

2018 GROWING ACRES CONFERENCE PROGRAM GUIDE

OUR WHY: TO DEVELOP,
STRENGTHEN AND INSPIRE
A LOCAL FOOD CULTURE
THAT IMPROVES THE
OVERALL *WELLBEING OF
THE REGION.

*Physical, Mental,
Economic, Environmental,
Spiritual, Social

CONVERSATION HUB

Cafeteria

Drop by our
Conversation Hub
for snacks, beverages,
discussion and
networking!

KEEP IN TOUCH

WWW.GROWINGACRES.ORG

INFO@GROWINGACRES.ORG



THIS EVENT IS HOSTED BY RIVERLAND
COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S CENTER FOR
AGRICULTURAL AND FOOD SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY AND IS MADE POSSIBLE
WITH A GRANT SECURED FROM
THE SOUTHERN MINNESOTA INITIATIVE
FOUNDATION.

DAY 1 : AM & PM KEYNOTES BY CHERYAL LEE HILLS AND ARLENE JONES, R5DC

REGION FIVE DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND SPROUT MN

Our rural region recognized the local food system as one of its strongest regional assets. Since that time we have made intentional efforts toward creating a regional food system that generates local wealth and provides access to healthy affordable foods. This work is specifically focused on offering opportunities to those who had not participated in the Agricultural economy. Rural food insecurity remains one of the most vexing challenges in the United States. In central Minnesota, the Resilient Region consortium played a role to address food insecurity and agricultural viability in a rural context.

In 2010, the Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) received a Sustainable Communities Planning grant to develop a 5-county, regional strategic plan. The Resilient Region plan focused on integrating key sustainability and resilience topics of housing, transportation, energy, natural resources, connectivity/broadband, health care, education/WFD, changing populations, efficiencies-effectiveness and economic engines.

It explicitly identified arts/culture and "agriculture" as key "economic engines" for the region, and emphasized the need to promote the agricultural sector, specifically local foods.

Cheryal and Arlene will share who they are, the transition from planning to action, implementation, processes, challenges and what's in store for the future of their region.

www.regionfive.org www.sproutmn.com



Cheryal Lee Hills, Executive Director of R5DC

Cheryal leads the organization in lending and planning for economic, community, and transportation development projects and she was recently named as a member of Sen. Tina Smith's Ag Working Group ahead of Upcoming Farm Bill Debate.

Arlene Jones, Executive Director of Sprout MN

Sprout launched a growers and makers market in a repurposed warehouse in northeast Little Falls. A destination where artisans, regional chefs, growers, producers and the public come together in an infusion of art and food, retail sales and community building with the natural bridges between agriculture, art, culture and local foods.

DAY 2: KEYNOTE SPEAKER - KATHY ZEMAN, MFMA

FOOD LICENSING, EXEMPTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Are you curious to learn more about Minnesota food licensing requirements? With this overview from Kathy Zeman, who works closely with organizations throughout the state, you will walk away with an understanding of the ins and outs of selling at a farmers market, at a craft or flea market, or from an online website or social media outlet.

www.mfma.org



Kathy Zeman, Operations Manager MFMA

Kathy has worked as the Operations Manager for MFMA since Sept. 2012. She also owns Simple Harvest Farm Organics in Nerstrand, MN and is an occasional vendor at Riverwalk Market Fair in Northfield.

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COMMUNITY PLOTS



TOPIC A: AGRICULTURAL UTILIZATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE (AURI)

The mission of AURI is to foster long-term economic benefit for Minnesota through value-added agricultural products. It accomplishes this by offering agricultural producers, entrepreneurs and agribusinesses a unique mix of services, including applied research, product development assistance, innovation networks and commercialization services. All of which have the goal of helping clients succeed, but none more than the commercialization services program.

The purpose of the commercialization services program is to help entrepreneurs and small-to-medium-sized businesses prepare their product or service for mass-market consumption. For many AURI clients, this often includes access to laboratories and scientists—important elements of development that would otherwise be prohibitively expensive. It also includes economic or feasibility assessments and providing counsel on how to best formulate product mixes for scaling up production.

