Blake Angelo is Denver's first Manager of Food Systems Development. Located in the Office of Economic Development, Blake is responsible for supporting food-related business development efforts across the city with a particular focus in supporting a balanced approach to healthy food access, mid-skill food job creation, and the expansion of local food businesses in target neighborhoods. Blake is a Denver-native with track record of supporting over 300 food and farm-related businesses. He understands that strong food systems require strong food businesses and strong multidisciplinary partners. Prior to this position, Blake worked as a business and organizational development consultant, was the director for the Beanstalk Foundation, and served as the first specialist in Urban Agriculture for Colorado State University Extension in Denver and Jefferson counties. He has a master's degree in Public Health and a bachelor's degree in Evolutionary and Ecological Biology.

Dr. Ramón Borges-Méndez, PhD was born in Puerto Rico. He holds an MCP and PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from MIT. Currently, Prof. Borges-Méndez is an associate professor and coordinator of the graduate program in Community Development and Planning at Clark University (Worcester, Massachusetts). He has written about workforce development, environmental justice, labor markets, regional planning, and immigration, which have been published in Local Environment, by Upjohn Institute Press, CENTRO Journal, and other edited volumes.

Kevin Bottke grew up on a Midwest crop and livestock family farming operation. He enjoys his great family, the outdoors, nature, animals, people and business. Kevin has received numerous National Business and Leadership Awards. He promotes and supports positive development in people and business, especially young folks in valued programs including 4-H, FFA and church youth programs. Kevin is a driving force in agriculture economic development and the bright future for all who choose to participate, especially from ideas to start-up to small and medium sized operations. Kevin owns "Pork Texas" a value-add sustainable, outdoor pasture-based swine production system. He was educated at the University of Minnesota, Southern School of Agriculture along with many years of hands on animal agriculture production and marketing experience.
**Professor Mary Ellen Camire** has been a faculty member at the University of Maine since 1989. She earned her A.B. in biology at Harvard University in 1979, then obtained a M.S. in nutrition in 1982 from the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. Her dissertation research at Texas Woman's University focused on the development of novel extruded snacks containing glandless cottonseed protein and fiber. She directs the Sensory Evaluation Center at the University of Maine and works with many crops including seaweed, berries, potatoes, grains and various aquaculture products. As President of the grain science community AACC International in 2008-2009, she refocused science efforts on whole grains and their constituents. On September 1, 2014, she became the 75th President of the Institute of Food Technologists, and she has held numerous positions within that organization. Mary Ellen is a member of the American Society for Nutrition, the Obesity Society, CAST, the American Chemical Society and several sensory evaluation organizations. She serves on the Grain for Health Foundation Scientific Advisory Committee. In 2006, she received the Babcock-Hart Award from the Institute of Food Technologists and the International Life Sciences Institute North America, and in 2007 became an IPT Fellow. She was the 2008 recipient of the College of Natural Sciences, Forestry and Agriculture Outstanding Researcher Award and the University of Maine Presidential Research and Creative Achievement Award. This year she received the American Society for Nutrition's General Mills Bell Institute of Health and Nutrition Innovation Award for her whole grain research.

**Judith A. Canales**, State Executive Director, USDA – Farm Service Agency, College Station, Texas.

On June 3, 2013, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the appointment of Judith Canales as State Executive Director for the Texas Farm Service Agency (FSA).

As Executive Director for the Texas FSA, Canales oversees all aspects of federal farm program delivery for an agency that employs nearly 1400 people (state and county office staff and elected county committee members) and on average, issues more than $1 billion annually in commodity, conservation, disaster and credit benefits to farmers and ranchers across the state. Most recently, Canales served as Acting Deputy Under Secretary for USDA Rural Development. In 2009, President Barack Obama appointed Canales as Administrator for the Rural Business-Cooperative Service at USDA Rural Development. Previously, Ms. Canales served as Executive Director of the Maverick County Development Corporation in Eagle Pass, Texas, and served for seven years as an adjunct faculty member for Southwest Texas Junior College. In 1996, Former President Bill Clinton appointed Canales as Deputy State Director for Texas Rural Development. She worked as the Acting Associate Administrator for Rural Business and Cooperative Service in Washington, D.C. She served as the Legislative Representative for the Department of Housing and Urban Development. She also served as the Executive Director of the International Hispanic Network, a national membership organization of Hispanic city managers, which promotes professional excellence among Hispanic executives and public managers in local government. She served as the Assistant City Manager for the City of Eagle Pass. Canales received a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government. She received a Master of Arts degree in Urban Studies from Trinity University in San Antonio, a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Texas at Austin and an Associate of Arts degree from Southwest Texas Junior College. Canales is a native of Uvalde, Texas and maintains a residence in Eagle Pass, Texas.
Dr. Cindy Caron is Assistant Professor of International Development and Social Change at Clark University. A political and environmental sociologist, she holds a Ph.D. in Development Sociology from Cornell University and a Master degree from Yale University. Her research on land, agriculture, and natural resource management has two complementary foci: the first focuses on decentralization, state-society relationships, and governance; the second on gender relations, property rights, and equity. She has research experience in India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. Her latest research project is on food security in banana-producing communities in Uganda and Tanzania.

Dr. Alba Collart is an Assistant Professor and Extension Economist in the Department of Agricultural Economics at Mississippi State University. She conducts applied economic research in horticultural marketing, consumer behavior, experimental valuation, and applied microeconometrics. Current research includes consumer valuation of new and value-added food products, and experimental design. Additional research focuses on agricultural policy for specialty crop growers. She holds a Ph.D. and M.S. from Texas A&M University and a B.S. from the Pan-American School of Agriculture, Zamorano.

