

# 2018 Urban Farming Conference

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## Panel Descriptions

**Friday, March 16 and Saturday, March 17, 2018**

### Friday Keynote:

#### **Radical [Re]Constructions: Revaluing Food, Farming, Family and Future**

The talk will unpack the creative practices of the Sweet Water Foundation, highlighting how locally deployed creative interventions that blend education, art, architecture, citizen science, and community-scale production are cultivating innovative models for community-conscious neighborhood development in the Southside of Chicago and beyond.

### Farm Design Practicum / Workshop (All Day Workshop)

**Day long workshop** to build design literacy and understanding of the requirements and options for designing and permitting an urban farm. We will use a real site as the basis for the workshop and approach the design in three iterations: a pop up temporary farm – how do you start growing immediately; a basic permanent farm that assumes some land security and introduces permanent infrastructure and the Mothership Farm which takes some investment and most often makes sense when long term tenure is secured.

### Growing Food, Building Community: On-Site Production at Boston Hospitals

As authorities on health and in their position as anchor institutions in Boston (employers of thousands, feeding thousands, addressing health issues) hospitals can invest in growing food to improve access to healthy food and provide economic development and jobs. Boston Medical Center opened the first rooftop farm on a hospital in Spring of 2016 and produced approximately 8000 lbs of food that was utilized in their food pantry and food services for patients and staff. BMC secured funding and built the farm in a matter of months and are now utilizing it to provide food for people in need, to connect their clinical care to living a health lifestyle, to create jobs, and to teach the community about growing and cooking fresh foods. Institutions and other large employers can utilize roof space and other campus spaces to improve the health of the Boston community

### University and Non-Profit Partnership: A Lowell Case Study

In 2017, the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, and Mill City Grows, a Lowell non-profit with a mission of food access and education, teamed up to build and maintain a one acre urban farming site on the UML campus. This talk will cover the story of how this project began, plans for the site moving forward, and the challenges and opportunities that come with creating this type of partnership.

### Hydroponics: Engaging Youth in Our School System

In this session we will share the model for our curriculum and how we are engaging youth in learning to grow produce hydroponics. We will briefly present the design of our systems, the science of hydroponics, and how one can do hydroponics in your own classroom or after-school location and how we are scaling the work across the state.

### Revitalizing City Landscapes

Learn about a range of urban agriculture projects from Jessie Banhazl, founder of Green City Growers, a leading commercial urban farming company in the Northeast. The session will feature an overview of sites where city landscapes have been revitalized through urban ag projects including public/private partnerships, and where community engagement has been successfully measured and achieved.

#### Ethnic Foods and Our Communities

This panel will discuss the importance of access to ethnic foods for cultural communities. We will explore what it means to establish culturally diverse market spaces in communities with low access; and why we should support farmers, fishers, and all food producers in building businesses that sustain all our vibrant food cultures.

#### The Role of School Gardens as an Entry Point and Connector to Urban Agriculture

Learn how school garden programming can incorporate youth & family voice and school feedback, to create more inclusive gardens. This includes building culturally-relevant crops into the garden plan, providing school garden leaders with both gardening & cultural competency training and facilitating discussions on culturally-relevant food. We will also share how creating more community around food through shared meals can build relationships by talking about family or cultural food traditions.

#### "We Grow Community": Strategies and Tools for Community Organizing

This workshop will be a dynamic discussion about how to organize diverse neighbors in urban neighborhoods. Orion will share the story of the creation of the Egleston Community Orchard and how neighbors of all backgrounds came together to transform a vacant lot that inspired the birth of the Boston Food Forest Coalition (BFFC). BFFC is a non-profit community land trust for neighborhood "forest gardens", with member sites in Dorchester, JP, East Boston, West End, and Mattapan. In sharing this story, Orion will highlight strategies and tools for community organizing, how to get consensus, and how to balance the need to make sure all voices are heard and the need to engage people through action. Your stories, experiences, and expertise are welcome - we will harness the collective intelligence in the room to learn together.

#### Leveraging Public/Private Partnerships to Increase Growing Spaces

Learn how to leverage partnerships with community-based organizations to develop community gardens and urban farms. Participants will gain a comprehensive understanding of each phase of the project from design, partnership development, funding, soils management, gardener recruitment, and activation.

