



Karissa Kruse is Chief Executive Officer of the Sonoma County Winegrowers (SCW), a marketing and educational organization dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Sonoma County as one of the world's premier grape growing regions.

Since taking over the top leadership role, Kruse has guided the strategy and implementation of Sonoma County becoming the most sustainable wine region in the world. Her forward-thinking approach has helped Sonoma County Winegrowers gain global recognition for their efforts and she's been invited to speak at major conferences around the world.

In an effort to continue to lead in the social responsibility component of sustainability, Kruse announced the relaunch of the Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation in January 2016 with a mission to support vineyard employees and their families in the areas of healthcare, affordable housing, childcare, education, resiliency and recovery and workforce development. She currently serves as executive director of the Foundation.

Karissa earned a BS in Economics and an MBA in Marketing from Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. She has 20 years of experience in various aspects of marketing, brand management, strategic planning and business development.

In January of 2017, Kruse launched the Sonoma County Center for Ag Sustainability, a think tank in partnership with the Wharton School of Business, that is focused on bringing subject matter experts from around the United States to Sonoma County to work on issues and opportunities affecting the long-term preservation of agriculture.

In January of 2020, Karissa announced that Sonoma County Winegrowers is the exclusive pilot partner with the California Land Stewardship Institute to launch a Climate Adaptation Certification, a first of its kind for agriculture. SCW has been learning for the past year how to implement best practices in carbon sequestration.

To kick-off 2022, SCW and Ford Pro announced a collaboration for Sonoma County farmers to be a living lab for going electric on their ranches. This exciting pilot program that includes charging, electric vehicles and Ford Pro Telematics software will support our local farmers in lowering their greenhouse gas emissions, optimizing their fleet efficiency and lowering operating costs.

Kruse announced her vision for the "Farm of the Future" in 2023 and is working to bring innovation acceleration to Sonoma County grape growers and the broader agricultural community through long-term scenario planning, pilot programs and partnerships.

Karissa has worked for companies such as General Mills, Universal Studios, Mattel and Dairy Management. She is also a Sonoma County grape grower.

Kruse is on the German Marshall Fund Alumni Leadership Council and FIVS Global Environmental Sustainability Working Group. Karissa recently gave a TEDx talk “Drink the Good Stuff” [Karissa Kruse: Drink the Good Stuff](#).

She is on the Board of Directors of Memorial Hospital Community Board and the Green Music Center. Karissa is a Past Chair and Past Board Director of the United Way of Wine Country and Past Board Member for California Association of Winegrape Growers, Sonoma County Alliance, Sonoma County Farm Bureau, First 5 Sonoma County, and Sonoma County Tourism.

In 2014, Kruse was selected as a North Bay Business Journal Women in Business Award recipient and was a Forty Under 40 Award recipient in 2012. Kruse was honored with the Marshall Memorial Fellowship in 2015. Karissa received the 2016 Friend of Agriculture Award from the Sonoma County Harvest Fair. She was named to the 2016 and 2017 Wine Business Monthly Magazine's Top 50 Wine Industry Leaders. In 2017, she was named to the Organic Authority's List of "Badass Disruptors Changing Your Food System" and Food and Wine Magazine named her one of the most Innovative Women in Food & Drink. Karissa was honored by the North Bay Business Journal in 2017 with a Community Philanthropy Award. In 2018, Karissa was named A Green Leader by Wine Enthusiast and selected as the Leader of the Year by the California Association of Winegrape Growers. In 2020, Congressman Mike Thompson named Kruse Woman of the Year for his district.