Speaker Biography's & Contact List

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Adam Diamond, PhD
Agricultural Marketing Specialist
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Adam Diamond works as an Agricultural Marketing Specialist within the Marketing Services Division of the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service. He is currently involved with several research projects concerning farmers market success indicators, regional food distribution systems, and organic food marketing barriers. Mr. Diamond has also been involved in proposal review and program administration with the Farmers Market Promotion Program. Prior to coming to the USDA three years ago, Adam received his PhD in geography from Rutgers University in 2006. His dissertation examined the structure and development of the organic milk commodity chain in the Northeastern United States. He received a master of arts in urban planning, specializing in environmental policy and planning, from UCLA in 1997, and has a bachelor of arts in political science from Reed College.

Chris Cook
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Christopher I. Cook is the Ag. Enterprise Development Coordinator for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation and also serves as Executive Director of the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation & Rural Sustainability. He has a broad range of planning, business creation and development skills, as well as strategic expertise. Mr. Cook has also applied for and been rewarded several Value Added Producer Grants (VAPG). He has administered these grants and supplied all the necessary documentation and maintained records as required by the Grantor. As Executive Director of the Virginia Foundation for Agriculture, Innovation and Rural Sustainability, he has successfully applied for the Rural Cooperative Development Grant (RCDG) for the last four years. The foundation is one of approximately 20 Centers nationally funded by this grant. He administers and manages all aspects of the grant. Mr. Cook has over twenty five years agriculture experience including organizing and developing farmer-owned start-up businesses. His work experience covers two continents. He is a Certified Economic Development Financial Professional with the National Development Council, KY, has a

Post Baccalaureate Certificate in Accounting from VCU and holds a Masters in Business Administration from the College of William & Mary.

Leon Geyer
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Leon Geyer joined the faculty in 1981. He conducts research in law and economics, working in areas such as the environment, commercial law, business organization, taxation, and tort problems of the farm and commercial sectors. Current research projects address the divorce impact on farm assets and the Limited Liability Company Acts. Before coming to Virginia Tech, Professor Geyer worked as an economist and attorney for USDA and the Committee on Agriculture, U.S. House of Representatives. He served as the Altheimer Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Arkansas in 1990; Visiting Professor, Faculty of Law, University of New Brunswick, Fredericton, Canada, 1994; Visiting Fellow, University of Melbourne, Faculty of Law, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia, 1995. He is advisor to the Undergraduate Honor System; President of the Faculty Senate; and President elect, American Agricultural Law Association.

Stacy M. Miller
Executive Director
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Stacy has worked with farmers markets from a variety of vantage points: vendor, manager, researcher, and consumer. She has grown and sold everything from Asian mustards to zinnias, and later served as the manager of the Morgantown Farmers Market for two years. In 2005, she earned a Masters of Science in Agricultural and Environmental Education from West Virginia University, and has since co-authored articles on farmers market impacts and characteristics for academic agricultural publications. Stacy works with managers, farmers, economic developers, and others in the farmer's market sphere to cultivate an environment of sharing: ideas, assessment tools, success stories, obstacles, and other resources. She is a "true believer" in the power of farmers markets to sustain healthy farms, healthy communities, and healthy economies. When not working for FMC, Stacy can be found in the garden, shaking a half-hearted fist at the groundhogs and feeding grasshoppers to her hens.

Theresa J. Nartea
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Theresa Nartea is a Marketing & agribusiness specialist with Virginia State University-Virginia Cooperative Extension. Her work focus is to develop practical training methods to teach county based extension staff and other stakeholders about unique and sustainable marketing strategies such as: Community Supported Agriculture, Subscription Farming, Workplace Farmers Markets and E-Commerce. Her teaching goals are to help build mutually beneficial food systems that connect Virginia farms with customers in their communities. She is an international expert on workplace community supported agriculture development. Her career has been devoted to championing the farming community. From 1993-1997, she worked in an agronomist capacity with USDA county programs and Washington State University-Cooperative Extension to provide technical support on farm preservation, environmental stewardship and farm profitability issues. She is a formally trained Soil scientist (NC Department of Environment & Natural Resources, 1999-2002). She has served as the Program director of education & marketing of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (NC State University) from 2002 to 2004, and Agribusiness & marketing specialist with North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University-NC Cooperative Extension (2004-2008).

