

Welcome to the 2021



Supporting Family Farmers
&
Protecting a Healthy and Productive Food Supply

Monday Evening Keynote by Will Harris
Tuesday Keynote by Lyla June Johnston

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Supporting the Family Farm and Promoting Sustainable Agriculture
Through Competitive Grants and Educational Opportunities

WELCOME FROM FARFA AND CHFS



Welcome to the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance's 15th annual conference, now under a new name to celebrate the 3rd year of our partnership with the Small Producers' Initiative (and our even longer partnership with our sister educational nonprofit, the Council for Healthy Food Systems).

The event has evolved over time. Initially focused entirely on policy, we gradually broadened our partnerships and our scope, adding multiple tracks and numerous topics to help farmers, food businesses, and consumers with every step from the soil to the table. This year, we've renamed our policy track as "The Big Picture," in recognition of the fact that policy work doesn't exist in a vacuum – it grows out of, and impacts, the social, economic, regulatory, legal, and farming realities.

There is no way that I could speak to the myriad, diverse ways that the past 18 months have affected each of us. So, I will speak just to what brings us together at this event: food and agriculture. In that sphere, we can see the truth of the adage that in crisis there is opportunity. The shutdowns last spring led to empty grocery store shelves, revealing to mainstream America what many of us have known for years: that the centralized, consolidated, "just in time," cheap food system is insanely fragile. That system did not collapse primarily because the government bailed it out with emergency orders, something that Big Agribusiness and Big Food counted on.

Yet alongside that bailout came a massive wave of new consumer interest in a more resilient system. All over the country, people flocked to farmers' markets and CSAs, bought chickens and planted gardens, and started talking about the problems with the meat supply ... where only weeks or months before, they would have known nothing more than the Tyson brand meat they were buying at the grocery.

Some have already forgotten and returned to the conventional system. But not all. After decades of promoting "get big or get out" and touting the "global marketplace" as the solution to all problems, numerous elected and agency officials are talking about more diversified local and regional systems. It's a long path from those comments to the needed systemic reforms, but it's a start! And their interest comes directly from what they have heard from their constituents, people like those at this conference. **Farmers, ranchers, and consumers have the power to change our system, from the soil up.**

This conference is about giving you the tools you need to make that change, as an individual and collectively. The sessions and speakers are important to that goal, but they're only part of it. Every year, our attendees tell us how much they learn from their fellow attendees, and the value of the connections they make. Take time to talk to the people around you! And check out the valuable resources available from the exhibitors in the LBJ Ballroom (not to mention the coffee and snacks there).

We look forward to talking with you over the next two days, but this conference doesn't really end when the last Tuesday session closes – it's just the start of an ongoing partnership. The Small Producers' Initiative offers workshops and education for small farmers. The Council for Healthy Food Systems is working on a healthy soils education project for consumers and developing workshops on meat and poultry production for farmers who want to market direct to consumers. And FARFA continues its state and federal work for common-sense policies for local, diversified food systems.

Stay in touch with all of us! Let us know what resources you need to succeed, and join us to build a stronger, more vibrant movement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith McGeary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Judith McGeary, Executive Director, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance/Council for Health Food Systems

WELCOME FROM THE SMALL PRODUCERS INITIATIVE



Welcome from The Small Producers Initiative to our 5th annual conference, now reimagined in our 3rd collaboration with the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance and the Council for Healthy Food Systems as “*The Southern Family Farmers and Food Systems Conference*.” The new name reflects our joint efforts and our desire to be a regional inclusive event.

It has been 2 years since we last saw each other, and much has happened. It is easy to see disaster and opportunity in the rearview mirror; the trick is to see it coming and be responsive. This past 18 months has illustrated that more than ever. It has been one of the greatest trials our society has confronted in recent times and certainly the greatest food trial since U.S. agriculture has transformed away from the family farm and homestead system, common prior to the 1980s. The events of the past year exposed the food chain’s fragility when too few links connect consumers to the food system. However, it also presented opportunities for producers as consumers sought new avenues of access to food. The result is an increased interest and access to local food. We address this new market opportunity in a few sessions and workshops.

The Mission of The Small Producer Initiative (SPI) is to enable small and mid-sized producers to be economically successful and to provide for their families, their futures and their community, regardless of product, technical approach, or production method. SPI is particularly interested in research and extension activities for regenerative agricultural practices, though its agenda is simple; provide extension, research and outreach services to small and mid-sized producers of any agricultural product. We are lucky to have a huge community of small and mid-sized family farmers and ranchers that invigorate our food systems and local economies. Further, we are fortunate to have advocates that work with state policy makers on the behalf of producers who lack the voice of large consolidated producers and producer organizations.

A note regarding our funding: SPI is currently funded through several USDA grants; most recently are the USDA 2501, “SPI-Agricultural Mentoring Program” (SPI-AMP) and an NRCS Cooperative Agreement, “The Small Producer Initiative’s Cover Cropping Research on Regenerative Soil Solutions, Education, Extension and Demonstration” (SPI-RReSSEED). In addition to these most recent awards, we also have received USDA funds to equip our “Soil, Plant and Animal Research Continuum (SPARC) Laboratory. The SPARC Lab is intended to provide fee-based soil, and plant and animal tissue testing services; hopefully starting late 2021 or early 2022. Stay tuned.

It is our hope for you to be successful, to develop your farm and grow it to the scale you dream of, provide for your families and community the food you are proud of, and to successfully pass your operation down to the next generation when that time comes. And, mostly we hope “*The Southern Family Farmers and Food Systems Conference*” provides you with information to reach your goals.

The Small Producers Initiative will continue to provide support and resources for technological advancements, production techniques and opportunity for success. We continue to seek funding to one day become The Small Producer Institute at Texas State University.

Sincerely,

Ken Mix, Ph.D., Texas State University



The wonderful thing
about food is you get
three votes a day.
Every one of them
has the potential to
change the world.

Michael Pollan



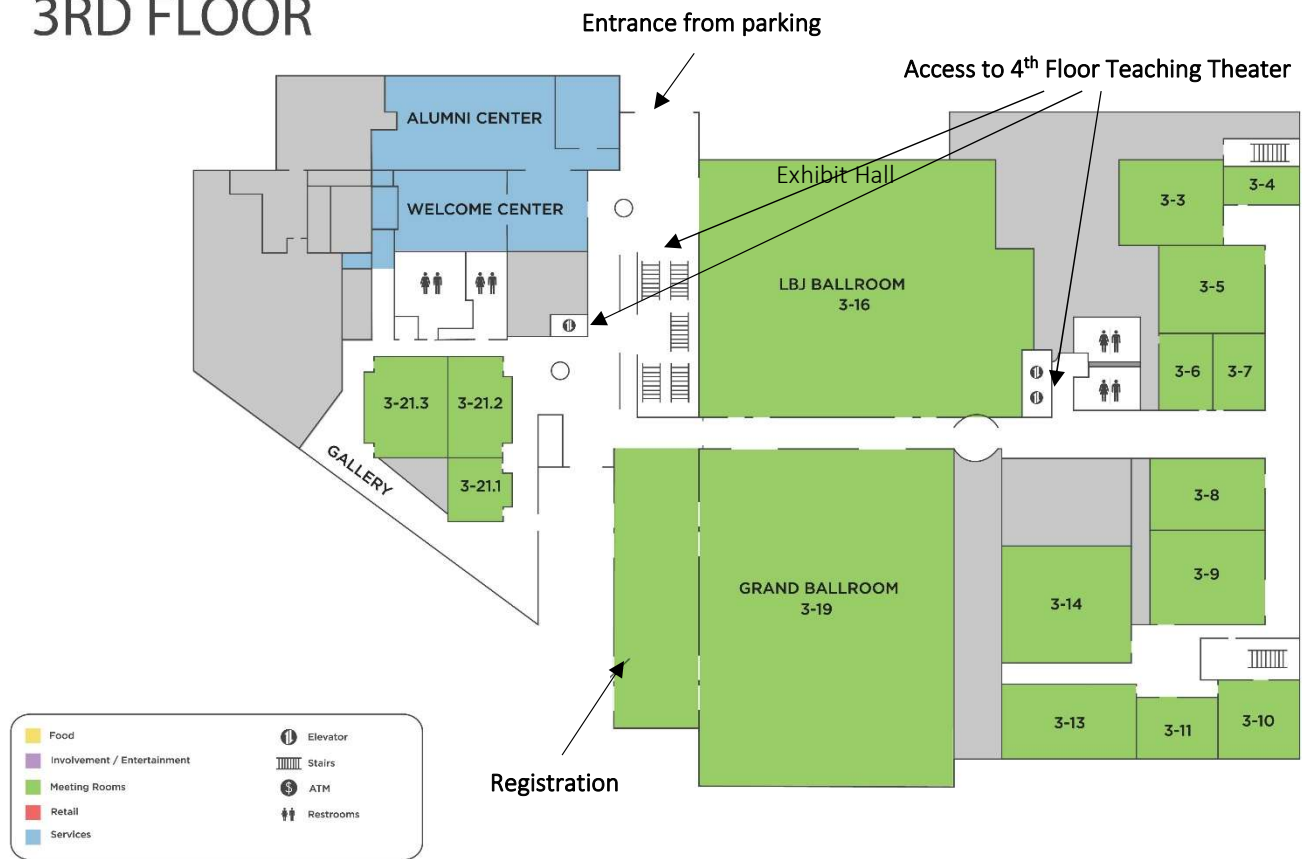
The Seed Project Foundation funds educational, agricultural, and community initiatives that support sustainability.

Learn about our work and how you can get involved at
www.spftx.org

FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

- All three days' events take place in the **LBJ Student Center**.
- The welcome, lunches, & Monday keynote/dinner are in the **Grand Ballroom**.
- Exhibitors, the Silent Auction, and the coffee, tea, and refreshments are located in the **LBJ Ballroom**.
- Most sessions are located on the 3rd Floor, with a few taking place on the 4th Floor in the Teaching Theater.

3RD FLOOR



AGENDA

Sunday, August 8/Pre-Conference Workshops

8:30 am	REGISTRATION OPENS
9:00 am - 5:00 pm (1-hour break for lunch) Room 3-14.1	<p>Why Farms Fail: Planning for a Resilient Family Farm (Full-Day) The morning will cover whole enterprise planning and goal setting, and the interface between farm and home. That includes the impact of family dynamics as well as planning for a variety of crises, whether they be weather- or market-related. We'll also touch on resilience "backups" through USDA programs, from crop insurance to disaster relief.</p> <p>The afternoon offers three alternatives for attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roundtable session with FARFA and other organizations involved in the disaster relief efforts, to discuss how to better coordinate and support our community in future disasters. • Individual consultations (15-20 minutes, one-on-one meetings with farm crisis experts in rooms 3-4.1, 5.1, 8.1, and 21.1). • Attend one of the other afternoon sessions (Small Farm Marketing or Starting a Successful Co-Op). <p>Presented by Scott Marlow, Glen Miracle</p>
9:00 am - 12:30 pm Room 3-9.1	<p>Designing Food Safety Into the Farm This half-day workshop will present ways you can set up your wash-and-pack area for optimal flow and produce safety as well as offer tips and best practices for worker training and management in the wash-and-pack space. We'll also touch on any recordkeeping necessary for the process. All of the topics discussed in the workshop will focus on produce safety within the FSMA produce safety rules.</p> <p>Presented by Lorig Hawkins, Billy Mitchell</p>
1:30 - 5:00 pm Room 3-9.1	<p>Small Farm Marketing Strategies & Tools This workshop will help new and beginning farmers determine which marketing strategies will work best for their farm and will provide seasoned farmers with new information about local food marketing strategies. You'll hear from a panel of Texas farmers and ranchers about the benefits, drawbacks, and their personal experiences with several local food marketing strategies: community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, farmers markets, and wholesaling, to name a few.</p> <p>In the second half of the workshop, you'll learn about online marketing platforms and how this rapidly expanding technology can help farmers connect to the thousands of consumers who now shop for their food online. There will be plenty of time for Q&A.</p> <p>Presented by Lorig Hawkins, Ivy Walls, Mark Hutchins, & representatives from online marketing platforms Barn2Door, GrownBy, Local Food Marketplace</p>
1:30 - 5:00 pm Room 3-3.1	<p>Starting & Running a Successful Co-Op Co-Op development experts and co-op founders from across Texas will explore the many ways that cooperation can build strong, resilient farmer and rancher networks as well as a committed, reliable customer base. Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing expenses and increasing market access. • Start-up basics. • Co-op business planning and design. • Worker cooperative farms and cooperative land trusts. • Legal and tax considerations. <p>Presented by Annelies Lottmann & Drew De Los Santos</p>
5:00 - 7:00 pm	Social in the Exhibitor Hall

