



THE 19TH ANNUAL

emerging 
FARMERS

CONFERENCE 

**ROOTED RESILIENCE: CULTIVATING
STRENGTH THROUGH DIVERSITY**

NOVEMBER 1 & 2, 2024

¡HOLA! NYOB ZOO! BOOZHOO! HABARI! HELLO! —



Farmers and Friends!

Welcome to the 19th annual Emerging Farmers Conference! This year's theme, **Rooted Resilience: Cultivating Strength through Diversity**, is the perfect description of how we are still standing through the impacts of climate change and coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A strength of our conference has always been Diversity. Diversity in language, cultures, ethnicity, religion, food, and farming styles. This is what brings us together every year so that we can learn from one another in the most meaningful ways possible. More importantly, we partner with farmers to inform the topics and the structure of our conference. This year we are having 3 longer workshops on Friday with a very specific focus that farmers will leave with tangible skills they can implement right away to support their businesses. We will also have a 4th workshop on Friday focused on helping farmers learn more about how policies are made, how their voices matter, and they can make a change.

Additionally, we have many other program areas at the conference that I am very excited about; The Resource room, Wellness room, Prayer room, Mommy and baby room, and Seed Exchange Space. This year we will be providing voter registration as well! Farmers have shared with us that they need time and space to have networking opportunities with each other and build relationships with service providers. We are happy to introduce a networking evening on Friday and I hope that many relationships can continue to grow outside of these spaces.

As we make way to put our farms to sleep, I am reflecting on some of the challenges of the growing season, but feel encouraged to see the resilience of our farmers as they are making plans to grow again next year. We have seen flooding, crop loss, farmers not being able to meet their contracts and the impacts of crop health due to the extreme temperature changes. Yet farmers are talking about planting garlic, re-evaluating their plans for farming next year, and scaling back to create sustainable lifestyles for themselves. These are signs of resilience. We are not quitting as farmers. We may take a step back to rest and recover, but we will be back! I hope that you enjoy this conference and can build meaningful relationships. We are so excited to have you with us and welcome!

Ka Zoua Berry
Farm Director
The Food Group

SAVE THE DATE!

emerging FARMERS CONFERENCE
Celebrating **20** Years

Emerging Farmers Conference
Planned by farmers for farmers.

November 7-8, 2025
Heritage Center in Brooklyn Center, MN

The Emerging Farmers Conference is brought to you by Big River Farms, a program of The Food Group.

@bigriverfarms

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

ERIKA ALLEN

Erika Allen is the CEO for Urban Growers Collective, President of Green ERA Educational NFP, and Co-Owner of Green Era Sustainability Partners. Her work exemplifies a strong commitment to sustainability with her dedication to the

eradication of environmental injustice and promotion of regenerative, urban agriculture within Chicago. Her commitment to the public sector through the promotion of sustainable agriculture, forging economic opportunities for low-income individuals and creating access to healthy food has made a strong and considerable impact. Erika has dedicated her professional career to public service, developing sustainable community food systems and addressing structural racism and its inherent barriers to justice.

Previously, Allen founded and was the Director of Growing Power – Chicago for 15 years from 2002 to 2017, and was a Chicago Park District Commissioner from 2012 to 2018. She is the Co-Founder of the Chicago Food Policy Action Council, serves on the Board of Grow Greater Englewood and Leadership Council for Growing Home, and is an Advisor and Stewart for the Community Food Navigator project. Allen has been appointed by Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker for the Illinois Leadership Council for Agricultural Education (ICAE) for a 3 Year term (2022-2024), and was selected in 2022 by the Biden Administration to join the Farm Service Agency (FSA) Committee for Illinois. Allen holds a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her MA in Art Psychotherapy from the University of Illinois at Chicago. She received an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Public Health from the University of Illinois at Chicago in December 2022.



Photo: Martine Sererin



EMCEE SINA WAR

Sina War is a passionate advocate for Minnesota's local food systems, serving as the Engagement & Inclusion Director for the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association. Through her work in public policy, education, and marketing, she uplifts local farmers and entrepreneurs while sharing the rich flavors of her Cambodian heritage through her brand, Twin Tiger. With a vision for Twin Tiger Farms & Gardens to serve as a cultural and culinary hub, Sina is dedicated to fostering community and celebrating diversity through food.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1 SCHEDULE	page 4
DAY 2 SCHEDULE	page 5
EVENT MAP	page 6
ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES	page 6
FRIDAY WORKSHOPS	page 7
SATURDAY SESSIONS	pages 8-9
PRESENTERS' BIOS	pages 10-14
COMMITTEE MEMBERS	page 14
SPONSORS	page 15

PURPOSE & VALUES

The Emerging Farmers Conference serves to advance the success and sustainability of farmers who traditionally face barriers to the education and resources necessary to build profitable agricultural businesses, including immigrant farmers and farmers of color.

Our values are...

RESOURCES

CONNECTIONS

KNOWLEDGE

EMPOWERMENT

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. CHECK-IN & REGISTRATION

12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. TOPIC INTENSIVE WORKSHOPS

ROOM

Policy Deep Dive: Learn to use policy to get resources and representation

Green Room

Zoe Hollomon, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective; Levi Welbourn, Latino Economic Development Center; Sachiko Graber, Waxwing Consulting, LLC; Billy Hackett, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition; Relyndis and Garrett Grady-Lovelace (video); Amanda Koehler, National Young Farmers Coalition

Climate Adaptation for Emerging Farmers: How farmers can plan for a changing climate

Orange Room

Nick Olson, Land Stewardship Project; Katie Black, UMN Extension; Natalie Hoidal, UMN Extension; Ada Snyder, High Mowing Organic Seeds; Lauren Barry, Dancing Gnome Farm

Farm Finances: How to manage farm costs and plan a budget for profitability

Red Room

Sina War, Minnesota Farmers' Market Association; Kathy Zeman, Minnesota Farmers' Market Association; Ryan Pesch, University of Minnesota Extension; Erik Heimark, Central Lakes College

Navigating Soil Health & Production on Rented Land

Blue Room

Tiffany LaShae, Blackeyed Peace; Adria Fernandez, Researcher, University of Minnesota; Esta Minani, Esta Family Farm and Global Greens farm incubator program; Tika Bhandari, Global Greens incubator farm program.

