7th Annual Ag & Food Conference WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

**Session 1** - 9:30 – 11:00

**Land Leasing Panel**

Panelists: Fred Ames, Easton-based land owner, Ames Real Estate Trust;

Bill Braun is a farmer at the Ivory Silo in Wesport, MA.  He grows vegetables on 2-3 acres of leased land using sustainable practices, for sale to a handful of restaurants and catering companies in the Boston area. The heart of the vegetable operation is to save its seed wherever possible, in an effort to establish a regionally-adapted seed stock and share it with his farmer peers along the South Coast.

Ashley Brister is a Massachusetts native with 10 years of experience working on diversified fruit and vegetable farming operations. Looking to put roots down closer to her family, Ashley found herself at Eva’s Garden in 2012, managing the production of specialty greens and herbs for sales to some of Boston’s finest restaurants. She has recently made the transition to Round The Bend Farm, a Center for Restorative Community and is looking forward to bringing her passion for social justice issues, as they relate to food and agriculture, to the South Coast community by teaching her skills to budding farmers and visitors and offering nutrient dense fruit and vegetables to CSA members.

Moderator: Margiana Petersen-Rockney - As a farmer herself, Margiana understands first-hand the challenges facing new farmers. She grew up on a dairy goat farm in SE MA and her family attended SEMAP events for years. While studying at Brown, she also leased five acres and created a CSA vegetable and livestock farm and internship program in nearby Rehoboth, MA. Margiana founded and organizes the Young Farmer Network based in RI, MA, and CT. She works for the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project and coordinates the Beginning Farmer Network of Mass. She still grows produce on about an acre, mostly in garlic, in Rehoboth, MA.

**Rotational Grazing as a Management Strategy for Conservation Land**

**Presenter: Geoff Beresford, Beresford of Tiverton, pasture-based livestock**

Many land trusts and conservation agencies are faced with pressure from invasive weeds on ecologically valuable grasslands. Classical solutions usually involve chemical herbicides and late mowing, but there is another option! In this session, livestock farmer Geoff Beresford will share his experience working with the Tiverton Land Trust to use intensively grazed beef cattle as a land management tool for combating invasive weeds on conservation land. The session will be informative for anyone interested in this exciting new chapter of the local livestock business: new and established farmers, conservationists, beef consumers, and the general public. There will be plenty of time for Q&A and discussion.

Geoff Beresford is a Rhode Island native with a background from the conventional meat industry and a keen interest in effective solutions for responsible food production. In 2011 he started Beresford of Tiverton, which he bills as "a pasture-based livestock business." He offers grass-fed beef and pastured poultry products to local consumers, land management solutions, custom grazing and custom butchering services in Tiverton and Little Compton.

**Growing Hops and Brewing Beer**

**Presenter: Sanne Kure-Jensen, NOFA/RI, Agricultural Writer & Grant Writer**

Longtime gardener and home brewer Sanne Kure-Jensen will discuss cultivating, harvesting and drying hops. Participants will learn about trellising systems, how to tell when flowers are ready for harvest as well as proper drying and storage techniques. Kure-Jensen will discuss the history of hops across the globe. Hops have ornamental landscape and medicinal uses besides flavoring beer. Participants will learn about different types of beer (lager, ale, IPA, porter, stout, etc.) and their appropriate hops. The workshop will include home brewing steps, brewing terms, required equipment, ingredients, sanitation, yeast types, bottling, and sources for recipes and ingredients. Kure-Jensen will discuss dry hopping and selecting an ideal conditioning site; temperature and light matter. Learn the right way to pour a homebrew when your efforts pay off.

Sanne Kure-Jensen is an organic grower, beekeeper and horticultural writer in Portsmouth, RI where she has been promoting pollinator-friendly growing for many years. She is a regular contributor to “Country Folks Grower.” Sanne offers workshops on pollinators, beekeeping, ecological landscaping and home brewing. She also manages educational programs and outreach for the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Rhode Island (NOFA/RI).