Monday, August 9 – LBJ Student Center

Tracks & Locations	The Big Picture LBJ 3-14.1	Start-up LBJ 3-3.1 (overflow in 3-3.51)	Crops LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater	Livestock Grand Ballroom	Finance & Business Mgmt. LBJ 3-9.1 (overflow in 3-10.1)	Research LBJ 3-13.1	EXHIBITOR HALL LBJ Ballroom	
7:30-8:30	REGISTRATION - MEZZANINE AREA							
8:30-8:45	Announcements							
8:45 - 10:00	Who Controls Our Food: The Issues With Consolidation: Doug Constance, Scott Marlow	Gardening for Food Production: Boone Holladay	Soil Health: Cover Crops and More: Ray Archuleta	Working With Your Processor: Wendy Taggart	Lessons Learned in 40 Years of Building a Market Farm: Alex Hitt	1) Olive Pomace as Feed Supplement (Dr. Kelley) 2) Olive Pomace for Broiler Production (Marcy Beverly)	Exhibitor Hall open in the LBJ Ballroom 7:30 am - 6 pm. Silent Auction benefiting FARFA. Coffee, tea & light refreshments available.	
10:00 - 10:30	Break							
10:30 - noon	The Economics of Local Food: What Will It Take to Grow Market Share? Chloe Sorvino, Annelies Lottmann, Margaret Smith, & Will Harris	Basics of Beekeeping: Walt & Heather Draker	Starting a Successful Vegetable Farm: Becky Hume, Diana Padilla, & Jeremy Peaches	Sustainable Dairying: Jim Goodman & Craig Miller	Farm-to-Table - COVID and What Happens Next: Erroll Schweizer, Sonya Cote, & Mark Jacob	1) Subtropical Soil Health Initiative (Justin Duncan) 2) Soil Science & Machine Learning (Rishab Basutkar) 3) Producer Perceptions of Cover Cropping (Katherine Westermann)		
12:00 - 12:15	Break							
12:15 - 1:15	LUNCH - Grand Ballroom							
1:15 - 1:30	Break							
1:30 - 3:00	The Carbon Debate: Ray Archuleta, Jim Goodman & Jim Blackburn	Success With Cottage Foods: Judith McGeary & Kelley Masters	Equipment for Small Acreage: Andy Pressman & Brent Heironimus	Animal Nutrition & Phytochemicals: Stephan van Vliet	Selling to a Wholesale Distributor: Evan Driscoll, Margaret Smith, & Jarryd Brennan	1) Sustainable Intensification & Agroecology (Dr. Constance) 2) Factors Contributing to Food Insecurity in S. Africa (Peter Temitope Agboola) 3) Results from the COVID-19 Impact Survey of Texas Agricultural Producers (Ken Mix)		
3:00 - 3:30	Break							
3:30 - 5:00	Power Dynamics & Systemic Injustice in Our Food System: Gail Myers, Matt Solberg, & Lyla June	Preserving Food: Fermenting, Canning, and More: Ryan Farnau & Aislynn Campbell	Food Safety: Michelle Akindiya, Frankie Bayne, & Codie Brown.	Goat & Sheep Management: Keeping a Healthy Flock: Liz Benavides & Lauri Celella	Grant & Cost-Share Programs: Kat Neilson, Nelson Daniels, & Samantha Salinas	1) Challenges and Training Needs of Texas Small Producers (Ken Mix) 2) Mixed Methods Needs Assessment of Texas Small Producers (Katie Tritsch) 3) Texas Small Farmers' Marketing Practices (Amanda Spradlin)		
5:15 - 6:15	FARFA & CHFS Member Meeting in Room 3.14-1							
6:30 - 8:30 pm	Banquet Dinner & Will Harris Keynote							

Tuesday, August 10 – LBJ Student Center

Tracks & Locations	The Big Picture LBJ 3-14.1	Niche topics LBJ 3-3.1 (overflow in 3-5.1)	Crops LBJ 4-16.1 (Teaching Theater)	Livestock Grand Ballroom	Finance & Business Mgmt. LBJ 3-9.1 (overflow in 3-10.1)	Technology LBJ 3-13.1	EXHIBITOR HALL LBJ Ballroom
7:30-8:15	REGISTRATION						
8:15 - 8:30	Welcome						
8:30 - 10:00	Healthy Soils: Why They Matter & How We Get There: Alex Racelis, Kara Kroeger, & Stephan van Vliet	Beginning Farmer Resources: Jay Bragg, Michelle Akindiya, Doug Havemann, & Bertha Venegas	Successful Orcharding and Fruit Production: Betsy Ross, Guy Ames, & Dan Rohrer	Breeds & Heat Tolerance: Stephen Lukefahr, Travis Krause, & Heather Blewett	Social Media Marketing: Jeff Bednar, Chaz Daughtry, & Lisa Seger	On-farm Renewable Energy: Will Harris, Nick de Vries, & Semih Aslan	
10:00 - 10:30	Break						
10:30 - 11:45	Legislative Update from DC and Austin: Patty Lovera & Judith McGeary	Floriculture: Gretchen O'Neil & Grant Winkelmann	Hydroponics & Aquaponics: Jeff Bednar & Kevin Wheeler	Pastured Poultry: Doug Havemann	Certifications: Morgan Ehmling, Don Davis, & Alice Varon	Remote Monitoring: Liz Benavides, Matt Kutugata, & Rishab Basutkar	Exhibitor Hall open in the LBJ Ballroom 7:30 am - 6 pm. Silent Auction benefiting FARFA. Coffee, tea & light refreshments available.
11:45 - noon	Break						
noon - 1:30	LUNCH & Lyla June's Keynote: The Untold Story: Pre-Columbian Native American Food Systems & Land Management Practices						
1:30 - 1:45	Break - Final chance to bid on Silent Auction items!						
1:45 - 3:15	Engaging Youth in Food and Agriculture: Stephen Lucke, Lauren Maples, Angela Vela, & Hernan Colmenero	Grant Writing for Producers and Producer Groups: Susie Marshall, Ken Mix, & Elise Haschke	Silvopasture: Colin Mitchell & Justin Graham	Pasture Biodiversity: Peggy Sechrist & Kara Kroeger	Farmers' Markets from the Farmer's Perspective: Michelle Akindiya & Ben Guyton	Software Tools: Pedro Schambon, Liz Jeffers, & Mason Zepeda	
3:15 - 3:45	BREAK & pick up auction items						
3:45 - 5:00	So Many Ways to Be An Agtivist! Leslie Provence, Marie Tedei, & Matthew Posey	Mushroom Production E. Ray Gard		Pastured Pigs: Tina & Orion Weldon	Financing Your Farm Operation: Tim Traister, Roel Garza, & Bertha Venegas		

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Monday

8:30-8:45 am

Welcome & Announcements. 3th FLOOR, LBJ STUDENT CENTER, GRAND BALLROOM

8:45-10 am

The Big Picture Track. *Who Controls Our Food: The Issues With Consolidation.* You've probably heard, or even talked about, how big companies control our food and agricultural system. But what does that really mean? Who owns what? What's the impact on farmers and consumers? And what can we do about it? *LBJ 3-14.1*

Start-Up Track. *Gardening for Food Production.* This session is aimed at people who want to get serious about raising vegetables, whether for their family's consumption or with an eye towards selling small quantities. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. *Soil Health: Cover Crops and More.* Soil Health and Regenerative Agriculture are new production sciences that bring a holistic, ecosystem-level, dynamic approach to agriculture. This approach can increase farmers' profits and increase their crop's and livestock's climate stress resilience. Ray Archuleta is a leading spokesperson on soil health and regenerative agriculture, teaching seminars around the country as a consultant for Understanding Ag. Formerly, he was a soil conservationist with NRCS and is one of the early formulators of the modern soil health movement. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. *Working With Your Processor.* Small, local processors can be hard to find – and sometimes they are easy to work with, sometimes not. Learn how to choose among processors (if you have more than one option) and how each animal (beef, pork, or lamb) breaks down in order to maximize the value of the cuts you get back. The session will also cover options in packaging and labeling your meat. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. *Lessons Learned in 40 Years of Building a Market Farm.* From bootstrap to retirement, Alex Hitt shares the story of how these first-generation farmers built a thriving business from a blank piece of land. The hurdles they faced, how they overcame them, and the keys to success they learned during the last four decades. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Research Track. *Olive Pomace as Feed Supplement and Olive Pomace for Broiler Production.* *LBJ 3-13.1*

10:30 am - noon

The Big Picture Track. *The Economics of Local Food: What Will It Take to Grow Market Share?* After more than a decade of touting local food systems, local food is 1.5% of total food in the U.S. The economic and financial systems need to do a better job of creating a resilient local food system. How do we create a decentralized system that is not too fragmented to make a difference? *LBJ 3-14.1*

Start-Up Track. *Basics of Beekeeping.* Beekeeping is an ancient practice and one that can be conducted on nearly any size operation, from a rooftop to hundreds of acres, and for a number of different purposes. Heather and Walt have been keeping bees on their property near Canyon Lake for many years. They will present the fundamentals of beekeeping, plus the trials and joys of having your own source of liquid sweet sunshine. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. *Starting a Successful Vegetable Farm.* Successful vegetable production requires careful planning and execution. Becky Hume utilizes Google software, readily available to everyone, to maximize the planning, growing, harvesting, and sales of her operation. Diana Padilla teaches beginning farmers in South Texas how to produce, market, and manage a vegetable plot, and develop a business plan to begin their own operation. Jeremy Peaches teaches youth how to produce in urban farm plots and generate a profit. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. *Sustainable Dairying.* Dairying poses special challenges, both in animal management and in economics. Craig Miller of Mill-King Dairy will discuss how they manage their Waco-area dairy sustainably and their marketing venues (including both raw milk and low-temp pasteurized). Jim Goodman, a retired organic dairyman from Wisconsin and President of the National Family Farm Coalition, will share his experience on the economics of organics, as well as the larger systemic issues facing sustainable dairy operations. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. *Farm-to-Table: COVID and What Happens Next.* Join a discussion on what the COVID shutdowns taught us about both the conventional food system and the farm-to-table food system. Beyond the direct farm-to-consumer sales, what did COVID mean for restaurants and retailers who prioritize local, but also use conventional supply chains to one degree or another? What is the outlook for the farm-to-table businesses and what have they learned from the last 18 months? *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Research Track. *Subtropical Soil Health Initiative, Soil Science & Machine Learning, and Producer Perceptions of Cover Cropping.* *LBJ 3-13.1*

1:30-3:00 pm

The Big Picture Track. *The Carbon Debate.* Sequestering carbon in soil is a hot topic, but both the on-the-ground realities and the policy implications are a topic of debate. This panel will explore the science of soil carbon sequestration, carbon markets that are being implemented in Texas, and alternative policy approaches to supporting carbon sequestration. *LBJ 3-14.1*

Start-Up Track. *Success With Cottage Foods.* Texas now has one of the best cottage food laws in the country, offering many opportunities for people to start a business (or diversify an existing one) by selling food made at home without any licensing or permits. Judith McGeary of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance will cover what you can make (including fermented foods), what requirements you must meet, and how to operate legally. Kelley Masters of Texas Bakers Bill will share from her 10+ years of experience on business planning, pricing, and marketing as a cottage food operation. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. *Equipment for Small Acreage.* This session will focus on understanding tools and equipment in relation to scales of production. Andy Pressman of NCAT will offer strategies for selecting the right tool for the job and how farm capitalization investments can affect profitability. Alternative sources for acquiring tools will be discussed as well as the importance of safely operating and maintaining equipment. Brent Heironimus of Donna's Farm will share what's worked and what hasn't worked on his small farm, including bringing some good small-scale tools for you to see in person. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. *Animal Nutrition & Phytochemicals.* As concerns regarding the effects of animal agriculture on human and environmental health mount, a growing number of ranchers and farmers are seeking ways to build health from the ground up. This talk will explore relationships along the soil-plant-animal-human health continuum and address the question: Do practices that stimulate soil health and plant diversity also improve the healthfulness of meat and milk for consumers? How can producers maximize those benefits? *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. *Selling to a Wholesale Distributor.* Learn about wholesaling from both the farm and the wholesalers' perspective. How do you decide whether and what type of wholesaling to do? How do you set prices and develop a sales strategy? What expectations should you be ready to meet? Come prepared with questions to ask that will help you develop a successful wholesale side of your business. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Research Track. *Sustainable Intensification & Agroecology, Factors Contributing to Food Insecurity in S. Africa, and Results from the COVID-19 Impact Survey of Texas Agricultural Producers.* *LBJ 3-13.1*

3:30-5:00 pm

The Big Picture Track. *Power Dynamics & System Injustice in Our Food System.* Our agricultural and food system is deeply skewed against small farmers and local food producers. Some groups are even further marginalized, including Indigenous farmers, Black farmers, and farmworkers. This session dives into some of the systemic injustices, their roots, their current forms, and what we can do about them. *LBJ 3-14.1*

Start-Up Track. *Preserving Food: Fermenting, Canning, and More.* How do you preserve your harvest? Ryan Farnau of F-Stop will cover fermenting, while Aislynn Campbell will discuss drying, canning, and other methods to make the most of your hard-earned crops. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. *Food Safety.* Food safety applies to almost everything a produce farmer does to get their product to their customers – harvesting, washing, packing, storing, distributing, recordkeeping, and employee training, to name a few. A well-designed wash-and-pack station can make this process simple and effective, while meeting the requirements of federal (and voluntary) food safety standards. In this presentation, you'll hear from three Texas producers about how they've designed their post-harvest systems to maximize food safety practices, focusing on the nuts and bolts of good wash-and-pack design. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. *Goat & Sheep Management: Keeping a Healthy Flock.* Professor Liz Benavides and Lauri Cejella, who runs a holistic cattle and sheep operation, will discuss prevention and management of disease on sheep and goat farms, specifically focusing on parasite and bacterial control and prevention. Bring your questions about parasite prevention and any other aspect of sheep and goat farming. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. *Grant & Cost-Share Programs.* Grant and cost-share programs can make a huge difference to a farming operation. In this session, you'll learn about three grant and cost-share programs producers are eligible to apply for. First, you'll hear about SSARE's Producer Grant program, which provides funding for on-farm research to improve your production or marketing strategies. Second, you'll learn about the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) at NRCS. EQIP is a popular cost-share program for producers who want to implement conservation practices on their farm or ranch. Finally, you'll learn about TDA's Young Farmer Grant Program, one of the only grant opportunities that can help cover operating costs for farmers under the age of 46. Presenters will share information about their programs, including tips to help you apply. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Research Track. *Challenges and Training Needs of Texas Small Producers, Mixed Methods Needs Assessment of Texas Small Producers, and Texas Small Farmers' Marketing Practices.* *LBJ 3-13.1*

5:15-6:15 pm

FARFA & CHFS Member Meeting in Room 3.14-1 *(For current & prospective members.)*

6:00-8:30 pm

Banquet and Keynote with Will Harris. Our speaker, owner of White Oak Pastures, runs his family farm in Georgia, which over the course of 150 years went full circle: from humane and sustainable farming, to industrialized and commoditized farming, and back again. Learn how Will and his team have built a farm business that is zero-waste, integrates solar panels, and utilizes rotational grazing for cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, and poultry.