#### A Case Study in Partnership: The Lynn Food and Fitness Alliance and The Food

For the past seven years, The Lynn Food and Fitness Alliance and The Food Project have partnered to support food system change in the City of Lynn. With the support of Mass in Motion, we have been able to use our different skills and networks to do work that neither organization could have done on its own. In 2014, the LFFA and TFP partnered with community groups, the Board of Health and Parks and Recreation Department to create a policy for the use of public land for community gardens. Over the past year, we have worked together on an ambitious project called Lynn Grows, an initiative that brings together residents from across the city to create a vision and set of priorities for food system change in Lynn. This workshop will examine the successes, challenges, and lessons learned from this partnership.

#### Changing the Food System Through Policy Advocacy

A how-to session on policy tools for changing the food system. Whether you're facing a local zoning ordinance preventing you from keeping chickens or building a hoop house, or a state law impacting your farm, you'll learn practical advocacy skills plus insider tips on best practices in policy advocacy.

#### "Farm City": Local Food as a Driver of Place

This session explores the increasing connection between urban agriculture and urban design. While our urban centers are growing, the demand for healthier, locally sourced food is also on the rise. It's time for our cities to embrace a new design philosophy.

#### Regulations and Ordinances: City of Brockton's Journey to an Agriculture Plan

Take the journey through the City of Brockton's Planners and community members as they share the work over the past 2 years to get to a draft of their municipal urban agriculture plan.

#### A New Approach to Food Access: Best Practices to Shift Systems

Join a conversation with practicing experts in the field of local farming, the business of food and philanthropic support of food systems and agricultural businesses. Learn best practices that stimulate innovative methods to strengthening the local food system and provide opportunities for greater more sustainable business opportunities for local producers. Panelists in this workshop will unpack the current "predominant" food system and bring insight to more equitable and local practices through their work and contributions to a new approach of a new local food economy.

#### Freight Farms' Leafy Green Expansion onto Campuses and Institutions

Attendees will hear from experts who are leading the way with "outside the box" food production for urban and rural communities. Leveraging Technology to Grow Food, Expand Minds and Enrich Community Year-Round, learn how on-site container farms create new possibilities for combining the growing season and the learning season.

#### Job Skills & Agriculture: Innovative Models for At-Risk and Formerly Incarcerated Youth

Discussion focuses on investment and support for formerly incarcerated and at-risk teens through intensive agriculture and food-based job training. Our panelists share their work on initiatives and programs that transform lives and communities.

#### The Building of Somerville's Urban Agriculture Network

Somerville MA has created a network of urban ag opportunities ranging from the urban ag ordinance itself to school gardens, a semi-commercial urban farm, a mobile market, and more. Come learn about the benefits, costs, and prerequisites to such a network of urban ag opportunities.

#### Snap and The Farm Bill: The Impact on Farmers and Our Communities

What's the Farm Bill? Why does it matter? Build your toolbox, and take away actions your communities can do to preserve the programs that ensure healthy food is accessible to all: farmers markets, community food projects, beginning farmers and ranchers, specialty crops, diverse farmers, the SNAP safety network, and farm to school.

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#### Common Ground: Rural and Urban Farmers of Color

Our experienced and committed agriculturally based professionals of color bring their stories from the fields, city lots and courtroom, sharing their unique perspectives and of those the work with. Discussion brings to light the common ground of urban and rural farmers of color.

### Creating a Culture of Healthy Food: Mobilizing, Connecting and Coordinating Stakeholders

To create an equitable food system, it is crucial to spark innovative approaches that involve cross-sector partnerships and a shared accountability to the historical lack of equitable access to healthy food within urban communities and the overall health impact on residents. Join a conversation about how Healthcare, Agricultural businesses, Housing, and Government are aligning to ensure that the visions and conversation of equitable access are truly implemented on the ground and are narrowly focused on creating a culture of health for all. Panelists will address the inequities (injustices) that have historically limited access to healthy food, share their contributions, their organization's work and bring insight as to what is being done to improve the health of urban communities through improved access to healthier food.

### Urban Production Sites: Potential Drivers of Improved Health, Economic Development, and Civic Engagement

Attendees can expect to learn about mechanisms in which urban production sites increase social capital, with implications for individual and community health: (1) building social networks; (2) providing opportunities for resource sharing and economic development; (3) reflecting and reinforcing collective efficacy; perspectives on urban production sites driving civic engagement in urban areas; and (4) preserving cultural knowledge and practice in diaspora: urban production sites being environments conducive to the transfer of positive behaviors from adult to child.

