



## **SPEAKER BIOS**

# **LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION**

Friday, April 28th, 2017  
8:45 A.M. – 4 P.M.  
National Agricultural Library

### **KEYNOTE: DR. DONALD J. DARNALL**

Dr. Donald J. Darnall is the Executive Director of the [Maryland Food Center Authority](#) (the “MFCA”) and has held this position since 1985.

Dr. Darnall has been a member of the World Union of Wholesale Markets, an International Fresh Food Association, since 1989 and has continued as a member of its Board of Directors since 1992.

Dr. Darnall was elected Vice-Chairman in 2004 and held the position of Chairman from 2006 to 2008. He was re-elected to the position of Vice Chairman again in 2015 and began serving again as Chairman in May of 2016 for another two-year term.

He is a long-standing member of the U.S. National Association of Produce Market Managers; United Fresh Produce Association; and Produce for Better Health Foundation.

One of Dr. Darnall’s goals is to support a more local and regional focus on the importance of fresh food markets in the U.S., their impact on supporting the distribution and consumption of locally produced fresh food, as well as making connections to the preservation of open space provided by local farms.

As Executive Director, Dr. Darnall oversees the 400-acre Maryland Wholesale Food Center, including the operation of the Maryland Wholesale Produce Market, the Maryland Wholesale Seafood Market, the development of the Maryland Market Center, and the Rock Hall Clam House, an Eastern Shore waterside marine focused facility.

Dr. Darnall holds a bachelors and masters degree in engineering, an MBA, a law degree and a doctorate in management.

### **MEETING THE DEMAND FOR LOCAL FOOD: GROWER AND DISTRIBUTOR PERSPECTIVES ON DEMAND AND GETTING PRODUCE TO MARKET**

#### **Panel Leader: Greg Bowen**

Greg Bowen is a principal at [Land Stewardship Solutions, LLC](#) and has over 30 years of experience in

land preservation and public policy. He currently serves on the Maryland Sustainable Growth Commission and is chair of its Rural Economies Workgroup.

Mr. Bowen is co-author of a publication commissioned by the Harry R. Hughes Center for Agro-Ecology, Inc. entitled “The Future of Sustainable Farming and Forestry in Maryland” and more recently co-authored a publication for the Center entitled “Health, Safety, and Welfare?, A Report on the Factors that Favor or Hinder the Flow of Local Food in the Chesapeake Region.”

Previously, Mr. Bowen served as Director of the Maryland FarmLINK program at the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC). He is a lifetime resident of Calvert County, and still lives on the family farm near the Patuxent River. His passion is preserving and maintaining the region’s working landscapes.

### **Speaker: Emily Best**

Emily Best is the general manager of [Tuscarora Organic Growers Cooperative \(TOG\)](#). TOG, located in southern Huntingdon County, Pennsylvania, has been selling locally grown, organic fruits and vegetables in metropolitan Washington, D.C. since the late 1980’s. TOG works on behalf of its more than 40 owner/grower members by selling their produce at-cost, with any profits returning to the grower. With one exception, all of TOG’s certified-organic family farmers are located in central PA. TOG employs over 15 people, about half of them on a full-time basis. TOG’s annual sales for each of the past five years have exceeded \$3.4 million. TOG has a diverse customer base comprised of restaurants, retailers, box delivery services, and other farmers throughout the mid-Atlantic. Besides produce, TOG also organizes bulk orders of boxes, soil, crop protection, and other supplies at discounted rates for its growers as well as other local farmers.

Ms. Best came to Tuscarora from a farming background, having apprenticed at New Morning Farm for four seasons, where she managed their farmstand at the FRESHFARM Dupont Circle market, ran the greenhouse operations, and managed several crops. She has also been active with the National Young Farmers Coalition, working to raise awareness of issues facing young farmers across the region. She has a masters degree from American University in Environmental Policy. She serves on the boards of the Pennsylvania Farmer’s Union and FRESHFARM, and is the Chair of USDA’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Advisory Committee.

