SAEA 9th Anniversary Sustainable Ag Conference for Large and Small Food Production

February 4 - 6, 2010

ECHO Hotel and Conference Center 1903 S. Closner | Edinburg, TX | 78539 | Tel: 956 383-3823

Healthy Soils — Healthy Foods

2010 CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

Dr. Arden Andersen is an internationally recognized physician, scientist and the author of several books. He is an agricultural consultant and family practice physician. Dr. Andersen is an enthusiastic advocate for preventive health care and, as a leader in the field of sustainable agriculture, a strong proponent of the critical role of food quality in human health. He is a sought-out speaker presenting lectures and workshops on the links between the nutritional quality of food and human health. Dr. Andersen has authored three books and produced two professional tape series on biological agriculture. In his latest book titled Real Medicine—Real Health, Dr. Andersen explains why natural foods are the best medicine.

Dr. Andersen is a graduate of the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific in Pomona, California. He earned his Ph.D. in Biophysics at Clayton University in St. Louis, Missouri, and a B.S. in Agriculture from the University of Arizona. He is a diplomat in Chelation Therapy and is certified by the American Board of Sclerotherapy. In addition to his private practice at Crossroads Healing Arts in Goshen, Indiana, Dr. Andersen is a physician for the U.S. Air Force Reserve Medical Corps.

Judith A. Canales has over twenty years of experience working at the national and local levels in federal and local government administration and nonprofit management. Her expertise is rural and urban development, housing, community development and economic development. She is also experienced in U.S.—Mexico border public policy issues and development.

In May 2009, Ms. Canales was appointed by President Barack Obama to the position of Administrator for Rural Business and Cooperative Programs in the United States Department of Agriculture—Rural Development. She is responsible for overseeing the national rural business and cooperative programs portfolio for USDA with a budget of over $1 billion. Before moving to Washington, Ms. Canales served as the Executive Director of the Maverick County Development Corporation in Eagle Pass, Texas, and for the past seven years as an adjunct faculty member for Southwest Texas Junior College.

Salomon Torres is District Director for U.S. Representative Ruben Hinojosa (TX-15) since September 2002. He promotes the Congressman's legislative agenda, assists cities and counties in pursuing economic development and infrastructure improvement projects, seeks resources for stakeholders such as nonprofit organizations, community groups, and educational institutions, and develops partnerships and initiatives to advance regional interests and the Congressman's priorities for South Texas.

Salomon holds degrees from St. Edward's University (BBA), the LBJ School of Public Affairs (MPA), and Columbia Law School (JD). He is a proud honors graduate of La Feria High School and currently lives in Harlingen. He will talk about community projects that are underway around the Lower Rio Grande Valley and will relay information about government programs that support local efforts including agriculture and water conservation, farmers markets, and sustainable building practices.

Edmund Gomez serves as Assistant Department Head and College Professor under New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service's Extension Agriculture Economics Department. He also serves as director for the Rural Agricultural Improvement and Public Affairs Project and the Northern New Mexico Outreach Project based at the Sustainable Agriculture Science Center at Alcalde, NM.

Since 1991, the Alcalde Science Center has been dedicated toward meeting the needs of the small scale farmers and ranchers in northern New Mexico through sustainable agriculture research and educational programs. The Alcalde Science Center conducts sustainable and organic research projects proposed by local farmers as well as cooperating small farms within the region. Edmund's presentation, "*Six Figures on 2 ½ Acres: Research*" is an attempt to discuss this research through the challenges they have encountered as well as the successes achieved by their small acreage producers.

Don Bustos has more than twenty years' experience successfully operating his family farm New Mexican. The Bustos family has farm the same land for over 300 years. The farm became certified organic in 1989, and became veganic in 2005. Don currently serves on the boards of national organizations including Western Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education, Western Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, the National Immigrant Farmer Initiative, and New Mexico Acequia Association. He is also a full time employee for the American Friends Service Committee, helping disadvantaged communities in New Mexico create food sovereignty. He is currently co-organizing the Good Food Network of New Mexico.

In his presentation, "*Six Figures on 2 ½ Acres: Practice*", Don will cover the essential components to growing on a year round basis using appropriate techniques and a sustainable approach. He will go through a step by step plan on how to be successful on a limited acreage, reviewing marketing strategies, farm planning techniques, and touching on financial opportunities that are available to growers. Don Bustos will share his experience achieving these goals on his family farm in New Mexico.

Brenton Johnson is the owner and operator of Johnson's Backyard Garden (JBG), a 60 acre organic vegetable farm and 600 member CSA (community supported agriculture) operation in Austin, TX. JBG is the largest certified organic CSA in Texas. Brenton, has an agricultural engineering degree from Auburn University and has been an avid gardener for the past 15 years. Brenton started his business growing vegetables in his backyard and selling to the Austin Farmer's Market. He then purchased 20 acres to expand the business. To meet the growing needs of the business, Brenton will begin farming on an additional 40 acres this fall. With this additional land, Brenton aspires to provide high-quality, locally-grown organic vegetables to over 1,000 Austin families weekly.