### Marketing and Production of Mushrooms

Expert Willie Crosby will bring his years of experience to share best practices for mushroom production as well as the marketing side of the mushroom business. You will have the opportunity to discuss topics such as; "what are best markets, what are good species for different markets (farmers market, retail, wholesale)" and more!

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**March 17, Saturday: 8:00-6:00 PM**

### **A.M.Keynote: "An Agroecological Paradigm"**

**Presenter: Isis Salcines, Havana, Cuba, Outreach Director**, Organopónico Vivero Alamar. The Organopónico Vivero Alamar is one of Havana, Cuba's largest and oldest urban farms. Isis Salcines will share their experiences implementing agroecology, addressing food security, and discuss the social, economic and environmental impacts of the farm.

### **P.M. Closing Panel: The State of Urban Farming : Where Are We and What's Next?**

Six years into the Commonwealth's urban farming initiative it seems fair to ask some hard questions: What is the status of urban farming in Massachusetts? Has it reached the goals we set back in 2012? Have we had positive impacts on improving access and affordability of fresh, locally grown (urban) food in low-income communities across the state? Are urban farms closer to discovering the equation for self-sustaining economic viability? Have our efforts afforded local residents with ample opportunities for inclusion? If not, what are the major remaining challenges? Most importantly, is there a shared vision of community food systems capable of addressing most, if not all of these challenges simultaneously?

### **Youth and Urban Farming (youth only) Workshops**

Opening Session

### "Paving Your Own Pathways"

SWF apprentices share their experiences about the importance of taking a leadership role in the process of rebuilding community and navigating the ever shifting pathways for entrepreneurship

- *Emmanuel Pratt, Sweetwater Foundation, Chicago Il.*
- *Devantae Phillips, Sweet Water Foundation, Apprentice, Chicago, Il.*

### Interactive Lunchtime Session

Activity led by Gardening the Community Team

- Toussaint Paskins, Food Access and Market Manager, Gardening the Community,
- Brandon Robinson Ortiz, Youth and Farm Fellow, Gardening the Community,
- Ariana Williams, Youth Program and Community Engagement Manager, Gardening the Community

### Community Build with The Food Project

Community Build is an interactive activity that places participants in a simulated experience where they must build their ideal community to promote active and healthy living within the established "system".

Led by:

- Manny Encarnacion, Root Crew Supervisor, The Food Project, North Shore
- The Food Project Root Members

### Campus Tour (optional)

Youth- Only Tour of Bunker Hill Community College

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### Soil Health in Urban Environments

In this session, presenters will relay the importance of having soils in urban settings tested, both for potentially harmful compounds found in urban settings more than rural settings, and nutrient levels in order to apply the recommended amount of fertility for optimum crop growth. Recommendations will be provided on how to apply fertility, both for organic or conventional systems

### Integrated Compositing Facility and Bioenergy Greenhouse Workshop

Compost generates heat, moisture and carbon dioxide and water vapor. Greenhouses can be integrated with sophisticated and basic composting operations, and these valuable compost byproducts used to boost greenhouse productivity and reduce or eliminate reliance on fossil fuel and electric power for year-round crop production. A range of ancient and modern systems, commercial and backyard scale will be discussed, based on more than 30 years of research and practice. This workshop can help attendees avoid costly trial and error and determine which methods and technologies are practical for their applications.

### Value Added: Branding, Packaging and Markets

Interested in turning local fresh produce into products like pickles, pesto, jam or sauces to sell at farmers' markets or CSA's? Confused about recipe development, scheduled processes, permitting, or labeling? Join CommonWealth Kitchen for an informative presentation on the basics of value-added processing and learn about their capacity to provide small-batch manufacturing services for local farms.

### Building Integrated Agriculture for Enhanced Urban Resilience

Forecasts indicate that we will need to produce at least 60% more food by 2050 to meet demands of growing populations, primarily in urban areas. An increasing demand for local food is making food a focal point of the urban experience. Given these drivers, we will explore how cities, communities and farmers are deploying innovative

approaches to agriculture and food production that enhance resilience and placemaking, while also addressing resource constraints. We will also discuss the opportunities for and challenges of local, urban food initiatives.

#### Transparent Soil: Innovations in Production

In this session we will present what transparent soil is, how transparent soil can be used to engaged to grow and research environmental stresses and pollutants on plants and their root structures.