AURI project development and technical staff provide clients with numerous services, including:

Project Development:

- Referrals
- Feasibility assistance
- Networking assistance and sourcing
- Business development consultation
- Product marketing assistance
- Identification of funding sources or other resources
- Network connections with potential corporate partners
- Business accelerator and incubator options

Technical:

- Product formulation
- Process guidelines
- Food safety, stability and shelf life issues
- Nutrition facts and claims
- Ingredients and ingredient sourcing
- General packaging guidance

For additional details on AURI's staff, services, and programs, please visit the AURI website at auri.org.



Lolly Occhino, Scientist of Food and Nutrition

locchino@auri.org
612.816.0502

Lolly Occhino is a Scientist of Food and Nutrition and leads the food program area for AURI. She conducts and manages applied research and technical assistance for food clients and works with the project team to facilitate the successful execution and development of new projects and initiatives.

Prior to joining AURI, Occhino held scientist roles with large consumer packaged goods companies and a small contract research and development company. Her experiences include product development and ingredient applications, design and analysis of experiments, and sensory and shelf life testing to support product formulation and optimization. Working in varying environments over the previous 20+ years, Lolly served multiple customers with individual needs.

Lolly holds an M.S. in Food Science from the University of Minnesota and a B.S. of in Food Science from the University of Wisconsin.



Michael Sparby, Senior Project Strategist

msparby@auri.org
320.760.1260

As the Senior Project Strategist of AURI, Michael is responsible for developing projects, securing grant funds, assists in the program delivery, overseeing the annual AURI Stakeholder Analysis process and is responsible for AURI's Cooperative Development Center through USDA's Rural Cooperative Development Grant program.

Over the course of his more than 22 years at AURI, he has identified opportunities to develop and commercialize value-added agricultural products throughout Minnesota. He has also implemented and managed the development and coordination of AURI's Renewable Energy Roundtable and aided in defining the direction of the organization.

Before joining AURI, Sparby held a variety of leadership positions, including Medicaid fraud investigator and consumer mediator for the Minnesota Attorney General's Office.

Sparby is a graduate of Moorhead State University and received his Bachelor of Science degree in public relations and mass communications. He also holds an Economic Development Finance Professional certification from the National Development Council, which provides a foundation for financial and business credit analysis as well as deal structuring.



TOPIC B: FROM HUMAN SERVICES TO LOCAL FOODS - HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

Come learn about why and how a human services provider is engaging the local foods momentum to accomplish their strategic goals. One Vision has 5 greenhouses, 4 acres of gardens, an upstart food hub, a farm to table restaurant, the beginnings of a bakeshop.

The benefits go far beyond the goals of the non-profit community provider. Jobs are being created for people with disabilities, producer/farmers are sprouting up and growing, and people in the area are benefiting from local foods availability. This session will demonstrate how partnerships from various industries can work together to benefit the whole community. www.onevision.org



Michael Mahaffey, Chief Development Officer, One Vision, Clear Lake Iowa

Michael Mahaffey is the Chief Development Officer for One Vision, a human services provider in Clear Lake, IA. His 25 years with the agency along with experience in sales management have him uniquely positioned to advance the organizations strategic goals. Social enterprise businesses will help One Vision to overcome its strong reliance on Medicaid funding for services as well as create job opportunities for people supported by the organization.



TOPIC C: UNDERSTANDING MINNESOTA TAX LAWS RELATING TO NICHE MARKETS

We would like to provide an explanation of the Minnesota tax laws that affect organizers and vendors at various niche events (e.g. farmer's markets, craft shows, and flea markets). Our primary focus for this event will be to explain Minnesota Sales and Use Tax laws and requirements but we will also touch on Minnesota Income Tax requirements. We will also provide references and contact information to help you find answers to your questions in the future. www.revenue.state.mn.us



Amber Hubbard, CPA, Revenue Tax Specialist, Senior Senior

Amber Hubbard, CPA. Amber works for the Minnesota Department of Revenue as a Revenue Tax Specialist, Senior. She has a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Minnesota State University-Mankato and holds an active CPA license.