**Improving Production for Medium/Large-size Gardens**

**Presenter: Steve Walach, Friends Academy School, Dartmouth, MA**

Learn how to manage gardening basics like sunlight, irrigation, crop rotations, fertilizers and organization of garden space to produce average yields of up to 300 pounds per 100 square feet over the course of a year.

Steve Walach teaches at Friends Academy in Dartmouth and has managed large and medium-sized gardens for 14 years.

**Intensive Tomato Production in the High Tunnel**

**Presenter: Andy Radin, URI Extension**

Tomato production in New England can be greatly bolstered by growing in high tunnels, which takes advantage of early soil warming, gains season extension on both ends, allows for dry leaf surfaces (=lower disease pressure) and high fruit quality, makes use of available vertical space, and greatly increases per-plant yield. We will look at trellising, general soil and water management, and pest management concerns and control options.

Andy Radin is an Agricultural Extension Agent with the University of Rhode Island. He has worked for the Nova Scotia Agriculture College on solid waste composting and has researched the Colorado potato beetle in Maine. Radin has a horticulture degree from the University of Wisconsin and a master’s in entomology from the University of Maine.

**Food Safety Modernization Act Update & The MA Commonwealth Quality Program**

**Presenters: Richard Bonanno, University of Massachusetts Extension; Michael Botelho, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources**

The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is the most sweeping reform of our food safety laws in more than 70 years.  For the first time, the FDA will have a legislative mandate to require comprehensive, science based preventive controls across the food supply. Included in this session will be an update on buyer requirements in the Commonwealth as well as information on the Commonwealth Quality Program, a program designed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources which serves to identify farm products that are grown, harvested and processed in Massachusetts using GAP and Eco BMPs.

**Plenary Presentation** 12:15

**Auditorium**

**Todd Sandstrum, South Shore Great Pumpkin Challenge**

These days, too many kids have never experienced the joy of gardening - turning a simple seed into food or beautiful flowers. Todd Sandstrum and Genevieve Pollock thought outside the box and developed this innovative, educational, marketing and community-building tool.  This past year, the South Shore Great Pumpkin Challenge got five communities involved and over 3,000 kids working in the dirt. And it keeps growing... The grant program has been sponsored by Coast Of Maine Organics, Inc., a national company! The Pumpkin Challenge has been written up in Today's Garden Center and South Shore Edible along with many local papers. In 2013, the Challenge caught the eye of global media mogul Zodiac as well. What is growing faster - the pumpkins or the Challenge?

Learn about the movement, how it all started and the hurdles the group has faced in this fifteen minute video. Afterwards, learn what is on tap for this year’s South Shore Great Pumpkin Challenge.

**Session 2** - 1:00 – 2:30

**Soil and Nutrient Management in High Tunnels**

**Presenter: Geoffrey Njue, UMass Extension, Green Industry Specialist**

High tunnels are unheated or minimally heated plastic covered structures in which crops are grown in the soil. Because high tunnels trap solar energy in the structure that warms the air and soil in the spring and in the fall, they provide many benefits to growers such as extending the production season and increased crop yields. However because the soil in high tunnels is protected from weather elements the management of the soil and plant nutrients in high tunnels is different from field production. This presentation will discuss soil and nutrient management before construction and during production in the high tunnel.

As a Green Industry specialist, Geoffrey works with the greenhouse, nursery and landscaping industry to provide education programs and research based information. He has broad experience with Extension and the agricultural and green industry. He worked most recently as commercial horticulture field specialist for South Dakota State University Extension. He worked with greenhouse and nursery growers and commercial fruit and vegetable growers. Prior to joining South Dakota State University Extension, Geoffrey worked for 11 years at the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension as an Agricultural Extension Educator with responsibility for ornamental horticulture in two counties.

**Starting Your Organic Garden**

**Presenter: Jim Lough, founder of Backyard Gardens, Buzzards Bay, MA**

This presentation will be focused on demonstrating low cost and energy efficient ways to start an organic garden. Perfect for the beginner, Jim will take you from seed to harvest.