Brenton Johnson will address how he developed his farm, Johnson's Backyard Garden (JBG), into the largest CSA (community supported agriculture) and organic farm in Texas. By tracing his journey from a backyard gardener to a full-time farmer, Mr. Johnson will describe how he transformed his backyard garden into a successful CSA. He will touch on topics such as securing Farm Service Agency funding, developing infrastructure, using a CSA model, obtaining organic certification, determining equipment needs, and planning, mapping, and managing crops and soils. Finally, Mr. Johnson will discuss the growing demand for locally-produced vegetables and how individual farms can begin to meet this need. By relaying his future vision for JBG, Mr. Johnson will discuss his plans to increase the scale of his business in a way that is sustainable and beneficial to the community at large.

Pam Walker is a writer and a local farm and food community developer. Pam is a former academic librarian, college English teacher and assistant director of the Center for the Study of Cultures at Rice Univeristy. She lives in Houston and at her farm in rural Schulenburg.

Pam recently published "*Growing Good Things to Eat in Texas: Profiles of Organic Farmers and Ranchers across the State"*. The book came out in August 2009 from TAMU Press and protrays eleven farming and ranching families who are part of a food revival in Texas. With biographical essays and photographs by Linda Walsh, Walker and Walsh illuminate the work these food producers do, why they do it, and the difference it makes in their lives.

Ms. Walker wrote her book because she wanted more people in Texas to know how to buy organic Texas produce and to become familiar with the fascinating people producing it. "I want people thinking about Pam Walker entering organic agriculture themselves to see that not only can it be commercially successful here, but it already is, and, in many cases, has been for quite some time. I want elected officials, policy makers, conservationists and ecologists, health professionals, and urban and rural planners to get an "up close and personal" look at the many benefits that independent organic agriculture, both rural and urban, brings to individuals, to families, to social and economic communities, and to the natural environment."

Dr. Bryan Unruh has over 20 years applied research experience with irrigated and dryland crop production systems. His expertise includes experimental design, demonstration and statistical analysis of research trials, and analytical chemistry with methods common to soil/plant nutrient analysis. Dr. Unruh is currently working with BioTech Ventures, LLC, as a consulting soil scientist researching trials on soil biology and soil amendments for crop production.

Dr. Unruh holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Soil Science and Master of Science in Agronomy from Oklahoma State University. He has authored/coauthored seven refereed publications in six different agricultural journals. Dr. Unruh has held administrative responsibility for over 50 active demonstration and research projects, facilitated research data analysis, and assisted principle investigators with analysis, interpretation, and reporting of research projects.

Danny Sosebee is South East Texas District Sales Manager for Netafim USA. Danny has a 13 year history with Netafim USA. He graduated from Texas A&M University in 1983 with B.S. in Agriculture Education/Ag Economics. Mr. Sosebee has worked as an agriculture science instructor and was involved in sales of agricultural seeds, fertilizers and chemicals.

Why Drip Irrigation? Drip irrigation is a management tool not just an irrigation system. Crop yield is a response to the amount of water taken up by the plant. How we manage the content, concentrations, timing, and quantities of the applied water directly affect our crops yields and quality. Soil moisture sensing, pH and EC levels, micro and macro fertility, and pest management all play a role in today's drip irrigation management. Drip irrigation allows today's grower to push the envelope with higher plant populations, different crop rotations, and modified cultural practices.

Dr. Joe M. Bradford is a recently retired (2009) soil scientist and researcher from the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS). He worked with the ARS for 38 years specializing in soil management and erosion control, and for the last 10 years in the organic management of food crops. With over 200 publications, Dr. Bradford is a leader in on-farm water and soil conservation and chemical-free farming.

Dr. Bradford lives in Ranger, Texas. He did his undergraduate studies at Abilene Christian College (now Abilene Christian University) and received this Ph.D. in soil science from Iowa State University.

Dr. Mamoudou Setamou is Assistant Professor of Citrus Entomology at the Texas A&M University at Kingsville—Citrus Center located in Weslaco, Texas. His research interest includes biology-based management of arthropod pest in citrus orchards, nurseries, and back-yard settings. Dr. Setamou applies Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to control pest, a broad approach that does not solely rest on the use chemical insecticides. He in working on the development of pest management strategies that are based on an understanding of pest ecology, the use of biological control agents as well as pesticides that are detrimental to pest without being highly toxic to the environment.

Dr. Setamou graduated Summa cum laude form the University of Hanover, Germany and has held the position of Senior Scientist with the USDA and the International Center of Insect Physiology and Ecology, Nairobi, Kenya.

James Bruce Henderson currently serves as the Conservation Agronomist for Texas Zone 3 (51 Counties in South and Southeast Texas). He works for the USDA—Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as a soil conservationist for organic producers. Mr. Henderson is based in Corpus Christi, Texas.

James was raised on a small ranching operation near Belton, Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in Agronomy. He began career his with the NRCS as a student trainee in 1981. He has been stationed in Hamilton, Bartlett, Brenham, Dumas, Uvalde, and Corpus Christi while serving in field offices, and in area and state staff offices.

