

Conference Agenda

Masters' Series
Technical Session/Practicum
Panel Discussion

THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019

8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Registration @ Louisiana Tech University, 1501 Reese Hall
8:30 am – 4:00 pm	<p>North Louisiana Farm Tour, Begins @ Louisiana Tech –Reese Hall</p> <p>Estes Farms (Hydroponic Production): Estes Farms a family operated farm focused on hydroponic growing in northern Louisiana. We grow lettuce, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, kale, collards, cabbage, and squash. We currently use about ¾ of an acre for the hydroponic operation. There are three greenhouses used to extend the growing season. One greenhouse is used for lettuce, one for tomatoes, and a third will be used for cherry tomatoes. The team is made up of John, Brooke, David, Abigail, and Judy Estes.</p> <p>Briarhill Farms (Diversified Homestead with Value-Added Production): The combined visions of husband and wife team Tom & Lorrie Faber, our journey began in 1986 when we were given an issue of Mother Earth News Magazine for a pickle recipe. The desire for simpler living and sustainability began at that point. In 2002, we turned our homesteading passion into a small business. Fast forward to 2019 where we live on our newly purchased 14-acre homestead just south of Ruston, Louisiana. We are a small farm dedicated to sharing our passion for farm fresh food, delicious vegetables, handcrafted products, and sustainability. Our focus is value-added products that we create for the enjoyment of our customers. Our products include: gourmet goat milk fudge, handcrafted goat milk soaps, hand-poured soy wax candles, and specialty baked goods. We love to promote locally grown and produced products. We open our farm up for school field trips to help educate children about the importance of sustainability and local agriculture.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch – Grown & Grazed</p> <p>Holly Creek Farm (Pastured Pork, Beef, Lamb and Eggs): We are Thad and Melissa Martin. We left the city during the summer of 2014 to live on the Martin family farm. Our goal was to ensure our children understood where food came from while becoming self-sustaining. We loved farm life and began growing food for our community the following year. We focus on high animal welfare, being stewards of our land using sustainable farming practices, protecting the health and regeneration of our soil and our local community and economy. We hope to provide our community with food they can trust for a very long time! Holly Creek Farm provides pastured pork, lamb, and beef.</p>
5:00 pm – 7:00 pm	<p>Welcome Reception @ Ruston Farmers Market Welcome: Mayor Ronny Walker Keynote Address: Sagdrina Jalal, Executive Director, Georgia Farmers Market Association</p>

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FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019

8:00 am – 4:30 pm	Registration @ Louisiana Tech University, 1501 Reese Hall				
8:30 am – 10:00 am	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening Plenary</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Welcome: Dr. Les Guice, President, Louisiana Tech University Message: Dr. William Green, Director, Tech, School of Agricultural Sciences and Forestry Keynote Address: Dr. Tim Seipel, Plant Ecologist, Montana State University</p>				
10:00 am – 10:30 am	Morning Break				
10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Exhibits Open	<p style="text-align: center;">Vegetables Love Flowers (Lisa Mason Ziegler)</p> <p>Learn how to have an organic garden where good bugs eat bad bugs, pollinators are abundant and the beautiful bouquet on the table came from your garden! Lisa tells all as she shares why flowers are the missing piece in many gardens, that flowers complete the circle of life to growing an organic garden. Flowers attract pollinators, beneficial insects and other good creatures.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Using the Lean System to Earn a Comfortable Living on a Farm (Ben Hartman)</p> <p>In this full day masterclass, Ben Hartman, author of <i>The Lean Farm</i> and <i>The Lean Farm Guide to Growing Vegetables</i>, will explain powerful concepts from the Japanese lean system that increase profits with less waste and work. Lean principles are universal, and the masterclass will cover practical techniques that farmers of any size and type can take home and immediately employ. Ben will provide examples of lean at work on his Indiana vegetable farm, Clay Bottom Farm, as well as on other farms.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Session 1: Introduction to Lean Principles for Farmers This session will provide an introduction to lean thinking on the farm.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Ruminants: General Husbandry and Economics for Direct-to-Consumer Farmers (Grant Estrade)</p> <p>In each session of this masterclass, Grant Estrade will cover general husbandry guidelines and challenges for the Louisiana farmer. Itemized cradle-to-grave costs for feed, equipment, fencing, etc. will be covered on a per animal unit basis giving producers a baseline so they will be able to make sound decisions and prepare for growth.</p> <p>Session 1: Ruminants: General husbandry and economics for direct-to-consumer farmers.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Sellers Perspective Facilitator: Jean McWeeney, President, North Louisiana Farm Fresh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craig Smith, Livestock Farmer, Smith Family Farms • Aaron Jennings, Beekeeper, Jennings Apiaries • Kate Estrade, Farmer, Local Cooling Farm • Melissa Martin, Farmer, Holly Creek Farm <p>The Sellers' Perspective panel will feature panelists who utilize various outlets for their products – grocery stores, farmers' markets, direct-to-consumers, specialty shops, etc. We'll investigate how and why they made the choices they did and the pros and cons they see with each outlet. There will be a Q&A period for the audience.</p>
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break (USDA FREE Technical & Financial Support)				