### **Speaker: Paul Mock**

Paul Mock is the owner and operator of [Mock’s Greenhouse and Farm](#) with Raynette Mock. The Mocks have been growing hydroponic produce at their farm in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia since 2006. They started their business with three greenhouses and now have 30 greenhouses comprising 80,000 square feet of growing area. They also have one acre of soil production.

The Mocks’ crops include five types of lettuces, basil, cilantro, six colors of cherry tomatoes, six varieties of heirloom tomatoes, cucumbers, and watercress. Eighty percent of their sales are wholesale, and 20% are through farmers markets. Seventy-five percent of the Mocks’ wholesale deliveries are in Maryland, and they also serve Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Some of their clients include Whole Foods, Coastal Sunbelt, Wegmans, G. Cefalo, Vitrano Produce, Bowie Produce, and Place Vendome Produce.

Mock’s Greenhouse and Farm has been USDA GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) certified since 2008. They have six full-time and six to twelve part-time staff with annual sales just under \$1 million.

Mr. Mock has a lifetime of horticulture and agriculture experience dating back to childhood.

**Speaker: José Morales**

José Morales is an Account Executive with [Keaney Produce Company](#) in Landover, MD. In 2011, he started in the company's Next Generation Senior Leadership Program. Mr. Morales' first two-year rotation was managing Keaney's production department. He has currently been in sales for over two years.

Keaney has been in operation since 1978 and was first located in the Florida Avenue Market in northeast Washington, D.C. The company is committed to distributing the freshest, high-quality products to the Mid-Atlantic region. Through continued dedication, Keaney's customers will receive extraordinary, hands-on support from their strong, educated family of 350 employees.

Keaney works with a range of producers throughout the mid-Atlantic and beyond to deliver products to restaurants, hotels, and schools, from Philadelphia to Virginia Beach.

Mr. Morales is originally from Planada, California in the Central Valley. While in high school he worked planting cauliflower for a summer and later as a produce vendor at several farmers markets in the Bay Area. This is when he fell in love with fresh fruits and vegetables.

During college he worked two jobs. One was in a busy restaurant in Oakland, CA and the other was as a vendor for a San Francisco baker at the Temescal Farmers Market. After college, Mr. Morales was a Peace Corps health volunteer in the Dominican Republic where he taught nutrition and cooking classes to his community. He is currently on the board of Community Foodworks.

**DISTRIBUTING LOCAL FOOD TO THE REGION: INFRASTRUCTURE AND TRANSPORTATION PERSPECTIVES**

**Panel Leader: Jon Schermann**

Jon Schermann is a Transportation Planner for the [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (COG) where he facilitates collaboration among the region's jurisdictions on the topics of freight planning and transportation safety planning. He has 14 years of experience in both the private- and public-sectors and has a special focus in helping cities, counties, and states address both goods movement and transportation safety issues within transportation planning processes. Mr. Schermann organizes regular meetings where public- and private-sector stakeholders discuss issues and share ideas about how to improve both goods movement and roadway safety in the National Capital Region.

Mr. Schermann holds a Master of Urban Planning and Policy Degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

**Speaker: Alan Moore**

Alan Moore is the Director of Distribution and Business Development at [Local Food Hub](#) in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Local Food Hub works with over 75 small family farms across Virginia to provide a range of services for growers, including aggregation, distribution, sales, marketing, accounting, production planning, technical assistance, and access to large consistent institutional and retail markets.

Born and raised in the tidewater area of Virginia, Mr. Moore, his wife, and three young children have deep southern roots. After graduating from the University of Virginia, he served as the Director of Operations for Jefferson Vineyards, a small boutique winery in central VA. He attended graduate school for Environmental Studies in Charleston, South Carolina. There he helped found Lowcountry Local First, a nonprofit organization working to revitalize the agricultural economy, environment and community in South Carolina. (He served as the organization's Sustainable Agriculture program director.)

Mr. Moore moved back to Virginia in 2009 to help found Local Food Hub. His hands-on experience in developing entrepreneurial programs has helped to promote economic development, preserve agricultural heritage, and better connect farms to tables in the region.

### **Speaker: Jason Lambros**

Jason Lambros is a Partner and Vice President of Food at [Coastal Sunbelt Produce](#) in Laurel, MD. He has been with Coastal since 1994, most recently as a part of executive and investment team that purchased the company from its founders.