#### You Have the Land, Now What Do You Do?

A condensed, interactive session on the basics of farm design: principles and process of farm design that can lead participants to their own checklists for decision making. Through examples they will can delve into storm water and rainwater catchment and reuse, materials for structure and pathways, compost structures, shed design, greenhouses, etc

#### Land Access in the City: From The Ground Up

Land tenure continues to be major challenge to farm site expansion. Learning how to navigate the labyrinth of individual city processes is one of the pathways to land access. In this workshop, we will explore relevant questions about land access, acquisition, and development and equip participants to understand how to apply the answers to their specific situations. We will start with who, what and where questions for farmers and move to the basics of zoning and permitting (where can you farm? what can you build?) to who in the city structure can answer specific questions (what about taxes?). We welcome all levels of experience.

#### Structures on the Farm – Innovations for Urban Sites

Farms are more than growing beds. Rural farms have significant built infrastructure and urban farms are constantly balancing growing space and infrastructure needs. Precisely because land is so precious, a well thought out shed will use a small structure to best advantage. Youth Build Boston spent 6 weeks examining the ins and outs of shed design and will show how a shed can be used for more than tool storage in their compact yet highly flexible shed design. On the other end of the spectrum, a greenhouse can be a major investment, but incredibly valuable to extend the north east's growing season. Greenhouses haven't changed much in decades, and can be costly to operate. Enter ArchSolar a company that is rethinking greenhouse materials to increase yields, lower costs and create measurable social impact.

#### Land Challenges – Tell Your Story

In other panels, we have offered advice and techniques. But urban farming is still an evolving industry and the experiences of practitioners will help us all advocate for better policies and procedures. In many ways, urban farming has yet to be accepted as a "highest and best use" for urban land and that poses a challenge to appropriate development. In other cases, decision makers may simply not be familiar enough with the benefits of urban farming. In this session we will encourage participants to come with samples of situations from their cities We envision an interactive session where we can collectively learn of specific land access challenges across the Commonwealth to discover common concerns and barriers, as well as any solutions.

#### Innovative Mobile Market Models and On-Site Tour

Learn more on how these urban farming organizations are finding innovative ways to meet the needs of the communities they serve. Each will discuss the strategy behind their marketing planning and their unique mobile markets. Brief tour of their vehicles planned for this session.

#### Ethnic Markets and Crops

Discussion will cover production of ethnic crops for ethnic markets in urban settings. Ethnic/immigrant groups continue to expand in the United States and Massachusetts and a large percentage are found in urban settings. In Massachusetts, Latinos are the largest race/ethnicity in the public schools in Boston, Worcester, Springfield, Holyoke and Lawrence. This session will provide research-based information on how to identify crops popular among these groups and how to grow and market them. Presenter will also include discussion on the Healthy Initiative Program (HIP) which has been very popular and represents a great opportunity for urban production

#### Rural and Urban Farmers: Partnership in Food Access

Our presenters discuss their growing and profitable partnerships, bringing their rural and urban enterprises new revenue streams. Hear how a common goal and shared interests are helping urban communities have greater access to an abundant and diversified fresh and local product selection to their inner city market place.

#### Planning for Profit

Learn how to lower your risks and increase your profits on your urban farm. In this workshop, Andy will guide participants in a holistic understanding farm business planning and basic farm finances for starting and operating an urban farm. He will demonstrate how to calculate costs of production in order for participants to understand their own production capacity and how they can meet the scales of production they desire.

#### Lender Speed Dating

This lender speed dating event will introduce farmers to potential sources of financing (including loans and grants) in Boston, Massachusetts, and throughout New England, and provide sufficient information for them to identify which may be a good match and with whom to follow up. Currently confirmed panelists: Kira Bennett Hamilton, The Carrot Project; Gerard Kennedy, MDAR; Jose Rojas, Boston Private; Rebecca Busansky, VGrows Investment Fund; Julie Kolodji, USDA-Farm Service Agency; Samantha Stoddard, Farm Credit East; Carlos Hernandez, SBA.

#### Farm Management; Best Practices

"Dialogue with Farmer Chris Kurth, owner of Siena Farms in Sudbury, about the challenges and rewards of "suburban" farming and "urban" marketing. Discuss seasonal labor models (apprenticeship vs farm-crew), farmland access models (leasing vs buying), and direct marketing models (CSA vs retail vs wholesale)."