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<p>Grow Cut Flowers for Profit (Lisa Mason Ziegler)</p> <p>Learn the ins and outs of field-grown cut flowers for profit from veteran flower farmer Lisa Mason Ziegler. She discusses tips for getting started, who you can sell to, what to grow and how to sell cut flowers commercially. Flower farming can become a part of your homestead or your urban home with little investment. Ziegler's urban 1-1/4 acre cutting gardens produce thousands of stems each week in season.</p>	<p>Seven Types of Farm Waste (Ben Hartman)</p> <p>Session 2: Seven Types of Farm Waste At the heart of lean is eliminating <i>muda</i>, or waste, from your production system. This session will unpack seven types of <i>muda</i> common on farms, and show examples of how you can get rid of <i>muda</i> to increase efficiency and grow your profits. You will leave with a plan to banish <i>muda</i> from your own farm as a way to become more economically viable.</p>	<p>Poultry: General Husbandry and Economics for Broilers and Layers for Direct-to-Consumer Farmers (Grant Estrade)</p> <p>Session 2: Poultry: General Husbandry and Economics for broilers and layers for direct-to-consumer farmers.</p>	<p>The Buyers Perspective Facilitator: Jean McWeeney, President, NLFF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dana Milford, for His temple family foods • Desi Bourgeois, Grown & Grazed • Brian Warren, Gibson's Grocery Store • Melissa Martin, The Mosquito Supper Club <p>The Buyers' Perspective panel will feature panelists from a variety of disciplines including grocery stores, to-go food sellers, and restaurant owners. We'll explore how they source their supplies, what they look for in local sources, tips on becoming a supplier, and if there are local/state laws that must be followed.</p>
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Afternoon Break			
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	<p>Ag Applications of Drone Technology (Bill Blackwelder)</p>	<p>Lean Market Gardening (Ben Hartman)</p> <p>SESSION 3: Lean Market Gardening This practical session is geared toward small-scale market growers. Ben will explain the innovative techniques inspired by lean thinking that he and his wife Rachel use at Clay Bottom Farm to eliminate weeds and pests, manage soil, and cut out waste in the production of tomatoes, greens, and many other crops. You will go home with concrete, lean ideas to apply next season on your own vegetable operation.</p>	<p>Pigs: General Husbandry and Economics from a Farrow to Finish Pig Operation for Direct-to-Consumer Farmers (Grant Estrade)</p> <p>Session 3: Pigs: General husbandry and economics from a farrow to finished pig operation for direct-to-consumer farmers.</p>	<p>Building a Statewide Network: Farmers Market Leaders Discussion Facilitator: Darlene Wolnik, Farmers Market Consultant and Researcher, Farmers Market Coalition and Owner at Helping Public Markets Grow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jean McWeeney, President, North Louisiana Farm Fresh • Sagdrina Jalal, Executive Director, Georgia Farmers Market Association • Emily Mickley-Doyle, Co-founder, SPROUT NOLA <p>Farmers market leaders will explore how a statewide association of farmers markets can help market organizations thrive through promotion, information and education, and helping build capacity.</p>
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm	<p>Farm-to-Table Dinner @ Ruston Farmers Market Chef Tootie Morrison Keynote Address: Tracey Weaver, Founder and Director, Urban University</p>			

