

2nd Annual
Small Producers Conference
August 13-15, 2018

Texas State University, Department of Agriculture
Program Director: Dr. Ken Mix, PhD



TEXAS  STATE
UNIVERSITY[®]

The rising STAR of Texas

Monday, August 13th, Morning Schedule

7:00 am	Registration Mezzanine																				
7:15 am																					
7:30 am																					
7:45 am																					
8:00 am	Plenary Room 204 Dr. Walter Horton, Dr. Madan Dey and Dr. Ken Mix																				
8:15 am	<table border="1"> <tr> <td rowspan="10">Direct marketing Room 202</td> <td rowspan="10">Aislynn Campbell (Executive Director of GROW Local South Texas)</td> <td rowspan="10">Alternative Financing Opportunities PART 1 Room 204</td> <td rowspan="10">Curt Nelson and Evan Driscoll (Austin Foodshed Investors)</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="9">Amy Gallo (Austin's Sustainable Food Center)</td> <td rowspan="9">Tim Traister (Capital Farm Credit)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q&A</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">BREAK</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="5">Wholesaling Room 202</td> <td rowspan="5">Tammy Howard (National Center for Appropriate Technology)</td> <td rowspan="5">Alternative Financing Opportunities PART 2 Room 204</td> <td rowspan="5">Curt Nelson and Evan Driscoll (Austin Foodshed Investors)</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="4">Tim Traister (Capital Farm Credit)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q&A</td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="2">Q&A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Q&A</td> </tr> </table>				Direct marketing Room 202	Aislynn Campbell (Executive Director of GROW Local South Texas)	Alternative Financing Opportunities PART 1 Room 204	Curt Nelson and Evan Driscoll (Austin Foodshed Investors)	Amy Gallo (Austin's Sustainable Food Center)	Tim Traister (Capital Farm Credit)	Q&A	BREAK		Wholesaling Room 202	Tammy Howard (National Center for Appropriate Technology)	Alternative Financing Opportunities PART 2 Room 204	Curt Nelson and Evan Driscoll (Austin Foodshed Investors)	Tim Traister (Capital Farm Credit)	Q&A	Q&A	Q&A
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12:00 pm																					

Monday, August 13th, Afternoon Schedule

12:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Presentation: Feedback from the Small Producer Needs Assessment Room 204</p>			
12:15 pm				
12:30 pm				
12:45 pm				
1:00 pm				
1:15 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Produce Quality Control and Grading</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 202</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Alan Lewis (Natural Grocers)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Matt Braud (The Common Market)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">USDA Financing Opportunities</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 204</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Billy Curb (USDA-Rural Development Agency)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Katie Jolander (USDA-Farm Service Agency)</p>
1:30 pm				
1:45 pm				
2:00 pm				
2:15 pm				
2:30 pm	BREAK			
2:45 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">CSA and Farm to Work Sales</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 202</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Sarah Prager (SFC - Farm Direct Projects Coordinator)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Diana Padilla (Yahweh's Farm)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">USDA Rural Development and NRCS Financing Opportunities</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 204</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bertha Venegas and Kathryn Brady (USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Services)</p>
3:00 pm				
3:15 pm				
3:30 pm				
3:45 pm				
4:00 pm				

Tuesday, August 14th, Morning Schedule

7:00 am	Registration Mezzanine					
7:15 am						
7:30 am						
7:45 am						
8:00 am	Plenary Judith McCreary (FARFA) Jay Bragg (TFB) and Andrew Smiley (TOFGA) Room 204					
8:15 am	FSMA Room 202					
8:30 am						
8:45 am	Richard De Los Santos (Texas Department of Agriculture)	Opportunities in Livestock Production Poultry Goats Swine Cattle Room 204	Javier Gonzalez (Blue Earth Farm) Travis Krause (Parker Creek Farm) Leah Gibson (Boxcar Farm)	Farmer's Markets for Farmer's Market Managers Double WIC and SNAP Room 301	Alex Canepa and Simone Benz (Austin's Sustainable Food Center)	
9:00 am						
9:15 am	GAP Room 202					
9:30 am						
9:45 am	Anwar Garza (PPC Farms)	Room 204	Room 301	Room 301	Room 301	
10:00 am						
10:15 am	Break					
10:30 am						
10:45 am	HMI Grazing Management Room 204					
11:00 am						
11:15 am	New Grazing Program Room 204					
11:30 am						
11:45 am	New Soil & Water Program Room 301					
12:00 pm						
	Cover Crops in Vegetable Production Room 301					
	Kathy Harris (Holistic Management International)					
	Thomas Schroeder (The National Audubon Society)					
	Justin Duncan (The National Center for Appropriate Technology)					
	Kyle Garmany (The Nature Conservancy)					

