



2024 Marbleseed Farmer Summits

BOOK OF PROCEEDINGS

Farm viability today, tomorrow, forever!



Book of Proceedings
from the Farmer Summits

2024 Marbleseed Organic
Farming Conference

Saturday, February 24
3:30 - 5:30 PM

Climate and Conservation
Farmer Summit
Thursday, 1:30-5:30 p.m.
Room K

Farm Hacks
Farmer Summit
Thursday, 1:30-5:30 p.m.
Room I

Growing Organic
Farmer Summit
Thursday, 1:30-5:30 p.m.
Room J

Livestock
Farmer Summit
Thursday, 1:30-5:30 p.m.
Room G

Wellness
Farmer Summit
Thursday, 1:30-5:30 p.m.
Room H

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This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under agreement number 2019-38640-29879 through the North Central Region SARE program under project number ONC20-067 USDA is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

SESSION SCHEDULE

2:15-3:00				
Livestock	Growing Organic	Wellness	Climate & Cons	Farm Hacks
How can organic meat compete with alternative proteins?	Living Mulch	Verbal & Nonverbal Communication with Employees, Customers, etc.	We Need More Renewable Energy	Employees on the Farm: Gaining & Retaining
Urban Meat Markets: What Proteins Sell	Working w/Certifiers	Allergies	Water-Ground Water Availability & Quality	How Small Farms can make a Profit
Selling to Ethnic Markets-Goat Meat	Specialty Crops: Berries, orchards	Slow Down: Being Inefficient is More Efficient for our wellbeing	Role of Farmers in Community Climate Education	Small Scale Solutions for Moving & Spreading Compost Materials
Meat Aggregation & Marketing Strategies	Farm SOP's: How much is too much?	Preventing....	Wildlife & Beneficial Habitat on the Farm	
3:15-4:00				
Livestock	Growing Organic	Wellness	Climate & Cons	Farm Hacks
Alternative Swine Feeding Programs	Weed Management	Sharing Wellness Resources	Conservation synergized with Profitable Production	Integrated Pest Mgt on a Small Budget: Spec. Critters/ Insects
Certifying Pasture as Organic	Organic Agroforestry	Feet	Successfully Growing Crops in Weather Extremes	Using Beneficials in the Green House
Regenerating with Livestock...	Vegetable Post Harvest Systems	Loneliness & Isolation	Urban Ag and the Current Food System	Task and Team Mgt Strategies, Tactics, Tools
Finding Markets to Maximize Income on Livestock Operations	Urban Farming Education for Youth	Time Management	Carbon Credits: Participation, Incentivize	Computers & Programming for Data & Farm Automation
4:15-5:00				
Livestock	Growing Organic	Wellness	Climate	Farm Hacks
Making a Living Livestock Farming Full Time	Access to Land	Extreme Heat & Sun Exposure	Biochars Role in Carbon Seq. Ag	High Tunnel Growing-Tips, Varieties, etc.
Land Access for Beginning Livestock Farmers	Soli Management	Emotional Burnout	Accelerated Plant Breeding for Rapid Climate Change	Weed Suppression
Working with Processors	Add-ons to CSA & Regenerative Practices		Severe Weather Events on Farm: Effects and Mitigation	Water Management: Retain Rainwater w/ Landscaping
Poultry Farm Expansion Equipment				Infrastructure & Equipment for Getting Started on Organic Acres

INTRODUCTION



In 2023 Marbleseed introduced the concept of Farmer Summits as an Open Space format at the annual Organic Farming Conference in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. We called this The Farm Viability Convergence. With the deep conversations that resulted and feedback from attendees, we went into 2024's conference planning to expand on the convergence with more topics, more time, and use it as a way to start the farmer-led learning process on the first afternoon we gathered.

Rather than one broad topic, these Farmer Summits took shape as an 'unconference'. Again grounded in Open Space technology, we endeavored to create an agenda that emerged from participants in real time. We created five themes that included Livestock, Growing Organic, Farm Hacks, Climate and Conservation, and Wellness. Each room had a facilitator/host to explain the process of creating the agenda. You can find these scripts as Appendix B of these proceedings.

Once the individual rooms created their conversation agendas, the topic cards were gathered and taped up in the central lobby to enable attendees to move from one theme to another based on their interests.

In this Book of Proceedings, you will find the key themes and learnings that emerged from over 56 conversations. Each of these 'sessions' had a convener and notetaker. Participants had the option to share contact information and maintain connections.