Jim Lough is an organic farmer and founder of Backyard Gardens in Buzzards Bay, MA. He has a passion for providing local, organic produce to his community. He is a professional musician, documentarian, writer and a true lover of nature and the outdoors. In February 2012, Jim & Nicole Cormier of Delicious Living Nutrition traveled across the country to interview farmers for their upcoming documentary, Organic Farms are Everywhere, expected to be finished this Spring.

**Building a Strong Brand to Increase Sales and Build Customer Loyalty**

**Presenter: Myrna Greenfield, Good Egg Marketing, Boston, MA**

Every farm has a unique story that can help attract loyal customers. This interactive session shows how to choose words and images that will make your website, social media and other low-cost marketing tools more effective. Take home a handout to help you develop a powerful brand.

Myrna Greenfield is the “Top Egg” at Good Egg Marketing, a Massachusetts-based business that specializes in promoting good food and good causes for farms, food producers, nonprofits, and small businesses. Good Egg services include market research, sales and marketing strategies, branding, websites, and social media plans. www.goodeggmarketing.com

**Growing Strawberries: Focus on Insect and Disease Management and IPM**

**Presenters: Sonia Schloemann, UMass Extension Fruit Program; Jim Ward, Ward’s Berry Farm, Sharon, MA**

This talk will cover the basics of growing strawberries in New England and some of the major insect and disease management challenges commonly found here.  We'll discuss site and soil requirements, planting systems, and Integrated Pest Management strategies that minimize the use of pesticides (organic or conventional).

As UMass Extension Fruit Team Leader and MA State SARE Coordinator, Sonia has 25 years of experience working with commercial fruit growers and 15 years prior experience working in diverse farming enterprises. Her focus has been on sustainability and developing IPM systems for crops, community farming models, and she has also worked recently in the area of native pollinator conservation.

**Cucumber Production in the High Tunnel & the Field**

**Presenters: Brad Clegg, 4 Town Farm, Seekonk, MA; Derek Christianson, Brix Bounty Farm, Dartmouth, MA**

From variety selection and fertility management to planting dates, pest, and disease management, this workshop will cover commercial scale field & high-tunnel cucumber production. We'll focus our discussion on tips & techniques for profitable production. Including discussions of downy and powdery mildew controls, fertigation & trellis systems, planting media, succession planting, plastic mulches, harvest techniques, & more.

Brad Clegg farms at Four Town Farm (http://4townfarm.com/)  
  
Derek Christianson is the farmer at Brix Bounty Farm in Dartmouth, Massachusetts. While managing a diverse selection of crops, he has been growing cucumbers using organic practices for the past 12 seasons.   
([www.brixbounty.com](http://www.brixbounty.com))

**Session 3** - 3:00 – 4:30

**CSA Panel**

**Panelists: Susan Murray, Apponagansett Farm, Dartmouth, MA; Steve Murray, Heart Beets Farm, Berkley, MA; 3rd presenter tbd**

Susan Murray has worked on several organic farms that all focused on the CSA model. In 2012 she and Tony Wood founded Apponagansett Farm in Dartmouth, MA. We are a small, diverse farm using sustainable farming practices to grow vegetables, fruit, flowers, and herbs for a CSA and farmers' markets. We also raise laying hens on pasture for eggs and have a small flock of sheep and goats.

Steve Murray holds a degree in physics from Umass Dartmouth and has been involved in farming since 2007 when he interned at Kettle Pond Farm in Berkley. The following year he became the farm manager and has not stepped away from the farming world since. He and his wife Sarah started Heart Beets Farm this year where they grow vegetables on roughly 2.25 acres. Their goal is to grow the most nutritious food possible using the best practices. They sell mainly through a growing CSA community, and on-site Farm Stand and local Farmers Markets. Steve enjoys educating people about soil fertility and human nutrition.