Dr. Neilson C. Conklin is President of Farm Foundation. Prior to joining Farm Foundation in January 2008, Dr. Conklin was director of the Market and Trade Economics Division of USDA’s Economic Research Service. Prior to his service at USDA, Dr. Conklin was chief economist at the Farm Credit Council. Between 1984 and 1988, Conklin worked at the USDA Economic Research Service in various capacities including fruit and vegetable outlook and as deputy director of the Agriculture and Trade Analysis Division. He also served as chief of the Agriculture Branch at the Office of Management and Budget and on the faculties of Colorado State University, the University of Arizona and Arizona State University. Raised on Vermont dairy farm, Conklin served in the U.S. Navy from 1968 to 1972. He received a Ph.D. in agricultural and applied economics from the University of Minnesota. He also holds an M.S. degree in agricultural economics from the University of Wyoming and a B.A. in history from Castleton State College in Vermont.

Dr. Kynda Curtis is a Professor in the Department of Applied Economics at Utah State University. Prior to obtaining her Ph.D. she served as a corporate trainer for the Frank Russell Company in Tacoma, WA where she developed financial educational curricula and delivered educational workshops. Over the last 12 years Dr. Curtis has led Extension programming in agriculture and food marketing at Utah State University and the University of Nevada, Reno. Kynda’s research interests include international agriculture/food marketing, consumer economics and industrial organization. In her Extension appointment she works with agricultural producers to assist them in developing new markets for their products and assessing the feasibility of new food and agricultural products and value-added processes. Kynda has received Extension program awards from the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association and the Western Agricultural Economics Association.

Dr. Robert Donovan has taught more than forty thousand students and trained thousands of employees in a variety of academic, corporate, and entrepreneur capacities. He has published or presented more than a hundred paper/presentations in chemistry, physics, material science, microbiology, and medical diagnostics that include proprietary technology and patents. He is currently working in advanced food production
systems with complex relationships to energy, transportation, distribution, and environmental impact using an innovative mathematical matrix relationship with an emphasis on safety.

**Dr. Sally Duncan,** Oregon State University: "I began my career with a history major after growing up on an Australian sheep and cattle ranch. I added journalism and broadcasting through a Masters degree, then worked part-time while child-raising. My subsequent PhD in environmental sciences led quite naturally into policy analysis. Probably because of that highly applied agricultural childhood, I am most interested in bridging the gap between academic pursuits and applied problems. To this end, I choose not to work on projects that are not transdisciplinary, solution-focused, and collaborative."

**Dr. Rebekka Dudensing** is an Assistant Professor and Extension Economist for Community Economic Development with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. She helps communities evaluate opportunities for local and regional economic development and provides economic and fiscal impacts analysis for industries, tourism events, and natural disasters. She also studies the roles of social characteristics and industrial structure in community development.

**Dr. Peter Feather** serves as the Agricultural Labor Affairs Coordinator in the Office of the Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). He is responsible for analyzing the Department’s various policies and activities that relate to agricultural labor, and he represents the USDA on immigration issues. Dr. Feather has held this position since June, 2009. Prior to that, he held positions as the Fuel Economy Division Chief at the Department of Transportation, Senior Economist at the President's Council of Economic Advisers and Economist at the USDA Economic Research Service. Dr. Feather received his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Minnesota in 1992. He also holds BS and MS degrees in agricultural economics from the University of Missouri.

**Dallas Flick** is an Honors Student at The University of Texas at Tyler and a member of the nationally recognized UT Tyler Debate Team. As a double-major in Speech Communication and Political Science, Dallas also serves as a volunteer Debate Coach for Aubrey High School.

**Anil Giri,** PhD Candidate, Department of Ag. Econ, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

**Barbara Goode** works for Engineering Extension at Kansas State University where she mainly works on sustainability-type projects. Barb has been working in the environmental field for more than 30 years. She began her career in environmental consulting and has worked the last 15 years in outreach programs at Kansas State University. She has a B.S. degree in geological engineering from Missouri University of Science & Technology and is a licensed professional engineer and geologist. Barb is currently managing one USDA-funded and two EPA-funded projects in the City of Salina, Kansas where she works and resides.
Adam Harwood is the Owner and Founder of LilyPad Farm, Global Aquaponics, and Apex Aquaponics.

Dr. Alvin Huang and Laura Schulman: Both Alvin Huang and Laura Schulman are trained food scientists, professional members of the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT). Laura also received a degree in Marketing from the University of Southern California (USC). They are on staff at the College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources (CTAHR) at the University of Hawaii, Manoa campus which is located in Honolulu. Laura and Alvin co-teach a food product development course (Experimental Foods) for the food nutrition majors. Alvin also regularly teaches Food Chemistry and Advanced Food Science, a graduate course. They were coordinators for the “Buy Local It Matters” campaign in year 2014 for the state of Hawaii, as well as a USDA funded marketing project to promote exporting Hawaii produce to the west coast since 2012. Currently their main focus is on value-added product development for Hawaii’s agriculture geared toward the gluten-free market segment. One of the unique ingredients in their formulations is breadfruit flour being manufactured in Samoa and Hawaii.

Dr. David W. Hughes is a Professor and Greever Endowed Chair in Agribusiness Development in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics starting in August 2014. The objective of the Greever Chair is to establish a nationally recognized program that enhances agribusiness development in Tennessee and the Nation. He has held previous faculty positions at Louisiana State University, University of West Virginia, and (most recently) Clemson University. Past and current areas of outreach and research include agribusiness-based economic development with an emphasis on developing local food systems, rural entrepreneurship with an emphasis on agribusiness, and economic impact analysis primarily for agribusiness-based activities. He has vast experience in engaging undergraduate and graduate students in community-based extension and other outreach efforts at http://economics.ag.utk.edu/davidhughes.html

Dr. Becca Jablonski is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at Colorado State University. She has worked across most aspects of the food system, most recently serving as a Fellow with the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture, a Visiting Scholar with the USDA’s Economic Research Service, an Agricultural Economic Development Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension, and as part of a small team commissioned by the USDA’s Agricultural Marketing Services to build a methodological framework to evaluate the economic impacts of food hubs (local food aggregation and distribution businesses). Becca’s research and extension efforts focus on evaluating rural/regional economic development initiatives and policies, with an emphasis on identifying strategies to improve agribusiness performance and enhance regional food systems. She is particularly interested in assessing the impacts of alternative food system initiatives and strengthened rural-urban linkages to farmers, supply chain participants, and rural economies. Becca holds a PhD and B.A. from Cornell University and an MS from the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies.