In this age of so much information available online, it feels more critical to have these opportunities to learn from each other. And to have the chance to explore information, reflect on its usefulness and network with others who share farm and life experiences. Additionally, the constraints of formal conference content involves identifying workshop topics well in advance of the event. And many times the challenges most top of mind when we convene was not anticipated when those plans were laid. This unconference method allows us space as learners to bring with us those things that feel most relevant and urgent in the moment. We can seek out others whose farms, challenges, and methods align with our own.

This Book of Proceedings also is an opportunity to share with the community the richness of those conversations and learnings. The breadth of topics is an illustration of the diversity of the community that gathers.

We are grateful for the support of North Central Region Sustainable Agricultural Research and Education for the funding that enabled the Farmer Summits in 2024, along with a training ahead of the gathering for the facilitators in each of the Summit themes.





CLIMATE AND CONSERVATION

Farmer Summit on Climate & Conservation! We imagined this Summit would explore the various impacts of climate on our farms and ways that we are finding to mitigate them in the face of a warming planet. Are you interested in production practices, conservation practices, weed or pest control, seeds and breeds?

CLIMATE AND CONSERVATION

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Session: "Role of Farming in Environmental Education"
Convener: Lindsay Zimmerman

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Members present have backgrounds in education and farming. Their focuses include the following:
 - a. Specifically, how environment impacts market farming
 - b. NRCS urban programs and prioritizing farmers and education in environmental impact
 - c. How the microcosm of farming can be used to educate children about global conservation issues
 - d. Podcasts about farming and their narrative in the climate change conversation
 - e. Using rock dust to reduce climate impacts on farms
 - f. Using sustainable agricultural practices to teach about sustainability in general
 - g. Hosting resiliency cohorts for farmers to develop plans which prioritize a community-level view/approach. How to include greater community into farm impacts.

Topics/Themes:

- Farmers can act as community leaders
 - When it comes to resiliency, there's a need to first recognize where the potential failure points are, like power + water
 - Often people are looking to tech for solutions, but farmers are overlooked as a solution for mitigation
 - Farmers can be the largest contributors to climate change as well as the solution in proper stewardship.
 - There are issues when some farmers don't believe in a changing climate. However, in changing the language in how to talk to them it can shape the conservation positively.
 - Don't overlook the importance of hard data on weather effects that can be used. Peer conservation and how other farmers are dealing with it.
 - Using agriculture in an educational setting with kids gives children a hands-on laboratory/classroom with active observation of these issues and systems in play.
- Most communities have the same core that. Values and leaning into that shared sense of priorities can help ease conversation when there isn't shared opinions on climate change. Many traditional farmers have little control over how quickly they can adapt their systems is the very way farmers look at community: one that promotes or can maintain the types of community involvement needed to solve these problems.
- Farmers getting together first on zoom and finding community support in their region is then beginning to translate to local community creation.
 - Highly individualized farmers need Community support, but that requires social change.
 - Current government funding and incentives basically encourage unhealthy practices and community models.
 - How realistic is it to ask farmers to do this type of education and provide education?
 - Many farmers are already providing education, often speaking at council meetings, etc. Many farmers are often experts on many of these topics.
 - Importance of framing issues of climate change in agriculture is necessary for progress for kids who don't have a framework for farming but understand climate change.
 - In colleges, A data point that most of students did not have an agriculture background but were urban students looking to become farmers. 1/3-1/2 students became farmers (i.e. Colorado State University).
 - About 20 programs around the country.
 - "Farm beginnings" is training people in organic ag. It is being seen that collectives and communal resources make it doable.

- the answer is young people and young farmers, because they already reject ingrained models like capitalism and are more open to social models and the issues of climate change new line Community and. Communalism can be ground-breaking to the sustainable farm, but policy and zoning often make things different to achieve. Some examples are:
 - Humble Hands Harvest with farm collectives.
 - Dorothy Day Catholic worker program
 - Full Circle Communal Farm

- Bread and Butter Farm
 - Environmental impact of a farm is required for organic farms. Many farmers already have plans and research but don't have the money or funding. But older farmers don't.
 - Grants don't always cover solar and other sustainable solutions.
 - How do we redefine community in an agricultural system? Especially in a capitalist culture.
 - We need a paradigm shift new line Farmers are also aware of their place in an. Ecological community. Including nature, plants, etc.
 - Digital communication can reduce burden on the farmer to educate. Can do one talk and share it multiple times in multiple regions, which saves resources.
 - It is good to see options that are possible and have different models to view and realize what's possible if it's not currently being done in your area
 - Value of hands on. Workshops can't entirely be replaced, but digital information is super valuable. new line audio podcasts are important for farmers to listen to while doing other tasks. Such as: "Ear to the Ground", "Real Organic Project", "Young Farmers Project"
 - We want Empowered Choice making. That's proactive and not reactive
 - Farmers are already educators, But how to embed in community and elevate their voice, while compensating them fairly, on a time that's not peak farming season.