Patricia Michael is an award winning environmental consultant, educator and trainer with over twenty years of experience using whole-systems approach to ecological design. She has experience in teaching, lecturing and conducting workshops in sustainable living technologies, organic agriculture and Permaculture Design. Patricia has lectured and presented in the US, Mexico, El Salvador, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, France, Czech Republic, Portugal, Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand.

For the past fifteen years Patricia has worked as a free-lance site designer in the Central Texas area. Each project has integrated design systems that are ecologically sound and economically viable. As an artist, Patricia works in four dimensions: the three dimensions of space and the dimension of time. Her landscapes change through the seasons and years to provide you with ongoing beauty in your surroundings.

Leslie McKinnon has begun a new career as an organic certification consultant after 12 ½ years as the Coordinator of the Organic Certification Program at the Texas Department of Agriculture. During that time the National Organic Standards were proposed, withdrawn, re-proposed, adopted and finally implemented. In her new role as an organic consultant, she combines all her experience, training and knowledge of organic standards, certification and sustainable agriculture to help farmers and other organic businesses understand and navigate the organic certification process.

A graduate of Texas A&M, she studied soil and plant science, soil microbiology, and received a Masters Degree in Entomology (specializing in biological control). After completing her coursework, Leslie worked for 9 years at A&M as a research assistant/lab manager in classical biological control, importing and rearing parasites and predators to control aphid pests.

Dr. Ribera is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Economist for District 12 of Texas AgriLife Extension, based in Weslaco, Texas. He also serves as the Program Director for International Projects for the Agricultural and Food Policy Center. His current work focuses on economic feasibility studies of biofuels using different technologies and feedstock, carbon sequestration, specialty crops, and international market integration.

Dr. Ribera received his B.S. and M.S. from the University of Arkansas and his Ph.D. from Texas A&M University, all in agricultural economics with emphases in risk analysis, simulation and econometric modeling. His research expertise includes applying risk analysis and econometric tools on business management and economic analysis.

Dr. Ribera will talk about "Budgeting and Economic Potential or Organic Production". He will discuss basic record keeping to develop crop enterprise budgets in order to project potential farm profitability and compare conventional and organic horticulture production and identify areas where organic production has higher economic potential.

John Garland is the Director of Child Nutrition at IDEA Public Schools, a charter school system in the Rio Grande Valley that prepares low-income students for college. Currently the IDEA district has 6,000 students, but the aggressive expansion plan will swell its size to 10,000 in the next few years,

Director of Child Nutrition, John Garland has increased operational efficiency to ensure a programmatic positive fund balance, hired trained chefs to run each of the school kitchens while reaching out to the student population, hired a Wellness Coordinator to track and respond to student wellness metrics, and installed vegetable gardens on each campus with a school farmer who produces food for the salad bars while teaching garden-based wellness lessons. John will discuss Gardening Basics: T*he Urban Homestead in South Texas—How to produce good food and fertilizer on a Lot".*

Dr. Juan Anciso works for the *Texas AgriLife Extension Service as an Extension Vegetable Specialist* and Associate Professor. Dr. Anciso has an undergraduate degree in biology, a master's in Plant Protection and a Ph.D. in Plant Pathology from Texas A&M in College Station. He is the extension vegetable specialist for the 21 county area of District 12 which stretches from Brownsville to Eagle Pass.

Dr. Anciso coordinated the IPM (Integrated Pest Management) program for citrus and vegetable pests from 1989 to 2002 as the IPM Agent for Hidalgo and Cameron counties from the Edinburg County Extension office. He has written several scientific and popular articles on vegetable pest management and food safety. He attends the annual USDA IR-4 Food Use Workshop as the plant pathology representative for Texas and also represents Texas on the National Good Agricultural Practices committee that addresses food safety in produce.

Ouina C. Rutledge is the Renewable Resources Manager for the City of McAllen's Public Works Department. She supervises five divisions for Public Works: Brush/Debris Collections, Composting Facility, Recycling Facility, Urban Forestry Division, and Keep McAllen Beautiful programs. She is a native plant expert and has worked in the landscape industry promoting and planting native landscapes to attract birds and butterflies.

Ms. Rutledge has a B.S. in Horticulture from Texas A&M University and a M.S. in Natural Resources Management from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. She served as a research botanist for a bioremediation company based in Alaska conducting revegetation studies on oil spill recovery sites, gravel pads sites, and drill sites, plant surveys, wetland delineations, and other environmental studies in Alaska and Northwest Territories, Canada. She also worked as a land use planner for the State of Alaska.

Dr. Larry Zibilske is a research soil scientist with the USDA-Agricultural Research Service in Weslaco, TX. His research program centers on soil microbiology and organic matter. He received a B.S. in Microbiology and M.S. in Soil Science from Texas A&M University, and the Ph.D. in Soil Microbiology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He was a tenured faculty member in the Departments of Plant and Soil Sciences and Microbiology at the University of Maine for eighteen years before returning to Texas in 1998 to continue research in sustainable agriculture with the USDA.

Dr. Zibilske is the current President of the Sustainable Agronomic Education Association (SAEA) of the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.