Amber has more than 9 years of experience educating Minnesota taxpayers through audits, classes, and presentations.



Mark Krause, Tax Professional Outreach Coordinator in the Income Tax & Withholding Division

Mark Krause is the Tax Professional Outreach Coordinator in the Income Tax & Withholding Division and is responsible for administering the paid preparer outreach program within the Minnesota Department of Revenue and providing income tax and employment tax education. Mark started his career with the Department in 2016 as a field auditor in the Special Taxes division.

Mark has a bachelor's degree in Business Management and an associate degree in Accounting. He has 25 years of experience in individual income taxes.



TOPIC D: SOIL HEALTH AND COVER CROPS FOR GROWERS LARGE AND SMALL

This session will discuss the science and principles of Soil Health along with its importance to plant productivity and the environment. Experienced producers will present practical methods of applying soil health best management practices on corn, soybean, vegetable and grazing enterprises.



Steve Lawler, Resource Specialist with Mower SWCD

- Began soil health initiative in Mower County, developing crop/tillage plots for soil quality monitoring and comparison tests with cooperation from NRCS, Univ. of Wis. River Falls and Univ. of Minnesota
- Work directly with Mower Soil Health Team (farmer led group)
- Provide instruction at Riverland Community College on soil health, cover crops
- Licensed Professional Soil Scientist, Minnesota



Tom Cotter, Owner/operator of 4th generation family farm near Austin, MN

- Wife, Alma; four children
- Raises corn, soybeans, peas, sweet corn, alfalfa and runs cow/calf operation
- Farm no-till soybeans, strip-till corn, graze cover crops, sells grass fed beef
- 2016 certified under Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program
- Mower SWCD 2016 Conservationist of the Year
- Soil Health team member for Mower and Freeborn Counties
- Cover Cropping for over 12 years

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DAY 2 SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER



FARM TO TABLE: IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING OBSTACLES IN CREATING A LOCAL FOOD ECONOMY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

As a mother, farmer, employee at the Harborview Cafe, board member of the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association (MFMA), and volunteer market manager of the Wabasha Farmers' Market, nearly all of Sara George's hours revolve around work within the food system. With this involvement, Sara has developed a unique model of aggregation of vendors' produce for sale to local institutional buyers at her market and her work is also tackling some of the technical tools that can help with the procurement process for local specialty crops.

Her work shows that with creativity, challenges can be faced, obstacles can be overcome, and successful relationships within communities can be achieved. With her passion and experience, she shares how to create lasting relationships within communities that strengthen local economics and create economically viable options for both the farmers and the institutions they work with.



Sara George, MFMA, Wabasha Farmers Market, D & S Gardens

Sara George is a farmer at D & S Gardens, market manager at Wabasha Farmers Market, Vice President of the MN Farmers Market Association and employee of a local restaurant, Harbor View Cafe, that uses as much produce from the local farms as they can. In her community, she has researched obstacles farmers face in supplying to institutions and has worked to overcome those by partnering with local and state partners.

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DAY 2 COTTAGE FOODS TRAINING



COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCER FOOD SAFETY TRAINING: KEEP IT SAFE! KEEP IT LEGAL! TIER 2

Do you make and sell baked goods, home-canned pickles, salsa, jam or jellies? Meet the training requirements to register as a Minnesota cottage food producer with University of Minnesota Extension Food Safety Training.

Learn food safety practices required for all processes covered under the cottage food law including baked, confections, dried, fruit preserves and, acid and acidified fruit and vegetables. You will learn how to produce, package and label a safe food product. Wonder if your product tests as an allowable non-potentially hazardous food? Bring it along and have the food tested. (Bring prepared food!)



Suzanne Driessen, University of Minnesota Extension

Suzanne Driessen is a University of Minnesota Extension food safety educator with 20 years of experience. Suzanne develops and teaches food safety programs for consumers and the food industry. Her most recent efforts include the Safe Food Product Sampling for Farmers' Markets and Community Events and Food Safety for Cottage Food Producers courses.