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

This group thinks the solution is general cultural change and affecting kids for lasting change.

Session: “Renewable Energy: Adoption, Barriers, and Concerns”
Convener: Scott Elkins

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Cost is the biggest barrier
 - i. Upkeep of pollinator systems in both urban and rural settings
- 2) Grants and incentives
 - ii. REAP + other incentives will cover up to 80% of costs. Sometimes applications will open early in the growing season, which is a barrier.
 - iii. Marbleseed grant list from MOSES booklet 2022
- 3) Farmers large or utility scale systems in ag country
- 4) Solar development --> trends toward utility scale
- Reference for utility scale development parallel with consolidation issues in ag
 - Individual barriers – could be plenty of interest but, limited installation capacity with solar
 - Still some barriers on educating folks about existing financial incentives
 - Even at 70-80% cost coverage there can be barriers of reimbursement, requires fronting the cost
 - For community solar, some local groups are pressing restrictive land use ordinances.

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

Public education to identify what part of opposition is strictly about bigger political dynamics is needed.

Session: “Severe Events + Conservation”
Convener: Hannah St. Aubin

Key topics or themes:

- Herbster, WI – Clare saw huge rainstorm on organic reg. Farm – winter + summer CSAs

- Started intensive regenerative farm
 - Used raised beds, integrated animals
- Driftless area – floodplain issues
 - Eliminated fields in floodplain that flooded out
 - Flash flood scenarios
- Infiltration
 - Farmers implementing mulch, no-till to increase infiltration
 - Raised beds with sunken aisle, so it stays + soaks in
- Monetizing conservation is important
 - How can we also make money through implementation of conservation
 - Need to protect the crop
- Where are we getting our weather from?
- Climate-Smart grants + funds
- Mike's farm: pastured animals, forest, cropland
 - Had a derecho come through in 2019
 - Key lining: makes a trench on the contour
 - Made swales
 - Has a diverse crop mix to break up compaction + increases infiltration
 - Integrated animals
 - Saw his first forest decimated by the windstorm
 - Invasives growing up because of lack of canopy
 - Originally lots of maples + oaks
 - Working w/ what's coming back to the area
- Climate migration Project
 - Good idea to move trees with southern genetics northward?
- Grain production + feed – need to use perennials
 - Affected by drought
 - Affected by world events
- Hazelnuts as perennial feed!
 - Harvest early by picking them
- WI climate projections: warmer + wetter
 - Less freezes, but random freezes are more of a risk – frost kill
 - Clare is using low tunnels to protect from early/late freezes
- Northwest WI grazer's network
- Anathoff YouTube channel for Mike's Farm!
- Alan is hoping to start a farm. Looking for 20-80 acres with alley cropping, bioswales, etc.

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

- Hail – how do we manage hailstorms? Cover for plants + animals.

Session: “Ground Water Quality” Convener: Dela Ends

Key topics or themes:

- Water: What is in our water? Testing tells only a limited amount. Need more resources around water testing. City water pressure issues for urban growers + high cost of water.
- High salt from snow dump. Beet application to roads? Need to know more.
- Filtering contaminants out of soil.
- How valid is water survey information?
- NRCS FSA offices differ wildly in how they serve farmers
- Government programs need to be more user friendly to small scale
- There's competition for ground water.
- Healthy soil reduces irrigation needs.
- Rain water for urban garden watering food safety issues.
- NRCS irrigation containment program. Backflow control to protect from contamination.
- Biochar is great for filtering water. Rain barrels need to be dark.
- Water testing can be done.
 - o UW Extension water quality in ag webinars underway on YouTube
- Carbon sequestration program to plant trees
- Drains on high tunnel to capture water

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

Several NRCS programs and Extension offices could be critical resources but knowledge may vary.

