“Enhancing Access to Knowledge, Partnerships, and Infrastructure for Resilient Communities”

TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY
131ST ANNUAL FARMERS CONFERENCE

March 28 – 31, 2023
Embassy Suites by Hilton // Montgomery, AL
2023 Merit Farm Family Award

Mr. Warren Ford and Family
Clanton, Alabama

Sponsored by:
First South Farm Credit
The first Farmers Conference was held at Tuskegee University on February 23, 1892. Its purpose was to convene farmers in an educationally stimulating environment that would arouse public sentiment and create an interest in the common, mundane, and practical affairs of life. The morning was spent identifying problems associated with farming and the afternoon portion of the conference focused on their solutions.

Today, this conference has evolved into a two-day event that focuses on the problems and solutions for small-scale farmers, landowners, and their communities in managing change in agriculture. Participants are engaged in intense courses of instruction, problem-solving, and interactive demonstrations. Additionally, the conference provides an opportunity for small-scale farmers to network with colleagues and university educators.

From its inception, the Tuskegee University’s Farmers Conference has retained the following objectives: (1) to share up-to-date information relevant to small-scale farmers and landowners involved in the production of traditional and alternative agricultural products; (2) to create awareness about family health, nutritional challenges, and existing resources for rural families; (3) to provide research-based information in a consumer adaptable format; and (4) to strengthen networks and partnerships that address problems of small-scale farmers and rural communities concerning local, national and global markets.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>TUCE Agriculture and Natural Resources Professional Development</td>
<td>Salon D</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>TUCE Family and Consumer Sciences Professional Development</td>
<td>Salon E</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
<td>Early Arrival &amp; Tours – On Your Own</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 pm – 5:30 pm</td>
<td>EXERT Youth Arrival and Check In</td>
<td>Salon F</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 pm – 9:00 pm</td>
<td>EXERT Youth Dinner &amp; Activities (Participants Only)</td>
<td>Embassy I</td>
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<tr>
<td>7:30 pm – 9:00 am</td>
<td>Breakfast</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 12:00 pm</td>
<td>8th Annual EXERT Youth Competition</td>
<td>Embassy II</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 am – 11:00 am</td>
<td>The Movable School Lecture</td>
<td>Embassy I</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 pm – 2:30 pm</td>
<td><strong>EXERT Awards Luncheon</strong></td>
<td>Embassy I</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:00 pm – 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Exhibit and Poster Set Up</td>
<td>Capitol Ballroom</td>
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<td>1:00 pm - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>TUCE Advisory Board Meeting (Invitation Only)</td>
<td>Salon DE</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 pm – 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Food Safety Outreach Program Farmer Workshop</td>
<td>Salon DE</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 pm – 4:30 pm</td>
<td>Farmer Focus Group Meetings</td>
<td>Salon DE</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 pm – 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Opening Social, Visit with Exhibitors, View Posters</td>
<td>Capitol Ballroom</td>
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<td>7:30 am – 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Breakfast on Your Own</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 10:00 am</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Opening Plenary (USDA &amp; State Agency Updates)</td>
<td>Embassy I&amp;II</td>
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<td>10:00 am</td>
<td>Break</td>
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### Concurrent Sessions

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<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Sessions</th>
<th>Location</th>
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| 10:15 am – 12:30 pm | **Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
1. American Grassfed Certification Program  
2. Silvopasture and Climate Smart Practices for Small Ruminant Producers  
3. Community Gardening for Food Security: Success Stories from the Western Black Belt of Alabama | Oasis      |
|               | **Family and Consumer Sciences**  
1. Alabama Department of Public Health Community and Statewide Updates, Diabetes and You  
2. Reducing Health Disparities  
3. Family & Financial Management: “Predatory Lending” | Salon C    |
|               | **Food Systems & Marketing**  
1. Strategies for Urban Agriculture/Food Systems and Development | Salon F    |
| 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm | Awards Luncheon                                                                                   | Embassy I&II |
| 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm | **Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
1. Introduction to Climate Smart Practices  
2. Sustainable Forest Management for Small Landowners | Oasis      |
|               | **Family and Consumer Sciences**  
1. Health and Wealth: Mental Health Wellness for Farmers  
2. The Role of Health Care Professionals in Reducing Health Disparities & Combating Kidney Disease | Salon C    |
|               | **Food Systems & Marketing**  
1. Working with Commercial Markets & Distributors (produce)  
2. Marketing Working Session: Black Belt Marketing and Innovation Center and Local Marketing Initiatives | Salon F    |
| 4:45 pm – 5:45 pm | Inflation Reduction Act Updates and Planning for the Farm Bill                                 | Embassy I&II |
| 5:30 pm       | Dinner on your own                                                                               |            |