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. SOCIAL HOUR, EXHIBIT HALL OPEN, & HEAVY APPETIZERS



RegenerativeAgricultureFoundation.org



NEW FARMERS, NEW CITIZENS, BIG DREAMS OR SMALL STEPS



Go Farm Connect is a peer network for support and information to assist an emerging cohort of farmers that America needs to thrive.



gofarmconnect.org



FARMLAND ACCESS HUB

Farmland Access Hub is a group of partners dedicated to assisting beginning farmers with their quest for land.



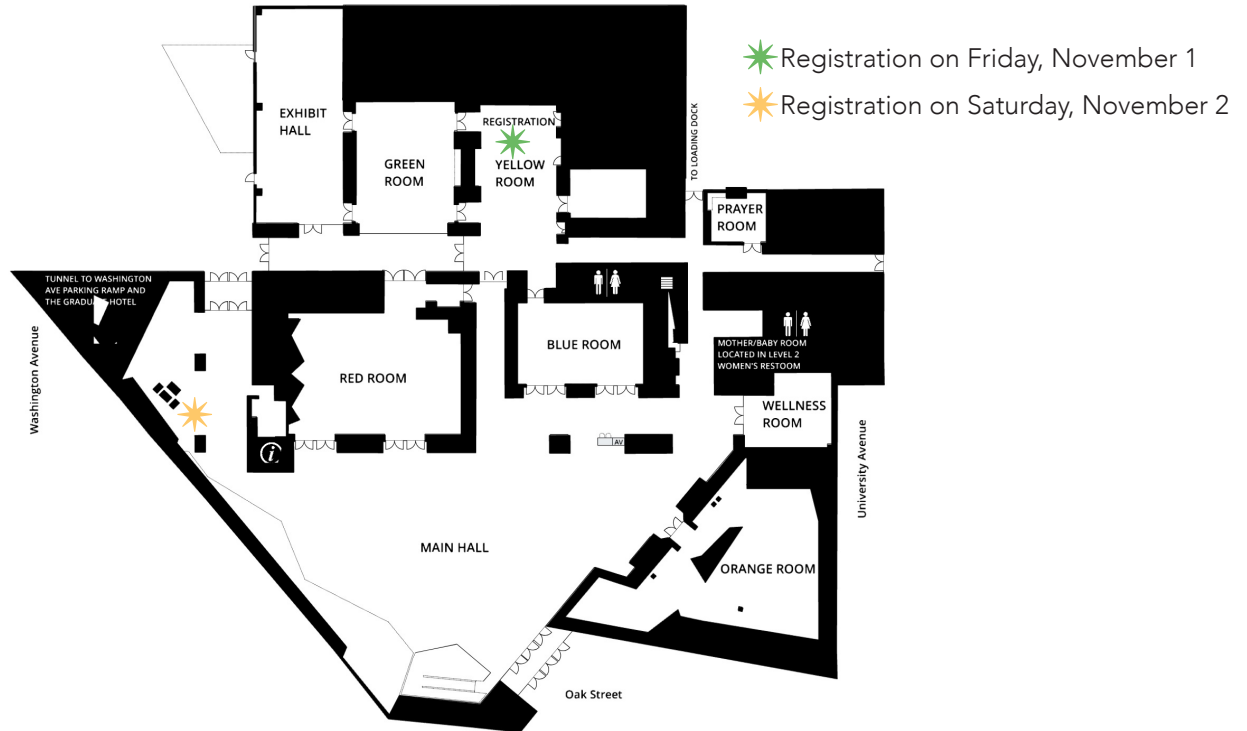
farmlandaccess.org



SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

7:30 a.m.	REGISTRATION OPENS	
7:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.	BREAKFAST	
8:45 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	WELCOME	
9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	SESSION 1 WORKSHOPS	ROOM
Small Farm Tools: Tillage, Cultivation, Seeding and Post-Harvest <i>Ariel Pressman, UMN Extension; Sam Oschwald Tilton, Glacial Drift Enterprises</i>		Green Room
Culturally Relevant Crops Session 1: African greens and Red River Valley Eggplant <i>Funwi Tita, Better Greens, LLC, MAIFA; Caliton Ntahompagaze, Caliton Family Farm</i>		Orange Room
Emerging Farmer Experiences Starting Livestock Operations <i>Tessa Parks, W.T. Farms; Matt Hardy, Rust Hill Ranch</i>		Blue Room
The Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Emerging Farmers Office: Ploughing through! <i>Anthony Adams, MDA EFO; Emily Toner, EFO; Lillian Otieno, MDA EFO</i>		Red Room
11:10 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.	KEYNOTE	MAIN HALL
Resiliency Pathways in a Climate Changing World <i>Erika Allen, CEO for Urban Growers Collective, President of Green ERA Educational NFP, and Co-Owner of Green Era Sustainability Partners</i>		
12:10 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	LUNCH	MAIN HALL
1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.	SESSION 2 WORKSHOPS	ROOM
Seed Sourcing for Resilient Food Systems <i>Sammie Ardito Rivera, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, Ujamaa Seeds; Zachary Paige, North Circle Seeds</i>		Blue Room
Organizing for Collective Land Access <i>Facilitated by Katie Kubovcik, Speakers: Moses Momanyi, Kilimo MN & Dawn 2 Dusk Farm; Kelly Maynard, UW Madison</i>		Green Room
Grounding Policy in the Voices of Farmers Listening Session <i>Facilitated by Zoe Hollomon, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective and Whitney Terrill, Land Stewardship Project</i>		Red Room
3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	SESSION 3 WORKSHOPS	ROOM
Farmer Experiences with Funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture <i>Jodi Brown, Brown Family Farm; Amanda Nigon-Crowley & Valerie Djuissi, The Village Agricultural Cooperative; Tou Vang, Hope Farm</i>		Blue Room
Culturally Relevant Crops Session 2: Molohkia, purslane, okra, armenian cucumber; beekeeping; heirloom corn <i>Haytham Ibrahim and Khalid Elhassan, Sudanese Farming Group; Porfirio Perez, Sebra Farm; Pheng Her, Guerilla Pastures</i>		Orange Room
Whole Farm Ecosystem: How Wildlife Supports Your Farm <i>Courtney Tchida, Wild Farm Alliance; Omar de Kok-Mercado, Mad Agriculture; Karin Jokela, Xerces Society and farmer</i>		Red Room
Athletes in Overalls: Farmer Movement Health & Wellness, and Self-Advocacy <i>Cynthia Flores, Labor-Movement, LLC</i>		Green Room