Brenton H. Johnson has a degree in agricultural engineering from Auburn University. While at Auburn, he worked extensively in the University Organic Gardens, the Horticulture Department Greenhouses, and the University Experiment Farms. Additionally, he worked for 10 years for the Bureau of Reclamation managing the agency’s water conservation program for the Wyoming/Nebraska and Texas/Oklahoma offices. This work experience, coupled with his engineering degree, has given him a strong background in water management, irrigation design, and business management, all of which are vital to a vegetable growing operation.
Brenton has grown JBG from a small backyard garden to a successful diversified business operation in just a few years. Johnson's Backyard Garden was started by Brenton H. Johnson in 2006.

**J. Richard “Dick” Johnson**, Assistant Director – Technology, Texas State Small Business Development Center. Dick owned and operated a software development company for 15 years specializing in manufacturing execution systems. He brought the company from start up to installations in 28 states and 7 foreign countries. Prior to that, Dick spent over 20 years in the technology industry in a number of middle and senior management roles. Dick has a BS-Marketing degree from Virginia Tech. Dick also leads the Technology Commercialization Program called-Spectrum- and has obtained his certification in Technology Commercialization from University of Huston. As a Certified Business Advisor VI with Texas State University Small Business Development Center, Dick works with existing small business to help them obtain funding, business planning, marketing, financial analysis and government contracting. He has been able to leverage his experience as a business owner to assist entrepreneurs to establish and grow their businesses.

**Erin Kimbrough**: In 2013, Mrs. Erin Kimbrough earned her B.S. degree in agriculture science from Texas A&M University. Her degree focus was on agriculture education. She completed her student teaching at College Station Independent School District, College Station, TX.

Mrs. Kimbrough’s work with Texas AgrAbility began in 2012. She has worked with serving AgrAbility client’s by facilitating cooperation with local FFA chapters. She has also presented the AgrAbility program to agriculture producers around the state. Erin has coordinated and presented our agriculture workshops for military veterans throughout Texas. Mrs. Kimbrough works closely with agriculture agencies to meet the needs of our clients. Her knowledge in agriculture production, livestock management, risk management, disability issues, and funding sources available for agriculture producers provides unique insight into the day-to-day operations of agriculture enterprises. She values working on the AgrAbility team because she says that there is no greater service she can provide than to keep or return farmers/ranchers to a life they love.

**Dr. Kathleen Liang** is a Professor at University of Vermont. Dr. Liang has designed, developed, and implemented innovative, award-winning courses in entrepreneurship taught within CDAE since 1998. Her research, teaching, and outreach focus on many perspectives of entrepreneurship and its interactions with people, communities, and organizations. Her learning-in-the-now approach to teaching and dynamic interactions with students push them from the classroom into real life applications of entrepreneurship as actual entrepreneurs. Her projects of multifunctional agriculture and regional food networks also expand the boundaries of understanding innovative and entrepreneurial agricultural operations and management.

**Ruoxi Lu** is a research assistant at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and a PhD candidate at Texas A&M's Department of Agricultural Economics. He is particularly interested in regional and community development subjects. Previously, he has conducted research on the economic resilience of Texas coastal communities to the impact of Hurricane Ike. Prior to enrolling at Texas A&M, he studied at the George Washington University and worked for National Community Reinvestment Coalition (NCRC) as a research intern.
Edwin Marty is currently the Food Policy Manager for the City of Austin’s Office of Sustainability. Edwin earned a BA in Anthropology from the University of Oregon and completed an “Apprenticeship in Agroecology” from the University of California, Santa Cruz. He went on to work on sustainable farming projects around the world, including Mexico, Mongolia, Australia, and Chile. Edwin worked for Southern Living Magazine as a garden writer and was the founder and director of a non-profit called Jones Valley Teaching Farm located in Birmingham, Alabama. He was also the Director of the non-profit urban farm in Montgomery called EAT South before leaving to join the City of Austin. Edwin has consulted on numerous urban farm projects around the country, helped establish the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, and co-authored a book about urban farming in America called *Breaking Through Concrete*, published by the University of California Press.

Dr. Joe Masabni received his B.S. in General Horticulture from Michigan State University in 1985. He received his M.S. in Pomology in 1989 and his Ph.D. in Vegetable Production in 1998 from Michigan State University. Dr. Masabni moved to Texas A&M University in August 2008 as the Extension vegetable specialist, after serving six years as the Extension fruit and vegetable specialist at University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton, KY. Dr. Masabni serves as the Extension Vegetable Specialist with statewide responsibility.

Dr. Masabni’s area of research is vegetable crop production and Extension education. As vegetable extension specialist, Dr. Masabni develops extension programs and provides educational opportunities to improve the profitability of the vegetable industry in Texas. The Extension program addresses the continued education of Extension agents and producers through workshops, training sessions, and print or electronic publications.

Sid Miller, Texas Agriculture Commissioner, is serving as the 12th Texas Commissioner of Agriculture, with his first term beginning in January 2015. Commissioner Miller brings a wealth of knowledge to the Texas Department of Agriculture. He is recognized as one of the state’s most dynamic and effective conservative leaders, as well as one of the state’s staunchest defenders of constitutional freedoms. During his six terms as a member of the Texas House of Representatives, Commissioner Miller brought his real world agricultural experience to the table. He’s your everyday man who’s made a difference in his community and for the Lone Star State by working as a small businessman, community leader, school teacher, agriculturist and former school board member. In every aspect of his work, Commissioner Miller has proven his convictions in being pro-business and pro-job creation. As the leader of the Texas Department of Agriculture, Commissioner Miller is working to safeguard water resources to ensure access for farmers and ranchers, as well as fighting to secure our nation’s porous border with Mexico. A true Texan through-and-through, Commissioner Miller is focused on promoting the best Texas-grown and Texas-made products through the GO TEXAN program. Additionally, Commissioner Miller will push for policies to continue growing the Texas economy and creating jobs. Commissioner Miller was born in De Leon, Texas, and is an avid rodeo and horseshow participant who holds nine World Championships. He is a graduate of Tarleton State University in Stephenville, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Agriculture Education. Commissioner Miller maintains close ties to Stephenville, where he owns and operates a nursery business. Commissioner Miller and his wife, Debra, have been married for 36 years. The Millers have two sons and two grandchildren.
**Dr. John Park** is a state Extension Specialist for cooperative business and the Roy B. Davis Professor of Agricultural Cooperation for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at Texas A&M University. Dr. Park is an educator with more than 20 years experience supporting the management and marketing decisions of agricultural and food businesses. He is a valued provider of executive training and educational programming on topics of food marketing, retailing, distribution, and leadership. Dr. Park is a longstanding member of the Food Distribution Research Society, of which he is a past president. He is the recipient of numerous awards for research, teaching, and leadership. Dr. Park resides with his wife and children in College Station, TX.

