



## **Benjamin Z. Houlton**

Benjamin Z. Houlton is the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and a Cornell University professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as well as Global Development. Houlton began his term on Oct. 1, 2020, as the 12th Cornell CALS dean. He serves as co-chair of Cornell's 2030 Project: A Climate Initiative, mobilizing practical solutions that mitigate the impacts of climate change.

As a premier institution of scientific learning and discovery, Cornell CALS is a world leader in tackling the complex challenges of our time with a culture of interdisciplinary understanding and collaboration. It is home to Cornell University's second largest total college population, with 3,600 undergraduate students, 1,020 affiliated graduate students, 350 faculty and 1,000 staff. The college offers 20+ majors and 40+ minors, managed by 16 academic departments and two schools. In fiscal year 2021, CALS led Cornell's Ithaca campus with a total of \$238 million in research expenditures.

Ben has published more than 130 works including peer-reviewed scientific articles, book chapters and published abstracts. An accomplished international scientist, his research interests include global ecosystem processes, climate change solutions, and agricultural sustainability. Ben's work has been published in leading scientific journals such as *Nature*, *Science*, *Nature Climate Change*, and the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and has been covered by news media including the *New York Times*, *Scientific American*, NPR, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Discovery News*, MSNBC/Today and the BBC. As part of his mission to connect scientific discovery with the public, he is also a frequent guest on regional and national news programs.

Ben is co-founder of The N3gative Company, which is empowering farmers and land managers with the tools to create, verify, and exchange permanent carbon dioxide removal in soil. The company's approach will scale up permanent carbon dioxide removal in soils around the world to remove millions to billions of tons of carbon dioxide each year while also improving agricultural productivity. He is also founding principal investigator for the Working Lands Innovation Center, where he directs approximately 100 acres of farmland carbon sequestration projects to improve crop yields and create new financial markets for farmers and ranchers. He is a member Boyce Thompson Institute's Board of Directors and editor of *Global Biogeochemical Cycles* published by the American Geophysical Union, the world's largest society promoting geophysical endeavors of Earth and space scientists. As dean, he also shares responsibility for leadership of Cornell Cooperative Extension throughout New York state with the College of Human Ecology.

**Benjamin Z. Houlton, Ph.D.**  
*The Ronald P. Lynch Dean*

260 Roberts Hall  
Ithaca, NY 14853-5905  
cals.cornell.edu

bzhoulton@cornell.edu  
Phone: 607.255.2241  
Fax: 607.255.3803

Prior to joining Cornell, Ben served on the UC Davis faculty since 2007, teaching global environmental studies with a co-appointment in the UC Agriculture Experiment Station. He also led their John Muir Institute of the Environment, bringing together more than 300 faculty affiliates, 350 postdoctoral researchers, staff, and students from across the university with the goal of devising innovative solutions to the environmental sustainability challenges of the 21st century. As part of the institute, he led the new OneClimate “Big Idea,” an inter-disciplinary, team-based approach to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help people, ecosystems, and agriculture adapt to an uncertain climate future. Ben served as faculty director of two diversity, equity and inclusion programs at UC Davis – EnvironMentors and SEEDS – and supported the launch of GOALS (Girls’ Outdoor Adventure in Leadership and Science) at the Muir Institute. He also worked with California tribes to empower the application of indigenous knowledge in agricultural and environmental sustainability. He has served as a scientific advisor to a Rockefeller Foundation and World Wildlife Fund project on sustainable agriculture, human nutrition, and climate solutions.

Ben received his B.S. from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point in Water Chemistry, an M.S. from Syracuse University in Environmental Engineering Science, and a Ph.D. from Princeton University in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. He spent two years working as a postdoctoral scholar at Stanford University and the Carnegie Institution for Science at Stanford before joining the UC Davis faculty. Ben is the recipient of the Gene E. Likens Award from the Ecological Society of America, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Young Investigator Award, and the NSF-CAREER award.

Ben grew up in Wisconsin and Minnesota, solidifying his dedication to the environment at a young age while camping with his family throughout the Midwest and spending time on his great aunt and uncle’s dairy farm. His family legacy in agriculture spans the dairy, poultry, and grain commodities, and still includes one remaining family dairy farm in Kansas. He can often be found fly fishing, running, traveling internationally, and coaching his kids’ soccer teams in his spare time.

Introductory talking points (to be used when verbally introducing Dean Houlton):

- Ben Houlton (HOLE-ton) is the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, a position he has held since Oct. 1, 2020. He is a professor in the college's departments of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology as well as Global Development. He is also co-chair of Cornell's "2030 Project: A Climate Initiative."
- He has a Ph.D. from Princeton University and his family spans generations of Midwestern dairy and poultry farmers.
- An accomplished environmental scientist, he is an active researcher and advises diverse students and postdocs in agricultural and environmental science, with an emphasis on climate solutions and global biogeochemical cycles.
- Dean Houlton is also the co-founder of The N3gative Company, which is empowering farmers and land managers with the tools to create, verify, and exchange permanent carbon dioxide removal in soil.
- Ben has published more than 130 works including peer-reviewed scientific articles, book chapters and published abstracts.
- As part of his mission to connect scientific discovery with the public, he is also a frequent guest on regional and national news programs.
- Please join me in welcoming Dean Ben Houlton.