Tuesday, August 14th, Afternoon Schedule

12:00 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Movie: The Symphony of the Soil in room 204</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Poster session in Mezzanine</p>			
12:15 pm				
12:30 pm				
12:45 pm				
1:00 pm				
1:15 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Value Added Opportunities</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 202</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mike Morris (The National Center for Appropriate Technology)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Alex Bernhardt (Bernhardt's Farm)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Soil Health</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Agriculture Department Pavilion</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Willie Durham (USDA-NRCS, Div. of Soil Health, Regional Soil Health Specialist)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Nathan Haile (USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service)</p>
1:30 pm				
1:45 pm				
2:00 pm				
2:15 pm				
2:30 pm	BREAK			
2:45 pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Small Business Development for Value Added Food Chains</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 202</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Peg Richmond (Senior Certified Business Advisor for TXState Small Business Development Center)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Soil Health</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Room 204</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ray Archuleta (Certified Professional Soil Scientist)</p>
3:00 pm				
3:15 pm				
3:30 pm				
3:45 pm				
4:00 pm				

Wednesday, August 15th, Field Day Schedule

9:00 am	<p>BCS Small Equipment Demonstration by Shahar Yarden at Back to the Garden Farm located at Montesino Ranch in Wimberley, TX)</p>
9:15 am	
9:30 am	
9:45 am	
10:00 am	
10:15 am	
10:30 am	
10:45 am	
11:00 am	
11:15 am	
11:30 am	
11:45 am	
12:00 pm	

2nd Annual Small Producers Conference Speakers



Ray Archuleta is a Certified Professional Soil Scientist with the Soil Science Society of America and has over 30 year's-experience as a Soil Conservationist, Water Quality Specialist, and Conservation Agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). During his tenure with the NRCS Ray served in New Mexico, Missouri, Oregon, and North Carolina. Ray received his AS degree in Livestock Science from Northern New Mexico College and a BS degree in Agricultural Biology plus 30 hours of graduate work in soil related courses from New Mexico State University. He served in the Peace Corps for two years in Guatemala as a Livestock Specialist. After his retirement from the NRCS in 2017, Ray founded Soil Health Consulting, LLC and Soil Health Academy, LLC to teach Biomimicry strategies and Agroecology principles for improving soil function on a national scale. Ray also owns and operates a 150-acre farm near Seymour, Missouri that he operates along with his wife and family.



Simone Benz
Simone joined SFC in 2013 with the goal of increasing awareness about the newly launched Double Dollars program, and has worked closely with community throughout the duration of her time with SFC. Currently, Simone serves on the Food Access Team and is honored to work alongside community leaders to start and sustain Farm Stands in neighborhoods that experiencing food insecurity. Simone loves to share recipes and cooking techniques with others, and is continuously inspired by the wealth of knowledge that is held by our communities.



Alex Bernhardt, Bernhardt's Farm
We are a small family owned sustainable farm in Elgin Texas. We farm year-round and grow a wide variety of crops that we sell at the Austin Farmers Markets. We farm about 6 acres and also have a licensed commercial kitchen on the farm in which we produce value-added products like kimchi, sauerkraut, pickles, jam, pesto, hummus, and freeze dried snacks. We strive to be a zero-waste operation and the kitchen is an integral part of our strategy and success.



Kathryn Brady, District Conservationist with USDA-National Resources Conservation Service
Miss Kathryn Brady is with the USDA-NRCS in San Marcos, Texas representing Hays County. Kathryn has been working for NRCS for eight years. Prior to San Marcos she has worked across the state of Texas; in Edinburg and Silverton Texas. In her career, Kathryn not only assists the local farmers and ranchers, but has also fosters relationships with the community. Miss Brady received a MS of Agriculture in Rangeland Ecology and Management from Texas A&M University, and a BS in Agricultural Leadership and Development. While an undergraduate, Kathryn, participated in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences: Agricultural and Natural Resources Policy Internship Program (ANRP) in Washington, DC; where she interned for former Congressman Ralph Hall (TX-R-District 4).