**Dr. Bryon Parman** is originally from a 7,500 acre family corn and cattle farm in Southwestern Nebraska consisting of a 500 head cow/calf operation and 3,500 acres of corn. He spent 6 years in the Navy, then went on to do a B.A. and M.S. in Nebraska, and finally a Ph.D. at Kansas State University in agricultural economics. His specialty areas include agricultural finance and real estate, production agriculture farm management, and econometrics. He is currently an Assistant Professor at Mississippi State University, Department of Agricultural Economics, working extensively with lenders and producers across the state. His recent work involves looking at issues including the run up in large scale production costs and potential changes in farm asset values as well as potential land bubbles created by high agricultural commodity prices.

**Dr. Carlisle Pemberton** recently retired as Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of the West Indies. He holds a BSc (Agriculture), MSc (Agricultural Economics) and MSc (Statistics with Distinction) all from UWI and a PhD (Agricultural Economics) from the University of Manitoba. He has published over 30 refereed articles and chapters in books and monographs and now serves on the Editorial Boards of Tropical Agriculture and the Journal of Agribusiness in Developing and Emerging Economies. Professor Pemberton’s research has spanned agricultural production and marketing, particularly with respect to the cocoa industry, but he has also done research in the area of non-market valuation especially with respect to the valuation of wetlands. Aside from his teaching and research, Professor Pemberton has served a number of professional societies. Currently he is the President of the Caribbean Agro-Economic Society (CAES) and is a former Chair of the Committee on the Opportunities and Status of Blacks in Agricultural Economics (COSBAE) and a Member of the Quality of Communication Awards Committee of the Agricultural and Applied Economics Association. He is also the Trinidad and Tobago representative on the International Association of Agricultural Economists. In the wider areas of public service, he has served as the Chairman of the Cocoa and Coffee Industry Board of Trinidad and Tobago (CCIB) and is currently a consultant with the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

**Dr. David Ringuette** is Co-Founder of GoFarm Hawaii, Professor of Horticulture for 30 years, past Chair of the Windward Oahu Soli and Water Conservation District, President of Serikaku Farm growing flowers and fruit, Former Peace Corps volunteer, Fulbright Award to Hungary, makes his own beer, wine, coffee, and vanilla.
Carlos Rubinstein was appointed chairman of the Texas Water Development Board by Governor Rick Perry on September 1, 2013. His term will expire February 1, 2017.

Carlos Rubinstein served as a commissioner of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) from 2009–2013. He is the Texas representative to the Western States Water Council, and the Border Governors’ Conference Sustainable Development worktable. Rubinstein is a former member of the Texas Environmental Flows Advisory Group, the Governmental Advisory Committee, which advises the EPA Administrator on environmental concerns regarding NAFTA, the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation; and the Commission for Environmental Cooperation and of the Good Neighbor Environmental Board, an independent federal advisory committee that assists the president and Congress on environmental infrastructure needs along the U.S. border with Mexico. He has also served as deputy executive director of TCEQ and as Rio Grande Watermaster. He is the past Texas representative to the Border Governors’ Conference Water worktable and a former city manager for the City of Brownsville. Rubinstein received a bachelor’s degree in biology from Pan American University.

Lic. Pedro Schambon Jr is Founder and President of My Father’s Farm; holds a degree in Accounting from Lindsey Hopkins School Florida, coursed Organic Agricultural Practices from Sena Institute Colombia, He has been Certified Organic producer since 2008 managed a 10 acres and 80 thousand square feet of Greenhouses. He has worked as a Consultant for Texas A&M for Overseas Training on Organic Practices in Guatemala for underprivileged farmers. He holds a certificate as an Organic Inspector license thru OIOA, as well as a Certificate for Good Agriculture Practices & Handling Practices thru USDA. He founded an Orphanage and sustainable farm in Colombia for homeless children. He works closely with the homeless ministry of the Methodist Church in San Antonio, He is on the Board of Directors for the Resolute Health and Wellness Center and his farm is an active agency of the correctional Guadalupe County and supports the local Food Councils and managed the Comal Public ISD High School Garden. MFF produce has been sold a Whole Foods, Central Market, Wheat ville supermarket, Grocer Supply, Greenling, Urban Acres and local restaurants, as well as a CSA program with the City of San Antonio, Baptist Hospital, and Metro Health department.

Pedro Schambon has traveled extensively to Israel, Greece, Haiti, Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Spain, Haiti, Ecuador, Canada, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica, St.Martin, USA & Colombia. His farm has been contracted to supply an extensive list of different varieties of Organic vegetables for the Resolute Health Hospital in New Braunfels were Organic produce is supply to their staff and patience’s.

Dr. Todd Schmit is an Associate Professor in the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University. He conducts research in agribusiness management and domestic agricultural economic development, with a focus on identifying strategies to improve agribusiness performance and consideration of agriculturally based inter-industry linkages to enhance the efficacy of policies targeted to rural agricultural development. Of particular interest is how alternative management and marketing practices by agribusiness decision-makers affect firm performance and how various firm, spatial, and market factors interact and influence industry growth. Current research is centered on the importance of inter-industry linkages and the effects of firm agglomeration, cluster strategies, and cooperative business ventures to the development and performance of local and regional food systems, with an emphasis on opportunities for small- and medium-scale producers and food and beverage manufacturers. Additional research is focused on farm management responses to environmental nutrient policies and consumer valuation of environmentally sustainable production practices. Dr. Schmit holds a PhD and M.S. from Cornell University and a B.S. from the University of Wisconsin-River Falls.
Tracy Shea is a business consultant with the West Texas A&M University Small Business Development Center. Tracy is a graduate of Miami University, an entrepreneur, a father, and an aquaponics hobbyist.