**Friday, March 31, 2023**

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<td>9:00 am – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Smallholder Farm of the Future Field Day</td>
<td>Tuskegee University - GWCAES</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 am – 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Gardening for Food Security and Education: Tour of Community Gardens</td>
<td>Montgomery, Lowndes and Wilcox Counties</td>
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TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023

10:00 am – 3:00 pm. TUCE Agriculture and Natural Resources Professional Development (Closed Session)

10:00 am – 3:00 pm. TUCE Family and Consumer Sciences Professional Development (Closed Session)

12:00 pm – 6:00 pm. Early Arrival & Tours (Own Your Own)

3:00 pm – 5:30 pm. EXERT Youth Arrival and Check-in

6:00 pm – 9:00 pm. EXERT Youth Dinner & Activities (Participants Only)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2023

7:30 am – 9:00 am. Breakfast

8:00 am – 5:00 pm. Conference Registration

9:00 am – 12:00 pm. 8th Annual EXERT Youth Competition (Embassy II)

10:00 am – 11:00 am. The Movable School Lecture (Embassy I)

Presiding: Lindsey Lunsford, Tuskegee University

Lecturer: Leah Penniman, Soul Fire Farm New York

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm. EXERT Awards Luncheon (Embassy I)

12:00 pm – 5:00. Exhibit and Poster Set Up (Capitol Ballroom)

1:00 pm – 2:00 pm. TUCE Advisory Board Meeting - Invitation Only (Salon DE)

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm. Food Safety Outreach Program Farmer Training (Salon DE)

Facilitator: Janice Hall, Alabama Cooperative Extension Service
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm. ........................................ Farmer Focus Group Meetings (Salon DE)

Facilitator: Rui Chen, Tuskegee University

5:00 pm – 9:00 pm ........................................ Opening Social, Exhibits, and Student Posters (Capitol Ballroom)
Student Posters and Presentations (Salon DE)

THURSDAY, MARCH 30, 2023

7:30 am – 9:00 pm ........................................ Breakfast (On Your Own)

9:00 am – 10:00 am .................................... Welcome & Opening Plenary (Embassy I&II)

Welcome: Rolondus Rice, Chief Operations Officer
Tuskegee University

Opening Remarks: Olga Bolden-Tiller, Dean
College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences
Tuskegee University

USDA & State Agency Updates
Charmaine Wilson, USDA, NASS
Ben Malone, USDA, NRCS
Davina Lee, USDA, RMA
Nivory Gordon, USDA, Rural Development
Clifton Warren, Jr. USDA, Farm Service Agency
Colton Buckley, National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils

10:00 am – 10:15 am .................................. Break

10:15 am – 12:30 pm ............................... Concurrent Sessions

Agriculture and Natural Resources (Oasis)

Moderator: George Hunter, Tuskegee University
American Grassfed certification program. Helping pasture-based producers differentiate themselves in the marketplace. ................. Carrie Balkcom
Silvopasture and Climate Smart Practices for Small Ruminant Producers

Moderator: Alphonso Elliott, Tuskegee University
Uma Karki
Tuskegee University

Community Gardening for Food Security: Success Stories from the Western Black Belt of Alabama

Moderator: Justin Tate, Tuskegee University

Silvopasture and Climate Smart Practices for Small Ruminant Producers

Moderator: Justin Tate, Tuskegee University

Community Gardening for Food Security: Success Stories from the Western Black Belt of Alabama

Family and Consumer Sciences (Salon C)

Morning Moderator: Catrina Hoffman, Tuskegee University

Alabama Department of Public Health Community and Statewide Updates, Diabetes and You
Carolyn Blanco, MSRD and Janice Hardy MSRD

Lactose-Free Food Demonstration
Natasha Ashley, RND, The Dairy Alliance
Atlanta, GA

Reducing Health Disparities
Katherine Burt, New York, NY

Family & Financial Management: “Predatory Lending”
Dana Sweeney

Food Systems & Marketing (Salon F)

Moderator: Candace Clark, Tuskegee University

Strategies for Urban Agriculture/Food Systems and Development
Tenisio Seanima
Justin Nickelson
J. Olu Baiyewu

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm
Awards Luncheon (Embassy I&II)

Moderator: Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

Speaker: Bobby Wilson, Co-founder and Owner
Metro Atlanta Urban Farm (MAUF)

Merit Farm Family Awardee
Warren Ford & Family, Clanton, AL

TM Campbell Leadership Awardee
Evelyn Crayton, Montgomery, AL
Concurrent Sessions

2:30 pm – 4:30 pm

Agriculture and Natural Resources (Oasis)

Moderators: Jamie Rye and Tequila Monroe

Introduction to Climate Smart Practices – The Future of Food and Water
Ebony Webber, Executive Director
Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

Moderator: Carnell McAlpine, Tuskegee University

Sustainable Forest Management for Small Landowners
Rashidah Farid-Tilghman Tuskegee University
US Forest Service SRS