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SATURDAY, MARCH 9, 2019

8:00 am – 4:30 pm	Registration @ Louisiana Tech University, 1501 Reese Hall				
8:30 am – 10:00 am	Exhibits Open	<p>Silvopasture in Practice (Steve Gabriel)</p> <p>A presentation outlining the basic principles and opportunities to implement the inclusion of trees and forest in grazing systems.</p>	<p>Market Analysis (Darby Simpson)</p> <p>Learn how to access and capitalize on your farm's marketing opportunities by understanding your customers, your competitors and your surrounding geographical areas. This session will help you to focus your energy on areas of marketing that can yield the best results first. Note: This session is applicable for any farmer, not just livestock.</p>	<p>Fungal Foray (Dr. Laura Sims)</p> <p>Learn how to look for and properly collect fungi in the forest. Learn how to identify a few mushrooms that are choice edibles and how to recognize inedible, and less delectable look-alikes. Then take a walk in the woods with Dr. Sims, collect fungi including edible ones (depending on availability), and take notes for the fungal diversity lab in the afternoon.</p>	<p>Establishing A Mayhaw Orchard (Michael Book)</p> <p>We will cover the planning, design and implementation process of setting up an orchard. From grafting your own trees, planting, and irrigation to maintenance and harvesting.</p>
10:00 am – 10:30 am		Morning Break			
10:30 am – 12:00 pm		<p>Managing the Farm Woodlot (Steve Gabriel)</p> <p>Fundamental to any agroforestry practice is understanding the basics of forest ecology and how we can steward the forest for present goals and future generations</p>	<p>Farm Sales Models (Darby Simpson)</p> <p>Learn about 10 different ways to sell your farm products with a focus on pasture-based meat. These tried and true proven strategies have been utilized over the past 12 seasons at Simpson Family Farm. Note: This session is applicable for any farmer, not just livestock.</p>	<p>Providing Aesthetics and Food Using Edible Landscaping (Dr. Paul Jackson)</p> <p>Edible landscaping is a practice that involves using plants that produce food to serve in a constructed, aesthetically pleasing design in the landscape. Examples include using uniquely designed raised bed vegetable gardens that utilize otherwise unused space on a property or using fruit producing shrubs and small trees in foundation plantings around a home. Plants selected for these spaces provide beauty during the year while at the same time yielding harvestable food. This approach to landscaping can be enjoyed by people of all ages and installed on properties with varying intentions, such as for teaching children, providing food security, and reducing food costs.</p>	<p>Sustainability in Beekeeping (Tom Faber & Aaron Jennings)</p> <p>Pollinators are important to all aspects of agriculture, and food production. In this session we will explore the ins and outs of different types of hives, management techniques, honeybee colony structure, predators of the hive and honeybee, honey, value-added products from the hive, and sustainability in the apiary. Tom and Aaron bring a combined 19 years of beekeeping experience to this session and will share their experience with marketing their products through farmers markets, Whole Foods, and other local specialty stores.</p>
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch Break				

1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	<p>Tree Fodder for Livestock Food & Medicine (Steve Gabriel)</p> <p>Tree Fodder for Livestock Food & Medicine – Several species including willow, poplar, and black locust have been researched extensively and offer a wide range of opportunities for utilization in Silvopasture systems.</p>	<p>Product Pricing and Retail Cut Selection (Darby Simpson)</p> <p>Walk through a profit and loss spreadsheet for poultry, pork and beef. Also, learn how to create retail cut selections based on your products, your market, and the time of year. We will even cover how to go about packaging your retail cuts for success. Most importantly, learn how to set profitable prices on those cuts!</p>	<p>Season Extension Using High Tunnels</p> <p>Facilitator: Dr. Naveen Adusumilli, Assistant Professor, LSU AgCenter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chris Coreil, USDA NRCS Miron Gordey, JCM Greenhouse <p>This session will cover construction options for high tunnels, system management, and crop opportunities.</p>	<p>Converting from Bahia Grass Pasture to Native Prairie (Marc Pastorek)</p> <p>Marc's presentation will share the story of his seed farm in Mississippi over the last 20 years, its planting and establishment, and the results over time.</p>
2:30 pm – 3:00 pm	Afternoon Break			
3:00 pm – 4:30 pm	<p>Putting it All Together: Designing A Silvopasture Grazing Plan (Steve Gabriel)</p> <p>Designing a Silvopasture grazing plan using Google Earth as a planning tool for your farm.</p>	<p>Appropriate Technology for Sustainable Agriculture (Panel TBA)</p>	<p>Fungal Diversity Lab (Dr. Laura Sims)</p> <p>Peruse and learn about the different types of fungi in Louisiana's forests! The forests abound with fungal fruitifications; take a close and personal look at their beautiful fruiting bodies and spores, and learn a little about how to identify them. Then learn about the many uses of fungi in food.</p>	<p>Advanced Beekeeping for Profit (Amy Weeks)</p> <p>The Advanced Beekeeping for Profit seminar will focus on working with the natural lifecycle of the colony to harvest the abundant hive products while maintaining bee colony health. The collecting, preparing, and selling of various hive products will be covered.</p>
4:30 pm – 5:00 pm	Closing Plenary facilitated by Dexter Sapp and Donna Isaacs			

NEW SESSION

Saturday, March 9 10:30 am – 12:00 pm	Growing Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Valerie Costanza, Registered Dietitian Elizabeth Griffon, Certified Yoga Instructor and Educator Conrad Cable, Farmer and Permaculture Advocate <p>The Growing Community block will include 3 speakers followed by a moderated Q&A. Certified Nutritionist, Valerie Constanza, will present "The Health Benefits of Eating Local". Certified Yoga instructor and educator, Elizabeth Griffon, will speak on "Sowing Joy (and Community) with Goga." Conrad Cable will put forth his vision of cooperatively organized, local food production in "The Greater Ouachita Grower's Network". These three speakers will offer a full circle experience of local food and health perspectives, from educating the public, to the local production and consumption that creates our food web.</p>	