Tuesday

8:15-8:30 am

Welcome & Announcements. 3th FLOOR, LBJ STUDENT CENTER, GRAND BALLROOM

8:30-10 am

The Big Picture Track. *Healthy Soils: Why They Matter & How We Get There.* Human health, animal health, the environment, food security – farming and ranching in ways that build healthy soils have myriad benefits. This panel will dig into these topics, discussing the benefits for farmers as well as consumers. But with all these benefits, why isn't everyone farming this way? What needs to change? *LBJ 3-14.1*

Niche Topics Track. *Beginning Farmer Resources.* Getting started in agriculture, particularly if you're a first-generation farmer, can be incredibly overwhelming. You're learning to produce at scale while balancing marketing, regulations, recordkeeping, personal responsibilities, and much more. Thankfully, there are great resources to help you along. This session will feature speakers from several programs that can help you navigate your early farming years: Battleground to Breaking Ground, Farmshare Austin, NRCS, and Texas Farm Bureau, as well as a moderator from the Small Producers Initiative. Part of the session will be discussion-based and interactive. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. *Successful Orchard and Fruit Production.* Locally raised fruit is in high demand, and it requires some special care in this region. Guy Ames of NCAT will cover the basics of orchard production, with a focus on unusual fruits that are well-adapted to this region. Betsy Ross will address the soil food web and how to optimize it for fruit production, and Dan Rohrer rounds out the panel with a discussion of growing in high tunnels. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. *Breeds and Heat Tolerance.* Texas poses many climatic challenges for cattle producers, especially heat. Dr. Steven Lukefahr developed STAR cattle from Senepol-Tuli-Red Angus crosses, to create a breed that is both heat tolerant and high quality in weight gain, forage utilization, and meat. Travis Krause has been raising grassfed and finished cattle for many years in south central Texas and will present his expertise on managing herds on grass and in a hot climate. Heather Blewett will cover her experiences with the Santa Gertrudis breed, including their most prominent trait of heat tolerance and how utilizing the breed, whether through a purebred or crossbred program, could make your herd more profitable and adaptable to the ever-changing cattle industry. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. *Social Media Marketing.* With so many consumers shifting food purchases online, social media can make (or break) your farm's marketing strategy. How do you choose which platforms to use? How often to post, and what should posts be about? Are social media posts even worth your time? These and many other questions will be answered in this panel discussion with Texas farmers and ranchers who have mastered the art of social media. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Technology Track. *On-Farm Renewable Energy.* As solar- and wind-power have become more accessible, and as impacts of climate change have become more visible, there is growing opportunity for farms to become net-zero energy spaces by employing these solutions. This may offer farmers new revenue streams as an agrovoltaic system that produces energy and agriculture. Will Harris will bring his experience of on-farm applications, Nick De Vries will discuss technology advances as an industry expert, and Semih Aslan will present research with farm applications. *LBJ 3-13.1*

10:30-11:45 am

The Big Picture Track. *Legislative Update from DC and Austin.* After the empty grocery store shelves of 2020, local food and sustainable agriculture are getting a lot more attention in both Congress and the Texas Legislature. But it's a long road ahead for the reforms we need. Patty Lovera, policy advisor for the Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment and policy director

for the Organic Farmers Association, will share the news from DC; Judith McGeary, founder and executive director of the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance, will provide the news from the recent Texas legislative session and discuss what comes next. *LBJ 3-14.1*

Niche Topics Track. Floriculture. Flowers are a popular and attractive crop, but what does it take to farm flowers on a small commercial scale? Two Texas farmers will take you through their successful operations, describing their production practices, as well as strategies for selling and marketing flowers. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. Hydroponics and Aquaponics. Hydroponic and aquaponic approaches have been part of agriculture for millennia: Poles created ponds nutrified with animal dung, then stocked with fish, ducks, and geese; Asian farmers have long used rice paddies to raise aquatic proteins in off seasons; the Mexica created the chinampas floating gardens of Tenochtitlan and used the surrounding lakes for fish. Soil-less agriculture can combine protein and vegetable production as a water conserving solution. In this participatory workshop Jeff Bednar and Kevin Wheeler will talk about hydroponic and aquaponic production, including technological advances in these emerging technologies. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. Pastured Poultry. Pastured poultry can be a great stand-alone farm business or diversification option. Doug Havemann of Mesquite Field Farms will cover breeds (meat and egg), housing, feeding, and on-farm processing. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. Certifications. There are so many certifications to choose from, so how do you know which one is best? Will they bring you more customers, or are they more about paperwork than sales impacts? This session will present the benefits, challenges, and opportunities related to certification programs for producers. Speakers will represent three distinct certification programs: USDA Certified Organic, Certified Naturally Grown, and American Grassfed Association Certified. You'll learn a little bit about each program, while also getting your questions answered about whether certifications are right for your farm. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Technology Track. Remote Monitoring. New technology can help farmers monitor and manage their operations. What is precision agriculture and how is it being used? Learn about how drone technology can capture data from in-ground sensors, and how technological tools can tell you more about your animals. How do you analyze the information and apply it on the farm? Bring your questions and your ideas on what technology you want to see developed. *LBJ 3-13.1*

Noon-1:30 pm

Lunch & Keynote by Lyla June Johnston: The Untold Story: Pre-Columbian Native American Food Systems and Land Management Practices

1:45-3:15

The Big Picture Track. Engaging Youth in Food and Agriculture. Youth are a vital piece of a resilient food system. This session covers a range of ways people and organizations are engaging with youth: community gardens, school gardens and curriculum, and recapturing Indigenous traditions. Learn about their successes, failures, and how we can keep building for the future. *LBJ 3-14.1*

Niche Topics Track. Grant Writing for Producers and Producer Groups. Grant writing is often seen as an isolated skill that only those in rarified spaces can undertake. However, farmers frequently have opportunities that are overlooked because this task appears intimidating. While grant writing does take effort and some skill, it can be learned and developed with practice. Each of the speakers in this session has experience with successful grant writing and failures. They will discuss the art and science of developing a good grant proposal. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Crops Track. Silvopasture Success. Silvopasture is an agroforestry practice that harnesses the intentional integration of perennials, livestock, and forage. Silvopasture systems are intensively managed for both tree products and animal protein production, providing short- and long-term

income sources. In this session Colin Mitchell of NCAT will give an introduction to design and management considerations for silvopasture systems in Texas and talk through different potential scenarios. Justin Graham, owner of Zanzenberg Farm, will talk about his Central Texas operation focused on using heritage pigs in pecan orchards and more. *LBJ 4-16.1 Teaching Theater*

Livestock Track. Pasture Biodiversity. As Wendell Berry once said, “There should be some profound resemblance between our treatment of our bodies and the treatment of the earth. We need to move our focus away from organs to organisms.” This goes for humans, animals, and the earth alike. In this participatory workshop, Peggy Sechrist and Kara Kroeger will introduce the One Health concept created by the Center for Disease Control. They will encourage participants to think about how biodiversity influences environmental health, animal health, and human health in their operations and beyond and the effects this can have on their land, production output, bottom line, and customer satisfaction. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. Farmers’ Markets from the Farmer’s Perspective. Hear from fellow farmers about how to make money at the farmers’ market, including selecting products, setting prices, and designing your booth display. The session will also cover working with the farmers’ market manager, what to expect from a well-run market, and what the market team expects from you. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

Technology Track. Software Tools. Software tools can help farmers in many ways. Pedro Schambon will discuss chain of possession software to track your crop from seed purchase to crop sale, to help with both farm management and regulatory compliance. Liz Jeffers will present online sales platforming to increase your customer base and sales. Mason Zapata will discuss cold chain data logging options to track your products’ temperature and handling from field to sale. *LBJ 3-13.1*

3:45-5:00 pm

The Big Picture Track. So Many Ways to Be an Activist! Our government only works when YOU get involved. And there are so many ways that you can! Leslie Provence of the Food Policy Council of San Antonio will talk about how to organize at the local level, wherever you live. Marie Tedei will share her experience running for office and as a new city council member. Matthew Posey, chief of staff for State Representative Cook, will share the inside view to help you understand how to most effectively influence your elected officials. Come away from this session inspired and empowered to make an impact! *LBJ 3-14.1*

Niche Topics Track. Mushroom Production. Mushroom production is a niche area with excellent opportunity for growth, with only 3-4 pounds of consumption per capita per annum. Mushrooms are high quality proteins scoring 87/100 for amino acid completeness and 69/100 for nutrient balance, plus they have versatile culinary applications. E. Ray Gard is a local mushroom producer with a new start up and will discuss the operational challenges and opportunities in mushroom production. *LBJ 3-3.1 (Overflow in 3-5.1)*

Livestock Track. Pastured Pigs. Pigs are often seen as destructive livestock, rooting in the soil, increasing erosion, and difficult to manage in a pasture. However, Orion and Tina Weldon manage their hog production to recover overgrown pastures, return grasslands and native plants, and profit while doing so. *Grand Ballroom*

Finance/Business Track. Financing Your Farm Operation. Loans and financial assistance programs are important tools for every farmer, big or small. This panel will make a daunting task approachable by covering the ins-and-outs of different financing options for your operation. You’ll hear from Roel Garza with Farm Service Agency about farm loan programs for various needs, Tim Traister with rePlant Capital about private financing options and how to work with a lender, and Bertha Venegas about EQIP and other financial opportunities available to farmers and ranchers through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. *LBJ 3-9.1 (Overflow in 3-10.1)*

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Bidding on the silent auction closes at the end of lunch at **1:45 p.m. on Tuesday**. You can pick up your winnings beginning at 3:15 p.m.

Also, several of these items are only available for bidding in our ONLINE AUCTION. Be sure to take a look at those items at www.32auctions.com/FARFA2021. Bidding for the online auction closes at **midnight, Sunday, Aug. 15**.

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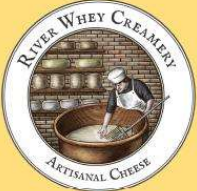
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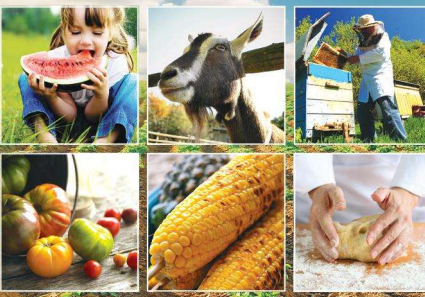


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
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KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

WILL HARRIS is recognized as a worldwide leader in humane animal husbandry and environmental sustainability. He is a fourth-generation cattleman, who tends the same Bluffton, Ga., land that his great-grandfather settled in 1866. Born and raised at White Oak Pastures, Will left home to attend the University of Georgia's School of Agriculture, where he was trained in the industrial farming methods that took hold after World War II. After graduating, Will returned to Bluffton where he and his father continued to raise cattle using pesticides, herbicides, hormones, and antibiotics, and feeding the herd a high-carbohydrate diet of corn and soy.

In the mid-1990s, Will became disenchanted with industrialized methods that had created a monoculture for their cattle. He made the audacious decision to return to the farming methods his great-grandfather had used 130 years before.

Will is the immediate past President of the Board of Directors of Georgia Organics. He is the Beef Director of the American Grassfed Association and was selected 2011 Business Person of the year for Georgia by the SBA.



LYLA JUNE JOHNSTON is an Indigenous public speaker, artist, scholar, and community organizer of Diné (Navajo), Tsétséhestáhesé (Cheyenne) and European lineages from Taos, N.M. Her messages focus on Indigenous rights, supporting youth, traditional land stewardship and food gathering practices, and healing inter-generational and inter-cultural trauma.

She blends undergraduate studies in human ecology at Stanford University, graduate work in Native American Pedagogy at the University of New Mexico, and the Indigenous worldview she grew up with to inform her perspectives and solutions. She is currently pursuing a doctoral degree at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks in Indigenous Studies with a focus on Indigenous Food Systems Revitalization.

Lyla June spends her free time learning her endangered mother tongue, planting corn, beans and squash and spending time with elders who retain traditional spiritual and ecological knowledge.