Coastal is the leading independent mid-Atlantic supplier for fresh produce and dairy products. The company currently employs over 1000 crewmembers and delivers daily to eight states and Washington D.C. Coastal's customers include independent restaurants, regional and national restaurant chains, hotel chains, schools/other institutions, contract feeders, wholesale distributors, and retail chains.

Mr. Lambros has also managed Coastal's team of fourteen professional produce buyers who procure approximately 3,000 fresh produce and dairy items with a total annual spend of over \$150 million. The company purchases fresh produce from most major domestic shipping points daily. He also built Coastal's local purchasing program that procures over 20 million pounds of local/regional produce and eight million gallons of local/regional dairy products every year. Coastal's domestic and international volume totals approximately 250 truckloads per week to the company's new Howard County facility.

Mr. Lambros is a University of Maryland College Park graduate and holds several professional and executive leadership certifications. He is a Board Member of Future Harvest - Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture.

### **Speaker: Laura Richards**

Laura Richards is a Transportation Planner for the [District Department of Transportation](#) (DDOT), focusing on goods movement. Since joining DDOT in 2013 she has assisted with the completion of the District's first *District Freight Plan*, implemented the Pay-to-Load Commercial Vehicle Loading Zone program, and created an interactive truck and bus map and truck routing tool. Ms. Richards has also developed a system for managing truck restriction requests through information transparency and sharing information about the nature of goods movement, and coordinated with other District staff and consultants to roll-out the Oversize/Overweight Commercial Vehicle Routing Tool. She continues to work to further goods movement safety and efficiency while maintaining and

improving quality of life in the District through planning and implementing a variety of projects including an off-hour delivery pilot, a freight trip generation research project, and positive route guidance signage for truck travel.

## **LUNCH TIME PANEL: OPPORTUNITIES AND BARRIERS FOR LOCAL FOOD: PASTURE-RAISED LIVESTOCK AND DAIRY**

### **Panel Leader: Susan McQuilken**

Susan McQuilken is a Marketing Executive at [Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission](#) (SMADC).

SMADC provides extensive resources for new and existing farmers to keep farmland productive and profitable in the five counties of Southern Maryland and connects consumers with the region's farms for food, fun and recreation. In addition to marketing and consumer outreach, Ms. McQuilken also assists farms with regulatory and food safety issues affecting value-added food production.

### **Speaker: Danielle Vogel**

Danielle Vogel, the creator of [Glen's Garden Market](#) in downtown Washington, D.C., comes from a long line of grocers stretching back four generations. Before founding Glen's, Ms. Vogel worked in government for ten years, for Democrats and Republicans in the House and Senate, and for the Department of Justice as an environmental litigator enforcing the Clean Air Act. When the effort to pass comprehensive climate legislation failed, she dedicated herself to finding a new (more incremental) way to address global warming. And thus evolved the idea for Glen's Garden Market, where Neighbors select from the Chesapeake Bay watershed's finest produce, meats, poultry, dairy products and specialty foods in a space designed to celebrate seasonality and offer unprecedented access to environmentally sustainable, locally grown foods.

Ms. Vogel and her team opened a second Glen's location in D.C.'s Shaw neighborhood in December 2015.

### **Speaker: Joe Cloud**

Joe Cloud owns and operates True & Essential Meats, aka [T&E Meats](#), a USDA-inspected red-meat abattoir in Harrisonburg, Virginia. T&E's main customer base consists of small sustainable livestock producers who direct market their own branded pasture-raised meats. Joe entered the meat business nine years ago with the purchase of T&E. He has learned a lot since 2008, and T&E has grown to being the highest volume small abattoir /co-packer in VA specializing in working directly with farmers.

T&E Meats is a in the health business: creating healthy customers; healthy regional farmers; healthy workers; and a healthy food community by connecting local farmers to local eaters; retaining food dollars in local communities; providing a safe, healthy, and affordable food supply; and healing the earth by promoting ecologically sound farming practices. T&E Meats current annual revenues are approximately \$1.2 million, 95% of which are generated through processing fees. The company processes approximately 1.1 million carcass pounds annually. In 2016, that meant approximately 800 beef and veal; 2,800 hogs; and 700 lambs and goats.