EVENT MAP



2024 EFC Additional Activities

EXHIBIT HALL

- Friday, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

VOTER INFORMATION

- Friday, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., *Green Room*
- Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., *Main Hall*

SEED SWAP

The MN SEED Project will be hosting a seed swap at the conference. This is a fantastic opportunity to exchange seeds, share tips, stories, and connect with others who are passionate about growing food and flowers as well as seed saving. Bring your extra seeds, whether they're heirloom, organic, or saved from your own garden, and take home new varieties to grow. No seeds? No problem! Come to learn, meet fellow farmers, and get inspired.

- Friday, 4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m., *Green Room*
- Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., *Main Hall*

RESOURCE ROOM

Stop into the Resource Room for direct help with business planning, selling to wholesale markets, land access, production, irrigation, crop planning, getting set up with Farm Services Agency, grant writing, and more!

- Saturday, 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., *Yellow Room*

PRAYER ROOM ongoing

MFCC MAPPING ongoing

MFCC booth in the Exhibit Hall

CALLING ALL BIPOC GROWERS, FARMERS & STEWARDS! The Midwest Farmers of Color Collective (MFCC) is organizing a mapping project for Black, Indigenous, and farmers of color in the Midwest. The goal of this project is to create an accessible map and directory that will be continually updated for our members. This effort will support deepening connections, fostering networks of care & safety, and promoting mutually beneficial knowledge and offerings amongst the collective.

RAFFLE

Each farmer gets two raffle tickets when they check-in. Fill them out and put in the boxes for the items you'd like by the end of lunch on Saturday. After session 2 on Saturday, winners names will be posted outside all workshop rooms. You must pick up your item at the registration table by 5:15 p.m., or the prize will go to the alternate winner.

THE SOIL & THE STORY EXHIBIT

Created by Tiffany LaShae through her studies and visits with Black farmers in the Black Belt region that stretches from Mississippi through the Carolinas. The stories highlight trauma as well as the resilience of these Black Farmers.

- Saturday 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., *Main Hall*

WELLNESS ROOM ongoing

MOMMY & BABY ROOM ongoing

SESSION INFORMATION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1
12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Policy Deep Dive: Learn to use policy to get resources and representation

Zoe Hollomon, *Midwest Farmers of Color Collective*;
Levi Welbourn, *Latino Economic Development Center*;
Sachiko Graber, *Waxwing Consulting, LLC*;
Billy Hackett, *National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition*;
Relyndis and Garrett Grady-Lovelace (*video*); Amanda Koehler, *National Young Farmers Coalition*

Agricultural policy deeply affects farmers and the condition of our food system. Everything from land access to organic growing standards to Farm Service Agency loans are affected by policy decisions made at every level. Join us for a deep dive into how Emerging Farmers and Black, Indigenous and other farmers of color can effectively make their voices heard. We will spend some time creating safe spaces to process the political climate, then move into action and harness our collective advocacy power. We will explore the landscape of agricultural policy, such as the farm bill and MN state policies, how they affect farmers, and what changes we can make. You will leave with a better understanding of federal policy, state policy and county policy, and how to make your voice heard at every level. Meet other local organizations that facilitate policy training and how to engage. Hear from farmers who have testified and engaged in the policy process, and gain the tools to ask your public officials for what you need. This session will serve as preparation for the Grounding Policy in the Voices of Farmers Listening Session with public officials on Saturday.

Climate Adaptation for Emerging Farmers: How farmers can plan for a changing climate

Nick Olson, *Land Stewardship Project*; Katie Black, *UMN Extension*; Natalie Hoidal, *UMN Extension*; Ada Snyder, *High Mowing Organic Seeds*; Lauren Barry, *Dancing Gnome Farm*

Our changing climate influences both long-term and day-to-day farm management decisions. In this session, learn about what changes to our climate we have already seen, what scientists expect for future temperature, precipitation, and extreme weather patterns, and hear how other farmers are coping with the stressors of climate change. We will share research about farmer health and safety, ways to improve farm resilience, and experiences from farmers who are already using resilience strategies. Learn about infrastructure options, funding programs, and techniques for supporting resilient farming in the upper Midwest. By the end of the session, you will be able to take home ideas and craft a climate resilience plan for your farm operation.