OUR SPEAKERS



MICHELLE AKINDIYA is the Education Director for Farmshare Austin. Since 2017, she has been teaching Farmer Starter, a 20-week beginning farmer training program on a 10-acre certified organic vegetable farm near Austin. Farmer Starter provides a foundation in production and business skills needed to run a successful farm, combining hands-on experience with classroom learning, plus field trips to area farms to see a range of scales and farming philosophies. Michelle began farming in 2005 on a Wisconsin farm. She managed Salute! Farm and Vineyard, a vegetable CSA and red wine vineyard in Woodstock, Ill., then moved back to Austin, gaining experience in urban farming, greenhouse management, managing a micro-grocer specializing in local foods, and foraging for local food for restaurants before joining Farmshare.



GUY AMES is the author of a series of publications on organic fruit production published by ATTRA, including *Community Orchards*; *Climate Change and Perennial Fruit and Nuts*; *Pawpaws: Tropical Fruit for Temperate Zones*; *Fruit Trees, Bushes, and Vines for Natural Growing in the Ozarks* and many more. Guy earned a bachelor's in history from Texas A&M-Commerce; and master's in horticulture from University of Arkansas-Fayetteville. He has more than 40 years of successes and failures growing fruit organically in the South including 25 years as operator of Ames Orchard & Nursery, producing fruit and fruit plants adapted to Ozark conditions. Among his crops are persimmons, hazelnuts, apple, pear, grape, elderberry, pawpaw, gooseberries, and blackberries. Guy is

also a horticulture specialist with ATTRA, the national sustainable agriculture information service managed by the National Center for Appropriate Technology.



RAY ARCHULETA is a Certified Professional Soil Scientist with the Soil Science Society of America and more than 30 years' experience as a soil conservationist, water quality specialist, and conservation agronomist with the Natural Resources Conservation Service. While with NRCS, Ray served in New Mexico, Missouri, Oregon, and North Carolina. After retirement, he founded Understanding Ag and Soil Health Academy to teach "biomimicry" strategies and agroecology principles to improve soil on a national scale. Ray received an associate's in Livestock Science from Northern New Mexico College and a B.S. 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. Ray, his wife, and family own and operate a 150-acre farm near Seymour, Mo.



DR. SEMIH ASLAN is associate professor of the Ingram School of Engineering at Texas State University and worked as a Senior FPGA Design Engineer with Motorola LTE Division and as a post-doctoral researcher at Illinois Institute of Technology. Dr. Aslan is the founding director of the System Modeling and Renewable Technology (SMART) Lab in the Ingram School and advises graduate students on green energy, multi-processor system design, and data analysis projects. His research interests include renewable energy, sensor modeling, signal conditioning, embedded systems, and hardware optimization. He is a Senior IEEE member. Dr. Aslan has mentored over 20 senior design projects at Texas State University during his 10 years there.



RISHAB BASUTKAR is a graduate technology management student at Texas State University. His research focuses on the application of machine learning and imagery using unmanned aerial vehicles as an alternative to conventional methods of measuring organic matter content in soil. Rishab earned his undergraduate degree in India, majoring in mechanical engineering. He is a strong advocate of these technologies and their ability to improve yields and increase the speed of food production. Rishab also sees benefits in terms of time efficiency, decreased labor, and real-time field crop data to help farmers make quick and effective crop-related decisions.



FRANKIE BAYNE is the farm manager of the Farm at Montesino in Wimberley, Texas. With her mind and hands directed towards improving soil health, contributing to a healthy ecosystem, and producing nutrient-rich food for her neighbors and friends, Frankie grows seasonal vegetables and fruits. She is a co-founder and the Board President of the Central Texas Farmers Co-op, a multi-farm CSA program in San Marcos and Lockhart. She also serves as operations and membership manager of Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association where she works to provide education, advocacy, and networking opportunities to organic and sustainable farmers in Texas. She is a Produce Safety Alliance certified trainer.



JEFF BEDNAR is the founder of the Profound family of businesses, starting with Profound Microfarms in 2015, a 2.6 acre farm in Lucas, Texas, where he grows leafy greens, edible flowers, culinary herbs and microgreens in 14,000 sq. ft. of hydroponic greenhouses. In 2018 he founded Profound Foods, a distribution hub that he created to connect farmers and chefs. Profound Kitchen was born in 2020 as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, creating value-added goods out of end-of-season produce and products that enhance the at-home cooking experience. Jeff shares time with chefs and farmers to bridge supply chain gaps and solve problems.



DR. ELIZABETH BENAVIDES is an Assistant Professor at Texas State University, where she teaches animal science, livestock genetics, and reproduction in farm animals, among other courses. She was awarded her Ph.D. in Animal Science from the University of Missouri and a master's in Animal Science from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. Her research during her master's degree focused on determining the mechanisms of puberty in meat goats. She continues to work with goats at Texas State University-San Marcos, investigating botanicals and other best practices to minimize the effects of intestinal parasite infections on goats.



JIM BLACKBURN is an environmental lawyer and professor in Rice University's Civil and Environmental Engineering Dept. He is a Faculty Scholar at Rice's Baker Institute, co-director of the Severe Storm Prevention, Education and Evacuation from Disaster (SSPEED) Center, and directs the undergraduate minor in Energy and Water Sustainability. Jim is working on

establishment of a new soil carbon storage standard called BCarbon and on implementing the Galveston Bay Park Plan through SSPEED Center. He is the author *Book of Texas Bays* and *A Texan Plan for the Texas Coast*, and co-authored two books of poems and paintings with artist Isabelle Scurry Chapman, *Birds: A Book of Verse and Vision* and *Texas Hill Country Birds and Waters: Paintings and Poems*. Two projects he helped design – the Galveston Bay Park Plan and the Texas Coastal Exchange – won recognition from the Houston Chapter of American Institute of Architects.



HEATHER BLEWETT is a cattle rancher and a realtor from Kingsbury, Texas, where she resides with her husband Kevin and two children. As a child, she raised and showed Santa Gertrudis and Brahman-influenced cattle with her parents in Carrizo Springs. She runs the annual Hot Gert Show in Robstown, Texas, and is manager of the South Texas Junior Santa Gertrudis Association. On the national level, Heather serves on the Youth Activities Committee for SGBI, planning the junior national show each summer. Her family runs the Buena Vida Cattle Company, currently raising about 95 head of Santa Gertrudis cattle. Heather is passionate about these cattle and a priority for her is to share information about the breed to cattlemen looking for new opportunities.



JARRYD BRENNAN graduated from Texas State University in 2009 with a bachelor's in Biochemistry. He apprenticed at Raphael Garden at Rudolf Steiner College in Fair Oaks, Calif., learning BioDynamic Agriculture in theory and in practice, serving a 40-member CSA. After a return to Austin, he worked his way up at Whole Foods Market from a cashier/bagger through customer service leadership and into produce and perishable leadership before finding a home at Farmhouse Delivery. Jarryd began as the grocery buyer/forager and shortly thereafter became the produce buyer/forager, which developed into a management role in produce. For the last two years he's worked with 75+ local growers, most of which utilize organic practices, curating local produce boxes weekly.



CODY BROWN was born and raised in West Texas in the small town of Andrews. He earned a bachelor of science degree in Horticulture Business Management along with a master's in Integrated Agricultural Sciences from Texas State University. Today, Cody is one of the owner/operators of Growtopia Farms, based in San Antonio. Growtopia organically produces vegetables and mushrooms for the greater Central Texas area. Near-term plans are to purchase land and expand into regenerative agriculture.



AISLYNN CAMPBELL has been growing food on family land, in community gardens, and in her own backyard for more than 30 years, honing her hands-on expertise while developing edible, 100 percent organic gardens in South Texas. She speaks and advocates throughout Texas with a focus on marketing, edible landscape, seed-to-plate nutrition, social entrepreneurship, and community leadership. In 2012, Aislynn created the Corpus Christi Downtown Farmers' Market. A year later, she founded GROW Local South Texas, a non-profit organization that provides affordable access to nutrient-dense food and cultivates South Texas' local food system.



LAURI CELELLA is co-owner of Dry Creek Livestock and Poetry Dorpers, located in Poetry, a small town in northeast Texas. Lauri currently leads a Regenerative Agriculture Mentoring Program group for Holistic Management International. Along with her husband, veterinarian David Celella, she practices Holistic Management at Dry Creek Livestock. Using planned grazing methods, they have incorporated Devon cattle and Dorper sheep to improve soil health at their operation. Ten years of raising Dorper sheep plus her work at a veterinary clinic provided Lauri with knowledge on parasite prevention and treatment for small ruminants.



HERNAN COLMENERO is Farm Manager for the farm program at IDEA Public Schools, a non-profit corporation that operates public charter schools in Texas. Hernan oversees the mixed vegetable production of nine school farms in El Paso, Austin, San Antonio, and the Rio Grande Valley. He also develops student curricula on regenerative agriculture principles, food systems, and the socio-economic and political frameworks that surround food production. His current work on a Master's in Public Health centers around the impact of biodiversity on human health, environmental degradation, and climate change. He is a USDA E. Kika De La Garza Fellow, has studied agricultural food systems in Cuba, and his last name means beekeeper.



DR. DOUGLAS H. CONSTANCE is Professor of Sociology at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. His degrees are in Forest Management (BS), Community Development (MS), and Rural Sociology (PhD), all from the University of Missouri-Columbia. His research focuses on the impacts of the industrialization and globalization of the conventional agrifood system on rural communities and on alternative agrifood systems. His more recent co-edited books are *Alternative Agrifood Movements: Patterns of Convergence and Divergence* (2014) by Emerald Press and *Contested Sustainability Discourses in the Agrifood System* (2018) by Earthscan Press. Doug is a past president of the Southern Rural Sociological Association and the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, and past editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Rural Social Sciences*. He is also past chair of the Administrative Council of the USDA Southern SARE Program.



SONYA COTE opened her latest restaurant, Store House Market + Eatery, in Bastrop, Texas, last December. The new business reflects this long-time Austin chef's commitment to supporting local farmers and producers, a hallmark of her Eden East food trailer that moved from East Austin to the parking lot of Driftwood sotol distillery and tasting room Desert Door in August 2020, with the new name of Eden West. Sonya also runs Central East Austin's "New American"-style restaurant Hillside Farmacy.



DR. NELSON DANIELS serves as an Extension Specialist for Agriculture & Natural Resources and is the co-State Director for Texas SARE. He previously held programmatic and administrative positions at Prairie View A&M University and worked as an Extension agent, both with Prairie View and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Nelson has been an instructor at Houston Community College in the Departments of Agriculture and Horticultural Sciences and an economist for the U.S. Agency for International Development in Sri Lanka. He has a bachelor's and a master's in Agricultural Economics from Prairie View A&M and a PhD in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M. His program interests are sustainable agriculture, agricultural diversification, business development, and the survival of the small family farm.



CHAZ DAUGHTRY is a first-generation farmer and agriculture entrepreneur. He is the founder and operator of Sweetwater Farms HTX, a 6-acre urban farm in north Houston, selling seasonal veggies and teaching youth about agriculture and entrepreneurship. Chaz is also the founder and CEO of Souffitgrill, a healthy spice and sauce company offering more than eight different spices. Today, Souffitgrill has become one of the largest healthy food product companies in the world. Chaz also is the co-founder of TWEF, a non-profit that has impacted over 100,000 lives. Chaz holds a bachelor's in economics from Texas A&M-College Station.



DON DAVIS and his wife Debbie raise historically correct, genetically pure Texas Longhorn cattle in Texas Hill Country, marketing their grassfed beef under the Bandera Grassland brand. The ranch is enrolled in the Audubon Conservation Ranching Program. Don is past president of the Cattlemen's Texas Longhorn Registry and owns and operates Grassfed Livestock Alliance, formed to provide a fair and sustainable market for family farms and ranches. The GLA supplies grassfed beef to Whole Foods locations in Texas and surrounding states. Don is current president of the American Grassfed Association. He and Debbie are part owners of Grassfed Sustainability Group, the Savory International hub in Texas, teaching Holistic Management and regenerative practices to landowners, managers, and producers throughout the Southwest.



DREW DE LOS SANTOS is the current Program Director at Austin Cooperative Business Association (ACBA). At ACBA she acts as a co-op coach and facilitates collective entrepreneurs in starting and maintaining their cooperative business. She also works with the Texas Rural Cooperative Center and the City of Austin to put on cooperative-focused workshops online. Before working at ACBA, Drew had a long history in community organizing and outreach in housing and environmental justice spaces. She graduated from Trinity University in San Antonio, and she is a gardener and lifelong Texan.



NICK DE VRIES is a veteran of both the U.S. Army – serving four years in the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood – and the energy sector with nearly a quarter of a century experience with major names in solar. He’s currently senior vice president of Technology and Asset Management at Silicon Ranch, where Nick has developed experience and a vision for making photo-voltaic (PV) plants more capable. Silicon Ranch owns – and Nick now operates – projects that he himself designed a decade ago, including the first transmission interconnected PV plant in the Southeast. Nick leads a team tasked with reimagining the relationship between agriculture and energy land use. Nick holds 3 patents in PV module manufacturing and design and a degree in Mechanical Engineering from Lehigh University.



HEATHER DRAKER is a Southwest Texas State University graduate with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and a Master of Arts degree in Education and Sociology. She has been teaching both high school and college classes for the past 15 years, where she has served as the Environmental Club Sponsor and Garden Club Sponsor. She has been an amateur beekeeper for the past ten years and currently co-manages 2 beehives with her husband, Walt.