Family and Consumer Sciences (Salon C)

Afternoon Moderator: Denzel Veale
Tuskegee University

Health and Wealth: Mental Health Wellness for Farmers
Maya Martin
Tuskegee University

Mental Health and Medication
Recennah Braxton
Montgomery, AL

The Role of Health Care Professionals in Reducing Health Disparities & Combating Kidney Disease
June Thompson, RDN, LDN, FAND
Consultant, Family Affair Care Group
Greensboro, NC

Food Systems & Marketing

Moderator: Demetrius Hooks, Tuskegee University

Working with Commercial Markets & Distributors (produce)
Bill Green
Executive Director
The Common Market Southeast
Gibron Burchett
Founder and Executive Director of HOSCO SHIFT, Inc

Facilitators: Drs. Franklin Quarcoo & Kristin Woods, Tuskegee University

Marketing Working Session: Black Belt Marketing and Innovation Center and Local Marketing Initiatives

4:45pm – 5:45pm

Updates on Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act

6:00 pm

Dinner on your own
FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2023

7:30 am – 9:00 am ......................................................... Breakfast (On Your Own)

9:00 am – 3:00 pm .......................................................... Smallholder Farm of the Future Field Day (Tuskegee University – GWCAES)

Presenters:

Digital and Automated Agriculture ................................. Gregory Bernard, Tuskegee University
Joseph E. Quansah, Tuskegee University
Riyaz Pishori, Microsoft

Drones in Agriculture ...................................................... Mahmoud Yousaf, University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign
Dennis Bowman, University of Illinois - Urbana Champaign

Organic Agriculture ........................................................... Kokoasse Kpomblekou-A
Franklin Quarcoo
Tuskegee University

Small Landholder Forestry .................................................. Rashidah Farid-Tilghman, Tuskegee University

Smallholder Cattle ........................................................ Frank Abrahamsen and Russell Johnson, Tuskegee University

Small Ruminants and Agroforestry ................................... Uma Karki, Tuskegee University

FarmersClick ................................................................. Mel Dowdell

Post Harvest Technologies ........................................... Desmond Mortley and Sena Ahiabor
Tuskegee University

Meat Processing for the Smallholder Farmer .................. Clarissa Harris
Tuskegee University

9:00 am – 3:00 pm ...................................................... Gardening for Food Security and Education: Tour of Community Gardens (Montgomery, Lowndes and Wilcox Counties)
Leah Penniman

Leah Penniman (all pronouns) is a Black Kreyol farmer, mother, soil nerd, author, and food justice activist from Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, NY; She co-founded Soul Fire Farm in 2010 with the mission to end racism in the food system and reclaim our ancestral connection to land. As Co-ED and Farm Director, Leah is part of a team that facilitates powerful food sovereignty programs - including farmer training for Black & Brown people, a subsidized farm food distribution program for communities living under food apartheid, and domestic and international organizing toward equity in the food system. Leah has been farming since 1996, holds an MA in Science Education and a BA in Environmental Science and International Development from Clark University, and is a member of clergy in West Krikan Indigenous Orisa tradition. Leah trained at Many Hands Organic Farm, Farm School MA, and internationally with farmers in Ghana, Haiti, and Mexico. She also served as a high school biology and environmental science teacher for 17 years. The work of Leah and Soul Fire Farm has been recognized by the Soros Racial Justice Fellowship, Fulbright Program, Pritzker Environmental Genius Award, Grist 50, and James Beard Leadership Award, among others. Her books, Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm’s Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land (2018) and Black Earth Wisdom: Soulful Conversations with Black Environmentalists (2023) are love songs for the land and her people.

Bobby Wilson

Bobby L. Wilson, co-founder and owner of Metro Atlanta Urban Farm (MAUF), shares a mission and a vision that focuses on agriculture, youth socio-emotional development, increasing representation in the sciences of those who historically have been underrepresented, and providing a strong program for seniors which includes community and therapeutic gardening. A graduate of Alcorn State University, Bobby worked as a UGA County Extension Agent for Fulton and DeKalb counties more than twenty-five years in the urban gardening program. Bobby holds a secretarial appointment to the Urban Agriculture Innovative Production Federal Advisory Committee. He recently served as a first-time Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) on a national research project, the NOISE Project (www.noiseproject.org), in collaboration with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology Celebrate Urban Birds, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). He is co-author of the publication, Understanding the Impact of Equitable Collaborations between Science Institutions and Community-Based Organizations: Improving Science through Community-Led Research, https://doi.org/10.1093/biosci/biac001. An innovator in home grown food production, MAUF has been successful at growing food free of chemicals for more than twelve years. As an anchor business for the College Park community, MAUF has been successful at providing a safe sanctuary for youth and seniors to expand their minds, establish new friendships, and discover their love for nature as a key component to healthy living. Metro Atlanta Urban Farm has linked its programs to the National Science Foundation, the Cornell University Lab or Ornithology, Alabama A&M Small Farms Research Center, Alcorn State Extension Service, Florida A&M Agriculture STEM Program, and other institutions. Through these effective partnerships, Bobby Wilson has been able to assist in recruiting students into the AG/STEAM Program.
Natasha Ashley is a Registered Dietitian Nutritionist and the owner of Natasha Ashley Nutrition, a nutrition consulting business which focuses on people overcoming the struggles and complexities of nutrition so they can reach and maintain their goals. She is also a recipe and content creator, and food and nutrition ambassador. Natasha has worked with Chobani, A&E Networks, Aetna, Macy’s, Columbia University, The American Dairy Association, New York Beef Council, National Urban League, and other prominent businesses. She holds her Master of Science degree from New York University and her Bachelor of Science degree from Florida State University. Natasha believes that health and wellness are connected to nutrition, and that culture rich foods can lead to a healthy life.