Session: “Conservation Practices Synergistic with Profitable Production” Convener: Heather Toman heather@slofarmersco-op.com

Key topics or themes:

- NRCS programs:
 - o EQUIP address resource concern: fix problems – cost share
 - o CSP: get a rate payment for 5 years for what you are already doing
- Buffer strips!
 - o Less wind damage + beneficial insects + catch snow
 - o Perennials – beneficial and can sell product
- CSA for investing in renewable installation
 - o Have to figure out how much that investment saves in energy \$ over the season
- Solar rows in the field with crops between rows
 - o State refunds in some state for doing it
- Solar Grazing Association
 - o Non-profit explains how to graze among solar panels
- AGRI Clearing House: has a lot of these resources
- Bee + Butterfly Fund: non-profit will come and plant or give seed to farmers but it is not from this region
- Wisconsin Native Range Ecological will plant WI native plants under solar projects
- Buffer strips, wind break and shelter belt – conifer, deciduous tree and shrubs. In hedgerows, just put shrubs.
 - o External windbreak paid for by NRCS
 - o Once put in they are continuous CRP payment
 - Through Farm Service Agency: 10 year contract
 - Can't harvest from it
- How many farmers use NRCS as a percentage?
 - o Maybe 10-15% more over time

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

- Batch funding with NRCS: can be funded from different pools based on rating of project
- Can apply for multiple things at different times – just a \$350K cap per farm bill (around 5 years)

Session: “Successfully Growing Crops in Weather Extremes” Convener: Dela Ends

Key topics or themes:

- Funding for climate resilience what structures will lie in place?
- When is it for the public good for farmers to do it + be properly funded for their needs?
- MN pollution control – Climate Smart
- Inflation reduction act
- COVID unrestricted money was very effectively + used well by farmers
- We need to show government the money given was a good expenditure
- Crop insurance for diversified farms (i.e. flowers, animals, etc.)
- Micro farm insurance – point is to support diversified farms but is not successful yet.
- Go Fund Me disaster insurance often by members
- For Hail – low tunnels are available for NRCS funding
- Are there crops for wet weather?
 - o Raised beds with sunken aisles
 - o John Jeavons style permaculture with diversity of fruit shrub and trees allow something will succeed.
 - o Multiple plantings over the season.
 - o Seed Linked is an excellent resource to look at growers results with trials in various areas.
- Soil is essential.
 - o Long-term investment in soil is important.
- Smoke may become more common challenge.
- Coop people can converse with customers about growing conditions/farmer challenges.
- Need to get consumers to appreciate forms of crops that are heartier and more resilient than the rest.
- Working with dietitians about a climate smart diet
- Market the healthiest diet from climate zones
- Educate consumers on what is locally grown

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

Weather extremes may expand to include smoke. Climate zones shifting will require more education of consumers.

Session: “Wildlife + Beneficial Habitation on the Farm” Convener: David Bayaski

Key topics or themes:

- Habitat for native birds
- Prairie --> birds or prairie plants
 - o NRCS grants? NRCS has wildlife biologist to help
 - .4 acres or less
- Farmed wetlands
 - o Marginal cropping
 - o Rehabilitating these wetlands
 - o Diversity -->bloom time
 - Diversity in plants --> diversity in insects
 - Non-pollinating insects are important, too
- Varieties --> depends upon where you are, soil, sun
- Xerces Society

- Cabbage pest
 - o Flower plot
- Garden is 50/50 and most pest controlled
 - o Flea beetles are still a problem
 - o Field garden veggies --> pests are not as controlled
- Septic field
- List of plants
 - o Wild farms
- Buying beneficials
 -

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

Pests can be controlled with beneficials; naturally occurring or purchased.

Session: “Urban Ag”

Convener: Abby Johnson abigale.johnson@usda.gov

Key topics or themes:

- USDA-NRCS
 - o EQIP: environmental quality incentives program, to:
 - Implement conservation practices
 - o Using census data to determine urban classification
 - o NRCS grant opportunity: community agriculture
 - Grants: WI, for community garden establishment, urban ag education + demonstration
- Farmer's goals for urban ag
 - o Getting food to more people
 - o Local food is more sustainable
 - o Connection to community
 - o Urban ag is the future of agriculture
 - o Education to youth + beyond
 - o Neighborhood garden/food hub
 - o Producing fresh food
- Beulah (Elkhorn, WI): Family homestead program for getting youth involved with urban ag
 - o Victory Garden Initiative (Milwaukee, WI): public accessible garden, Blitz Initiative for garden beds at homes of community members