Farm Finances: How to manage farm costs and plan a budget for profitability

Sina War, *Minnesota Farmers' Market Association*; Kathy Zeman, *Minnesota Farmers' Market Association & Simple Harvest Farm Organics*; Ryan Pesch, *UMN Extension*; Erik Heimark, *Central Lakes College, Go Farm Connect & Maple Ridge Produce*

This workshop track is designed to empower farmers to start their farm business from a financially grounded place, and guide farmers who have already started their business with possible next steps towards financial sustainability. The topics to be covered in this workshop include: (1) Developing a business plan: How will you finance your farm; What crops will you grow; Where you are going to sell your products - pros/cons of each point of sale; How much will you sell your products for (pricing); Calculating projected profitability (2) Telling your story and farm goals: Why and how to tell your unique story and including this in grant and/or loan applications. Attendees will brainstorm and begin to draft their narratives. (3) Planning for taxes: Schedule F for individuals, LLCs, co-ops Participants in this workshop would leave with financial toolboxes of budgeting templates, pricing guides, draft documents for grant or loans. On Saturday there will be the Farmer Experiences with Funding session that would provide more specific grant or loan options available.

Navigating Soil Health & Production on Rented Land

Tiffany LaShae, *Blackeyed Peace*; Adria Fernandez, *University of Minnesota*; Esta Minani, *Esta Family Farm & Global Greens*; Tika Bhandari, *Global Greens*

One of the most important aspects of a farm is soil health. But if you are on a small plot, incubator farm, or rented land it can be hard to justify using cover crops that take away space that could be used to make money. Investing in soil health is important even for farmers in rented land. Hear from Global Greens farmers and staff about the field basic soil health practices they implement with success! Soil health is more than just applying fertilizer and inputs. What are 3 ways you can use cover crops that are inexpensive and don't interrupt your growing cycles? What other ways can you build soil on small plots? Farmer and soil researcher Tiffany LaShae will show farmers practical ways to evaluate and understand the soil of your plot. Learn from her about soil formation, soil texture, pH, and how these soil properties affect nutrient availability and management practices. Adria Fernandez, a researcher from the University of Minnesota will break down lab testing for soil nutrient analysis and how you can use testing information to influence management. Farmers on rented land can improve their soil health and nutrient availability by understanding the soil they are working with, and techniques to improve the health of their plot even if they will not be there long term.

SESSION INFORMATION

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 2

9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

SESSION 1 WORKSHOPS

9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Small Farm Tools: Tillage, Cultivation, Seeding and Post-Harvest

Ariel Pressman, UMN Extension; Sam Oswald Tilton, Glacial Drift Enterprises

Are you looking to become more efficient on your farm? Not sure which tools are both affordable and useful? This talk will look at different tools appropriate for use on small farms across a number of price points. We will talk about everything from walk-behind tractors, to push seeders to brush washers. We will go into detail about not only what the tools do, but how much they cost and where you can find them. This presentation will be hands-on - with a number of tools in the room for farmers to handle and ask questions about. Farmers considering applying for the MDA beginning farmer equipment and infrastructure grant are highly encouraged to attend.

Culturally Relevant Crops Session 1: African greens and Red River Valley Eggplant

Funwi Tita, Better Greens, LLC, MAIFA; Caliton Ntahompagaze, Caliton Family Farm

Learn from other farmers about crops relevant to their culture and growing practice. Funwi Tita will speak about African greens, and how he adapts and markets these crops in a Minnesotan climate. Tita has been pivotal in expanding production and market outlets for bitter leaf, water leaf, and garden eggs in his community. Caliton Ntahompagaze will speak about growing African eggplant in the Red River Valley of Minnesota and bringing more awareness to this crop.

Emerging Farmer Experiences Starting Livestock Operations

Tessa Parks, W.T. Farms; Matt Hardy, Rust Hill Ranch

Starting a new livestock operation can pose many challenges to emerging farmers. Farmers navigate securing long-term land access, finding available processing facilities, veterinarian services, and markets. Hear directly from emerging farmers about their experiences starting a variety of livestock operations. Presenters will speak about cultural livestock practices and their creative strategies for land access.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture – Emerging Farmers Office: Ploughing through!

Anthony Adams, MN Department of Agriculture, EFO; Emily Toner, MN Department of Agriculture, EFO; Lillian Otieno, MN Department of Agriculture, EFO

The Emerging Farmers Office (EFO) at the MN Department of Agriculture exists to serve emerging farmers like you. This session will focus on identifying the specific challenges faced by emerging farmers. We will collectively brainstorm solutions, and identify potential partnerships with farmers, organizations, and collaborators to also help inform our program and better serve emerging farmers more effectively. We listened last year and are back to listen and share updates on your feedback. Come meet the new EFO staff members, Anthony Adams, and Emily Toner.

SESSION 2 WORKSHOPS

1:45 p.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Seed Sourcing for Resilient Food Systems

Sammie Ardito Rivera, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective & Ujamaa Seeds; Zachary Paige, North Circle Seeds

Seeds are the foundation of food, and are critically important to a strong regional food system. Hear from other farmers about options for seed sourcing, seed varieties that work well in our region, and the importance of seeds in climate resilience. Participants will also learn about local seed saving projects and resources, and how they can get involved.

Organizing for Collective Land Access

Speakers: Moses Momanyi, Kilimo MN & Dawn 2 Dusk Farm; Kelly Maynard, UW Madison. Facilitator: Katie Kubovcik

Organizing communities for collective land access can be a complex process. Learn from experienced family and community organizers on what strategies emerging farmers implemented to be successful in organizing a variety of collective farming operations. A small panel of organizers will represent multi-family farming operations and community-organized farm incubators. Organizers will give brief presentations on their land holding strategies, governance structure, and will share about the challenges and successes of organizing collective farming operations. The presentations will be followed by a discussion with session attendees and sharing of resources for farmers who are interested in or actively pursuing collective farming operations.

Grounding Policy in the Voices of Farmers Listening Session

Facilitated by *Zoe Hollomon, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective; Whitney Terrill, Land Stewardship Project*

Whether at the township level or federal level, farmers' voices are critical for creating just and practical policies for our food system. In this listening session, farmers will have space to share their experiences, stories, and needs to public officials at the state and federal level, including legislators, Congressional offices, and administrators. Potential interest areas may include land access, climate change, crop insurance, and language access to U.S. Department of Agriculture and Farm Service Agency programs, amongst others.