Jay Bragg, Associate Director of Commodity and Regulatory Activities for Texas Farm Bureau
In this capacity, he works to implement a state and national program to influence the decisions of government agencies on rules and regulations that affect farmers and ranchers. Jay also is responsible for staffing organizational Commodity and Issues Advisory Committees and providing staff leadership on environmental and natural resources issues. His areas of focus are water and natural resources, farm labor, horticultural crops, honey and apiculture, and small farm and ranch issues. Prior to joining Texas Farm Bureau, Jay spend six years as the Regional Environmental Planner for the Brazos River Authority and four years as the Grant Coordinator for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board. Jay graduated from Stephen F. Austin State University's Arthur Temple College of Forestry with a BS in Environmental Science and a minor in Marketing.



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Matthew Braud, The Common Market

Matthew has been the lead procurement associate throughout the Common Market's Texas launch in 2018. Prior to the Common Market, Matthew gained knowledgeable experience in agriculture by starting and operating a commercial aquaponic greenhouse near Hockley Texas. These experiences have provided Matthew with a unique perspective of the producer's side as well as the procurement/purchasing side. "My main goal is to be the bridge between fresh food and the people who need it"



Aislynn Campbell, Founder of Corpus Christi Downtown Farmers' Market, Founder and Executive Director of GROW Local South Texas.

She founded Corpus Christi's Downtown Farmers' Market in 2012. In 2013, Aislynn led a team to found GROW Local South Texas, a nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate a healthy community by growing the local food system and improving access to nutritious, affordable foods. She has created several community education programs on the importance of a strong local food system: The Corpus Christi Downtown Farmers' Market is now weekly downtown destination; The Learning Garden, a 2-acre community garden that teaches how a community can grow fresh, sustainable food together; BAWKtoberfest, an annual backyard chicken coop tour; Seed to Plate educational Programming with children; biannual workshops for local producers and more. In 2013, Aislynn delivered a TedX talk, "The Food Revolution Begins in your Home(town)."



Alex Canepa, Sustainable Food Center, Farmers' Market and Advocacy Manager

Alex Canepa provides strategic guidance to the Sustainable Food Center's farmers markets and leads the organizations policy efforts. He works to reduce the barriers that farmers and ranchers face bringing their products to market. In order to realize a more just an equitable food system, Alex sends and receives emails, attends meetings, and grills hamburgers at farmer's markets. Before arriving at the SFC, Alex worked on other things for other organizations including the National Farmers Market Coalition and Texas Senate. Alex holds a Master's Degree from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor's Degree from Trinity College Dublin, where he earned a double first-class honors degree in History and Political Science.



Billy Curb, USDA-Rural Development Agency

In 1990, Billy Curb was selected as the Texas Commercial Loan Specialist of Rural Development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. As state specialist, Billy leads the agency's efforts to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural Texans. Rural Development fosters growth in homeownership, finances business development and supports the creation of critical community and technology infrastructure.



Richard De Los Santos, Director of the Office of Produce Safety, Texas Department of Agriculture

Richard De Los Santos serves the State of Texas as the Director of the Office of Produce Safety with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Prior to that Richard worked in the GO TEXAN marketing division for sixteen years. In addition to his time with the Texas Department of Agriculture Richard worked in the vegetable seed industry and was responsible for developing new vegetable varieties for growers. He is from South Texas where he grew up on a farm in Mission Texas raising different types of vegetables with his family. Richard has a strong commitment to Texas agriculture with more than 35 years' experience in the produce and horticulture industries.