Caroline Blanco is a registered dietitian nutritionist and has over 15 years of experience working with organizations nationwide to promote health and wellness. Caroline currently serves as the Director of Program Development & Collaborations for the American Diabetes Association where she oversees various initiatives focused on health equity and social determinants of health. Caroline has helped to develop health education materials and professional education opportunities for health care professionals and community-based organizations. Caroline has previously facilitated various grants through CDC, NIH, USDA, and foundations - focused on chronic disease prevention and management geared towards policy, systems, and environmental changes in health systems, schools, restaurants, and community centers. Caroline has received the U.S. President’s Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition’s Community Leadership Award, has served on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics’ National Committee, President of the South Texas Dietetic Association, and the San Antonio Mayor’s Fitness Council. Caroline has a passion for working at the grassroots level focusing her efforts on health equity.

Recennah Braxton has with Genoa Healthcare since 2013, a specializing in treating and serving those with behavioral health and complex conditions. Dr. Braxton graduated from Hampton University School of Pharmacy Located in Hampton, Virginia in 2009 with her doctorate degree in Pharmacy. Additionally, she is a preceptor for Auburn University School of Pharmacy and Florida A & M University School of Pharmacy. Dr. Braxton is a mother of one son, Uriah Braxton.
Kate Gardner Burt, PhD, RDN is an associate professor and Undergraduate Program Director of the Dietetics, Foods, and Nutrition Program at Lehman College, City University of New York. She teaches courses in cultural humility and foodways and in professional practice. Dr. Burt’s research explores how systemic racial bias and whiteness impact the dietetics profession and dietary recommendations. Dr. Burt received her BS in film and television from Boston University and her MS in exercise physiology and nutrition, RD and PhD in food and nutrition policy from Teachers College, Columbia University.

Janice Hardy, MS, RDN, LD is a volunteer Community Diabetes Self-Management Instructor with the Communities Improvement Association, Mt Meigs, AL. She is a patient/client focused dietitian who has experience as a Clinical Dietitian, Clinical Nutrition Manager Assistant Manager/Assistant Chief Nutrition and Food Service and Manager/Chief Nutrition and Food Service over a 37-year career with the Department of Veterans Affairs at medical centers in three states. As a Clinical Dietitian provided excellent nutrition care for veterans; in management positions, motivated team members (professional and non-professional) to deliver exceptional nutrition care and customer service for our nation’s veterans.

Dr. Maya D. Martin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at Tuskegee University. A proud Alabama native, she was born and raised in Decatur, AL. Dr. Martin completed her undergraduate studies at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and matriculated through Alabama A&M University where she received a Master of Social Work degree with a concentration in Community Mental Health. After working several years in various clinical settings within the social work field, she made the decision to pursue a Doctor of Social Work degree at Tulane University where she researched the effects of food insecurity on geriatric mental health. Dr. Martin is a wife to James Martin as well as a mother to Jaylin, Meghann, and Jayci. She enjoys spending time with her family, reading, watching movies, and traveling.

Dana Sweeney is the statewide community organizer at the Alabama Appleseed Center for Law & Justice. Based in Montgomery, he travels across the state connecting Alabamians with their lawmakers and collaborating with communities to advocate for justice. His presentation will update attendees on key criminal and economic justice bills being debated at the statehouse, will review how folks can get engaged in advocacy work, and will demonstrate why there is good reason to hope and work for a better Alabama.
Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension is proud to announce the selection of Mr. and Mrs. Warren Ford as the recipients of the Merit Farm Family Award for 2023.

Mr. Ford is the owner and operator of Ford Farms, LLC in Clanton, AL. Located in Central Alabama, Clanton is the county seat of Chilton County, a region known for its abundant peach and vegetable production.