T&E currently employs 18 full-time personnel, including butchers, packers, kill floor employees, and several admin positions. The company works with 250 to 300 producers each year, the great majority from Virginia. Many of these customers come from as far as three hours away, so T&E serves a large part of the Commonwealth. Most of T&E's non-Virginia customers come from the central Appalachian region of West Virginia, although several are based in Maryland.

Before T&E, Mr. Cloud had a 20 year career in private consulting as urban planner and designer. His educational background includes a Master's of Landscape Architecture from Harvard University. He is passionate about issues of community sustainability and was one of the first landscape architects to become LEED Accredited through the U.S. Green Building Council.

### **Speaker: Eric Paulson**

Eric Paulson is the Executive Secretary for the [Virginia State Dairymen's Association](#) (VSDA) and was named to the position. VSDA is a member organization that has represented dairy farmers across the Commonwealth since 1907.

The goal of the VSDA is to represent and promote the dairy industry in VA. The VSDA is a member-organization that spans the Commonwealth of Virginia and represents its member's views on both the state and federal levels. VSDA is committed to ensuring a profitable and sustainable dairy industry in the Commonwealth. Its office is in Bridgewater, Virginia. VSDA represents dairy farmers through education, advocacy, public relations, and by supporting research to benefit industry.

Mr. Paulson was raised on his family's dairy farm in Port Republic, Virginia, outside Harrisonburg. He graduated from Virginia Tech with a bachelors in Dairy Science and a bachelors in Political Science. He also completed the Sorensen Institute for Public Policy program from the University of Virginia. Eric currently lives in Hanover County with his wife and two children.

## **OTHER LOCAL FOOD DISTRIBUTION CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Panel Leader: Kristin Dawson**

Kristin Dawson is part of the [Baltimore Development Corporation](#) and the [Baltimore Food Policy Initiative](#). As the food retail economic development officer, Ms. Dawson's work focuses on addressing health disparities by attracting and expanding grocery and grocery alternatives to Baltimore, specifically to food desert areas, and growing the food economy by supporting food entrepreneurs. She is based out of the city's economic development agency, the Baltimore Development Corporation, one of the main partners in the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative – an interagency collaboration that consists of the Office of Sustainability, Health Department and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. Ms. Dawson is on the boards of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore and the Baltimore Food Hub.

Ms. Dawson was recruited to Baltimore over ten years ago for what was supposed to be a one summer post-graduate school fellowship program, but fell in love with the city and has lived and worked in Baltimore ever since. She is on the boards of the Farm Alliance of Baltimore and the Baltimore Food Hub.

### **Speaker: Chris Van Vlack**



Chris Van Vlack is the Urban/Ag Conservationist for the [Loudoun County Soil and Water Conservation District](#).

The Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District delivers the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices program in Loudoun, the Virginia Conservation Assistance Program, the Non-Agricultural Buffer Planting Program, and also helps with pasture management, erosion and drainage issues, and farm plans required for Land Use Tax, Barn Construction, and small acreage livestock. Mr. Van Vlack has been with the District since 2005.

Mr. Van Vlack also operates his own custom hay and bush hog operation, Hanging Rock Hay and Bush Hog, specializing in square bales and small acreage properties. He is currently the President of the Loudoun Farm Bureau where he has served on the board since 2009. He is a past state committee member for the Virginia Farm Bureau Young Farmers, and was the American Farm Bureau Young Farmers Discussion Meet National Champion in 2016. Mr. Van Vlack also serves on Loudoun County's Rural Economic Development Council and is a member of the Hillsboro Ruritan Club.

Mr. Van Vlack is a graduate of American University.