Deb Williamson
Co- owner
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Deborah Williamson, as the co-owner of Seven Oaks Lavender Farm in Catlett, Virginia had been building a niche farm business by offering a pick-your-own lavender season and a variety of lavender products. Seven Oaks Lavender Farm was successful in being profiled on local television, Virginia Living, the Washington Post, various Farm Bureau publications and local newspapers. Deborah has been on the board of the Fauquier Farm Bureau for over a year and has learned a lot about agriculture around Virginia and farm policy. Farmer Girls, LLC was born in June of 2009 as a partnership between Deanna and Deborah with the goal of bringing a large variety of local farm fresh food to local people. As farmers themselves, one of their most important goals is to have a system that allows farmers to make a reasonable profit so they may continue farming. With local farmers being able to sell their products profitably, and still having the time to do more farming, the community and all within it benefit.

Pablo Elliott

The Local Food Project at Airlie
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Established in 1998, the Local Food Project at Airlie grows 3,000 pounds of organic vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers each year for the Airlie Center kitchen. The project demonstrates the significant role local food can play in an institutional setting. Garden staff works closely with chefs to integrate flavorful, nutritious, fresh-picked produce into delicious dining room meals. Airlie guests can learn more about the Local Food Project by visiting our organic culinary garden. Garden staff looks forward to sharing information on sustainable gardening methods, crop varieties, and local food systems. The Local Food Project also reaches out to the regional community by hosting workshops, seminars, and conferences for food growers of all levels—from the backyard gardener to the aspiring small farmer. The project serves as an educational hub for anyone seeking to learn more about eating, producing, and supporting locally grown food.

Michael Clune
The Farm at Sunnyside, Director of Farm Operations
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Michael comes to The Farm at Sunnyside having previously run Sanctuary Farm (his own vegetable farm in South Carolina) and served as marketing manager for Blue Ridge Dairy, a local cheese and yogurt producer. As Director of Farm Operations, Michael oversees the production, marketing and administrative aspects of the business. He serves on the board of the Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection.

Doug Linton
Quarter-Mor Farm
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Mr. Linton has been raising beef for three years. He sells his product at the local farmers markets and organic store.

Hue-Chan Karels
Owner
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In 2007, Hue-Chan Karels had the inspiration to make a lifestyle change and depart from her FDA regulatory and compliance consulting practice to start an artisan cookie business. In starting her business, she soon discovered a lack of permitted, commercially equipped kitchen space as required by federal, state and local laws to produce and sell her cookies. Frustrated, she pushed forward in her quest and found she was not alone. Her entrepreneurial spirit and determination was the driving force to keep going and thus the "Open Kitchen" concept was born – licensed, commercially equipped kitchen facilities for use by culinary entrepreneurs on a cost-effective and flexible basis. After two and a half years and some reshaping of her original vision, Open Kitchen is now open for business and not only offers two dedicated, fully equipped and licensed commercial kitchens but also includes a Bistro serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner featuring culinary talents of local chefs and using locally sourced ingredients whenever possible; a Coffee and Tea Bar offering artisan baked goods made at Open Kitchen by local food entrepreneurs; a Culinary Studio offering a wide range of cooking classes taught by local instructors; and Catering services involving newly trained culinary students whenever possible. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Master of Science in Organization Development. She is also a Qualified Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) administrator and trainer.