The Fords began their farming operation over a decade ago with thirty-five acres primarily devoted to purple hull pea production. With a successful cropping history and documented experience in hand, this young and energetic farm family joined a cooperative marketing initiative led by Tuskegee University, often referred to as the WalMart Project.

For several years the farm supplied the Project with an ample supply of purple hull peas, watermelons and squash including zucchini squash.
Today Ford Farms exists as a roughly 600-acre diversified farming operation began. Enterprises at Ford Farms, LLC now include grain, cattle, and fresh produce, including strawberries.

Engaged participants with the State of Alabama Farmers Market Authority, the Fords sell produce at several farmers markets across the area and even operate two fruit and vegetable stands of their own in the Alabama Black Belt Region.

Mr. and Mrs. Ford are active participants in Tuskegee University Extension Program efforts and are regular attendees of the Annual Farmers Conference, and The Professional Agricultural Workers Conference.

Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension is proud to support Warren Ford and Ford Farms, LLC. in their commitment to innovative agricultural practices and the promotion of sustainability in our rural communities.
Burnestine Page Taylor, M.D. is a seasoned physician with more than 32 years of experience in Primary Care, with the continued deliverance of medical care in a variety of clinical settings including inpatient, outpatient, directorship, and emergency medicine. Dr. Taylor dedicated years of her career to the adult veteran population, primarily in outpatient setting some intermittent inpatient and emergency room responsibilities. She is currently a Medical Officer in Disease Control and Prevention at the Alabama Department of Public Health. Her professional publications include: Hereditary Amyloidosis, Description of a new American kindred with late onset cardiomyopathy, February 1987-205, Arthritis and Rheumatism, Vol. 30, Issue 2, pages 195-2005, Benson, MD, Wallace, M. Tejada, E. Baumann, H and Page, B. (1987) Based on research and patients and Assessment University of Louisville/Department of Internal Medicine

June M. Thompson, RDN, FAND has been a member of NOBIDAN for over 15 years, serving on the nominating committee, nominating committee chair, the chair of the mentoring committee, chair elect and is currently Chair. June is a Renal Dietitian with Fresenius Kidney Care for the past 33 years. June also works as a consultant for Family Affair Care Group, Inc which provides service to adults with intellectual disabilities.

During her career, Mrs. Thompson taught a variety of classes in nutrition at North Carolina A&T State University (it should be noted that June is a proud alumna of N.C. A&T State University, having obtained her BS in Home Economics with a specialty in Clinical Nutrition in 1979, and her MS in Foods and Nutrition in 1984, respectively).

June Thompson was voted Dietitian of the year in 1996 by the National Kidney Foundation. She is very involved with North Carolina Counsel of Renal Nutrition, having served three 2-year terms as chair, on the public education, and the MNT committees.

In her personal life, she is married to Tony L. Thompson for 40 years. They are the proud parents of two adult children, Kenya Danielle, and Tony Lee II. She is a lifelong resident of Greensboro, and a proud North Carolinian.

Food Systems and Marketing

Gibron Burchett, a St. Louis native, is the Founder and Executive Director of HOSCO SHIFT, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to urban agriculture education and empowering communities through sustainable food systems. Growing up, Gibron tended to his family’s 17,000-square-foot garden in Walnut Park, producing up to 20,000 pounds of produce annually. After a successful multimedia career in the music industry and time spent living on an Austrian pumpkin farm, Gibron returned to St. Louis to establish HOSCO Shift.

Gibron trained under Will Allen of Growing Power, an internationally recognized urban agriculture and aquaponic food production expert. After collaborating on several projects, Gibron applied his knowledge to HOSCO Shift and the St. Louis Science Center’s $7.5 million “Grow” agricultural exhibit as a lead consultant in 2014.
Since 2011, Gibron has operated a season-long educational apprenticeship program that teaches participants in sustainable agriculture from seed to market. The Progressive Food Cooperative Apprenticeship instructs apprentices in soil fertility principles, organic pest and disease management, proper harvest and post-harvest handling techniques, direct marketing, and CSA operations.

HOSCO Shift Inc. collaborates with the North Sarah Food Hub (NSFH) and Confluence Farms. NSFH, a $1.2 million shared-use kitchen, provides a licensed space for community members to create products. The project is in partnership with the Missouri Foundation of Health, the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and other organizations. Confluence Farms trains students and apprentices in agriculture and plant-based value-added packaged food products through HOSCO's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, U.S. Department of Labor, and Department of Labor Apprenticeship program. Gibron is also working with Tuskegee University to train students in practical farming techniques, value-added product development, and local food system design and implementation.