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Dr. Madan Dey, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Agriculture, Texas State University

Dr. Dey is currently serving as the Chair of the Department of Agriculture, Texas State University. He has worked in various academic and research organizations and has conducted research on several sub-sectors of agriculture and natural resources, including crop, livestock, and fisheries. He is a globally recognized leader and expert on aquaculture and aquaponics, and an agricultural economist with 30 years of experience in teaching, research, outreach, and governance in a variety of agricultural and natural resources contexts. Dr. Dey has published widely in several fields of agricultural development and policy, including 93 referred journal articles, several books, and 45 book chapters and reviewed proceedings. Over the past 30 years, he has led and implemented a number of pioneering, innovative, and inter-disciplinary agricultural projects in the U.S., Asia, and Africa.



Evan Driscoll, Associate with Austin Foodshed Investors

Evan has worked in food systems for the past 10 years. Before coming to AFI, Evan worked in Food Sourcing and Recovery at Central Texas Food Bank, working with food businesses across Central Texas to recover and distribute surplus food. Evan was also a Projects Manager and Farmers' Market Coordinator with Sustainable Food Center where he managed the Farm to Work and Farm to School programs and the Downtown Farmers' Market. Evan served as a Farm Manager at Green Gate Farms in Austin, TX. Before this, he owned his own small farm – Sasquatch Acre – in Portland, OR. Evan co-founded the Central Texas Young Farmer Coalition, which helps connect new and beginning farmers from around the state. He serves as the At-Large New and Beginning Farmer Board Position for the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, as well as a Board Member of The Common Market - Texas Chapter.



Justin Duncan, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with The National Center for Appropriate Technology

Justin has a BS in Agronomy from Prairie View A&M University, an 1890 Land Grant Institution, and an MS in Plant Breeding from Texas A&M University. He's spent years figuring out the nuts-and-bolts of successful organic farming in the humid South, concentrating mainly on sweet potatoes, strawberries, niche market ethnic crops and drought mitigation techniques. He formerly served as the Houston region director of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association and has strong rapport with organic farmers in Eastern Texas. He currently works on a project teaching transitioning soldiers how to become farmers.



William (Willie) Durham, National Soil Health Specialist with USDA-National Resources Conservation Service

Willie teaches principles of soil health and agroecology throughout the United States. He began his agriculture career working as a field sales representative for Helena Chemical Company and Terra International, Inc. in the Rio Grande Valley in the mid 1990's, becoming a Certified Crop Adviser in 1992. In 1995, he became the Regional Agronomist for Novartis Seeds (Syngenta). In 2001, he became a Conservation Agronomist for USDA-NRCS. In 2004, he was certified as a Professional Agronomist by the American Society of Agronomy. In 2006, he became the USDA-NRCS Resource Team Leader for Program and Technical Assistance in Uvalde, Medina, Kinney and Maverick counties. In 2009, he became State Conservation Agronomist in the Ecological Sciences Section for USDA -NRCS in Temple, Texas.



Amy Gallo, Austin Sustainable Food Center

Amy graduated with a degree in Behavioral Neuroscience before going on to teach health class at Boston area magnet schools, manage a substance abuse treatment center and consult for a firm pioneering preventative medicine programming. These seemingly disparate fields led her to believe that food can be medicine as much as it is a tool that brings community together and builds bridges between rural food producers and urban consumers. After moving to Austin in 2009 she managed the farmers' market team at Johnson's Backyard Garden, a mid-sized farm in Austin. Amy began working at the Sustainable Food Center in May 2017 and currently manages marketing and events for both SFC Farmers' Markets in Austin, TX.



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Kyle Garmany, Water Markets Program Manager –Texas Chapter of the Nature Conservancy
As Water Markets Program Manager with TNC Texas, Kyle is responsible for developing innovative strategies to alleviate water scarcity and protect the ecological integrity of the rivers, bays and estuaries of the state. His work includes the development of partnerships with agricultural producers to decrease water use, as well as the execution of environmental water transactions to meet instream and environmental flow demands. Prior to his tenure with the Conservancy, he worked as a Hydrologist for state of Texas, where he focused on environmental flow policy, the administration of water rights, and lead efforts to develop tools and strategies to develop environmental water transactions. Kyle studied Hydrology at Humboldt State University, and Water Resources at Texas State University.