### **Speaker: Lea Howe**

Lea Howe is the Farm to School Director at [DC Greens](#) where she works to build a healthier, more just food system in her hometown of Washington, DC. In this capacity, Ms. Howe supports DC Public Schools on adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Program, a procurement framework that directs institutional buying power towards five core values: local economies, health, valued workforce, animal welfare and environmental sustainability. As DC's Core Partner for the National Farm to School Network, she brings together and collaborates with local stakeholders to put food education on the menu in every classroom, grow DC's robust school garden network, and provide all students with culturally appropriate, healthy, and regionally-sourced foods.

Ms Howe's passion for food education and sustainable agriculture took root in Montana while serving with FoodCorps. Lea served her first year in Boulder where she worked to integrate farm to school programming in the public school system and increase access to local food in the community. She then moved to Missoula for a FoodCorps Fellowship where she spearheaded a campaign to bring local, grass-fed beef into public schools and institutions.

### **Speaker: Dena Leibman**

Dena Leibman is the Executive Director of [Future Harvest - Chesapeake Association for Sustainable Agriculture \(CASA\)](#). Future Harvest CASA has provided education, networking, and advocacy to build a sustainable Chesapeake Foodshed since 1998. The organization focuses primarily on helping farmers produce in ways that are profitable and Bay-friendly.

Ms. Leibman's commitment to conservation and sustainable agriculture has propelled her through a long career in wildlife biology, publications, and managerial positions in communications. She is also co-owner of ZigBone Farm Retreat, a 100-acre sheep and goat farm and naturally built retreat center in Maryland.

### **Speaker: Ronny Faragasso**

Ronny Faragasso has served as the Head of Food Procurement at [Capital Area Food Bank](#)

(CAFB) in Washington, D.C.

CAFB distributes nearly 15 million pounds of fresh produce, through direct distributions and a network of 444 Food Assistance Partners, into D.C., Prince George's and Montgomery Counties as well as northern Virginia communities, each year. Wellness and nutrition is a primary focus and all produce is distributed at no charge.

CAFB targets excess inventory and #2 produce, depending on the items, in full truck load volumes directly from growers. CAFB picks up this produce with its own tractor-trailer three to four days per week. Growers are normally paid within ten to fourteen days. CAFB works with up to a dozen farms currently growing produce specifically the organization throughout Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania and Virginia. The organization works directly with growers to creatively reduce the cost of produce by purchasing in bulk bins. CAFB hopes to build more of these relationships offering access to fresh produce to expand its reach into the community with an expanded variety of nutritious, wholesome produce.

For more than 20 years, Mr. Faragasso was the produce buyer/merchandiser for a local gourmet food chain, operating under three banners throughout the mid-Atlantic, as far north as New York and Connecticut. For the past six years, he has been building a produce program at CAFB. When he first started, the organization sourced produce nationally and focused on the "hard 7." Today, CAFB procures almost entirely locally through the growing season and has expanded its produce offerings significantly.

### **Speaker: Andrew Rose**

Andrew Rose is the Marketing Manager for Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit.

MidAtlantic Farm Credit is an agricultural lending cooperative owned by its member-borrowers. It provides farm loans for land, equipment, livestock and production; crop insurance; and rural home mortgages. The co-op has over 11,000 members and over \$2.6 billion in loans outstanding. MidAtlantic has branches serving DE, MD, PA, VA and WV. It is part of the national Farm Credit System, a network of financial cooperatives established in 1916 to provide a dependable source of credit to farmers and rural America

Prior to joining MidAtlantic Farm Credit, Mr. Rose spent almost 12 years running the marketing, business development and strategic alliances for a regional CPA firm. An innovative strategy, marketing and business development authority, he is frequently asked to speak to groups on a wide variety of topics. He is also a sought after author for his technical expertise on the subjects of trend spotting, technology and other topics.

Mr. Rose is deeply involved in the non-profit community, sitting on or advising many non-profit boards and social impact organizations. He recently served as the Chief Strategy Officer in Residence at the Emerging Technologies Centers, the Chair of the Advisory Board for the Maryland Cybersecurity Association, and was an organizer for the TEDxBaltimore event.

### **Speaker: Molly Harris**

Molly Harris owns and operates [LuLu's Local Food Hub](#).