To address the growing demand for food, Gibron expanded operations to serve seniors, single mothers, and homeless populations during the 2020 pandemic. HOSCO and North Sarah Food Hub have also expanded their cold storage capacity to accommodate the increased production and distribution of healthy meals. In collaboration with BJC Hospital, HOSCO and NSFH developed a spin-off diabetic meal brand called Nutrition, which offers diabetic-friendly meals for patients. This partnership highlights HOSCO's commitment to providing healthier food options to the community. Within a year, HOSCO produced 750,000 meals and distributed 2.1 million pounds of produce throughout the St. Louis Metropolitan region. HOSCO and NSFH continue their work, distributing over 20,000 pounds of food weekly to St. Louis residents via grocery boxes. Leveraging his background in the music industry, Gibron has initiated collaborations with music artists to combine food, music, and technology in innovative ways. These collaborations not only promote HOSCO’s mission and values but also create unique experiences that engage and inspire communities to support urban agriculture and sustainable food systems.

Bill Greene currently serves as the Executive Director of The Common Market Southeast, a non-profit food distribution organization whose mission is to bring good fresh food grown by small to mid-sized family-owned farms to local communities. The Common Market works primarily through anchor institutions such as schools, universities, hospitals and community organizations in order to reach the maximum number of people creating improved access to local food. During the ongoing covid crisis, Bill and his team have supported over 40 local farms and obtained multiple federal and local contracts to provide emergency food relief to approximately 166 community organizations throughout the southeast including 45 local area Atlanta organizations.

Prior to coming to The Common Market, Bill worked at The Kroger Co. for 18 years in various roles including Legal Counsel, Store Manager, District Manager and Vice President of Operations. As an attorney, Bill also served clients in private practice in the areas of civil litigation, mergers and acquisitions, technology agreements and general corporate work. Bill is a graduate of Howard University where he obtained his bachelor’s degree in business management and the University of Kentucky where he received his juris doctorate.
Bill is also very involved in the community having volunteered for organizations such as The Boy Scouts of America and Junior Achievement, on the advisory boards of both the City of Atlanta’s AgLanta Brand and the South Atlanta Food Bank. He also formerly served on the board of the Automotive Training Center.

Bill is an author and speaker. His book “The 12 Pillars of Manhood” discusses principles of manhood development and rites of passage from a Christian perspective. Bill and his wife Kristy live in East Point and have three adult children, Taylor, William IV and Ethan.

### Agriculture and Natural Resources

**Carrie Balkcom** is the Executive Director of the American Grassfed Association. AGA is the National, multispecies entity organized to protect and promote Grassfed and pasture based farmers and ranchers.

AGA is the leader in pasture based production and the oldest grassfed certification in the United States. AGA certifies ruminants and dairy.

Carrie grew up on a Florida cattle ranch and has stayed connected to the agriculture and livestock industry. She has spoken, presented or coordinated numerous regional and national conferences; and is well known in agricultural, culinary and sustainable agricultural circles.

**Ebony Webber** is a motivated, nonprofit executive with operational insight to drive vision, efficiency, and purpose. She is primarily responsible for providing leadership and support to the National Executive Committee, Advisory Board, and oversight and management of Strategic Partnerships for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS).

Hailing from a small, rural community, She found interest in developing students and providing resources and opportunities to increase access to academic and career-related programs in underserved communities. By cultivating innovative programs and strategic partnerships, Webber has been able to assist underrepresented students and professionals in recognizing and maximizing their full potential in the food, agriculture, and natural resources industries.

Many of her responsibilities support her passion for advocating for inclusion, diversity, and equity, and developing leaders, organizations, and communities to feed and clothe the next generation. Webber is passionate about building progressive and effective teams, valuing differences, empowering others, and personal growth.

Webber’s professional traits include: strategic-minded with the ability to build strong relationships and provide excellence in stakeholder relationship management, strategic planning/implementation, business development, budgeting, fundraising, and program development.
The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) would like to introduce Charmaine Wilson as the new Alabama State Statistician, effective September 25, 2022. Ms. Wilson will now be an integral part of NASS’s Southern Region.

Ms. Wilson comes to Alabama from the Wild and Wonderful State of West Virginia where she has been serving as West Virginia State Statistician since December 2014. Prior to West Virginia, Ms. Wilson held 3 NASS headquarters positions in Washington, DC, and worked in the Texas and Michigan Field Office for several years. She also served as a Soil Conservationist in Adel, IA with the Natural Resources Conservation Service prior to NASS. Ms. Wilson will bring a plethora of knowledge to the Alabama agriculture community where she will be establishing, maintaining, and strengthening new relationships with stakeholders as well as with colleges/universities where she will be responsible for recruiting our future leaders.

Ms. Wilson is an alumnue of Alcorn State University, Lorman, MS, earning her master and bachelor’s degree in Agriculture Economics. She was a proud member of the Sounds of Dynamite Marching Band. In the spring of 1995, she was initiated into the Delta Epsilon Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Ben Malone is the eighth State Conservationist to serve Alabama’s Natural Resources Conservation Service. He holds a degree in forest management from Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University (Alabama A&M). Malone began his career in conservation as a student trainee in New York and Maine with the U.S. Forest Service during his studies at Alabama A&M. He served as a Forester with the U.S. Forest Service in Vermont until he accepted a position with the NRCS as a Soil Conservationist in Mobile, Ala. in February 1997.