Anwar Garza, V.P. of Marketing and Field Operations, Plantation Produce Company (aka PPC Farms)
Anwar Garza is a 3rd generation farmer in Mission, Texas. He has led the transition of PPC Farms from an entirely conventional farm into using organic and regenerative farming techniques. Food safety has been his expertise and is entering his 9th year under various 3rd party certifications as well as USDA programs. A graduate of the University of Texas Pan American in marketing, Mr. Garza is able not only to farm vegetables but market them, completing the full cycle from seed to consumer.



Leah Gibson, Co-Owner of Boxcar Farm
Leah has been involved in the local food movement for over a decade. It started with a plot in a community garden, and over the course of ten years evolved to the 11acre pastured pork farm that her and her husband own and operate today. Leah is passionate about using animal agriculture to build soil & manage land. She has studied Holistic Management, and attended restorative agriculture workshops with experts like Mark Shepard and Darren Dougherty. Their farm uses intensive rotational grazing with pigs and poultry to restore the land back to a productive pasture. She loves working with pigs, educating consumers about the benefits of pasture-raised meats, and exploring ways to collaborate with small farmers and businesses. In the past two years, she has helped start the Central Texas Meat Collective and Central Texas Farmers' Cooperative, both which help facilitate small farmers working together to bridge the gap from field to fork.



Javier Gonzalez, Co-Owner Blue Earth Farm
We are a new farm just south of Austin, located in Buda, Texas. We specialize in pastured poultry. We take pride in providing the highest level of ethical care for our animals and delicious, healthy food for you. We would love to be your farmers- thanks for stopping by to get to know us a bit better. Prior to starting the farm, I owned The Kitchen Gardener, where I designed and installed edible gardens for restaurants and homes. I am passionate about helping people grow their own food. It has been a lifelong dream to start my own farm and I am grateful I can put my knowledge and experience into our own 10-acre farmstead. I like to experiment with new ideas and new techniques to find what works best for our challenging and unpredictable Central Texas climate. I am also the welder, animal herder and fence builder.



Nathan Haile, Soil Health Specialist for Texas with USDA-National Resources Conservation Service
Nathan Haile has 21 years of experience with the Natural Resources Conservation Service has given him the opportunity to evaluate soils across the state of Texas and many unique regions of the nation. For the past 10 years, he has focused his efforts in improving knowledge of soil quality in Texas. He graduated with a Plant and Soil Science degree from Tarleton State University and is currently the Soil Health Specialist for Texas NRCS. Nathan and his wife Angie have 2 daughters and enjoy raising kids and cows on a small operation in Hamilton, Texas.



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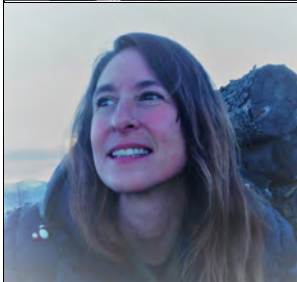
Kathy Harris, Holistic Management International

Kathy Harris is a Holistic Management© Professional Certified Educator and Program Director for Holistic Management International. In her current position with HMI, she works with Certified Educators across the world to deliver training and on-going support for the successful practice of Holistic Management. She has been involved in Holistic Management since the late 1990s when she began a small-scale 20-acre homestead farm in North Texas, and later developed startup infrastructure and enterprises for a 250-acre ranch. Her 15 years of agricultural experience includes cow and goat dairying, pastured poultry, grass-fed beef and lamb, honeybees, fruit trees, vegetable gardens and native pecans. She has served as a mentor and facilitator for the Beginning Women Farmers in Texas program, volunteered with the Kids on the Land and helped form holistic land management clubs in Texas.



Dr. Walter E. Horton Jr., Ph.D., Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs and Chief Research Officer, Texas State University

Dr. Horton was the Vice President for Research and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies at the Northeast Ohio Medical University. He has an outstanding reputation as a scientist and scholar working in the area of arthritis research. He has served as a full member of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Skeletal Biology Development and Disease study section and serves on NIH review panels focused on commercializing research. He began working in drug discovery for Eli Lilly and Company and then led an intramural research program at the National Institute on Aging, NIH. He earned his B.Sc. in zoology from Kent State University and his Ph.D. in anatomy and cell biology from the University of Cincinnati. He was awarded a National Research Service postdoctoral fellowship from the NIH in the area of molecular biology.