Dr. Alexis Solano is an Agricultural Economist at the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (USDA). She received a BA in Economics (2004) and an MS in Agricultural and Resource Economics (2008), both from the University of Delaware. She received her PhD in Food and Resource Economics from the University of Florida in 2012. The focus of her research has primarily been agricultural marketing, though recently her research has concentrated on rural producer survivability and the impact of grant awards and other sources of funding on that survivability.

Anastasia Thayer grew up in Vermont and received her undergraduate degree in Economics and Environmental Studies from Wellesley College. She is finishing a Master of Science degree in Resource and Applied Economics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Her interests include the economics of cooperative share agriculture, non-market valuation techniques, and economic development. Anastasia will be joining the PhD program housed within the Agricultural Economics Department at Texas A&M University this fall.

Dr. Dawn Thilmany McFadden graduated from Iowa State with a B.S. in Public Service and Administration in Agriculture, and from UC-Davis with a M.S. and Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics. She is a Professor of Agribusiness and Agribusiness Extension Economist with Colorado State University, and also serves as the Chair of the Colorado Governor's Food Systems Advisory Council. Dawn was the Interim Program leader for Organics with USDA-CSREES and a Farm Foundation Fellow for Rural Community Vitality. She currently Advises the USDA on Research, Extension and Education and serves on a National Rural Development Policy Board. Dawn's research and extension focuses on Sustainable Community Development, Specialty Crops and Food System Work teams. Her current work focuses on developing curriculum and short courses for beginning farmers in the Western region and supporting value-added agribusinesses throughout Colorado.

Daniel Torres, Director, Business & Cooperative Programs, Rural Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Daniel serves as the Business & Cooperative Programs Director of Rural Development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Texas. As Program Director of Business & Cooperative Programs, Daniel leads the agency’s efforts to increase access to capital and economic opportunity for business owners and other eligible entities in rural Texas. He is responsible for overseeing the rural business, cooperative programs, and renewable energy portfolio for USDA in Texas. Business & Cooperative programs foster growth in business development and support the development of cooperatives and renewable energy systems. Daniel has dedicated his professional career to working for agricultural and rural interests. During the past 29 years he has worked with USDA in various management capacities throughout south and central Texas. His experience spans across agriculture, mortgage and commercial lending. He also served five years as USDA Rural Development’s Rural Energy Coordinator. Torres holds a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from Texas A&I University.
**Dr. Justin Velten** is an Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of Texas at Tyler, earning his doctorate at Regent University. He has worked in sales, fund-raising, and has taught at university's for the past ten years. Dr. Velten has also carried on a tradition of agriculture as a fourth generation cattle producer.

**Dr. Clint Walker III** is a third generation professional beekeeper. Along with his wife, Janice, he operates a commercial beekeeping business that focuses on producing premium varietal honeys in Texas. Their company, Walker Honey Farm, also distributes honey to grocery stores, provides honey to food manufacturers, and operates a farm-to-you store with honey based products as well as mead (honey-wine) and grape wines made on site. Clint has a doctorate from Baylor University. He has served as President of the American Beekeeping Federation, Vice-Chair of the National Honey Board, and Chair and Founding Member of the National Honey Bee Advisory Board.

**Dr. Al Wagner** received his B.S. in Agriculture Education from Texas A&M University in 1969. He received his M.S. in Food Science in 1972 and his Ph.D. in Food Science in 1981 also from Texas A&M. Dr. Wagner served as a Food Technology Specialist, with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension from 1976 to 2010. From 1996 until 2008 he served as Associate Department Head for Extension Horticulture. He retired in August of 2010 and was hired back, half time, to continue his work as a “process authority” for processed fruit and vegetable products. Dr. Wagner continues to work with food processors in Texas, advising them on regulatory issues and food safety. He created a web-site for food entrepreneurs that has become very popular and useful to not only the new people, but established food processors. He conducts an annual training for persons producing acidified and low-acid foods. This is a certification school required by FDA and USDA. He also continues to serve as the Executive Director of the Texas Food Processors Assn.

**Dr. Brian Williams**, Mississippi State University, focuses on the primary areas of commodity marketing, farm management, production economics and agricultural policy. His research and extension efforts have focused on value-added activities in the cattle industry, grain marketing, and crop production practices. Since joining Mississippi State University in 2012, Brian has regularly worked with the media in providing information and updates about crop and livestock markets.

**Nicole Zammit, RD** is the Farm to School Lead for the USDA Southwest Regional Office. Based in Dallas, TX, Nicole provides training, technical assistance, and support to all F2S efforts across the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma. Nicole is a registered dietitian and received her Bachelor’s of Science in Dietetics from Michigan State University and completed her dietetic internship at Hurley Medical Center in Flint, MI. Prior to working with the USDA, she served as the Assistant Nutrition Services Director for Eugene School District 4J and as a Regional Dietitian for Sodexo School Services throughout the state of Oregon.
Dr. Jad R. Ziolkowska is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability at University of Oklahoma. She was a post-doctoral scholar at University of California at Berkeley and an EU Marie Curie Fellow in the 7th Framework Program. She was also a researcher at University of Texas at Austin. She received her PhD and habilitation, both in agricultural economics from Humboldt University of Berlin. Her research areas include policy evaluation and decision-making support in the field of natural resource, environmental, bioenergy, agricultural economics and sustainable resource management. Her current research focus is on optimizing water management systems, desalination, biofuels, geospatial and spatio-temporal analyses.