Afterwards, Malone became a District Conservationist and served in the Jasper and Mobile, Ala. offices. Over those five years in these communities, Malone assisted farmers with resource concerns on their row crop, cattle, dairy, poultry and timber operations. He also served on two National Technical Teams during this time. In 2003, he accepted a position as a Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Coordinator in Hammond, Louisiana. As a RC&D Coordinator, he oversaw 14 parishes where he promoted agricultural diversification, forest product utilization, developed markets and created business development opportunities. In 2005, Malone became the Emergency Operations Center Manager for Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts in Louisiana. Malone’s efforts included collaborating with local governments to address debris removal, channel slope repair and sediment removal projects related to the storm.

In March 2008, Malone became Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations for the Central Area of Alabama. In this role, he managed conservation efforts in 18 counties and 11 field offices. In April 2011, his area was devastated by numerous tornadoes. He and his staff are credited with helping communities recover from the disaster’s effects. In the summer of 2014, he was selected to serve as Acting State Conservationist in Alabama.
A native of Monroeville, Ala., Malone was heavily involved in 4-H during his childhood which guided him to a career in natural resources. He is married and has two children. In his free time, Malone enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with family and friends.

**USDA, RISK MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

Davina S. Lee has been with the USDA, Risk Management Agency for 28 years. She started as a co-op student in 1995 as a Computer Specialist. Upon graduation from the Valdosta State University in 1996 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems, Davina was hired full time. During her career with the Risk Management Agency, she has held several positions including a Risk Management Specialist, Deputy Director, and as of 2015, the Regional Office Director. She has received numerous awards and recognitions, most notably, RMA’s Administrator's Award for Civil Rights Leadership. The Valdosta RO has 11 employees and oversees the federal crop insurance program in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Puerto Rico.

**USDA, RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

Nivory Gordon has over 34 years of service with the USDA Rural Development. He started his career as a Co-op Student in 1987 while attending Alabama A & M University in Huntsville, Alabama. Gordon obtained a B.S. in Agricultural Education in 1989 and M.S. in Agricultural Management 1992. During his tenure with the Agency, he has illustrated respect for others, productive work environment and leadership with integrity.

Gordon held the following positions over the years with USDA: Assistant County Supervisor 1989-1991; Construction Analyst 1991-1995; Rural Development Specialist 1995-2002; Area Specialist 2002-2013; Area Director 2013-2021. Gordon has positively impacted the lives of many Rural Alabamians over the years. Based on his extensive experience, leadership and aggressive work ethics, his goal will be to operationalize the Agency's mission.

Gordon is a native of Wilcox County, Alabama where he resides with spouse Rachel. Nivory III and Bryant Arthur are his adult sons. He currently operates the family farm (beef cattle and quarter horses) in Furman, Alabama. Gordon serves on the Deacon Board of First-Born Church of Ackerville; Wilcox County Cattleman Association Board of Director, Delta Leadership Institute 2015-2016 Graduate; National Cutting Horse Association Membership; Selma Dallas County Alabama A & M Alumni Chapter President and various other community organizations.
**USDA, FARM SERVICE AGENCY**

**Clifton L. Warren, Jr.**, a native of Eutaw, Alabama, was appointed by the Biden Administration to serve as the State Executive Director of the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) in Alabama in November 2021.

Prior to his appointment, Warren served as an FSA County Executive Director for Hale, Perry, and Bibb Counties. Warren started his career with FSA in 1999 as a Temporary Program Technician. Over the last 23 years he served farmers and ranchers through many roles with FSA including County Operations Trainee, Program Technician, County Operations Reviewer, and District Director. Warren also served three years in the U.S. Army during the Persian Gulf War from 1990 to 1993.

Warren was raised on a small family farm in Greene County, Alabama, where they raised hogs and grew corn, peas, okra, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and watermelons. It was working along-side his grandmother on the farm that he learned the value of hard work and the important role that farming plays in the lives of people every day.

Warren is a member and has served as President/Polemarch of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc. (Tuscaloosa, Alabama) where he provided strong leadership, training, and direction for members at the local level while simultaneously making recommendations concerning policy and implementation at the regional and national level. He also served as Undergraduate Chapter Advisor for the University of Alabama (Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.) Since 2011, Warren has served as Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer for Zion Brush Creek Missionary Baptist Church in Eutaw, Alabama.

Warren is a highly innovative and results-oriented professional with a variety of academic, military, and civilian administrative and program experience with a total of over 26 years of experience in Public Policy Administration and Management. Warren and his wife Bernice reside in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, where he enjoys attending sporting events, traveling, and spending time with family.