In the fall of 2008, Ms. Harris recognized the need for farmers in central Virginia to have a venue to



sell their products throughout the winter season. She began with a small group of farmers making weekly deliveries of their products to her restaurant. By extending these farmers' availability lists to families in the area searching for local food beyond the farmers market season, Ms. Harris was able to increase their sales and make their weekly deliveries profitable. Taking this program online in the spring of 2009 allowed for her to open the online farmers market program up to hundreds of families purchasing from over 75 farms each week. Sales soared to well over \$10,000 per week overnight.

Streamlining the process to its simplest form and emulating it in a virtual world allowed for Ms. Harris to develop an innovative solution to meet the farmer's mandate for increased sales. Through a grant from USDA, and support from VaFAIRS, she has enhanced the software and licensed out to multiple users throughout the state and across the country. Continuing to analyze needs, envision the solutions and collaborate closely with a team, Ms. Harris is now preparing the software for its next stage in sales and management.

Ms. Harris is a proud mother of three University of Virginia college students. She lives in Goochland County with a flock of guinea hens, a small herd of goats, a single Suffolk sheep and a loyal golden retriever.

### **Speaker: Patti Miller**

Patti Miller was an early Steering Team member for the [West Virginia Food and Farm Coalition](#) where she has served continuously as a tireless instigator, volunteer and facilitator. She is the chair of the Coalition's Aggregation Distribution Working Group ("the Hub Club") and a servant-leader to the group's members. Ms. Miller adores the "challenge and privilege of helping support and orchestrate the many community efforts around WV and...region [to] communicate, share knowledge, access resources and succeed."

Ms. Miller is passionate about local foods, small farms and the communities that produce them. From 2005 to 2016, she and her wife owned and operated Panorama at the Peak: a local foods restaurant in Berkeley Springs WV. As General Manager and chief 'sourcer-er', frustrated by the complexities and complications of sourcing and 'legally' serving local food to her guests, she jumped at the chance to collaborate with and help ignite West Virginia's local food movement when approached by its organizers in 2010.

### **Speaker: David Robishaw**

David Robishaw is a Marketing Specialist at the [Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services](#) (VDACs).

Mr. Robishaw works to promote the use of Virginia agriculture and as part of his duties, arranges grower and buyer tours, assists shippers with regional marketing, and provides print and electronic guides and point of sale materials to growers and producers. He is also the Program Manager for the Virginia Wine Board and Virginia Apple Board.

Prior to joining the Virginia Department of Agriculture in 1995, Mr. Robishaw was the produce Buyer and Merchandiser for Atlantic Food Services (now U. S. Foodservice), an independent food service distributor in Manassas. He also spent 10 years in the wholesale produce business and 5 years in the restaurant industry. Mr. Robishaw is a University of Virginia graduate.

**Speaker: Ron Williams, Jr.**

Ron Williams, Jr. is the owner of Dorchesters Farm FoodHUB.

Since 2012, Mr. Williams has been exploring the waters of Maryland's Eastern Shore as a licensed Maryland Blue Crabber, Oyster Harvester and registered Seafood Dealer. While crab and tidal fishing, he began agricultural farming to supplement his income post-crabbing season and fell in love with farming. He joined and started the DC Chapter of the National Young Farmers Coalition. His farm business will focus on providing an aquaculture and agricultural food hub company that provides fresh, healthy products to various retail, wholesale and institutional customers throughout the Washington Metropolitan region.

Mr. Williams is a Washington, D.C., native and spent part of his childhood in Prince George's County, MD. He is a George Washington University graduate. While studying at GW, he was accepted into a career program that allowed him to work at various US Government Executive Agencies while attending school. Over the years he has interned for Congressman Sander Levin of Michigan, and Former Chairman of the Democratic National Committee Terry McAuliffe. Prior to pursuing his farming and fishing career path, Mr. Williams was an organizer for a number of political campaigns in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. He has also consulted for several local membership organizations and nonprofit institutions.

**Speaker: Pat Millner**

Pat Millner, Ph.D is a Research Microbiologist with more than 40 years experience in agriculture at the [USDA Agricultural Research Service](#), Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center, in Beltsville, MD.