Tammy Howard, Sustainable Agricultural Specialist with The National Center for Appropriate Technology

Tammy came to the National Center for Appropriate Technology via a long stint of farming and sustainable agriculture work in the New York State and Arizona. At NCAT, Tammy works as a Sustainable Agricultural Specialist with an emphasis on farmer's market nutrition programs, beginning farm business planning, market gardening, and other horticultural topics. She works extensively setting up farmer's market SNAP programs in Montana and with beginning farmers throughout the country providing technical assistance on business planning, marketing, and goals setting. She holds a bachelor's degree in Horticulture Food Crops from Colorado State University and a master's in Food Systems Studies from Antioch University. She lives in Belgrade, Montana and enjoys hiking and trail running and managing her flower farm in her spare time.



Katie Jolander, Farm Loan Officer, Guadalupe County FSA Service Center - Katie Jolander is a Farm Loan Officer assigned to the FSA Office in Seguin, Texas, serving 12 counties in south central Texas. Jolander began her federal career in 2008 as an FSA intern in Vermont. In 2013, she accepted a permanent position with FSA in Texas. While attending Texas State University-San Marcos, she was awarded a scholarship sponsored by USDA, and earned dual Bachelor Degrees in Ag Business and Ag Education in 2010. Jolander grew up on a dairy in the Central Valley of California, but now calls Guadalupe, Texas, her home.



Travis Krause, co-founder of Parker Creek Ranch and Ranch Marketing Solutions

Travis was born and raised on his family's ranch in South Texas. He was profoundly influenced by the writing and teaching of early leaders in the industry like Joel Salatin, Greg Judy and Allan Nation. Travis earned a B.S. in Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at Texas A&M University and worked for several years abroad in India, Ecuador, other developing countries. He soon realized the practical limitations of his work and felt the need to learn more about agriculture. Upon returning to his family ranch he studied and experimented with sustainable agriculture techniques and production methods, business management, and a broad variety of subjects pertaining to agriculture. The culmination of these experiences and experimentation have lead him down a path of success and leadership in regenerative agriculture.



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Alan Lewis, Government Affairs, Stakeholder Relations and Organic Compliance with Natural Grocers

I have been involved in all of Natural Grocers's internal transformation from Mom and Pop to national chain. I have helped to set up information and accounting systems, food processing lines, eCommerce sites, recruiting systems, marketing plans, social media strategies, small vendor incubators, site selection systems, etc. Currently, I am focused on advocacy. This entails monitoring legislation and regulatory actions for dozens of issues that concern us. I work at the local and federal level with policymakers, advocacy and trade groups to stay ahead of key issues. I have helped create national coalitions for key causes, which are able to respond immediately to threats and opportunities.



Robert Maggiani, Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with The National Center for Appropriate Technology

Robert Maggiani is a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with NCAT in San Antonio. He has been with NCAT for five years and has authored or co-authored several ATTRA publications on food hubs, organic farming and drought resources for producers here in Texas. He earned BBA and MS degrees from the University of Texas at Austin and was an organic vegetable farmer in South Texas and Mexico in the 1970's and 1980's. Robert served as a Marketing Specialist with the Texas Department of Agriculture for 27 years, helping to start the state's organic certification program in 1989. Robert has extensive contacts with growers, retailers, wholesalers, restaurants, and specialty crop trade associations, and is fluent in Spanish. He is a member of the Board of Directors for TOFGA and is a member of the Texas International Produce Association (TIPA).



Judith McCreary, Executive Director of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA)

Judith McCreary is an attorney, activist, and sustainable farmer. She earned her B.S. from Stanford University and her law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. During that time, she became a passionate advocate of sustainable agriculture, and she and her husband established their own livestock farm. She founded the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance to promote common-sense policies for local, diversified agricultural systems. Judith has been profiled in Civil Eats, the Texas Observer, and multiple Edible magazines, appears in the documentary Farmageddon, and has been interviewed on numerous radio shows across the country. Judith served as the Vice Chair of the U.S. Secretary's Advisory Committee on Animal Health and currently serves on the Board of the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund and the Advisory Board of the Weston A. Price Foundation.



