase Higher Amounts of Dairy Products*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Yumda Food & Drink Business Info. *Dairy product purchasing differs in households with and without children*. January, 2021. ([LINK](#))
- Morning Ag Clips. *Dairy product purchasing habits analyzed*. January 2021. ([LINK](#))

Podcast Guest and Interviews:

The National Provisioner. *Beef market insights with Virginia Tech's Mario Ortez*. 2025

[Available online](#).

WSLS News (Interview). *What's causing rising beef prices?* 2025

[Available Online](#)

Real Virginia (A Farm Bureau TV Show). *Virginia Beef Prices Soar: What's Behind the Record- High Costs?* 2025

[Available Online](#)

Farming the Future Podcast. *Coffee Production & AgriMarketing*. 2024

[Available online](#).

The Grower and the Economist. *Why Small Producers Should Pick Specialty Production*.

[Available Online](#).

Faculty Lead, Agribusiness Workshop Series

Organizing and leading a statewide series of applied agribusiness workshops fostering collaboration across Virginia's agricultural ecosystem — including producers, commodity associations, ag lenders, business owners, and the Virginia Farm Bureau. These programs advance producer capacity for value-added innovation, financial resilience, and market differentiation across multiple commodity sectors. *Funded by Southern Extension Risk Management Education (SERME)/NIFA*.

Workshops:

- **Adding Value in Beef and Dairy Operations.** *Harrisonburg, VA (Oct 17, 2025)*
Focus on direct marketing, branded beef, and value differentiation.
Guest speakers: Virginia Cattlemen's Association (Virginia Verified Beef); Lenah Nguyen (VCE & Carver Food Enterprise Center); First Bank and Trust; Virginia Farm Bureau.
- **Adding Value in Fruit and Orchard Enterprises.** *Winchester, VA (Oct 23, 2025)*
Hands-on training in farm-based product diversification and agritourism for orchard producers.
Guest speakers: Virginia Farm Bureau.
- **Differentiation & Direct-to-Consumer Sales in Viticulture.** *Winchester, VA (Oct 23, 2025)*
Strategies for branding, agritourism, and DTC sales in Virginia's wine industry.

Guest speakers: Paul Briedé (Briedé Family Vineyards); Virginia Farm Bureau.

- **Business Strategies for Row Crop Operations.** *Warsaw, VA (Dec 5, 2025)*
Financial evaluation of alternative business models (e.g. regenerative or niche grain markets)
Guest speakers: Eric Chou (Hodo Foods); Virginia Farm Bureau.

Speaker and Panelist Engagement:

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Producer Meeting. Blackstone and Harrisonburg, VA.

Topic: A Solid Agribusiness Model & Financial Statements 2025

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) Winter Conference. Blacksburg, VA.

Topic: AI in Food and Agricultural Industries: Taking the Pulse 2025

Southern Regional Intercollegiate Dairy Challenge. Radford, VA 2024

Global Agricultural Productivity (GAP) Report at Virginia Tech. Washington DC. 2024

Ag Council's Spring Leadership Retreat. Purdue Agricultural Council, West Lafayette, IN 2022

SERVICE

Committees' Service at AAEC, VT

- Department Head Search
- External Partnerships and Experiential Learning
- MS Online
- Undergraduate

LANGUAGES

Spanish: Native proficiency

English: Bilingual proficiency