SESSION 3 WORKSHOPS

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Farmer Experiences with Funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Jodi Brown, Brown Family Farm; Amanda Nigon-Crowley & Valerie Djuissi, The Village Agricultural Cooperative; Tou Vang, Hope Farm

Have you thought about applying for funding from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)? Hear from farmers who have received financial support from programs including Minnesota Grown cost-share programs, the Produce Safety Mini-Grant, and the Sustainable Agriculture Research Demonstration Grant. They'll share about their application processes and how they've used these funds as a part of their farm operations. Meet the MDA staff that administer these programs and get a sense of whether these programs may be a good fit for your farm as well. Bring your ideas on other financial resources you've had experience with and want to share about with others in the room.

Culturally Relevant Crops Session 2: Molohkia, purslane, okra, armenian cucumber; beekeeping; heirloom corn

Haytham Ibrahim and Khalid Elhassan, Sudanese Farming Group; Porfirio Perez, Sebra Farm; Pheng Her, Guerilla Pastures

Learn from other farmers about crops relevant to their culture and growing practice. Pheng Her will speak about his experience of learning to keep bees and make a variety of products. The Sudanese Farming Group will speak about raising Sudanese crops in a communal and urban farm project at the microfarm site in New Hope, MN. They grow a variety of Sudanese crops including purslane, molohkia, okra, and armenian cucumber, and will talk about the value of increasing market access of these crops in Minnesota. Porfirio Perez will speak about the heirloom corn varieties he grows.

Whole Farm Ecosystem: How Wildlife Supports Your Farm

Courtney Tchida, Wild Farm Alliance; Omar de Kok-Mercado, Mad Agriculture; Karin Jokela, Xerces Society & Farmer

Farms are ecosystems where organisms live and interact in their environment. The health of the farm ecosystem is influenced by farm management practices. In this session, we will explore practices farmers can use to support birds and pollinators that also support the farm. Listen to how providing habitat and food for these types of wildlife can result in outcomes like reduced pest numbers and increased production. You will hear farmer perspectives on creating beneficial habitat along with ideas on leveraging funding to create more on-farm habitat. Leave the session with helpful resources that can help you apply holistic principles.

Athletes in Overalls: Farmer Movement Health & Wellness, and Self-Advocacy

Cynthia Flores, Labor-Movement, LLC

During this session, we will discuss movement health and wellness from an athletic perspective with tips on managing food, fluid, sleep and stress for best performance. Additionally, we'll talk about self-advocacy during work, and for those that want, practice movement patterns related to repeated bending and lifting.

PRESENTERS

ANTHONY ADAMS

Outreach & Engagement Coordinator, MDA Emerging Farmers Office

Anthony A. Adams is the Emerging Farmer Outreach & Engagement Coordinator at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA). He brings a passion for conservation, sustainability, and agriculture to his role. Previously working with agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the USDA, and as a University of Minnesota Extension Educator, Anthony has a strong background in supporting beginning and small farmers. As an emerging farmer himself, he understands the unique challenges and opportunities facing this community. Dedicated to helping emerging farmers succeed, Anthony works to bridge them with MDA programs and grants, providing technical assistance and building strong community connections.

SAMMIE ARDITO RIVERA

Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, Coordination Team Member Ujamaa Seeds, Upper Midwest Seed Hub Coordinator

Sammie Ardito Rivera (Leech Lake and White Earth Ojibwe) was born and raised in the Twin Cities and spent another ten years learning and working with communities across the United States. She received her Bachelor's in Applied Indigenous Studies with an emphasis in Traditional Ecological Knowledge at Northern Arizona University and her movement education in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is a Midwest Farmers of Color Collective Coordinating Team member, the Upper Midwest Seed Hub Coordinator for Ujamaa Seeds and co-owner of her family business, Sin Fronteras Farm & Food.

LAUREN BARRY

Owner, Dancing Gnome Farm

Lauren is the owner of Dancing Gnome Farm, a certified organic vegetable farm in Wabasha, MN. Alongside a team of enthusiastic young folks, we grow over 200 varieties of vegetables for CSA and market in Hopkins, Lake City, and Wabasha, MN.

MICHAEL BIRCHARD

Land Steward, Frog Tree Farm

Michael Birchard is a dedicated community leader and land steward at Frog Tree Farm in Lyons Township, Wadena County, MN. He focuses on empowering historically marginalized communities through youth programs, sustainable farming, and economic development initiatives. As a violence prevention educator, Michael helps guide youth on education, financial empowerment, civic engagement, and mental health, with the goal of fostering the next generation of leaders. His work also extends internationally, as he collaborates on agricultural and business projects in Cameroon, further demonstrating his commitment to sustainable development and global empowerment.

KATIE BLACK

Extension Educator, Climate Resilience

Katie is an Extension Educator with the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP). She works with a wide variety of farmers and partners to provide resources for short-term and long-term strategies for dealing with a changing climate. She earned a Master of Science degree in Applied Plant sciences from the University of Minnesota.

KENT BOYD

Climate Adaptation, Resilience and Public Health Extension Educator

Kent focuses on Planetary Health, community climate adaptation and resilience, and transformative systems change. Kent's position with the University of Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership places him at the nexus of climate change and

health, where he works with individuals, communities, municipalities, and health professionals to increase adaptation and resilience strategies across the state.

JODI BROWN

Owner, Brown Family Farm

Jodi Brown is a first generation farmer and vegetable enthusiast. She is the owner of Brown Family Farm in Oak Park, MN where she and her husband Ben grow a wide variety of vegetables, fruits and herbs for their CSA Program. They also raise heritage hogs and sell them by the halves, wholes and by the cut. They pursue natural and organic practices at their farm and are MN Ag Water Quality Certified.