Dr. Ken Mix, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Soil and Crop Science, Texas State University

Ken is a former vegetable producer from central Indiana. He operated a 20 acre commercial produce farm outside of Indianapolis in the 1980's and 1990's. He currently teaches and has active research in entomology, soil health, crop production and agriculturally related climate and water resources. He oversees several projects with graduate students; including multispecies intercropping, variety trials, soil water, climate change and Central Texas fruit crops, novel crops, Soil For Water project in the Hill Country in collaboration with NCAT and more. He also oversees the Texas State University Students' Sustainable Farm. He is involved in multiple USDA programs.



Mike Morris, Southwest Director of The National Center for Appropriate Technology

Mike Morris is Southwest Director for the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT), in San Antonio. A longtime advocate for sustainable and regenerative farming and ranching, water conservation, and local food, Mike's current projects include Soil for Water, the Subtropical Soil Health Initiative, and "Is Organic Farming Risky?" He has a Ph.D. in Philosophy and spent many years teaching at colleges and universities in the Midwest, but eventually came to his senses and moved to Texas in 2010.



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Curt Nelson, Co-Founder, Partner of Austin Foodshed Investors

Curt Nelson earned a BA from the University of Minnesota and an MBA from the University of Arizona. He has worked in the computer software industry for Hewlett-Packard and Silicon Space. Silicon Space pioneered “no shore” development from offices in Tijuana, Mexico. In 2006 Silicon Space spun out the search engine marketing firm Covario, which raised Private Equity funding from Dubilier & Co. and venture capital from Voyager Capital, among others. Covario was acquired by Dentsu Aegis in 2014 and combined with Dentsu’s iProspect. In Austin, he’s been a business mentor for UnLtdUSA, Social Venture Partner with Mission Capital, judge for Food+City, member of Black Fret, on the Advisory Board of The Cook’s Nook, and supporter of Slow Money Austin, the Capital Area Food Bank, Texas Center for Local Food, Sustainable Food Center, and others.



Diana Padilla, Co-Owner Yahweh’s Farm

Diana Padilla operates Yahweh’s Farm, a diversified urban farming business located in Harlingen TX. We grew our farm from the bottom up using organic practices since 2004. In 2014, the farm became a certified organic. The farm grows a variety of vegetables and subtropical fruit. Most of the business is Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Food to U Basket Program. Our customers say this program helps them eat more fruits and vegetables. We have been growing for our CSA members since 2010 growing each year to more families.



Sarah Prager, Austin Sustainable Food Center

Sarah Prager is the Farm Direct Projects Coordinator for the Austin-based non-profit, Sustainable Food Center. At SFC, she manages the Farm to Work program and contributes to various projects connecting local farms with selling opportunities, such as schools and institutions. Prior to joining SFC, Sarah received her Master in Public Health from the University of North Carolina where she explored the intersection of public health and regional food systems. In North Carolina, she developed and implemented an incentive program for shoppers with SNAP benefits at the Chapel Hill Farmers’ Market and co-authored the county’s Community Food Assessment. Sarah is a native Austinite, a loquat fanatic, and a Texas hill country admirer.



Peg Richmond, Business Advisor, Texas State University Small Business Development Center

After a career in high-tech marketing and business development, Peg began working with small businesses to craft their marketing messages and executive communications. Now, as a business advisor with the TX State SBDC, she focuses her efforts with innovation start-ups in technology, food manufacturing and consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies. She has completed independent research to better understand food manufacturers’ needs and holds regular classes designed to help early-stage food entrepreneurs reach and retain the retail shelf. She is a mentor for the City of Austin’s FASTForward program and a certified facilitator of Get Shelf Made, Profit Mastery® and IC²’s Innovation Readiness curricula. Peg holds an MBA from Indiana Wesleyan University and both a Master of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Texas.



Thomas Schroeder, Conservation Ranching Program Manager, National Audubon Society

Thomas Schroeder is the Audubon’s Conservation Ranching Program Manager for Texas and Oklahoma. The Audubon Conservation Ranching Program is a market based conservation approach offering recognition for good grassland stewardship through a certification label on beef products. Prior to joining Audubon, Thomas worked as a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist for the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) in their San Antonio office. In his time with NCAT, Thomas worked on the Soil for Water Project, an initiative aimed at educating landowners about soil health and management practices that can build the water holding capacity of soils. Thomas has a B.S. in Agriculture from Texas State University and a B.A. in Anthropology from Marquette University.