#### Supporting Farm/Food Safety in the Urban Farm Space

Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) comprise a prerequisite program that can be utilized to manage food safety risks as produce transitions from the field to packing environments. The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) is a set of rules and regulations created by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to create safeguards in food production. It places a large financial and logistical burden on small to mid-scale farmers across the U.S. Any farm making over \$25,000 a year in produce sales could be affected, i.e. most fruit and vegetable production farms in America. In this workshop, get the facts and the current status of these regulations and how they may impact your urban farming enterprise.

### Tools and Equipment for the Urban Farm

This workshop will provide a hands-on understanding of tools and equipment commonly used in urban farming. Andy will offer strategies for selecting the right tool for the job and an understanding of how a tool investment can affect a farm's profitability. The workshop will also cover how to properly use and maintain tools so that you can increase your efficiency while saving your back.

The Buzz: Honey Bees and The MDAR Apiary Program Join the MDAR Apiary Program Chief Inspector to discuss the local and national state of honey bees and the role of the Apiary Program in ensuring healthy populations in the Commonwealth.

### Greenhouse Management

In 2008, The Food Project partnered with The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative to open up an unfinished 10,000sq foot greenhouse. Boston Greenhouse and Farms Manager Danielle Andrews will walk you through the planning and implementation process of opening up this shared production space- drawing on neighborhood, local farming and national resources. She will run through the irrigation, heating, cooling and ventilation systems- while trying to also indicate simpler and less expensive options for growers. Danielle will offer recommendation people and resources that can be useful for growers that are considering greenhouse construction.

### Intensive Crop Planning and Production

This session is a very hands-on and interactive presentation about crop planning and crop storage. We will look at a sample spreadsheet that incorporates different sources of data and allows a grower to lay out a field map, figure out a seed order, calculate dates for seeding, transplanting and harvest, compare varieties, or adapt the model to fit their farm's needs. This workshop will also explore options and best practices for post-harvest crop storage.

### Making Profit and Diversifying in a Competitive Market Place

"Sure you can grow it, but can you sell it"? CSAs, once the goose that laid the golden egg, seem to be a tightening market. Numbers at farmers' markets across the state are down. What's a farmer to do? In this session we'll discuss diversification for small farms to help them sell produce and make a profit.

### Stories from the Fields: Nuestras Raíces

Nuestras Raíces, a Holyoke MA-based urban farming organization, will share their successes and challenges, with decades of farming within city limits to draw from. Nuestras Raíces has created pathways for their community to gain greater access to land, jobs, healthy and fresh food, specifically much in demand grow cultural crops. In this session you will hear about their work and the impact of their innovative programming.

### Cultural Food Connection: Somerville's Green Team World Crops Project

Cultural relevancy and preference is just as important as location and cost in improving access to healthy food. Green Team youth corps members will present about the World Crops Project at Groundwork Somerville, and our inter-generational, cross-cultural approach to urban farming, food access, and cultural food connections.

### Stories From the Field: Island Grown Initiative, Martha's Vineyard, MA



Noli Taylor, the Community Food Education Director at Island Grown Initiative on Martha's Vineyard, will share the work and impact of this innovative program that provides greater food access for the Island's year round residents. Hear about the multi-tiered program, including the island's farm to school program, Island Grown Schools, founded in 2007

#### Compost Optimization to Maximize throughput and Minimize Footprint

There are many nuances to the process of composting and the less space a compost pile takes up the more space available for growing produce. Come learn about various ways to speed along the process to minimize compost footprint and enable more space to grow revenue generating crops. Level : Intermediate to Advanced

#### Stories from the Fields: Regional Environmental Council

REC supports urban agriculture initiatives in Worcester through all three of its signature programs- YouthGROW, a youth employment program that manages two urban farms, UGROW, a network of 62 community and school gardens, and our Community Farmers Markets and Mobile Market which bring affordable, local produce to 16+ locations in Worcester per week. Come learn about how each of these programs began, grew, and is sustained with a focus on partnerships, funding, and income generation.

#### SNAP and The Farm Bill: The Impact on Farmers and Our Communities

What's the Farm Bill? Why does it matter? Build your toolbox, and take away actions your communities can do to preserve the programs that ensure healthy food is accessible to all: farmers markets, community food projects, beginning farmers and ranchers, specialty crops, diverse farmers, the SNAP safety network, and farm to school.