SAL DAGGETT

Land Steward, Stubborn Oak Farmstead

Sal is a farmer, conservationist, and writer raising vegetables and pastured heritage pigs at Stubborn Oak Farmstead in Deer Park, WI. Their farm strives to balance agricultural production with habitat restoration for native plants and animals. They are constantly evolving practices in response to changing weather patterns and eager to share their experiences building a climate resilient farmstead.

OMAR DE KOK-MERCADO

Mad! Lands Midwest Lead, Mad Agriculture

Omar is a soil scientist and grazer who works with farmers across the Midwest to enhance, scale, and replicate on-farm regenerative systems. As Mad Agriculture's Rewilding lead, Omar is implementing a new pilot program with Whole Foods Market to install prairie strips on farms within their supply chain. This program intends to create insetting opportunities that align with the retailer's goal of investing in carbon reduction projects while supporting their farmer suppliers. Omar's vision is to continue installing re-wilding spaces on America's farms until there is a vast uninterrupted corridor of biodiversity spanning the continent.

KHALID ELHASSAN

Co-founder Sudanese Farming Group

Khalid is an organic vegetable grower and livestock farmer. He is the co-founder and manager of the Sudanese Farming Group, that runs a half acre of Sudanese ethnic crops community farm in New Hope, MN as part of Big River Farms and also runs a 6-acre livestock sheep farm in Northfield, MN as part of the Sharing Our Roots incubator farm.

ADRIA FERNANDEZ

Researcher, Department of Horticultural Science, University of Minnesota

Adria Fernandez is a researcher in the Department of Horticultural Science at the University of Minnesota. Her work explores how farmers can incorporate legumes and cover cropping practices into diverse rotations, and how these crops affect soil health and microbial communities. Adria has been involved in collaborative on-farm research since 2009.

CYNTHIA FLORES

Founder/Owner, Labor-Movement, LLC

Cynthia founded Labor-Movement in 2020 to train farmers in movement patterns with the goal of extending career longevity and enhancing their quality of life. Her background includes outdoor education, wilderness medicine, and 20 years of vegetable farming. Cynthia is a Certified Personal Trainer, Functional Movement Systems SFMA I, and Licensed Massage Therapist specializing in integrative sports techniques. She currently lives in Maine.

SACHIKO GRABER

Founder, Waxwing Consulting, LLC

Sachiko Graber (Sachi, she/they) is a south Minneapolis resident and former/aspiring farmer. She is the founder and director of Waxwing Consulting LLC, which provides climate and equity support to mission-aligned organizations. She formerly served as the Associate Director for Climate and Climate Policy Manager with The Nature Conservancy's Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota chapter.

BILLY HACKETT

Policy Specialist, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Billy is a Policy Specialist at the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (NSAC), where he leads policy development and advocacy for key crop insurance, disaster assistance, credit, and consolidation issues. A native Floridian, Billy began his work in the food and agriculture space organizing in solidarity with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers while a student at the University of Florida.

MATT HARDY

Owner, Rust Hill Ranch

Rust Hill Ranch is a 40-acre family farm in Franconia, Minnesota featuring forest-raised pork, pastured chicken & eggs, and grassfed beef & lamb. We use regenerative practices to promote soil health, nutrient-dense food, and animal welfare. Livestock are rotationally grazed on fresh grass/forage. This continual movement naturally fertilizes the pasture, resulting in richer soil, plants, and meat.

ERIK HEIMARK

Specialty Crop Farm Business Management Instructor

Erik Heimark is a Specialty Crops Farm Business Management (FBM) Instructor at Central Lakes College. He has owned and operated Maple Ridge Produce, a 5 acre produce farm, for the last 8 years with his husband Jay Rigdon. Before teaching he managed Gilby's Orchard and worked as a naturalist for a local nature center. He loves food, cooking, entertaining guests, baking, hunting and preserving the harvest.

PHENG HER

Owner, Guerrilla Pastures

Pheng left his career four years ago to start Guerrilla Pastures, a regenerative farm in Oak Grove, MN. They combine traditional farming practices with modern understanding of ecology to grow the highest quality food, while helping to restore soil health. They raise pastured poultry, dairy goats and have our own small apiary on site,

harvesting honey as well as bees wax and propolis from the bee hives to make lip and hand balms, and paw balms for pets.

NATALIE HOIDAL

Extension Educator, Local Foods & Vegetable Production

Natalie works with vegetable growers across Minnesota ranging from community gardeners to large commercial farmers. She supports growers with all aspects of production ranging from IPM to soil health through direct assistance, applied research, and various communication channels.

ZOE HOLLOMON

Executive Director, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, Rootsprings Coop Member

Zoe Hollomon (She/They) is a multi-racial black, queer, activist and farmer. Zoe is a proud co-founder and Executive Director of the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective and is humbled and amazed by the ingenuity, courage, and wisdom of the farmers and cultivators she works with. Zoe is a founding member of Rootsprings Farm & Retreat Cooperative in Annandale, MN, a place for healing retreat for BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ people and organizations. She has over 20 years experience organizing with grassroots organizations in the Midwest and on the East Coast building organizations to influence decision-making in food, farming and environmental policy.

HAYTHAM IBRAHIM

Co-Founder of Sudanese Farming Group

Haytham Ibrahim is the co-founder and farm operations manager of the Sudanese Farming Group (SFG). Haytham comes from an engineering background and currently works with others on a 1/2 acre farm in New Hope, MN. SFG grows 9 - 10 varieties of vegetables including plants that are used in cooking ethnic food from Sudan such as Molukhia, Okra and purslane.

PRESENTERS (continued)

KARIN JOKELA

Pollinator Conservation Specialist & NRCS Partner Biologist, Xerces Society; Farmer, Sogn Valley Farm
Karin provides pollinator-related technical support and training to NRCS field office conservation planners and farmers, primarily in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. She has a strong background in pollinator conservation and agriculture, and holds a master's degree in ecology and evolutionary biology from Iowa State University. She also manages an organic vegetable farm and native plant nursery with her family in Cannon Falls, MN.