Dr. Millner's research involves:

- environmental and crop production factors and practices that impact food safety of fresh market produce in organic and conventional farming systems
- treatment technologies to destroy zoonotic pathogens in animal manures and other recycled organic residuals
- bioaerosol emissions from animal operations including land application of manure and biosolids
- on-farm practices to reduce environmental survival and dissemination of pathogens into the food chain
- composting technologies to improve the nitrogen content of the product for use in organic production
- use of compost to improve and maintain soil health and control fungal root diseases of plants
- food safety and quality of aquaponic and hydroponic vegetables

Dr. Millner has a B.S., M.S., and Ph.D from the University of Maryland.

**Speaker: Tricia Kovacs**

**Tricia Kovacs** is a local and regional food systems policy advisor in the [USDA Agricultural Marketing Service](#), where she coordinates efforts across the USDA to support the local and regional food sector—including direct-to-consumer, farm-to-institution, and regional processing, aggregation, and

distribution. She also works on food safety topics and represents the USDA as a convener on the Food Safety Modernization Act Collaborative Training Forum.

Prior to joining the USDA, Ms. Kovacs managed Regional Markets programs at the Washington State Department of Agriculture, where she was founding Program Manager for the state Farm to School Program and also led the Small Farm Direct Marketing Program. She was lead author on publications that help farmers and buyers understand complex market requirements, including *Bridging the GAPS Farm Guide: Good Agricultural Practices and On-Farm Food Safety for Small, Mid-Sized and Diversified Fruit and Vegetable Farms*, and *A School's Guide to Buying Washington-Grown Food*. Ms. Kovacs holds a M.Sc. in Sustainability, Planning, and Environmental Policy from Cardiff University in Wales and a BA from University of Virginia. Originally from rural Appalachian Virginia, she lives with her husband and two children in Washington, D.C.

## WELCOME AND WHAT'S NEXT

### **Speaker: Brian LeCouteur**

Brian LeCouteur has worked for over 20 years as the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government's (COG) urban forester. He is as an ISA Certified Arborist, and has had oversight of more than 120 riparian reforestation projects, totaling approximately 14,000 trees planted on 30 acres in the Anacostia Watershed. He is currently working with the District of Columbia and the U.S. Forest Service as a project manager on a host of urban forestry projects including urban forest canopy mapping and analysis, urban timber recovery and reuse, and an urban forest health matrix in partnership with Frostburg State University. Mr. LeCouteur is presently the staff liaison to COG's Regional Urban Tree Canopy Workgroup, tasked with developing a strategy for regional tree canopy management and regional green infrastructure planning and enhancement.

In 2006, Mr. LeCouteur helped to launch COG's Regional Agricultural Workgroup and their Web portal, [www.nationalcapitalfarms.org](http://www.nationalcapitalfarms.org). The group works with local government agricultural and economic development staff to help promote the importance of farming and local farm products within metropolitan Washington.

Mr. LeCouteur's primary horticultural and arboricultural knowledge is derived from many years of working alongside his father, Eugene H. LeCouteur at their 25 acre nursery and landscape contracting business in Fredericksburg, Virginia, founded by his grandfather in 1919. He holds a masters degree in planning from University of Virginia, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Mary Washington.

### **Speaker: Lindsay Smith**

Lindsay Smith has been consulting with COG since March 2016 to launch its Regional Food Systems Value Chain Coordination Program, a partnership with local philanthropy and the USDA's Food LINC initiative.

Since moving to the metropolitan Washington ten years ago, Ms. Smith has also consulted with philanthropy on strengthening local and regional food systems and improving food security in the region. She has also served as the Montgomery County Food Council Coordinator, consulted on land conservation, and worked as an urban planner in Prince George's County, MD.

She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners and serves on the Board of the

National Capital Area Chapter of the American Planning Association. She is a member of Future Harvest CASA, the Virginia Association of Biological Farming, and the Virginia Farm Bureau. Last September, she joined the third class of VALOR, the Virginia Agriculture Leaders Obtaining Results Program.

Lindsay holds a master's in urban planning and a master's in environmental policy from the University of Michigan. Part of her graduate program included learning Portuguese so that she could complete an internship with a unique municipal food security program in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.