Moderator: Ashley Brister, Round the Bend Farm Center for Restorative Community

**Eating Farm Fresh in Every Season**

**Presenter: Nicole Cormier, Delicious Living Nutrition, Sandwich, MA**

The local food movement is bringing flavor and nutrition to the table that can have a huge impact on your health. The foods you choose to eat throughout the day can help increase energy levels, improve your overall health and maintain a healthy relationship with food. This workshop will give you the tools you'll need to start incorporating more local produce and locally produced foods into your meals. It will include local food sources, resources, recipes and how to eat locally in every season.

Nicole Cormier is a Registered Dietitian and local food enthusiast. She is owner of the nutrition counseling company, *Delicious Living Nutrition, Inc.*, inspiring each client to connect to their food sources and improve their whole health. Her community outreach regarding the local food movement includes her radio show, *Radio Brunch*, her health food store, *Farm Fare Market*and her partnership with *Backyard Gardens,*a micro-farm run by Jim Lough. She is also author of the *Everything Guide to Nutrition*, *The $5 a Meal Vegetarian Collage Cookbook* and *201 Organic Smoothies & Juices for a Healthy Pregnancy.* In February 2012, Jim & Nicole traveled across the country to interview farmers for their upcoming documentary, Organic Farms are Everywhere, expected to be finished this Winter.

**A Community Tree Farm in Fall River**

**Presenters: Perry Long, Director, Office Neighborhood Development, Fall River, MA; Matthew Thomas, Attorney**

Perry C. Long is the Director/Chief Service Officer of the Office of Neighborhood Development & Outreach for the City of Fall River, Massachusetts. Perry began his career working for the Massachusetts Great & General Court as the District Director for the 8th Bristol District, State Representative Michael J. Rodrigues (D-Westport). In 2013, Perry was appointed Director & Chief Service Officer of the Office of Neighborhood Development & Outreach. In his current role, Perry provides oversight on all functions of the Office of Neighborhood Development & Outreach, working collaboratively with the city administration as well as the Community Development Agency.

**Growing Organic Carrots for CSA Into Winter**

**Presenter: Laura Tangerini, Tangerini’s Spring Street Farm, Millis, MA**

This workshop will focus on growing great carrots for a CSA especially if you distribute into the winter and deep winter. Organic carrot production is a challenge. I will discuss how we grow this high-value crop using organic practices with minimal labor. I'll discuss production practices that allow you to have carrots year round. Varieties, soil amendments, seeding, seeding dates, weeding, thinning, harvesting and storage will be discussed.

Laura Tangerini spent many years growing vegetables in Maine and began Tangerini’s Spring Street Farm in Millis, MA, in the 1994. Over the years she has grown the farm to what it is today. Income comes from an on-site farm stand, greenhouse and ice cream shop, a 300 member CSA operating year-round, and agri-entertainment including lot of u-pick opportunities, concerts, birthday parties, summer camp for kids, field trips and classes. The farm’s practices are mainly organic.  
  
**Carrots: Post-Harvest Methods & Storage**

**Presenter: Ruth Hazzard, UMass Extension**

We"ll focus on post-harvest methods and storage needs, and how some different winter storage facilities met the needs of carrots  in a study we did in 2012-2013. Also: to wash or not wash before storage -- is one better than the other? 

Ruth V. Hazzard works for University of Massachusetts Extension as an educator and researcher in ecological pest management and vegetable cropping systems.  Since getting her MS in Entomology in 1989 she has worked with both organic and conventional farmers throughout New England on pest management strategies in vegetable crops. Her focus in recent years has included production systems for winter harvest and sales of vegetable crops, including experiments with fall carrots, storage systems, and low tunnels. She started the year-round Student Farming Enterprise program, now in its 8th year, which gives UMass students practical experience in growing and marketing organic vegetables. She lives and gardens in Amherst with her husband, next to the North Amherst Community Farm.

**Vermicomposting:**

**Presenter: Jenny Galli, formerly with The Worm Ladies of Charlestown**

Jenny will provide a fun and up-close workshop for participants who are interested in learning how to use worms, specifically red wigglers, for your very own household composting system! Learn how to use these amazing creatures to minimize waste. Vermicomposting is easy, clean, and fun, and Jenny will provide great tips for keeping your worms healthy.