AMANDA KOEHLER

Land Policy Associate Director, National Young Farmers Coalition
Amanda (she/her) recently joined National Young Farmers Coalition as the Land Policy Associate Director after nearly eight years as the Policy Manager at Land Stewardship Project. She lives in Saint Paul, MN, where she and her spouse are piloting Maple Urban Farm, raising chickens for eggs and fruits, vegetables, and herbs. Amanda has nearly a decade of experience in local, state, and federal grassroots organizing and lobbying to build a more just and resilient food system.

TIFFANY LASHAE

Owner, Blackeyed Peace
Tiffany LaShae is a farmer, seed grower, food justice activist and farmer educator. She has worked on farm projects and with farmers in many places throughout the USA, Africa and Asia. Tiffany is also a soil steward and scientist, facilitating in field farmer-led soil research and accessible soil health assessments and recommendations.

KELLY MAYNARD

Cooperative Development Specialist, UW Center for Cooperatives
Kelly Maynard is part of the team of Cooperative Development Specialists at the UW Center for Cooperatives, and enjoys working with diverse groups as they refine their cooperative business proposition and she prioritizes

facilitation and learning about group process and governance in the early stages of cooperative development. Kelly also develops workshops and resources in collaboration with outside partners to broaden understanding about the cooperative model and explore innovative applications that address challenges like farm ownership transitions, farm labor shortages, and beginning farmer land access.

STEPHANIE MCLAIN

Soil Health Specialist, NRCS
Stephanie is the Soil Health Specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Minnesota. She works to train and educate NRCS employees, farmers, landowners, conservation partners, ag professionals, and policy leaders about the benefits of soil health in our cropping systems. Stephanie delivers hands-on technical assistance on cover crops, no-till or reduced till, crop rotations, soil function and other topics related to building soil health management systems and implementing soil health principles on the landscape.

ESTA MINANI

Owner, Esta Family Farm
Esta, from Burundi, learned how to farm and take care of the land in Africa, and farmed in refugee camps for many years. She has been in Iowa's Global Greens Program since 2015 and finally found 2.5 acres of land to rent and farm with her family. It's different farming in Iowa, but she has mastered using cover crops on her small plot to make the land more sustainable to farm organic vegetables. Her plan is to retire from her other jobs within two years and farm full time.

MOSES MOMANYI

Founder and Executive Director, Kilimo MN; Founder & Executive President, African Growers & Producers Alliance
Moses B. Momanyi has over 15 years of hands-on experience as a vegetable farmer. As the Founder and Executive Director of Kilimo MN, he is dedicated to transforming agriculture and

fostering sustainable food practices across the Twin Cities. Driven by a passion for community development and environmental stewardship, Moses leads initiatives that empower African immigrant farmers, enhance food security, and promote ecological sustainability. In addition to his work with Kilimo MN, Moses serves as the Executive President of the African Growers and Producers Alliance, further expanding his efforts to uplift farming communities and promote equitable food systems.

AMANDA NIGON-CROWLEY

Executive Director, The Village Ag Coop

Amanda is the director and a co-founder of the Village Ag Coop in Rochester MN, which lifts 200+ recent immigrant families through connections to small farms, markets, education and resources. She led a team of 12 farmers from the cooperative through an MDA funded research project on culturally specific crops in 2022 and 2023. The community explored organic measures for pest control and trialed different varieties of plants to determine dependable seed sources for growing in our region of SE Minnesota.

CALITON NTAHOMPAGAZE

Owner, Caliton Family Farm
Caliton Ntahompagaze is a farmer specializing in Red River Valley eggplant in West Central Minnesota. Claiton is a founder of the New Roots Farm Incubator Cooperative, which seeks to increase land access for Emerging Farmers in the Fargo/Moorhead area.

NICK OLSON

Land Stewardship Project
Nick Olson has been working as an organizer with LSP for 15 years, primarily within the Farm Beginnings initiative. During the past five years, he has been organizing farmers to lift up their voices and actions for justice and assisting farmers with adaptation and resilience in the face of a changing climate. Additionally, he and his family run a certified organic vegetable farm in Litchfield, MN.

SAM OSCHWALD TILTON

Agriculture Teacher & Advisor, Glacial Drift Enterprises

Sam is passionate about plants and their cultivation and has learned about vegetable farming and organic weed control through his experience as a farm worker and manager, farm owner, university researcher, author, extension educator, and technical college horticulture instructor. He also organizes the Midwest Mechanical Weed Control Field Day. He helps farmers tweak management systems to put the heat on weeds - tillage, crop rotation, crop selection, and soil fertility can all be managed in ways that manage weeds. He teaches engaging hands-on field days for farmers and ag advisors, and develops educational resources for organizations.

LILLIAN OTIENO

Director, Minnesota Department of Agriculture - Emerging Farmers Office

Lillian Otieno is the first Director of the new Emerging Farmers Office (EFO) at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, a member of the EFC planning team for the past eight years and she has since led emerging farmers listening sessions, two years in a row during the conference. Minnesota is leading the nation in dedicating the first of its kind office at state government level focused on addressing the needs of emerging farmers. This work is a collaborative effort together with farmers like you all, the Emerging Farmer Working Group, internal and external stakeholders.

ZACHARY PAIGE

North Circle Seeds

Zachary Paige is a certified organic vegetable and flower seed saver and producer, and owner of North Circle Seeds where he has been saving seeds for over a decade. He holds an MA in Plant Breeding from Iowa State and is passionate about seed saving education.