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCILS (NARCDC)**

**Colton Buckley** is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils (NARCDC), where he has held various positions over the years, including 2nd Vice President and Executive Director of the Texas Association. With nearly a decade of experience in the government relations, economic development, and nonprofit sectors, Colton is a seasoned professional with a strong background in leadership and public service.

Colton has served as the former campaign manager and adviser to Texas Commissioner of Agriculture Sid Miller and was appointed to the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents by Governor Rick Perry. He holds a bachelor’s degree in agricultural services and development from Tarleton State University and a master’s degree in communication from Liberty University, where he is currently pursuing a PhD in public policy.

Growing up on his grandparents’ Brangus cow-calf operation in Arnett, Texas, Colton has always been an advocate for agriculture and the revitalization of rural communities. He currently resides in Crenshaw County, Alabama.
Dr. Evelyn Ford Crayton, RDN, LDN became the 90th President of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in 2014. She is the second person ever to be elected from Alabama. In 1957 Dr. E.N. Toddhunter, Dean of Home Economics of the University of Alabama was elected. History was made when Dr. Crayton was elected by the members from throughout the nation and the Overseas Dietitians.

For over 40 years, she served the public as an innovative nutrition leader in many roles at the district, state and national levels. She was awarded Professor Emerita at Auburn University upon her retirement in 2013. She is self-employed as Director of Living Well Associates, LLC and serves as an off campus Director of an Individualized Supervised Practice Pathway (ISPP) at Dominican University in Illinois.

She earned degrees from Grambling State University (Louisiana), St. Louis University (Missouri), and Auburn University (Alabama). Her area of specialty is Nutrition Education for the Public. She is nationally and internationally recognized and is a frequently requested speaker on topics related to nutrition and health literacy. During her 40 year tenure in Extension, she developed many Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program publications (EFNEP), several curricula and training programs for this highly successful community-based self-help program. When ISPPs were initiated in 2011, her innovative skills, with assistance from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), facilitated the creation of a partnership with Dominican University. She is a member of the National Organization of Blacks in Dietetics and Nutrition and is a Past President of the Alabama Dietetic Association and the Tuskegee District Dietetics Association.

During her long and successful career, there have been many mentors who encouraged and guided her in the pursuit of excellence in all that she does. She is committed to the scholarship of others. She is passionate about helping others, especially students, minorities and aspiring dietitians. She has received numerous honors and awards, some of which include: Outstanding Dietitian in Alabama; Alabama Extension Superior Service Award; National Association for Equal Opportunity Award (Grambling State University); Top 100 Black Leaders in Alabama (Congresswoman Terry Sewell), and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. Woman of the Year. She serves as a consultant to Head Start Programs in several states and served on numerous committees and advisory boards for universities, the Food and Drug Administration, the National Cancer Institute, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Montgomery County (AL) Board of Education. She is a life member of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and a founder of the Gamma Xi Chapter of the sorority at Auburn University; she served as the Faculty Advisor. She is a member of the Alabama Cooperative Extension Service Employees Organization, and a founding member of The Auburn Black Caucus.

She is active member of her community. She was appointed by Federal Judge Truman Hobbs to serve on the Montgomery County (AL) Board of Education’s Bi-Racial Committee. She served on the Montgomery County (AL) PTA Council, served as vice president of the Lamp Lighters (an organization for gifted children) and is a graduate of Leadership Montgomery, Class IX.

She is married to John L. Crayton. They are the proud parents of three adult children. She is a member, Sunday school teacher, chair of the Scholarship Committee and Hostess Board and a Deaconess at Antioch Baptist Church in Mt. Meigs, (Montgomery) AL.
AGENDA AND SPEAKERS
Raymon Shange
William Hodge
Millicent Braxton
Miles Robinson
Lindsey Lunsford
Demetrius Hook
Catrina Hoffman

AWARDS COMMITTEE
William Hodge
Carmalita Pollard
Millicent Braxton
Catrina Hoffman
LaTanya Hunt-Haralson

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING
Jacquelyn Carlisle
Millicent Braxton
Lindsey Lunsford
Karen Craig
Maurice Antoine

EXERT
Millicent Braxton
Janet Sullen
George Hunter
Raymon Shange
Catrina Hoffman
Billie Grant
Tiiwon Siaway
Wanda Carpenter-Morrow

FINANCIALS
Shannon Payne
Elizabeth Whetstone
DeAmbria Abner

LOGISTICS
Carmalita Pollard
John Myers
Wanda Carpenter-Morrow
George Hunter
William Hodge

IT TEAM
Karen Craig
Doug Eaves
Peter Kanyi
Amir Muhammad

REGISTRATION
Carmalita Pollard
Karen Craig
Wanda Carpenter-Morrow
John Myers

EVALUATIONS
John Myers
Raymon Shange
Shirley Brown
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