CONCURRENT SESSION INFORMATION

TUESDAY, MAY 19
Concurrent sessions 9:30am-12:00pm

Facilitators: Kathleen Liang, Professor, University of Vermont and Sally Duncan, Oregon State University

This workshop introduces a novel framework to identify, characterize, link, and evaluate the entrepreneurial potential and innovativeness of RFNs by integrating social, economic, and ecological factors. This framework serves as the underpinning theory for a newly funded project by USDA AFRI Foundational Program (2014-2017). It offers scholars an opportunity to study integrated3 and entrepreneurial/innovative4 concepts of RFNs and their contributions to resilience at both the enterprise level and the community level, which directly relates to identifying new and creative economic and social opportunities for rural communities. The overall hypothesis to support this framework is that more integrated3 and innovative4 RFNs will improve and enhance long-term opportunities for entrepreneurship and innovation for network participants at diverse production and consumption scales, which will contribute cumulatively to social, ecological, and economic resilience.

Several areas with respect to local/regional food systems have not been fully investigated, and this workshop will offer participants an opportunity to learn about the most recent development in RFNs, and to discuss several steps in designing and examining the RFNs:

1: Determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) within the RFN concept as they relate to improving entrepreneurial opportunities and innovations.
2: Characterize resilience of established RFNs with respect to entrepreneurial activities and innovativeness.
3: Analyze effects of existing policies and institutions on RFNs with respect to entrepreneurial opportunities and innovativeness.
4: Develop a framework for integrated analysis of RFNs sustainability at the regional scale.
5: Establish collaborative approaches to long-term RFN research, education, and outreach.

Session B : Farmers and Producers Sharing Successful Stories on Production- Lone Star Salon B

1. "Organic crop production planning" - Pedro Schambon Jr, Owner of My Father’s Farm, Certified Organic Vegetable & Fruit Grower

2. "From Production Agriculture to Consumer Driven Integration and Diversification: A Case Study in Bees, Honey, Wine and Eco-Tourism" - Clint Walker III, Owner of Walker Honey Farm, LLC

This presentation will detail the concepts and strategies employed by a commercial beekeeping operation to successfully diversify and vertically integrate a third generation production agriculture
business. Core philosophy, product development, strategic alliances, and opportunistic diversification will all be highlighted

3. "Making a difference with Pork" - Kevin Bottke, Owner of Pork Texas

Session C: Rural Development and Sustainability-Lone Star Salon C
1. "Economic Value of Water for Irrigation in the High Plains" - Jad R. Ziołkowski, Assistant Professor, University of Oklahoma, Dept. of Geography and Environmental Sustainability

Recent droughts considerably affected the Ogallala Aquifer supplying irrigation water for agricultural production in the US High Plains. With the current high water use and the projected increase in water demand for agricultural production, many farmers may face the dire necessity to switch from irrigated to non-irrigated production.

In this paper, the economic value of water for irrigation was estimated by means of farm-budget residual valuation in three High Plains States: Texas, Kansas and Nebraska, and for five crops: corn, cotton, sorghum, soybean, and wheat. Among the analyzed High Plains States the highest shadow price of water was found for wheat production in the Texas Northern High Plains ($865.99/af), while the lowest shadow price was found for corn in the Texas Southern High Plains ($5.13/af).

The analysis can generate discussion on economics of irrigation and how to deal with the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer. The study can also be helpful to stakeholders and policy makers to evaluate scenarios and tradeoffs between profitable crop production and conservation of water resources.

2. "Rural Energy for America“ - Daniel Torres, Business Programs Director of USDA’s Rural Development

Developing renewable energy presents an enormous economic opportunity for rural America. Information regarding financial assistance in the form of grants and guaranteed loans to agriculture producers and rural small businesses for purchasing and installing renewable energy systems and making energy efficiency improvements. These efforts help farmers, ranchers and other small business owners save money on their energy bills, support America’s clean energy economy, and cut carbon pollution. Doing so can help a business reduce energy use and costs while improving its bottom line.

3. "Achieving Sustainability in the Gulf of Mexico Shrimp Fishery" - Andrea Hance, Executive Director, Texas Shrimp Association

Session D: Food Security and Food Waste-Lone Star Salon D
1. "Food Recovery Challenge Feeds Wichita Hungry" - Barbara Goode, P.E., Kansas State University, Engineering Extension

Over a two-year period, the Pollution Prevention Institute (PPI) trained and mentored two engineering interns to work directly with Wichita Kroger Stores, identifying problematic processes that led to food waste and increased landfill waste. After documenting audit results and consulting with PPI mentors and Kroger’s managers, the interns made recommendations related to reducing the amount of food made each day. Excess food not reduced at the source was evaluated for donation opportunities, primarily through the Kansas Food Bank (KFB). The interns worked with the KFB identifying opportunities to increase donation pick-ups.

The overall results were impressive, with implemented outcomes from four local food stores included:

- 60 tons of food diverted, either through the KFB or to feed animals
- 1.3 million gallons of water conserved
- 91 metric tons of CO2 equivalents (greenhouse gases) prevented
- $70,000 in disposal fees, but these savings do not account for the added costs to use the Quest services

2. "Achieving Food Security: The United States and The United Republic of Tanzania" - Carlisle Pemberton, Professor of Agricultural Economics (retired), University of the West Indies, St Augustine
The United States has been among the leading nations in maintaining a high level of national food security. However, African nations have struggled with the problem of food insecurity. This problem, throughout the developing world, led to the United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1: ‘Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger’ with a Target 1.C: ‘Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.’ The United Republic of Tanzania is the second largest economy in the East African Community (EAC) and agriculture accounts for 24.5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), providing 85% of exports. Agriculture has been emphasized as the engine for growth in Tanzania and the country appears to be a bright spot in the developing world in achieving food security, even recently reporting surplus levels of grain production to the tune of 128%.

This paper explores the reasons for Tanzania’s relative good performance in food security especially among sub-Saharan African states. The paper also compares the food security indices for the United States with those of Tanzania. The paper points out that Tanzania is still deficient in a number of food security indicators, especially the key indicator chosen by the United Nations to measure the achievement of MDG 1 (Indicator 1.9): “Prevalence of undernourishment (%) - 3 years average” (34.6%). However, the United States continues to be a food secure nation scoring very well on the Food Security indicators. Finally, the paper explains what can be learnt from the United States about achieving food security by nations like Tanzania.