DAY 1: REGATHER FOR PANEL Q&A

PICK UP A PANEL QUESTION CARD TO JOT DOWN A QUESTION FOR ONE OF OUR PRESENTORS/EXHIBITORS. PLEASE RETURN TO THE GROWING ACRES TABLE BEFORE 3:30PM.

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TRY-IT TABLES

Albert Lea Seed-Plant a Seed

Visit our Try-It table where we'll have potting soil and some disposable pots where you can try planting a seed to take home. There is no charge!

Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships-Samples

Try a sample of puffed kernza or roasted hazelnuts—two new crops in research at the University of Minnesota. Connect with us to learn more about UMN specialty crops and how you can grow them on your farm, serve that at your restaurant or incorporate them into your food business.

"Steal This Idea"—Creative Display/Show Solutions

Margaret Andree from Dobbins Creek Farm attends many local farmers markets and craft shows and will have a collection of creative display and show solutions that you can check out, including DIY table weights and signage.

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EXHIBITORS



Growing Acres—Inspiring Niche Markets and Local Foods in the Region

www.growingacres.org

Sign-In and Registration. We are also starting a database of folks who are interested in, or already participate in some capacity, local foods and niche markets in our region. We'll have extra question cards available for our Regather for Panel Q & A and will be available if you have questions about the event or about future initiatives.



Albert Lea Seed

www.alseed.com

We will have a display and information pertaining to garden seed and farm seed. We will also provide helpful information on how-to grow vegetables and popular end uses for certain specialty grains and specialty markets.



AURI-Agricultural Utilization Research Institute (Day 1)

www.auri.org

Visit with Lolly Occhino, Scientist of Food and Nutrition and Michael Sparby, Senior Project Strategist from AURI who will be presenting at 2 Community Plots throughout the day on what AURI does and how it can help producers, entrepreneurs and agribusinesses with a unique mix of services, including applied research, product development assistance, innovation networks and commercialization services.



Austin Area Minority Business Project, Immigrant Law Center of MN

www.ilcm.org

Providing information about our services which include free immigration legal services and technical business support for minority entrepreneurs.



Austin Start Up Factory—Austin Community Growth Ventures

Start Up Factory Austin is a new venture in partnership with Iowa State University. It is dedicated to the production of successful new companies by following a robust and repeatable process to launch a new company. This locally hosted program provides coaching and mentoring over 12 months for selected companies.



Jen Haugen RD, Down to Earth Dietitian (Day 1)

www.jenhaugen.com

I am a nutrition communications consultant and I will be offering my services to businesses that need assistance with speaking opportunities, recipe development, social media engagement, writing content. I also consult privately with individuals to help them cook with joy and live with balance (including gardening), so I will have information about those virtual consultations as well. I will have a few books available for purchase - The Mom's Guide to a Nourishing Garden

**Minnesota Corrugated Box, Inc. (Day 1)**

www.mcbox.com

We are a corrugated company that produces protective packaging, retail packaging, point of purchase displays and any additional corrugated needs. We plan to bring examples of work that we currently run for our agriculture/food type customers to show our capabilities and what is available to them.

**Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture–Dairy and Meat Inspection (Day 1)**

www.mda.state.mn.us

Speak with representatives from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Dairy and Meat Inspection Division to learn about meat inspection, compliance activities, legal ways to market animals and any regulatory questions that may arise.

**Minnesota Farmers Union**

www.mfu.org

Visit with the Minnesota Farmers Union, learn more about them, their membership opportunities and their “Minnesota Cooks” program.

**Minnesota Farmers’ Market Association (Day 2)**

www.mfma.org

MFMA provides services, programs and leadership that support and promote farmers’ markets across Minnesota. Drop by our table to learn more!

**Mower County 4-H (Day 1)**

April VonRuden, Mower County 4-H Program Coordinator, will be available to discuss current programs and opportunities for Mower County youth.