WALT DRAKER is a Texas State University graduate, earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture with a concentration in Horticulture. While at Texas State, he served as the president of the Texas State Bee Club (Bobcat Buzz) and has remained actively involved in beekeeping. Since graduation he has set up successful handyman and landscaping businesses in Central Texas. His landscaping work focuses on compost tea application and planting native pollinator friendly plants. He lives in Canyon Lake, Texas, with his wife, Heather, and their daughter who share his love for and commitment to the environment. He oversees his 14-acre homestead where he grows organic food for his family and co-manages 2-6 beehives at a time.



EVAN DRISCOLL is a staff consultant at Kitchen Table Consultants, working with farm and local food supply chain companies across the country, specializing in business development, financial analysis, and fundraising readiness for food and farm businesses. Evan has spent over 10 years working in local food systems and small business development, beginning with starting a diversified fruit/vegetable/egg farm in Portland, Ore. After a move to Austin, he was farm manager for Green Gate Farms, a fruit/vegetable farm. His experiences led him to explore distribution and sales as a potential solution to the bottlenecks he saw on the farm. At

Sustainable Food Center in Austin, the Central Texas Food Bank, Foodshed Investors, and as executive director of Texas Farmers Market, Evan continued to expand his skills and knowledge in food distribution and access programs, procurement, and food business financing.



MORGAN EHMLING is a farm viability program manager at Sustainable Food Center, a non-profit organization based in Austin, working to cultivate a just and regenerative food system. Morgan identifies challenges faced by farmers and ranchers in Central Texas and facilitates connections for producers needing vital technical, educational, or financial resources. She is deeply passionate about sustainable food production, regenerative agriculture, social justice, and responsible land stewardship. Morgan graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with dual degrees in Plan II Honors and Sociology. She joined Sustainable Food Center in 2018.



RYAN FARNAU is a Kentucky-born market gardener/farmer. In 2015, he left a career in commercial photography and transformed his family’s residential lot into a market garden. He started a small CSA program that same year and began selling to restaurants. As part of his local, sustainable food production philosophy, he also began producing value-added products from his and other local farms’ produce with a goal of limiting food waste through food preservation techniques like pickling and fermentation. He now operates from Crowe’s Nest Farm in Manor, Texas, selling products at the Texas Farmers Markets in Austin. Past advocacy work includes working with Judith McGeary to lobby state representatives to pass the new Texas cottage food laws.



DIANA GARCIA-PADILLA is co-owner of Yahweh’s All-Natural Farm and Garden, a USDA Certified Organic farm. She is also founder of HOPE for Small Farm Sustainability, a non-profit organization in the Texas Rio Grande Valley. A self-taught entrepreneur, born and raised in Chicago, Diana has experience in the restaurant industry and in business management. The mission of HOPE is to foster and expand interest in organic and natural local food pro-

duction. HOPE does this by utilizing on-farm training workshops, online videos, and in-person presentations to train farmers in production methods and steer them toward technical and funding resources.



E. RAY GARD was born to a farm and ranch family in New Mexico and has been involved in agriculture ever since. He has worked in community development and has taught organic farming and other regenerative land use practices for over 18 years. His focus as a consultant in regenerative agriculture, as a small business owner, and as a current faculty member at Texas State University is on helping his community use what they have to maximize profit and build healthy soils and even healthier communities. While serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in the early 2000s, he became interested in culinary mushroom production and mycology as a means for small-scale farm operations to diversify revenue streams. After years growing mushrooms for himself and friends, he partnered with friends to start a culinary mushroom operation in collaboration with a small organic vegetable business.



ROEL GARZA is Farm Loan Program Chief for the Farm Service Agency in Texas. Garza began his federal career with FSA in 2000. He has served as a Farm Loan Officer at the Jim Wells County and Hidalgo County offices. In 2013, Garza became the Farm Loan Manager for the Jim Wells County office where he served until he was selected as Farm Loan Program Chief in 2018. Garza earned his bachelor's in Agricultural Science from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He is a native of Falfurrias, Texas. Upon selection as Farm Loan Chief, he, his family, and part of his cow-calf operation relocated to Calvert, Texas.



JIM GOODMAN works, speaks, and writes to promote fair farm prices, a safe food supply, and a society that respects and includes everyone. Jim and his wife Rebecca ran a 45-cow organic dairy and direct market beef farm in Wisconsin for 40 years with roots back to his great-grandparents' immigration from Ireland and the farm's 1848 purchase. He serves on the policy advisory boards for the Center for Food Safety and the Organic Consumers Assn. and is a board member of Midwest Environmental Advocates and the Family Farm Defenders. He is board president of the National Family Farm Coalition. Jim was a 2008-2009 Kellogg Foundation Food and Society Policy Fellow and is a past chair of USDA's North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program Administrative Council as well as a past member of the USDA National Research, Extension, Education and Economics Advisory Board, and the USDA Dairy Industry Advisory Committee.



JUSTIN W. GRAHAM comes from a family that farmed since Texas' settler days in the prairies near Palo Duro. He spent his youth on his uncle's small cotton and corn farm in Uvalde County, where water and climate were better for conventional growing. As industrial agribusiness became more the norm, much of Justin's family left farming, and he entered Texas State University to study Art and Anthropology. His future wife, Kayte, was there studying agriculture, nutrition, and geography, and Justin joined her in her passion for changing the food system. They worked briefly with Betsy Ross (another Conference speaker), where Justin first witnessed the benefit of managing to promote soil life rather than circumventing it. In 2013, they purchased a small homestead in Center Point and designed and opened Zanzenberg Farm, a small, diversified silvo agroforestry operation. Their goal is to produce high quality pork and poultry under fruit and nut trees while enriching soil, sequestering carbon, and controlling soil and water runoff to the Guadalupe River.



BEN GUYTON and his wife, Amelia, own and operate Pure Luck Farm and Dairy, a national award-winning farmstead goat cheese producer in Dripping Springs, Texas, established by Amelia's mother in 1995. Pure Luck has built its longstanding reputation for handmade artisan goat cheese and certified organic culinary herbs. Ben has worked at the dairy for over 15 years, and for the past 9, has been representing the farm, family, and their cheeses to the public at the Texas Farmers Markets in Austin.



ELISE HASCHKE provides consultation services to food and farm-affiliated organizations to develop strategic initiatives, secure public and private funding, and design project portfolios that restore ecological health and economic prosperity to farms. Prior to her role at Food Roots Consulting, Elise spent 4 years working with federal food and nutrition programs at the Texas Department of Agriculture and 3 years working with direct farm-to-market sales channels at Sustainable Food Center. She was an Austin mayoral appointed member of the Austin Travis

County Food Policy Board and an Austin City Council-appointed commissioner on the Joint Sustainability Committee. Elise holds an M.S. in Nutrition from Tufts University, and undergraduate degrees in Neurobiology and Dietetics from the University of Texas.



DOUG HAVEMANN is a U.S. Army Veteran and retired technologist. He and wife Melissa co-own Mesquite Field Farm where they produce grass-fed/finished beef, pastured poultry, and high tunnel-grown specialty crops. Mesquite Field Farm is one of two mentor training farms for the Texas AgrAbility project Battleground to Breaking Ground (BG2BG) – a project for veterans, active-duty military, and beginning farmers and ranchers designed to encourage and enhance sustainable farming and ranching. Doug and Melissa continue their mission to provide services to individuals with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and functional limitations to start or continue in production agriculture. Doug is a member of the FARFA board of directors, BG2BG steering committee, Farmer Veteran Coalition Texas Chapter Board, Small Producer Initiative steering committee, Chief Executive of First Shot Distillery, and co-owner of RegeneraIT, an agriculture services company.



LORIG HAWKINS owns and operates Middle Ground Farm in Bastrop, Texas. Middle Ground Farm and its team grow 5 acres of Certified Organic produce that is distributed to the Austin, Bastrop, and San Marcos regions. The farm is also a member of the Central Texas Farmers Coop. Lorig and her partner, Carolina, also raise a small herd of cattle on leased land adjacent to the property. Lorig holds a Trainer Certificate in Produce Safety and is currently a Food Safety Fellow with the National Young Farmer Coalition. They currently sit as Board Chair for the non-profit, Farmshare Austin, an organization that teaches new farmers and works to increase food access and preserve farmland.



BRENT HEIRONIMUS began his career in the hospitality industry, running restaurants and country clubs after earning degrees in business and hospitality. He transitioned to farming full time in 2014 after seeing the business opportunities presented by the small farm his parents started in 2011, Donna's Farm, which Brent now owns. About 15 miles south of Beaumont, Brent grows seasonal produce and flowers, selling at the Beaumont Farmers Market and at his on-site farm stand, and supplies fresh produce to local restaurants and to consumers. He believes in using the proper tools to make a farm more efficient and to streamline the process of farming on a small scale.



ALEX HITT has been farming outside of Chapel Hill, N.C., for 40 years with his wife Betsy. On their diversified operation at Peregrine Farm, they produce cut flowers, small fruits, vegetables, and pastured turkeys; selling at a farmers' market, directly to restaurants, pick-your-own, and a roadside stand. They've also marketed crops to grocery stores, florists, and floral wholesalers, managing to make their entire living since 1990 off the 2.5 acres in production. Alex has served on the Board of Advisors for the Center for Environmental Farming Systems in Goldsboro, N.C., and was the board chair of the Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA. He is a past chair of the Administrative Council of the Southern Region on USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Program. He and Betsy were named 1995 Small Farmers of the Year by NC State A&T University, and 1995 Farm Stewards of the Year by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association.



BOONE HOLLADAY is the Fort Bend County Extension Agent in Horticulture for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, where he brings past experience in retail horticulture, landscape design, and irrigation installation to his programming efforts. He holds an undergraduate degree in Horticulture from Stephen F. Austin State University and master's in Agricultural Education from Texas A&M. Long before his studies, he was an avid gardener and plant enthusiast. He previously was on the horticulture staff at Moody Gardens in Galveston, at Producers Cooperative in Bryan, and the Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences in College Station.



REBECCA HUME is the owner/operator of VRDNT Farm in Bastrop. She graduated with a degree in International Agriculture from Cornell University in 2011. She spent 8 years working in various sectors of the agricultural industry including organic greenhouses, flower farms, and industrial vegetable production before starting VRDNT in 2019. It is a biointensive farm providing diversified vegetables through CSA and wholesale. Rebecca's goal is to optimize on-farm efficiency and continue to provide Central Texans local, delicious, and clean food.



MARK HUTCHINS owns and operates Rehoboth Ranch in Greenville, Texas, along with his wife, Hillary. Together they raise grass-fed, non-GMO beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, and goats. Both Mark and Hillary’s parents raised their children to understand the importance of growing healthy foods using sustainable, non-chemical methods. Outside of the farm, Mark works for a law firm as a paralegal, and was elected in 2020 to serve on the county commission. Mark has been a member of FARFA since 2014, actively assisting the organization on raw milk issues. He joined the Board of Directors in March 2017.



MARK JACOB joined Wheatsville Co-Op as general manager in April 2020, following extensive experience leading multi-unit operations at a regional level in both housing and retail food sectors. While growing up in East Texas, he began work as a front-end grocery clerk and eventually worked for a regional chain, becoming director of store operations for 16 retail locations. Mark has broad experience with inclusion and diversity efforts, including leading development of affinity groups for Latino, Black, LGBTQ, veterans, and women in an 11-state region. Another of his passions is food access, and working to address this issue in the Austin community is one of his missions since joining Wheatsville.



LIZ JEFFERS is an account executive at Barn2Door, a leading online solution designed to help farmers grow and manage their direct sales to build a more resilient business, increase sales, access more customers, and save time. Liz has spent the past six years working with farmers to help them grow their businesses, develop their brands, and strengthen relationships with their customers, working through Barn2Door to create smooth buying experiences for farmer customers, including one-click orders via the web, social media sites, mobile, and email. Liz is passionate about supporting the nation’s farmers and improving local food access.



TRAVIS KRAUSE is founder and CEO of Grazing Lands, a company that leases ranches for grazing livestock at scale, using regenerative practices to improve soil health and biodiversity and to sequester carbon. The goal is to expand the number of acres managed regeneratively as much as possible, bringing ecosystems back to life. A graduate of Texas A&M University Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Travis worked for several years abroad in developing countries before returning to his family ranch about 50 miles west of San Antonio. He started Parker Creek Ranch in 2010, a small producer and retailer of regenerative agriculture products. A seventh-generation rancher, he currently resides on the family ranch near D’Hanis, Texas, with his wife Mandy and two kids.



KARA KROEGER’s mission is to create awareness of human, animal, and ecosystem health through regenerative agriculture education and outreach. Her current position is as Sustainable Agriculture Specialist at the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) in San Antonio, where she promotes holistic management tools that lead to improved soil health and increased nutrient density of food. Kara also oversees NCAT’s Soil for Water initiative, which aims to create a critical mass of producers who apply regenerative ag practices that catch and hold more water in the soil. Kara holds a B.S. degree in General Agriculture from Texas State University. She also has a background in nutrition and as a chef, using that experience to operate Foundation Culinary, a nutrition consulting/private chef business focusing on holistic health.