TESSA PARKS

Co-Owner/Operator, W.T. Farms

Tessa Sadae Parks (she/they) is a first-generation, half Japanese-Filipino farmer who co-owns and operates a beef and certified organic hay operation with their spouse Wyatt (he/him) on 100 percent rented ground in Northfield, Minnesota. As part of the Sharing Our Roots Farm Commons Cohort since 2021, Tessa and Wyatt rotationally graze Holstein steers they raise from bottle calf to butcher, then sell direct to consumer. Tessa is also the newly elected Rice County Farmers Union President.

RYAN PESCH

Educator - Ag Business Management, University of Minnesota Extension

Ryan is an Extension Educator in Ag Business Management who specializes in direct marketing for local food producers and farm finances with beginning and specialty crop operators. He also farms vegetables with his family in Otter Tail County near Pelican Rapids.

ARIEL PRESSMAN

Consultant, University of Minnesota Extension

Ariel owned and operated Seed to Seed Farm for seven years - selling his 15 acres of certified organic crops exclusively to large scale wholesale buyers. Ariel has created and conducted a number of training courses and workshops helping farmers develop farm management, marketing and outreach strategies to profitably service wholesale accounts. He currently works as a consultant for UMN Extension providing support to growers moving into wholesale markets.

ADA SNYDER

High Mowing Organic Seeds

Ada Snyder has been involved in the organic seed community for over 15 years, working in sales and in the field with a focus on regionally adapted seed varieties for organic systems. She enjoys visiting farms, meeting with growers and learning their farming systems to help find varieties that thrive in their unique conditions.

COURTNEY TCHIDA

Program Associate, Wild Farm Alliance

Courtney brings over 20 years of experience as an organic farmer, community organizer, educator, researcher and collaborator. She played a pivotal role in founding and managing the Cornercopia Student Organic Farm at the University of Minnesota. She also co-created the MN SEED Project to help connect people to free, locally adapted, native seeds, and she joined the Wild Farm Alliance as a program associate in 2024.

WHITNEY TERRILL

Land Stewardship Project

Whitney Terrill co-leads LSP's Farm Beginnings organizing and Land Access and Land Legacy initiatives. She has a bachelor's degree in sociology, as well as executive certificates in conservation and environmental sustainability and in social impact strategy. Whitney is a Farm Beginnings course graduate and beginning farmer who owns and operates a small organic vegetable farm in Washington County, MN., where she focuses on growing varieties of pumpkins and sweet potatoes.



PRESENTERS (continued)

FUNWI TITA

Owner, Better Greens LLC

Funwi is the founder of Better Greens LLC, a pioneering initiative dedicated to cultivating and distributing culturally significant African vegetables. With a passion for community empowerment, Funwi is the president of Minnesota African immigrant farmers Association (MAIFA). He is committed to promoting sustainable agriculture and preserving cultural heritage by promoting access to culturally relevant vegetables in Minnesota and around the country.

EMILY TONER

Grants Specialist Sr, MDA Emerging Farmer Office

Emily is a grants specialist in the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Emerging Farmer Office where she administers grants and also serves as a resource to expand access for emerging farmers to MDA grants and resources.

TOU VANG

Owner, Hope Farm

Hope Farm is located in Dennison MN where we grow 8-10 acres of vegetables and flowers. We got the land two years ago. We used to be certified organic and plan to get certified again when the land qualifies.

SINA WAR

Director of Engagement & Inclusion, MFMA

Sina War is a Profitability Coach for the Grow Your Green Program and a leading advocate for Minnesota's local food systems. As the Engagement & Inclusion Director for the Minnesota Farmers' Market Association, she champions farmers' markets statewide and nationally. With expertise in public policy, education, and marketing, Sina supports local farmers and entrepreneurs. Her passion for sharing Cambodian flavors led to the creation of Twin Tiger Brand, starting with the Sinaracha hot sauce. Sina envisions Twin Tiger Farm & Garden as a community hub for culturally significant produce, uniting cultures through culinary diversity.

LEVI WELBOURN

Regional Food Systems Coordinator, LEDC

Levi Welbourn, a Chicago native, is a passionate Afro-Latino farmer that weaves together his experience as a community organizer, educator, activist, policy advocate and more, to build community and collaborate towards equitable and sustainable agriculture/ food systems. Levi now calls Minnesota his home where he continues his

advocacy work through the lens of agriculture. Levi works to address disparities and dismantle social and economic barriers emerging farmers face. Outside of work, Levi spends time with farmers across Minnesota providing support for farming families, storytelling and sharing, lending a hand with farm work, and sharing meals with his community. Levi is a plantain lover and is always willing to talk about food.

KATHY ZEMAN

Executive Director, MFMA; Farmer, Simple Harvest Farm Organics

Kathy's ag business management degrees comes in handy as an organic livestock farmer and as executive director at MFMA. She approaches business decisions based on "principled" profitability values. Kathy is knowledgeable in MN's food licensing laws and rules, which drive the different sales channels food farmers can choose in which to be profitable.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Aaron Blyth, Latino Economic Development Center

Amanda Koehler, Independent Contractor

Amy Johnston, UMN Extension

Anthony Adams, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Ellyn Oelfke, USDA Farm Service Agency

Erika Resendiz Alonso, Fond du Lac Tribal Community College

George Tian, USDA Farm Service Agency

Hana Tanberg, The Good Acre

Katie Lee, UMN Extension SARE

KaZoua Berry, The Food Group

Laura Mirafuentes, The Food Group

Leslie Mackenzie, Big River Farms

Levi Wellbourn, Latino Economic Development Center

Lillian Otieno, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Lucia Possehl, Sharing Our Roots

Mar Horns, The Food Group

Nan Roberts, Independent Contractor

Nikki Crowe, UMN Extension

Rachel Holmes, The Food Group

Sara George, Renewing The Countryside

Sarah Woutat, Independent Contractor

Sina War, Minnesota Farmers Market Association

Sophia Lenarz-Coy, The Food Group

Summer Badawi, The Food Group

Whitney Terrill, Land Stewardship Project

Zoe Hollomon, Midwest Farmers of Color Collective

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