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

- Challenges to urban ag:
 - o City limitations: water, livestock
 - o Regulations: government
 - o Land availability
 - o Zoning

Session: “Carbon Credits” Convener: Frank Stonaker & Allen Lemay

Key topics or themes:

- 30 year trial testing on corn, soy, cover crops
- Carbon credits: water, air, land
- How is this being measured?
 - o How is your risk managed?
 - o Yard stick to pull soil sample from land
 - o Lime
 - o Ton of material in 30% carbon capture

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

Biggest bang for buck is managed grazing

Session: “Carbon Sequestration” Convener: Steve Schultz steveschultz2810@gmail.com

Key topics or themes:

- Can make your own but it should not go to ash
- 40 lbs/acre: possible biochar ration
- 1st step is soil test to know your soil
- Provides water retention
- Cornell: animal bedding and wood can be used as organic content for bio char
- To create: burn from top, use smaller branches vs larger logs
- Biochar: will hold carbon in the ground for 1-2 thousand years!
- Fall application: can apply on surface, will breakthrough into soil naturally
- When creating: let wood dry for a year before processing into biochar
- April 2nd: GreenLake BioChar event: NCRS with climate scientists that is sponsored by Golden Sands RC&D
- Biochar can essentially allow trees to go from carbon neutral to carbon negative
- Possible ave cost: \$400/ 1 cubic yard
- Hardwood biochar: sequesters higher amount of carbon vs softwood biochar

Session: “Accelerated Plant Breeding and Crops for the Future” Convener: Sadie Willis, FairShare CSA Coalition

Key topics or themes:

- USDA rezoning growing regions. How to find what works for specific areas + what can be adapted over time? Can't predict hot/cold, wet/dry -- but can know general highs/lows, frost-free, so use to inform seeds to select and grow to localize
- Seed banks: saving seed, getting community involved w/ taste tests + then choosing what to carry into next season. Heirloom collard project: working to adapt varieties for North, breeding new crosses and getting input on what people like best. Offer options to work w/ heirlooms or hybrids, keep varieties or select for specific traits.
- Education around saving and growing seeds. Example: carrots + queen Anne's lace, need education to manage approach. Need a framework to report out findings.
- Circadian Organics focuses on MW-specific seed varieties with some exceptions based on inability to isolate from GMO, or climate.
- Keeping seed growing in the region where they are to be used so that they can be adapted to it is a strategy for resilience. Can also be a seed bank for other regions with enough investment in seed production. As the coasts become untenable for farming, the Midwest will be more flooded with farming opportunities.
- Unique opportunities for home growers, “gardeners”, to grow seed the scale of seed-growing is such that 1/8 acre tomato plants --> 300+ acres worth of tomato seeds. Able to isolate better at home scale. Can also work with more heirloom, native, Indigenous seeds at smaller scales; work with seed banks at tribes.
- Value in both Midwest heirlooms and modern varieties along with creating hybrids. Midwest-adapted doesn't mean it has to come from the Midwest. Ex: Experimental Farm Project, Culinary Breeding Network, Dry Farm-

ing Org. Need to trial in many locations to wash out local weather events in data. Considerations for disease transmission: sometimes want to control breeding populations. Value: disease-resistance, open-pollinated varieties, day length, extreme tolerance. Sourcing resilient varieties from seed banks, not the big companies, to make them more accessible to farmers + home growers.

- Urban farming: seed-growing can be very viable because of the scale. A backyard is the perfect size to grow 1 crop and avoid-cross pollination, and be financially viable. In production, have to be cognizant of disease build-up. Ex: only grow Brassicas on land that was in hay for 5 years. Backyard growers are able to provide a lot of value in selecting for flavor and size, more than large seed companies.
- Home gardeners are usually treated as not knowledgeable. Are susceptible to seed scams, B-grade or mislabeled varieties, more likely to carry disease.

Session Learnings of Key Take-Away:

- David Abazs: UMN Ext: downloadable climate maps to see what your climate will be in 50 years --> bring trees from regions as a resilience method.
- Seed production is viable at very small scales including urban farming and gardeners.



FARM HACKS

Farmer Summit on Farm Hacks! This Summit was inspired by a comment from an older farmer about wiring a farm with duct tape and a coat hanger (not that we are suggesting this is a good idea). It does reflect the innovation and frugality that farm life inspired. We imagined this Summit would explore some of the unique and maybe DIY ways that you have addressed challenges like farm infrastructure, access to funding, extending your growing season, or adding income streams.