MATTHEW KUTUGATA grew up in Texas and attended the University of Texas at Austin completing his bachelor’s degree in geography. He’s worked on various farms, with non-profits, as a naturalist in the United States, and as a park ranger abroad. Matthew completed his master’s in Agricultural Sciences at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where he used digital image analysis and machine learning to evaluate cover crops and to monitor wildlife in agricultural landscapes. He started his Ph.D. in 2020 at Texas A&M in the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences. There he is assisting in a project to develop computer vision-based tools and resources for integrated weed management.



ANNELIES LOTTMANN is one of the foremost experts on cooperative development in Texas. She is co-founder of Yard to Market Co-op and has worked as a Cooperative Development Specialist with the Texas Rural Cooperative Center. Annelies has assisted dozens of new cooperatives and rural businesses as they start, grow, and thrive. She was instrumental in the City of Austin’s creation of a worker-co-op training and coaching program for 2021.

Annelies has served on the boards of Black Star Co-op and the Austin Cooperative Business Association and has led strategic planning and board training sessions for many of the food system nonprofits in Texas.



PATTY LOVERA is a food policy consultant who serves as the policy advisor for the Campaign for Family Farms and the Environment, a coalition of state and national groups working to fight factory farms, and as the policy director for the Organic Farmers Association, which represents U.S. certified organic farmers. Previously, Patty helped start and grow Food & Water Watch, serving as their Food and Water Program Director for 14 years. Patty has a bachelor's degree in environmental science from Lehigh University and a master's degree in environmental policy from the University of Michigan. Before joining FWW, Patty was the deputy director of the energy and environment program at Public Citizen and a researcher at the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.



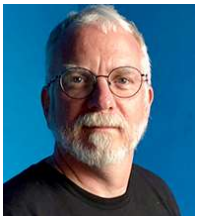
STEPHEN LUCKE is founder and CEO of Gardopia, a nonprofit working to reduce obesity and malnutrition by increasing access to fresh produce and implementing strategic intervention programs in schools, businesses, and community organizations. During his undergraduate years, he became enamored with health and wellness, first starting a student & employee wellness program, and then a community garden on campus, all of which led to his launch of Gardopia. He earned a B.S. in biochemistry and an M.A. in nutrition, both from the University of the Incarnate Word. Stephen is a proponent of civic engagement and ran for mayor of San Antonio in 2017.



DR. STEVEN LUKEFAHR is a retired professor of Animal Science from Texas A&M University-Kingsville, having taught genetics and statistics for 27 years. He has conducted research on cattle, horses, rabbits, and other species. Steven raised cattle in his youth and worked on area cattle ranches. In 1994 Steven started a small, cow-calf operation. Since 2003, he has not fed hay to his cattle, but instead developed a holistic system involving proper stocking rate and rotational grazing. This system includes breeding of heat-tolerant cattle he developed (based on Senepol, Tuli and Red Angus breeds; "Star" composites) that are well adapted to south Texas. In addition, he created niche markets for his calves as breeding stock or as grass feeders for local ranchers.



LAUREN ZAPPONE MAPLES co-founded PEAS Community Farm & Urban Orchard at Austin's Cunningham Elementary in 2011 and became the executive director in 2015. Prior to leading PEAS, she was a classroom teacher who became known for taking her students for outdoor learning. In 2014, Lauren received the John F. Ahrns Award for Environmental Education from the Children in Nature Collaborative of Austin for her work using the school's community farm as a science and math classroom. In 2015 she received the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching Grant which allowed her to spend a semester studying place-based outdoor education in New Zealand. This research prompted the launching of PEAS as a 501c3 nonprofit to extend the reach of classroom teacher support for outdoor learning to other Austin area schools.



SCOTT MARLOW is the CEO of Long Rows Consulting, providing education and policy analysis on farm financial crisis, credit, risk management, and disaster assistance, and their role in building global and community resilience. Scott previously worked with RAFI-USA, providing financial counseling to farmers in crisis, education on disaster assistance and credit programs, and policy initiatives addressing farm financial and environmental resilience. He has 10 years of experience as an operator on farm survival hotlines and has provided producer education and advising of nonprofit organizations on 18 hurricanes and multiple other natural disasters. He was a co-organizer of Farm Advocate Link, a network of farm crisis advisors based at Farm Aid.



SUSIE MARSHALL is founder and executive director of GROW North Texas, a Dallas-based not-for-profit that cultivates healthy food communities by strengthening local food production and improving access to fresh, nutritious food. She has 13 years' experience working with food producers and food assistance programs distributing surplus fruits and vegetables. Susie is a long-time volunteer for the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, currently as grants administrator and previously as executive director. Susie has a bachelor's degree from Texas Wesleyan University, a master's degree in health and physical education from Texas A&M-Commerce, and a master's of theological studies from the Perkins School of Theology at SMU.



KELLEY MASTERS owns the website TexasCottageFoodLaw.com as a private citizen and home baker who was responsible for filing the first Texas Cottage Food Bill in 2009. When the bill died, Kelley redoubled her efforts, starting the Texas Baker’s Bill Facebook page in 2010 and working toward the ultimate passage of Texas’ first cottage food law in 2011 and subsequent expansions in 2013 and 2019. She’s spent countless hours mustering grassroots and media support, working with legislators and special interest groups, and has probably delivered more homemade cookies to the State Capitol than anyone in history. The experience inspired her to earn an associate degree in paralegal studies in 2019. She and her husband own a software company that publishes CakeBoss Software for Bakers, and she continues to maintain the cottage foods website.



JUDITH McGEARY is an attorney, activist, and sustainable farmer. After earning her Bachelor of Science from Stanford University and her law degree with high honors from the University of Texas at Austin, she clerked for a Federal Appeals Court and went on to private law practice. During that time, she became a passionate advocate of sustainable agriculture, and she and her husband established their own livestock farm. After seeing how government regulations benefit industrial agriculture at the expense of family farms, she founded the Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance to promote common-sense policies for local, diversified agricultural systems. Judith has been profiled in the *Texas Observer* and *Edible Austin*, appears in the documentary *Farmageddon*, and has been interviewed on numerous radio shows across the country.



CRAIG MILLER, a 3rd generation dairyman, is co-owner and CEO of Mill-King Market and Creamery near Waco. Craig, his wife Rhianna, and his parents, Billy and Shorty Miller, produce minimally processed dairy products with no synthetic chemicals, additives, or preservatives while using sustainable methods on the land and for their cattle. Mill-King is known for its low-temp pasteurized, cream-top milk found in grocery stores, top restaurants, and specialty coffee shops across the state. In their early years, the Millers traveled homestead farms, dairies, and feedlots, witnessing the differences between sustainable and factory farming. They switched to production of raw milk and raw milk cheese for retail, later moving to vat pasteurized dairy products, turning Mill-King into a company known across Texas for its high-quality products.



BILLY MITCHELL is the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) training coordinator at the National Farmers Union and works closely with the Local Food Safety Collaborative, an FDA-funded initiative to provide training, education, and technical assistance to local food producers. Billy works with producers around the country to identify creative and cost-effective solutions that make food safety practical for small and medium size operations. The program targets organic, sustainable, value-added, diversified, and socially disadvantaged growers who serve local markets. Previously, Billy worked on diversified vegetable farms in Georgia and spent more than a year coordinating farm food safety workshops with various Georgia agricultural service groups.



GLEN MIRACLE grew up in Kentucky with a gardening mother and farming grandparents. For 20+ years in Houston, while working in the arts, he explored gardening as a hobby. In 2001 he and his wife Kenan decided to move 45 miles northwest of Houston to Hempstead, where he continued his art projects part-time, but began the framework of a small family farm, named Laughing Frog Farm. Since 2009, the farm has been his full-time job, growing about 2 acres of vegetables, running a small flock of Gulf Coast sheep, and raising free-range meat and egg laying chickens. Most Saturdays, he is at the Urban Harvest Farmers Market in Houston selling meat and produce.



COLIN MITCHELL is a sustainable agriculture specialist for the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT). Colin has a bachelor’s in government and a minor in geography and the environment from the University of Texas in Austin. He is a former project management intern for the Permaculture Research Institute of Australia and a PRI certified permaculture designer. Colin spent the years after his internship working on and managing sustainable agriculture and development projects across central Texas and the United States. For NCAT he currently works on projects related to soil health and carbon sequestration, ecosystem services, adaptive multi-paddock grazing, cover crops, agroforestry, and other regenerative agriculture systems.



DR. KEN MIX is a former vegetable producer from central Indiana. He operated a 20-acre commercial produce farm outside of Indianapolis in the 1980s and 1990s. He is the Program director of The Small Producer Initiative at Texas State University and currently teaches and has active research on small producer needs, entomology, soil health, crop production, and agriculturally related climate and water resources. Ken oversees several graduate student projects on those topics. He is currently starting SKM Homestead, a small livestock and mixed produce 50-acre farm in Fentress, Texas.



DR. GAIL MYERS is an agricultural anthropologist, and since 1997, has interviewed, researched, lectured, written about, and recently filmed stories of African American farmers, sharecroppers, and gardeners. Gail co-founded Farms to Grow, Inc., in 2004 in Oakland, Calif., to work with Black farmers locally and nationally, launching the Freedom Farmers Market in Oakland in 2013. Gail lectures and consults frequently with community groups, universities, and national organizations, as well as local, state, and federal agencies, educating about the traditions of Black farmers' material culture and traditional foodways. In 2018, she received the Advocate for Social Justice Award from the Eco-Farm Association. Gail continues grassroots organizing and coalition building through her work with Farms to Grow. Her upcoming documentary/multi-media project, "Rhythms of the Land," featuring interviews with Black farmers, is currently in post-production.



KAT NEILSON joined the Texas Department of Agriculture's grants team in 2018 and is the Texas contact for the Specialty Crop Block Grant and Specialty Crop Multi-State program, the Young Farmer Grant, the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program, the STAR Fund, and the Agriculture and Research Development Program. Her background is in non-profits, including higher education foundations and museum management. Her experience includes fundraising, fiscal and operations management, program development, and the entire life cycle of grants. Her time away from work includes volunteering and serving on multiple non-profit/government boards including chambers of commerce, historic commissions, and professional associations.



GRETCHEN O'NEIL is a farmer-florist located in Manor, Texas, launching her floral design business, Petals, ink in 2009. She soon began cultivating flowers herself to provide unique varieties to her clients. By 2012, she removed all the grass in her downtown Austin lot to grow flowers, and in 2015 purchased Grassdale, a 7-acre farm, 18 miles from downtown. Her services include weddings and events, floral subscriptions, wholesale and florist supply, farmers' market sales, online sales, hands-on workshops, dried floral products, and a mobile flower truck.



JEREMY PEACHES is the founder of FreshLifeOrganic, an agriculture consulting, service, and farm company that specializes in aquaponics/ hydroponics, row crop farming, operations, risk management, and marketing agriculture products. He is sought after for his knowledge of sustainable agriculture planning, design, and maintenance of farms, gardens, and greenhouses. Jeremy is the Harris County Extension Agent for Prairie View A&M University, where he earned a degree in Agriculture, adding to the agricultural knowledge that he, as a second-generation farmer, gained from his family.



MATTHEW POSEY graduated from Texas State University with a bachelor's degree in Political Science. During his time at the University, Matthew co-founded and was President of the Sigma Chi chapter on campus. Additionally, he served as the External Affairs Chair for the student government and as a member of the Texas State House Code Council. Setting his sights on serving the people of Texas through policy, Matthew has spent 12 years working in the Texas House of Representatives. When the Legislature is not in session, he has worked on a variety of state and federal campaigns. He currently serves as the Chief of Staff to State Representative David Cook for House District 96.



ANDY PRESSMAN is the Northeast Regional Director and Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with the ATTRA Program at National Center for Appropriate Technology. He has worked with NCAT since 2007. Andy's background is in small-scale intensive farming systems, working to help producers in the fields of organic crop production, tools and equipment for the small farm, season extension, perennial polycultures, and urban agriculture. Andy and his family also operate Foggy Hill Farm, a small, diversified family farm and CSA located in Jaffrey,

N.H. Andy has a bachelor's in Agricultural Systems from Ohio University and a master's in Sustainable Systems Design/Agroecology from Slippery Rock University.



LESLIE PROVENCE is a retired data analyst, currently vice president and treasurer of the Food Policy Council of San Antonio, and was a founding member of that organization in 2010. She led zoning code changes in the city in 2015 and 2020: to allow urban farms and the home sales of cottage foods and produce from residential market gardens, and to streamline the process for starting an urban farm. She also led changes to the local livestock code to increase the number of chickens allowed from three to eight. Leslie organizes an annual coop tour in San Antonio as an educational and community-building event (currently on hold). She has been an active advocate with FARFA in several legislative sessions. Leslie earned a Master's in Public Administration from University of Texas-San Antonio in 2007 with a thesis on community gardening on public housing properties.



DR. ALEX RACELIS is assistant professor in the Department of Biology at University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, with expertise in agroecology, invasion ecology, biological control of invasive species, socio-ecological systems, and urban ecology. His Ph.D. is in environmental studies from University of California-Santa Cruz. He previously worked as a research ecologist with the USDA and is the recipient of awards that include the Ecological Society of America Education Scholar (2016), the University of Texas Regents Outstanding Teacher Award (2016), and a Fulbright Garcia Robles Research Fellowship to conduct research in Mexico.