**Old 218 (Day 1)**

www.old218.com

Old 218 is a local in-house embroidery, silk screen & digital print provider that also offers promotional products via outside vendors.

**Principal Sales & Use Tax Division (Day 1)**

www.revenue.state.mn.us

Amber Hubbard, CPA, Revenue Tax Specialist, Senior and Mark Krause, Tax Professional Outreach Coordinator in the Income Tax & Withholding Division will be available to answer questions and discuss Minnesota sales and use tax.

**Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships**

www.extension.umn.edu/rsdp/

The Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships (RSDP) connect Greater Minnesota communities to the University of Minnesota to support local sustainability projects and opportunities. RSDP brings together community ideas and expertise with University of Minnesota knowledge and resources to drive sustainability in four areas:

- Sustainable agriculture and food systems
- Sustainable tourism and resilient communities
- Natural resources
- Clean energy

**Renewing the Countryside**

www.renewingthecountryside.org

Learn about the Grow a Farmer Campaign and Fund, Farmland Access Navigators, Slow Money MN, Farmers Market Aggregation Project, Farm to Child Care, Farmer/Buyer Speed-dating, New Farmer U, and the Feast! Local Food Network.

**Resource Table**

We will have information available from multiple organizations, including Hunger Solutions, Minnesota Grown, Farmers Market Nutrition Program, Minnesota Farmers’ Market Association and others who wish to send information packets for conference attendees.

**SCORE, Marshall Jones (Day 1)**

www.score.org

Visit with Marshall Jones from SCORE to learn about the partnership between SCORE and the USDA that’s been set up to help the Ag community in Minnesota.

**SHIP Mower County (Day 1)**

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) is designed to improve health by reducing risk factors that contribute to chronic disease, resulting in reduced health care costs. SHIP connects markets and organizations to funding that works towards those goals.

**Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation**

www.smifoundation.org

We will have available information related to our lending programs and the work we do related to economic development, including our local foods work through FEAST! Local Food Network.

**SWCD–Soil and Water Conservation District (Day 1)**

www.mowerswcd.org

Drop by to visit with Steve Lawler and Tom Cotter, find out what projects the SWCD have in the works as well as discuss follow up questions you may have from the Soil Health Community Plot’s.



University of Minnesota, Cottage Foods Law

www.mda.state.mn.us/licensing/licensetypes/cottagefood.aspx

Drop by Suzanne Driessen's table for resources on Cottage Foods, Safe Food Sampling and more! Suzanne will be presenting the Cottage Foods training on Saturday.

Can't make it to Saturday's Cottage Foods Training? You can complete the training for Cottage Food Producer Registration (PDF: 934 KB / 68 pages) online for gross annual food sales of \$0-5000. Check the above link for more information.

GROWING ACRES

INSPIRING NICHE MARKETS & LOCAL FOODS IN OUR REGION

COMING UP NEXT.....



CONNECTING TO EXPLORE

While visiting the Conversation Hub take a minute to fill out our Connecting To Explore-Invitation sheet to share what role might you play in this work of the region? (talents, resources, etc.) We'll be in touch soon!



2018 AG SUMMIT - AGRICULTURE RENEWED

Where: Holiday Inn Conference Center, Austin

When: Tuesday, February 27th

Time: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Cost: Free

This summit is a celebration and coming together of the energy, people, and ideas that are propelling Riverland Community College's Center for Agricultural and Food Science Technology forward. Forward in ways that are building a base for even more good things to come.

Visit www.riverland.edu/about-riverland/community-services/agriculture-summit for more information and to register.



FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM & SENIOR FARMERS MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

Where: Riverland Community College-Albert Lea Campus

When: Tuesday, March 27th

Time: 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Cost: Free

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) in Minnesota seek to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants and income eligible seniors, and to expand the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets.

This training is taking place in Albert Lea this March!

Head to www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/fmnp/sfmnp.aspx for additional details and registration information.



The Growing Acres logo was created by: Leyk House Creative, LLC

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