Session E: Locally Sourced Food, Local Foods System and Networks - Lone Star Salon D
1. "The Role of Food and Culinary Tourism Demand in the Western US" - Kynda Curtis, Professor, Department of Applied Economics, Utah State University
   As agricultural producers look to diversify their operations in order to obtain economic sustainability, simultaneously, tourism providers struggle to find the regional distinctiveness necessary to differentiate themselves against other tourism destinations. Food tourism can enhance a destination’s tourism offering and create backward linkages that generate additional economic opportunities for local growers and providers. Food tourism provides a market for local agricultural products and services while simultaneously providing tourists with the cultural experience they seek. Tourists spend approximately 40% of their travel budget on food while traveling. Additionally, tourists often travel exclusively for food-related experiences, such as wineries, breweries, local-sourcing restaurants, and food festivals. The demand for locally-sourced dining experiences is demonstrated by two National Restaurant Association reports including the 2013 “Restaurant Industry Forecast” which reported that 7 of 10 consumers were more likely to visit a restaurant offering locally produced items and the 2014 “Top Ten Trends across the Nation,” report included locally sourced meats and seafood and locally grown produce as the top 2 trends.
   To assess the demand for food and culinary tourism activities among visitors to the Western US, 700 in-person surveys were administered to tourists in key tourism destinations (ski destinations, airports, national and state parks, and tourist information centers) in Utah and Nevada in 2014. Confirmatory factor analysis was used to determine the common destination attributes and the role food plays in supporting specific tourist types and differing travel motivations. Econometric modeling was used to investigate tourist differences across sub-regions within the West and to determine which aspects of food tourism (buying local, activities, special events, traditional foods/recipes, etc.) are preferred by the travelers in the area. Study results will provide valuable information on visitor preferences when forming food tourism best practices and cross industry partnerships between tourism establishments and local growers and food processors.

2. "Assessment of the Salina Area Food System" - Barbara Goode, P.E., Kansas State University, Engineering Extension
   This presentation will show the process used to bring Salina and Saline County, Kansas, local-food stakeholders together to find solutions to increase participation in the aggregation and distribution of local foods. As part of the local food system, a food cooperative and incubator kitchen, participated in the assessment. To address their own needs, a scaled-down assessment was...
conducted with their stakeholders. Additionally, the project explored options for connecting low-income neighborhoods with local food sources. This project was funded with a USDA AMS LFPP planning grant.

3. "Food in Remote Regions: Connecting Supply and Demand Markets for Community Supported Agriculture in the Tanana Valley of Alaska" - Anastasia Thayer, University of Alaska Fairbanks
This study evaluates the supply and demand for community supported agriculture (CSA) shares in Fairbank, Alaska. Through farm-specific cost data, production statistics, and CSA member surveys, the research was able to assess the market and the determinants of price. In addition, a choice experiment of CSA members and non-members was conducted to identify favorable share attributes and determine consumer willingness-to-pay. This research identifies ways to expand the local food system and discusses the challenges and intricacies of meeting food demands in a rural community.

4. "Collective Action and “Connectivity” Challenges of Community Supported and Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) in the USA: A Critical Review of the Literature." - Ramon Borges-Mendez, Associate Professor, Clark University and Cynthia Caron, Assistant Professor, Clark University
Community supported agriculture (CSA) has become a “catch-all” term that refers to a diversifying field of study and practice. This paper has three objectives. First, it will develop a state of the art review of the literature to characterize these networking efforts emerging from the local level by asking, “What new avenues of collective action are emerging and what are the challenges to sustain it? Second, the review will take stock of the networking and organizational tools emerging from this process of networking in community supported and climate-smart agriculture. What kinds of technology and organizational platforms are emerging to support these networks, such as those integrating geographic information science (GIS) and digital modeling, social media, and commercial applications to improve traceability for various kinds of farm-to-table programs? Finally, intending to reach multiple audiences, the review will propose how to address research, education and extension challenges to build a "new ecology of agricultural connectivity".

Session F: Aquaponics for Rural Development and Value-added Agriculture - Lone Star Salon B
Aquaponics is a relatively new production system combining fish (aquaculture) and plants (hydroponics) and is gaining popularity in Texas. Aquaponics has advantages for the small-acreage producer because it is an intensive production system in a limited area. Aquaponics is also efficient in its water use as about 10-15% of the water is needed to produce a similar crop in the field. Aquaponics has its challenges; pest and disease control options that are not harmful to the fish, marketing, and proper variety selection. Aquaponics principles and practices will be presented with a discussion of current research activities undertaken by Texas A&M.

2. "Aquaponics - Going to Market with Profit" - Adam Harwood, Owner and Founder of Global Aquaponics, LilyPad Farm, and Apex Aquaponics

Discussion of the business model and distribution plan developed to incorporate profitable commercial aquaponics businesses into rural communities. This model is designed as a 'public/private partnership' wherein underutilized community resources can be repurposed and paired with smaller local agricultural producers to create greater food security & food independence for the community, reduce transport expenditures, comply with Dept. of Agriculture initiatives, increase the quality of school lunches, grow and keep local jobs and keep local money in the local economy. A discussion of grants that may cover or help defray project startup costs will be included. This business model is the result of a feasibility study initiated and funded by the
Amarillo Area Foundation; special thanks to them for their willingness to share this information for the betterment of rural communities throughout Texas.

Session G : Innovative Programs to Develop New Food Channels and Resources - Lone Star Salon C
1. "Turning Interest into Producer" - David Ringuette, Professor, Windward Community College
   In three years, GoFarm Hawaii has turned out 21 producers and attracted 1 million dollars in grants from government and nonprofit agencies. This innovative approach uses the desire of people wanting to grow food, to transform them into food producers. The program teaches vegetable farming to new comers in agriculture. Over the course of a year, it requires an increasing participant commitment with a corresponding increase in program resources. Participants learn and DO all aspects of vegetable farming, including business plan development. They are required to work individually on their plots, sell their produce and are evaluated by their end product.