DAN ROHRER has grown peaches in the Fredericksburg, Texas, area for about 25 years, alternately using organic or sustainable methods. In 2011, he began growing peaches in high tunnels to minimize weather risk and increase production. He's also grown tomatoes, strawberries, melons, and sweet cherries in high tunnels, and found that with all, yields exceeded his original goals. Dan also raises Belted Galloway cattle for their high-quality, grass-finished meat. He grew up in Pennsylvania, where his family runs peach and apple orchards, and graduated from Penn State with a degree in Agricultural Engineering. Dan's been active in organizations that include Hill Country Fruit Council, Texas Fruit Growers Association, Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association, Texas Certified Farmers Market Association, and the Southwest Belted Galloway Association.



BETSY ROSS is CEO of Sustainable Growth Texas, a biological, natural soil fertility service company. She is also manager of Ross Farm in Williamson County. Betsy is a recognized practitioner of and speaker on setting up soil systems that jump start natural processes. She does not believe in the use of herbicides, insecticides, or toxic synthetic fertilizers. Through Sustainable Growth Texas, she shares her sustainable practices for orchard, residential, farm, ranch, commercial, and prairie projects throughout the state. Betsy was raised on a family ranch in West Texas, raised two children, actively volunteered in her communities, then returned to University of Texas at Austin to earn an MBA. She retired full-time to the family farm in 1999.



P. WADE ROSS (known as "Phil" by friends and family) owns a beef cattle operation on 120 acres of his family's more than 100-year-old heir-land, just outside Bryan/College Station, Texas. He serves as chief executive for Texas Small Farmers and Ranchers Community Based Organization, a non-profit 501(c)3 established in 1998. P. Wade's professional background is as a lifelong financial literacy/ entrepreneurial trainer, which aligns with his deep passion to help small farmers gain the essential skills and infrastructure to run viable, sustainable farm operations. He currently serves on numerous boards and committees, with his main goal being to serve as a constant voice for Black farmers and help pave the way for the next generation of farmers.



SAMANTHA SALINAS leads the San Antonio Service Center for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Resource Conservation Service. Her team covers a five-county area, including Bexar and surrounding counties, where Samantha oversees NRCS promotion of conservation practices for improvement of natural land and water resources in the region, focusing on water quality, plant health, soil erosion and quality, animal health, and air quality within the region's cropland, rangeland, and pastures. Samantha joined NRCS 20 years ago and holds a bachelor's degree in Range Management and Agronomic Sciences.



PEDRO SCHAMBON, JR., is founder and president of My Father’s Farm in South Central Texas, selling into HEB, Central Market, Whole Foods, restaurants, a CSA, and San Antonio hospitals. A Certified Organic producer since 2008, he manages 10 acres and 6,000 sq. ft. of greenhouses. Pedro has consulted for Texas A&M, offering training on organic practices for underserved farmers in Guatemala, and holds certificates as an organic inspector and from USDA for Good Agriculture Practices & Handling Practices. He founded an orphanage and sustainable farm in Colombia, is on the Board of Resolute Health and Wellness Center, and managed the Comal Public ISD High School Garden. Pedro developed Pro Farmer Software, which he created to assist farmers of vegetables and herbs run their day-to-day businesses.



ERROL SCHWEIZER has 25 years’ experience in natural and organic foods. He also has worked as an activist on environmental justice, mandatory minimum drug sentencing, and hemp/cannabis legalization. He led the grocery division at Whole Foods for nearly a decade. His team launched thousands of products, helping popularize grassfed dairy, biodynamics, and fair trade, and shepherding over 10,000 items through non-GMO verification and championing mandatory GMO labeling. Errol was recently named a top 25 retail game changer in the U.S. by Supermarket News and received a Lifetime Achievement award by Hemp Industries Association. For 5 years he’s been a board member, partner, co-founder and advisor to over 25 cooperatives, natural product and cannabis retailers, manufacturers, and branding agencies. He is also host and founder of “The Check Out” podcast.



PEGGY SECHRIST is a Professional Certified Educator in Holistic Management. Peggy and her husband, Richard, were the first ranchers in Texas to create a certified organic, grass-fed beef operation in 1995 adding production of pastured poultry in 1998. She has advocated for sustainable agriculture in collaboration with agencies that include Texas A&M, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Wildlife Association, Texas Dept. of Agriculture, and NRCS, and she served on the Southern SAWG Board of Directors and the USDA/SARE Administrative Council. She’s currently the Hill Country Advisor for NCAT’s Soil for Water Initiative, which educates landowners about ways to increase the water holding capacity of their soils.



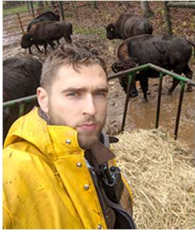
LISA SEGER is one-half of Blue Heron Farm, a small-scale, sustainability-minded goat dairy in Field Store, about 45 miles northwest of Houston. Though she and her husband, Christian, work as a “small-farm-team,” she is primarily responsible for cheese making, and sales and marketing of their goat milk cheeses, yogurt, and cajeta. Prior to 2006, Lisa was a copywriter and marketing manager. She says Blue Heron Farm had a website before it had a milk license! The online branding of the farm has evolved over time, and Lisa doesn’t always follow the social media advice she gives other farms, but she promises it’s good advice. The key to getting good coverage, she says, is that you should always take your work seriously, but never take yourself seriously.



LINDSEY LUSHER SHUTE is founder and CEO of Farm Generations Cooperative, creators of GrownBy, and co-owner of Hearty Roots Community Farm in Clermont, N.Y. Lindsey co-founded the National Young Farmers Coalition and led the organization as its executive director for a decade. She grew the organization from a few volunteer farmers to a nationwide network with 40 chapters in 28 states and a grassroots base of over 150,000. Lindsey was recognized as a “Champion of Change” by President Barack Obama and is the recipient of the Glynwood’s “Harvest Award.” *EatingWell* magazine named Lindsey an “American Food Hero,” and she was included among “20 Food Leaders Under 40” by *Food Tank*. Lindsey has presented talks and keynotes on a range of topics across the country, including an alumni keynote at Bard College in 2017.



MARGARET SMITH is the director of The Common Market Texas. Growing up in Virginia, Margaret loved hearing her grandfather’s stories about growing up on a farm. Committed to building community power and creating equitable systems, Margaret is passionate about using food as a delicious way to promote positive change. Margaret has worked at The Common Market for five years, contributing to the nonprofit’s national expansion, connecting institutions and communities with locally-grown, good food from sustainable producers in the Southeast, the Mid-Atlantic, and Texas. Margaret holds a master’s in Crop and Soil Environmental Science from Virginia Tech and is a graduate of the College of William and Mary. She lives in Houston.



MATT SOLBERG has worked in the fishing industry in Alaska, on a corn harvesting crew in Argentina, and on a bison farm in Virginia. As a student at the University of Vermont, he volunteered with migrant dairy farmworkers and learned about the specific challenges of migrant farmworkers, documented and undocumented. He spent a semester in Oaxaca, Mexico, studying agricultural economics and the impact on migration. Today Matt works with National Center for Farmworker Health to build partnerships with agricultural employers in the U.S. and is helping farms and labor contractors set up COVID vaccine clinics for incoming H-2A workers.



CHLOE SORVINO leads coverage of food and agriculture at *Forbes*. She manages a team of 50-plus expert contributors, along with the 30 Under 30 Food and Drink list and the Forbes Ag Tech Summits. From profiling entrepreneurs to traveling the world to report on food, her seven years at Forbes took her to In-N-Out Burger’s secret test kitchen, drought-ridden farms in California, and a billionaire-owned slaughterhouse in Omaha. Chloe’s work has been featured in NPR, *Women’s Wear Daily*, and the *Financial Times*, and she shared a 2014 Best in Business Award in government reporting by the Society of American Business Editors and Writers. Her book about the future of meat will be published by Simon & Schuster’s Atria Books in 2022.



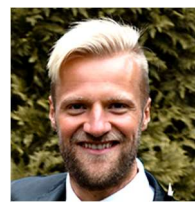
WENDY TAGGART is the cofounder of Burgundy Pasture Beef which opened in 1999 in Grandview, Texas, eventually becoming a vertically integrated 100% grass fed beef operation – from the pasture to processing to retail stores (Burgundy’s Local Grass Fed Meat Market) in Dallas and Ft. Worth. Burgundy Pasture Beef ages, cuts, and packages at its Grandview retail store/butcher market. Wendy helps manage this process and also networks with other like-minded producers to offer a broad selection of pasture-raised and grass-fed pork, chicken, and lamb. Wendy has helped Burgundy Pasture Beef evolve as a “grass roots” business for consumers demanding more wholesome meats and knowledge about the foods they’re eating.



MARIE TEDEI is owner/operator of an urban farm in Balch Springs, east of Dallas. After a corporate career, Marie turned to self-employment as an organic horticulturist. When an organic gardening conference inspired her to begin growing food, she turned her 14-acre horse boarding facility into a farm with about 30 hens, an Icelandic ewe, livestock dogs, and barn cats. Marie feeds her CSA customers with about 2 acres in seasonal production. She also uses the farm for community outreach and educational programs. Marie serves on her city council, a position through which she hopes to bring a focus on environmental and preservation issues to local ordinance-making.



TIM TRAISTER recently joined rePlant Capital, a financial services firm where he leads a team to provide loans to large farms seeking to transition to regenerative practices. He has 20 years of progressive lending, credit, and business development experience. Most recently, he spent 7 years in the Farm Credit system, managing a \$150 million portfolio focused on land financing, small producers, and niche farm loans. Tim has also worked in the real estate industry in commercial transactions and is a licensed real estate broker. He lives in Austin and is a graduate of Texas A&M. In his free time, Tim manages wildlife and range restoration projects on his family ranch.



DR. STEPHAN VAN VLIET is a nutrition scientist and metabolomics expert in the Stedman Nutrition and Metabolism Center at Duke University School of Medicine. Dr. van Vliet’s research is performed at the nexus of agricultural and human health. He routinely collaborates with farmers, ecologists, and agricultural scientists to study critical linkages between agricultural production methods, the nutrient density of food, and human health. His work has been published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, the *Journal of Nutrition*, and the *Journal of Physiology*.



ALICE VARON is Executive Director of Certified Naturally Grown which offers peer-review certification for farmers and beekeepers who produce food for their local communities without the use of synthetic chemicals and GMOs. In 2010 Alice helped launch CNG’s apiary certification program to support and encourage natural beekeeping. More recently she worked with experts to develop CNG certification programs for aquaponics and mushroom producers. She is an active member of IFOAM-Organics International, serving as the North American representative on its PGS Committee, a group formed to support the development of grassroots certification programs that are built on trust, social networks, and knowledge exchange.



ÁNGELA VELA, of Laredo, is of Mexica and Coahuiltecan descent, identifying closely with her grandmother’s community in Las Minas, Texas. Ángela is completing her master’s in clinical social work at the University of Texas at Austin and has experience working with Indigenous youth, older adults, LGBTQ+ youth, and college students at the clinical level. Ángela is a culinary arts and food justice educator with the Indigenous Cultures Institute of San Marcos where she develops summer programming for Native youth and collaborates during the annual summer camp to get youth thinking about ancestral foods ways and Indigenous Texas history, knowledge, and tradition.



BERTHA VENEGAS is State Outreach Specialist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas, where she manages outreach operations and coordinates with organizations that work with historically underserved farmers and ranchers, providing program information for the planning and application of conservation work. Beginning her career as a soil conservationist, Bertha’s 33 years with the U.S. government include assisting rural communities in central and south Texas, providing leadership in resource management and sustainability to local, state and federal entities, community-based organizations, nonprofits, and individuals.



IVY WALLS is a budding farmer and community entrepreneur from Houston. In 2015, Ivy launched Shop the Ivy Files, selling apparel that praises the essence of black and brown communities. She is the creator of social networks such as Undisputed Excellence, Jeeping While Black, and now Ivy Leaf Farms, a community farm in Houston that provides opportunities to grow and to access healthy and sustainable foods. Ivy graduated from Prairie View A&M University, then worked as an infection preventionist. She has worked closely with COVID-19 patients, which highlighted the need for healthy foods easily accessed within local communities.



TINA and ORION WELDON are co-founders and owners of TerraPurezza, a regenerative agriculture institute and farm in Spicewood, Texas. Tina has a background in nutrition and public health, with a bachelor’s in dietetics from Rutgers University. Orion was working on his PhD in conservation ecology, researching endangered species’ habitat requirements, when they met in 2014. Through their studies, they realized agriculture is a core contributor to challenges in their respective fields. They decided to start TerraPurezza in 2015 as a commitment to sustainability. TerraPurezza operates on over 150 acres as the first model of industrial regenerative agriculture in the nation.



KEVIN WHEELER is a graduate of Texas State University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in agriculture with a Major in Agriculture Business & Management concentrating in Soil Science. He is now the Head Farmer and manages a 17,000 sq ft Aquaponics Greenhouse at Pro-Vision McNair Urban Farm in the Sunnyside community in his hometown of Houston, Texas, where they grow Living Lettuce and raise Tilapia. He lives in Dickinson, Texas, (just outside of Houston) with his wife Christine where they both have a passion for food, whether that be growing it, cooking it, or sharing it with others.