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2nd Annual Small Producers Conference Speakers



Andrew Smiley, President of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Board of Directors
Andrew has 25 years of experience working in sustainable agriculture and food systems throughout the south, including 12 years with Sustainable Food Center in Austin, TX. Andrew recently served as manager of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association Farm Aid Disaster Relief fund following Hurricane Harvey. Andrew was elected president of the TOFGA Board of Directors in February 2018 and is Policy Director for Kim Olson's Campaign for Texas Agriculture Commissioner. Andrew continues to utilize his experience to build a more sustainable and equitable food system as a collaborator with organizations throughout the country.



Tim Traister, Loan Officer with Capital Farm Credit
Tim Traister is a loan officer with Capital Farm Credit, where he specializes in land financing, small producers, and niche farming loans. Capital Farm Credit is a Co-op and the largest rural lender in Texas with over \$7 billion in assets and over 20,000 members who share in its profits. Prior to joining CFC, Mr. Traister has worked in the commercial banking and real estate sectors, where he has been involved in over \$1 billion in real estate transactions across the United States from single family homes to large ranches to high-rise office towers. Tim grew up in Austin and attended Texas A&M where he received his Bachelors in Accounting and Masters in Land Economics Real Estate Finance.



Bertha Venegas, State Outreach Coordinator with USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Bertha T. Venegas serves as State Outreach Coordinator for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas. In her position, she serves as NRCS Liaison coordinating outreach efforts with organizations that work closely with minority farmers and ranchers providing program information for the planning and application of conservation work. She manages the state outreach operations and coordinates with colleges and universities for the recruitment of new employees. Bertha, a native Texan, was born and raised in Eagle Pass. She attended Southwest Texas State University (Texas State University) in San Marcos where she received a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture.



Nicole Wagner, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Soil and Crop Science, Texas State University
Nicole has 16 years of academic, government and nonprofit research, and analysis in cropping and horticulture, precision agriculture, statistics, international trade and agricultural commodity forecasting. She was with USDA-FAS and forecasted the production of the major agricultural commodities of all South American countries, focusing on Brazil and Argentina. She was an International Economist with USDA working on agricultural trade policy issues. She was with the 2008 U.S. delegation to the UN's "High-Level Conference on World Food Security". She is co-PI on USDA funded "EverGreen" and PI of USDA funded "RURAL-V". She also has farm production experience on a 5000 acre corn-soy farm in Minnesota, a small diversified vegetable farm in Montana, and a large organic dairy in Montana.



John Muir, BSC Sales and Service
John Muir has been a mechanic for 20 years. He has been with Homestead BCS for the last 6 years and has acquired a lot of experience operating and repairing the BCS tractors and attachments. He will be demonstrating mulching a cover crop with the Flail Mower, building raised beds with the Swivel Rotary Plow and the maintaining of existing beds with the Precision Depth Roller on the 30" Tiller.



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The Small Producer Initiative Advisory Team

Jay Bragg	Texas Farm Bureau
Robert Maggiani	National Center for Appropriate Technology
Jarred Maxwell	Austin Food Shed Investors
Lois Kim	Plantation Produce Co. (aka PPC Farms)
Tim Traister	Capital Farm Credit
Jamey Gage	Farmer - B5 Farm
Tim Miller	Farmer - MilBerg Farm
Andrew Smiley	TOFGA
Marissa Lankes	Farmer - Sustainable Ag educator ACC
Scott Sroufe	Texas Department of Agriculture
Robin Barthen	Texas Department of Agriculture
Eric de Valpine	Austin Food Shed Investors
Willie Durham	USDA
Lorig Hawkins	Farmer - Sustainable Ag educator
Alex Canepa	Austin Sustainable Food Center
Pedro Schambon	Farmer - My Father's Farm
Judith McGreary	Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
Sue Beckwith	Texas Local Food Center
Brian Bruner	Rancher – Ag educator TXState



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The **2nd Annual Small Producers Conference** is partly funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-National Institute of Food and Agriculture and Office of Advocacy and Outreach.



The **2nd Annual Small Producers Conference** meals have been provided through a generous grant from Capital Farm Credit.



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