Derek Luhowiak
Owner
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Derek and Amanda Luhowiak live and work from their home outside of Marshall, Virginia. Derek has worked in the restaurant business since he was fifteen years old and most recently held the position of Executive Chef at Ayshire Farm in Upperville, VA. Amanda has gained experience in a number of fields since graduating from the University of Tennessee in 2004. She has always dreamed of doing something good for the earth and those around her. With their skills, passion and determination the sky was the limit in creating a business plan. Their goal of creating something to call their own, that would be true to their beliefs about food, the way it is raised and the environment is clear in all they do. Derek & Amanda have created a fun, friendly atmosphere where people of all ages can enjoy a delicious, wholesome farm fresh, local meal.

Jamie Nicoll
Madison County Cannery Project
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Founded – Summerfield Farm Products, Free Union, Virginia – 1983 - Farming, meat processing. Restaurant and household sales through Federal Express - Capitalized on $1,400 - Maximum Annual Sales - $4M; Shipped 20,000 lbs/month - Shuttered – 2007

Raised free range veal from cow's milk and pasture raised lamb. Sold meat door-to-door from the back of a pick-up truck around the state, DC and Georgetown for three years. 1983 story in Washington Post initiated the mail order part of the business. Moved to Boyce, Virginia, 1984 to be closer to DC for meat cutting training. Delivered fresh meat to Manhattan restaurants every Saturday morning. Moved to Brightwood, Virginia, 1985 for more pasture. Opened small USDA approved meat processing facility (16x16) in farm's old smokehouse with attached walk-in cooler and freezer (12x24). Hired and trained two staff to cut and package meat.

Expanded into dry-aged prime beef, dry-aged lamb legs, fallow venison, pheasants, rabbits, mushrooms (farm raised shiitake, wild morel and chanterelle). Venison farmer became a 50/50 partner supplying the capital for a 7,500 sq. foot USDA meat processing facility with a USDA approved commercial kitchen and deli. Personally responsible for complete layout of the facility and for sizing coolers and freezers.

Personally responsible for all recipe development: glace de veau, chicken stock, venison stock, cold & hot smoked salmon, duck breast proscuitto, line of fresh sausages with dried fruits (before Bruce Aidell's line), smoked sausages, guanciale, balsamic reduction, flavored oils, molasses/sugar cured smoked bacon, a few vacuum tumbled items and all items sold in the deli. Responsible for all perishable inventories, rotation, and production flows to satisfy just-in-time business model and 21-day average turnover.

Countless articles in national newspapers and magazines: New York Times (4), Washington Post (3), USA Today, Cook's Magazine, Playboy, others.

Ken Smith
Owner/Operator
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Ken Smith was born in Baltimore, Maryland and grew up in rural Harford County on the family farm. He relocated to Fauquier County in 1972 to his father's farm. Ken assumed full control of all farm assets in 1985. He increased milking herd from 120 cows to current lever of 500 cows. He received the quality award winner from Maryland and Virginia Milk Producers Cooperative for all 12 months in 2008 for milk quality and rated top herd in the Fauquier-Prince William district for the last ten years by the Dairy Herd Improvement Association. Ken is a member of Warrenton Presbyterian Church and enjoys spending time with his five children and four grandchildren. He also likes canoeing/kayaking on the Rappahannock River.

Bernadine (Bernie) Prince
Co-Director
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FRESHFARM Markets strives to build and strengthen the local food movement in the Chesapeake Bay region. We use our markets to create vibrant urban and community places, to provide economic opportunities for farmers and to showcase our region's agricultural bounty. FRESHFARM Markets began as a program in the Public Education Division of American Farmland Trust. In May 2002, we incorporated as an independent, nonprofit organization in Washington, DC, and received 501(c) 3 status. In 1997, the first FRESHFARM market was opened in the DuPont Circle neighborhood of Washington, DC, and in 1998, a second market was opened in St. Michaels, MD. The DuPont Circle market has expanded from a customer base of 21,000 to more than 100,000 and has been named by The Wall Street Journal and The Financial Times of London as one of the top farmers' markets in the country.