GRANT WINKELMANN began his floriculture career by sprinkling zinnia seeds in his junior high backyard garden. Unfortunately, the zinnias shaded out the vegetables he was actually trying to grow, and thus began a 10-year foray into vegetable production. Stints on different vegetable growing operations imparted basic principles of crop production. After graduating with a degree in Agricultural Economics from Texas A&M, Grant returned to his floriculture roots by taking a position as farm manager at Arnosky Family Farms in Blanco, Texas, getting a crash course in producing high quality cut flowers at scale in the harsh climate of central Texas. In 2019, Grant and his wife Carrington established Winkelmann Flowers to produce specialty cut flowers for wholesale.



MASON ZEPEDA, a graduate of Texas State University’s Healthcare Administration program, began his career working in Supply Chain Administration as a Capital Buyer for a pediatric hospital, prior to transitioning into an outside sales role. Mason was an acute care medical sales consultant before entering the packaging sales world where he was a consultant for companies looking to transport dangerous goods throughout the world. In this position, Mason also sold temperature-controlled packaging which gave him great experience in cold chain technology before working for 5 years as an independent packaging consultant. Most recently, he was hired to run U.S. sales for a global data logger and monitoring solutions manufacturer, Onset Computer Corporation, where he is helping build a division specializing in cold chain storage and transportation monitoring.

MODERATORS

We thank the following people for offering their time and expertise to moderate our panels:

KELLY & WES ADAMS: Owners of Adams Blackland Prairie Farm in northeast Texas, Wes and Kelly both serve on the Council for Healthy Food Systems' Board of Directors. They grow cover crop and forage seeds and raise grass-fed beef. Their farm has been certified organic since 2009.

CONNIE HALE: Connie and her husband, Mike, raised their eight children while producing and processing pastured poultry at Windy Meadows Family Farm, an hour east of Dallas. She serves on the Board of FARFA.

TOM HENSLEE: Tom is a farmer and lawyer living near Asheboro, N.C. The farm has a busy BnB on the property and raises grassfed beef. He is President of the Board of FARFA and a member of the Piedmont Triad Regional Food Council.

MARK HUTCHINS: Elected last year as a County Commissioner, Mark is on FARFA's Board of Directors and owns and operates Rehoboth Ranch in Greenville, Texas, along with his wife, Hillary. Together they raise grass-fed, non-GMO beef, lamb, pork, chicken, turkey, and goats.

DR. SHEYENNE KRYSHER: Having recently joined the ranks of beginning farmer, Sheyenne has a lengthy background in agricultural education at the high school and collegiate level. She now assists TXST students in gaining career skills and job opportunities.

DR. XIANGPING LIU: As Assistant Professor of Agriculture Economics at Texas State University's Department of Agricultural Sciences, her primary research interest is in natural resource economics and is particularly interested in the economics of carbon sequestration and soil health.

ROBERT MAGGIANI: Robert is a Sustainable Agriculture Specialist with NCAT. He was a commercial vegetable farmer in the '70s and '80s and the first marketing specialist assigned to Texas Department of Agriculture's efforts to establish an organic certification program.

CASEY McAULIFFE: Casey is Executive Director of Galveston's Own Farmers Market and with her family runs Moon Dog Farms, a Certified Naturally Grown vegetable & flower farm. She is a City Councilwoman in the City of La Marque and is on the Board of CHFS.

DANNY NUCKOLS: Danny served as the Council for Healthy Food Systems' first Board President, stepping down from that position early this year. He is an Associate Professor of Economics at Austin College.

DR. OMANA-SUDHAKARAN: Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at Texas State University's Department of Agricultural Sciences. His primary research interest is in food safety economics, consumer behavior, aquaponic-hydroponic production, and small farmers.

DR. NICOLE WAGNER: Assistant Professor of Crops and Soil Science at Texas State University's Department of Agricultural Sciences. She co-founded SPI with the initial 2015 stakeholder meeting and the 2017 SPI Conference. Her primary research interest is in regenerative practices for small farmers and compost science.

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CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS

Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA)

FARFA supports independent family farmers and protects a healthy and productive food supply for American consumers. We promote common-sense policies for local, diversified agricultural systems.



FARFA successfully led the fight to stop the National Animal Identification System, a plan to electronically tag and track all livestock animals. The program was designed for factory farms and would have been disastrous for pasture-based livestock producers had it not been defeated. FARFA also led the fight to include a small-producer exemption to the expensive and burdensome requirements of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act. In both campaigns, FARFA organized large national coalitions of organizations and individuals who spanned the political spectrum.

At the state level, FARFA has passed bills to establish and expand the cottage food law, require health departments to respond to questions from producers, reduce permit fees, make sampling at farmers' markets easier, and more. FARFA is the recognized voice for sustainable agriculture and local foods in the Texas Legislature.

Council for Healthy Food Systems (CHFS)

CHFS's mission is to promote diversified local and regional foods systems that are healthy, safe, economically sound, and environmentally sustainable. We seek to enhance public understanding of how health, safety, economics, and the environment are impacted both by different farming methods and the evolving dynamics of food consumption.



CHFS serves both farmers and consumers. Through its website, CHFS provides information for consumers about their food, from its effect on their health to its impact on the world around them. We want consumers to understand how they can spend their dollars and their time to change the system. CHFS has taught workshops throughout the state to help farmers and local food producers understand the laws that impact their food business and identify opportunities for diversifying. CHFS is currently developing an educational program for consumers on soil health.

FARFA & CHFS Staff: Judith McGeary, Executive Director
Teresa Davenport, Communications & Outreach Director
Molly Pantalone, Administrative Assistant

Are you a member of FARFA?

Our advocacy efforts require travel, phone calls, production of materials, and everyday expenses such as database maintenance and subscription fees. **Your membership or donation ensures that we have funds available when issues need immediate attention.**

Look for a membership application form in your registration packet, as well as opportunities to make **tax-deductible donations to the Council for Healthy Food Systems**, our research- and education-focused sister organization.

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS (cont'd.)

The Small Producers Initiative (SPI)

The Mission of The Small Producers Initiative (SPI) is to provide extension services, research, and outreach to small and mid-sized producers of agricultural products. This includes animal production, fruit, vegetables, row crops, and more. SPI evolved over the course of several years, through discussions with a growing number of individuals and stakeholder organizations regarding the need for increased opportunities and development of small and mid-sized producers.



USDA defines a “small farm” as any farm business grossing \$350,000 or less annually, with mid-sized farms earning about twice that. **In Texas, 89% of farmers gross \$50,000 or less on their farm or ranch operation.** While our focus is small and mid-sized producers, we’re interested in providing outreach, training and extension for farms and ranches of any size, any production method, any organizational structure, and so on. We’re focused in Texas, and we’re especially interested in young, beginning, minority, and veteran farmers and ranchers.

After a few years and many conversations, the Small Producer Stakeholder Meeting was held in August 2015 to gather input on the needs of small producers. The meeting led to a deeper realization that needs of small and mid-sized producers are largely overlooked, and stakeholders generated ideas for training opportunities, topics, and speakers, as well as a funding strategy. We hosted our first conference in August 2017, where we conducted a **Needs Assessment** of 70 small producers (the majority of conference attendees). Since 2019 we have partnered with FARFA and CHFS to create a larger and more inclusive conference. Some of our major conference topics were identified by producers as challenges are:

1. **Access to capital**
2. **Aversion to acquiring debt to finance operation**
3. **Financing**
4. **Organic certification requirements**
5. **Access to equipment and land**

We’re continuing to research and analyze small producers’ needs by reaching a larger, statewide audience. Texas has the greatest number of Hispanic, African-American, and beginning farmers, and the second largest veteran farmer population. Texas has 464,180 farms grossing \$10,000 or less annually and 47,286 farms grossing \$50,000 or less annually. Combined, these small farms make up 89% of the Texas farmer and rancher community and generate \$1.5 billion in sales annually.

Texas is a growing state, with Central Texas (between Austin and San Antonio) being one of the fastest growing regions in the nation and containing three (almost four) of the fastest growing cities in the United States. This ongoing growth offers small producers new markets with consumers who have a rising interest in “local,” “organic,” and “sustainable” food options.

Texas State University is nestled in the midst of this growth and provides an excellent location for SPI to aid producers in accessing these growing markets. SPI exists to clarify the needs of small producers thorough academic research, and to provide sought-after training in financial management, marketing, food safety, certification programs, soil health, crop production, pest management, and much more. SPI will meet the needs of small producers through webinars, in-person workshops, and an annual conference.

The Small Producers Initiative will continue to provide support and resources for technological advancements, production techniques and opportunity for success. We continue to seek funding to become The Small Producers Institute at Texas State University.

SPI is directed by Dr. Ken Mix and Katie Tritsch (SPI grant coordinator), and most importantly, guided by our Advisory Team.

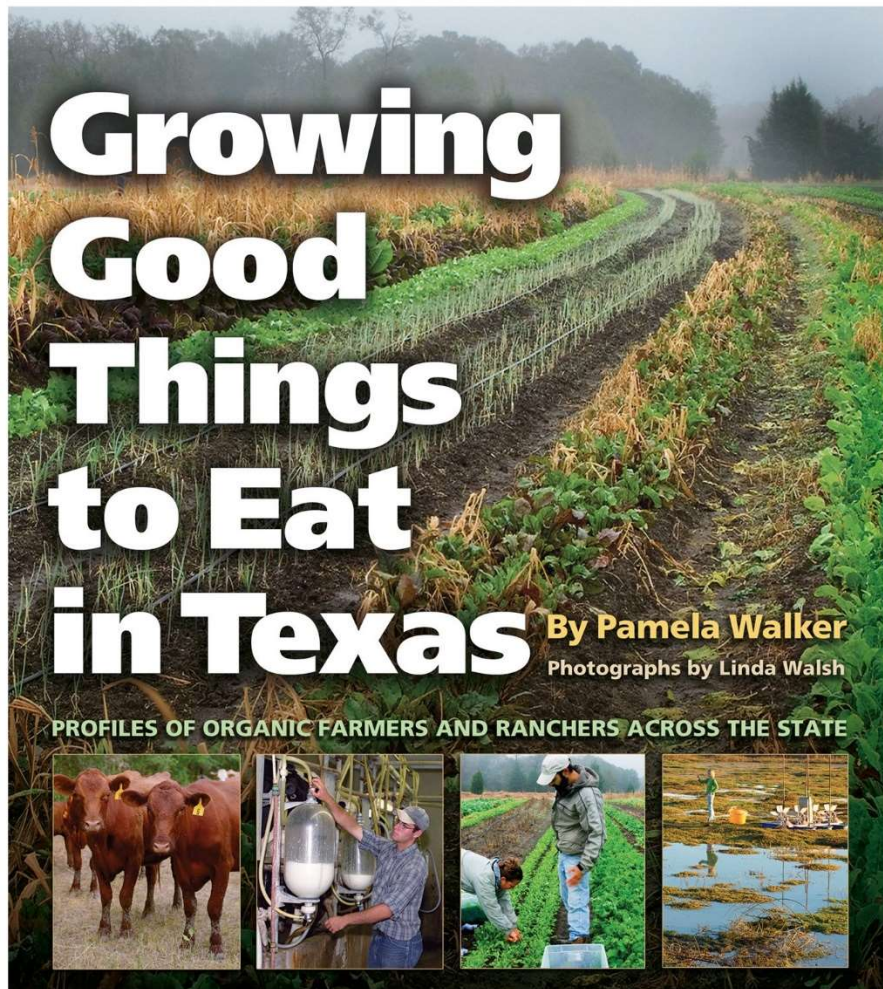
USDA



United States Department of Agriculture

The 2021 ***“Southern Family Farmers and Food Systems Conference”*** is partially supported by USDA grants to The Small Producers Initiative: USDA-NIFA Non Land-Grant Capacity Building grant #2018-70001-28119 entitled Texas State Supporting Small Producers (TSSSP) and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement grants #A0182501X443G009 and #AO202501X443G003 entitled Integrating the Small Producer Initiative with Research and Extension (InSPIRE) and Small Producer Initiatives Agriculture Mentoring Program (SPI-AMP).

These grants provided funds to bring in the following speakers: Becky Hume, Andy Pressman, Diana Padilla, Guy Ames, Betsy Ross, Brent Heironimus, Cody Brown, Colin Mitchell, Dan Rohrer, Frankie Bayne, Kevin Wheeler, Michelle Akindiya, Ray Archuleta, Don Davis, Alex Hitt, Lisa Seger, Chaz Daughtry, Evan Driscoll, Morgan Ehmling, Margaret Smith, Lyla June Johnston, Will Harris, Steven Lukefahr, Criag Miller, Wendy Taggart, Heather Blewett, Peggy Sechrist, Tina & Orion Weldon, Laurie Celella, Travis Krause, Kara Kroeger, Doug Havemann, Stephan van Vliet, Jim Goodman, Gretchen O'Neil, Kat Neilson, Jay Bragg, Elise Haschke, Susie Marshall, E. Ray Gard, Phil Ross, Stephen Carpenter, Lindsey Shute, Billy Mitchell, Carolina Mueller, Eileen Coleman, Dan Baze, Glen Miracle, Liz Jeffers, Lorig Hawkins, Jeff Bednar, Scott Marlow, Matthew Kutugata, Pedro Schambon, Dr. Gail Myers, Anita Ross, Mason Zapata.



Growing Good Things to Eat in Texas

By Pamela Walker
Photographs by Linda Walsh

PROFILES OF ORGANIC FARMERS AND RANCHERS ACROSS THE STATE

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