2. "From BattleGround to Breaking Ground: Agriculture Workshops for Military Veterans" - Erin Kimbrough, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
   This presentation highlights Texas AgrAbility's educational agriculture workshops for military Veterans titled "BattleGround to Breaking Ground. Information on past and upcoming workshops will be presented, as well as, the type of education and information that participants can expect to receive. This presentation will also explain who Texas AgrAbility is and their mission to keep producer's working on their operations.

3. "The Local Scoop on Farm to School" - Nicole Zammit, RD, Farm to School Lead, USDA Food and Nutrition Services Southwest Regional Office
   From coast to coast, farm to school projects have taken root in district all across the US! Learn what efforts schools are taking to expose their students to garden based education, understanding where their food comes from, and experience what it tastes like. Hear about the new resources available from USDA and various levels of support including ways to fund your programs and current research.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20
Concurrent sessions 10:45-12:00pm

Session A : Value-added Agriculture - Lone Star Salon A
1. "Beyond Processing: Redefining Value-added Agriculture in Texas" - Rebekka Dudensing, Assistant Professor and Ruoxi Lu, PhD student, Texas A&M University
   In this presentation, a systematic framework to defining and characterize value-added agriculture in the US, especially in Texas will be introduced. Such framework is intended to address the ambiguous nature of the currently available definitions of value-added agriculture and to assist Texas farmers in identifying value adding and enhancement opportunities related to their production along the agricultural value chain.

2. "Communicating Authority through Symbols: A Value-Based Agricultural Case Study" - Justin C. Velten, Assistant Professor of Communication, and Dallas Z. Flick, the University of Texas at Tyler
   This presentation provides a look into the psychological process of consumer purchasing based on product labeling. Producers and marketers can learn the importance of creating a sense of authority through their use of symbols/labels, which in turn creates consumer drive for the purchase of agricultural products.

The Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program, administered by the Rural Business-Cooperative Service (RBS), awards planning and working capital grants to producers and firms. Planning grants are used for the development of a value-added product. The funds may be used for a feasibility study and a business plan and/or a marketing plan. Working capital grants are used to help pay for the expenses of producing the value-added product. The goal of the VAPG program is to increase the survivability of rural producers. However, once grant funds are exhausted recipients are no longer required to report their progress to RBS. It is often unknown if the producers are still operating and how long they operated. This study examines which factors affect how long a producer operates and their probability of survival. Using demographic, economic, institutional, business organization, and grant-specific data, it can be determined which variables will have the most impact on producer viability, especially the VAPG program’s effect.

Session B: Implications of the 2014 Farm Bill - Lone Star Salon B
1. "Implications of the 2014 Farm Bill for Value-Added for Specialty Crops" - Alba Collart, Assistant Professor, Mississippi State University
   This talk presents an overview of the major implications of the 2014 Farm Bill for value-added agriculture in the U.S. specialty crop industry, particularly in the increasingly expanding organic agriculture sector.

2. "Implications of the 2014 Farm Bill for Value-Added for Dairy and Cattle" - Brian Williams, Assistant Professor, Mississippi State University

3. "Financial Situation of U.S. Ag: Land and Rental Values" - Bryon Parman, Assistant Professor, Mississippi State University

Session C: Panel discussion - Barriers to Increasing Local Food Processing - Lone Star Salon C
Panelists: 
Moderator: Edwin Marty, COA OoS, Food Policy Manager, Office of Sustainability, City of Austin
Panelists:
- Brenton Johnson, Johnson’s Backyard Garden - Local Organic Fruit and Vegetable Farm
- Ben Runkle, Salt and Time – Local Butcher
- Jarred Maxwell, Slow Money Austin/ Austin Food shed Investors - Local Financing Company for Sustainable Food Businesses
- Dick Johnson, Texas State University, Business Advisor - Small Business Development Center
- Al B. Wagner, PhD, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Food Technology Specialist

Overview: The local food processing industry has a $700 million annual impact on the Austin economy. Central Texas food manufacturing businesses are gaining national attention with innovative approaches that range from insect flour-based foods to an ever-expanding range of Organic products. However, locally-sourced ingredients are rarely included in locally manufactured products, and the rising cost of business may be driving some processors away. What does the future hold for local food manufacturing and what are some solutions for ensuring the industry continues to grow?

Focal questions:
- What are the barriers for increasing local food processing (Fruit, vegetables, meat)?
- How much of the locally processed food is from locally produced product and how to increase the amount sourced locally?
- Is there a policy issue that needs to be addressed?
- Which of the following are critical issues that need addressing?
- Physical infrastructure
- Regulations
- Local production capacity
- Consumer Support
Session D : Symposium - Assessing the Economic Impact of Local Food Systems: Framing a Meta-Analysis for the US - Lone Star Salon D

Moderator and Discussant: Dawn Thilmany McFadden, Professor, Colorado State University
Speakers:
- David Hughes, Professor - University of Tennessee
- Becca Jablonski, Post-Doctoral Scholar - Colorado State University
- Todd Schmit, Associate Professor - Cornell University
- Blake Angelo, MPH - Conservation Impact, Denver CO

Overview: There is a growing public interest in regionally-focused food systems, yet agreement that resulting impacts for local communities and participating growers remain unknown (Low et al, 2015; Union of Concerned Scientists, 2013). This session brings together two projects aimed at improving understanding of the economic impacts resulting from local food system innovations. First we will introduce a new USDA AMS-sponsored toolkit to assess the economic impacts of food system initiatives. The toolkit highlights the importance of a diverse team of community stakeholders, data that reflects local specificities, and modeling that integrates locally-specific data and accounts for opportunity costs. Second, we will present preliminary typology and benchmarking results from a USDA NIFA-funded project that uses a meta-analysis of case studies and nationally available data of innovative business models in the local foods landscape. By scanning the studies and data available on these projects we hope to provide field-based businesses and practitioners with useful benchmark financial numbers to both inform the economic assessment models for different value-added activities, and provide critical information to help guide system and farm-level planning decisions. As these results are not yet final, there will be time for feedback and discussion of how these materials could be refined in the next phase of this project.