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Session: Compost and Inputs
Convener: Marika Dewar-Norosky & Jonno Woutat

Key Topics: Sourcing materials; building compost; adding inputs to compost; manure

- Sourcing materials
- Building compost and monitoring temperatures
- Adding inputs to compost but there could be issues of knowing what is needed and how to fix it
- Pros and cons of using manure vs. compost

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

Avoid using manure in tunnels

Go towards using vegetative compost with something like alfalfa that is high in N

Bury pumpkins; “Take Jack Back”

Collect dry leaves from city, make a giant heap, turn with skid loader

- Make piles that are 9’x6’ and 50’ long
- Takes 1-1.5 years to process into compost

Compared to compost, challenges of using manure include weed pressure and need to follow organic rules

- Manage weeds by adding ingredients to heat up mixture and kill weed seeds
- Try using spent grains from brewery

Session: How Small Farms Can Make a Profit
Convener: Charlie Zieke

Key Topics:

- Small farmer cooperation/collaboration
- Planning out farm in advance with CSA, chef, etc.
- Transparency in operation with customers
- Using software to your advantage

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

Models and practices to explore

- CSA – use composting program for excess food
- Chef agreements – sit down with them and plan out menu
- Farmer cooperatives – calls adopting an abundance mindset, work together
- Succession planting as a practice
- Selling wholesale – requires you to scale up to meet customer requirements (Local Food for Schools used crates; Local Food Purchase Assistance used wax boxes)
- Use a price sheet to drive product
- Double up food bucks
- Use transparent book-keeping practices

Understand the value of what you are growing

- What do you want, when do you want it, how much are you willing to pay

Softwares to explore

- “Heirloom” - \$15/month; in Beta testing
- “Tend” - \$40/month or \$400/year

Session: Farm SOPs – How Much is Too Much?
Convener: Matthew Clayton

Key Topics:

- Safety-related SOPs
- SOPs as training tools
- SOPs as accountability measures

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Safety-related SOPs are the most important ones to create
- Esp. chainsaw safety
- In general, SOPs are a great reference for training employees and establish accountability amongst team members
- Useful in farm succession planning; “I won’t always be here to teach you x/y/z”
- When training employees, emphasize “First get it right, then you can faster without having to put in more effort”
- If you work with volunteers, give them clear instructions and easy tasks
- Assistant managers can be tasked with developing SOPs
- Templates are available online (US Forest Service has good log of SOPs online)
- Have them translated for ESL employees
- Have veteran crew members review them
- Whole farm crew can review them 2-3 times a year to identify how to improve and where things may have gone wrong
- To check for missing steps/errors, etc., have a few people (including yourself) follow the SOP to see if you can follow it and if there is any important information missing
- Develop SOPs for each crop, each motorized tool; each piece of equipment (rule of thumb: 30-50 SOPs)
- Organize season, safety, equipment for a tiered system of learning
- Pest management SOPs are difficult – make “at a glance” visual aids and steps to take following identification
- Make logs for equipment maintenance, manuals, receipts, etc.
- Keep copies in employee handbook and farm office
- Have copies available with space for signatures (ex: picked, washed, packed, delivered, etc.) to ensure quality control and accountability
- Could also digitize SOPs and logs (ex: shared Google doc or spreadsheet) so they can be accessed through phones/devices while in the field
- Use checkboxes to check off tasks as they are completed
- Tend Ag is an app that can do this
- Essential SOPs
- Safety
- Most important crops
- Frequently asked questions/tasks frequently retrained on
- Anything you want to be hands off on as a manager
- Harvest day: harvest, wash, pack, store, safety considerations

Session: Employee Retention and Recruitment
Convener: Scott Rosenberg

Key Topics:

- Wages and bonuses
- Developing relationships
- Finding employees who want to do farm work

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- How to attract employees in rural areas?
- Work share w/ another business
- Offer \$15-18/hour wage and end of season bonus if possible
- Build relationships by working alongside them and listening to what they have to say
- In general, folks who have an interest in farming, nutrition, food, and/or wellness are more likely to work out be-

cause the work will be fulfilling to them

Session: Computers and Programming for Farm Automation
Convener: Derek Nedveck

Key Topics:

- Greenhouse automation
- Farm wifi/internet

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Automation options and user experiences
- Advancing Alternatives
- No app available; have to sign into server
- UI/UX not the best
- Aegis plus \$2k; opens and closes; includes wifi (\$400)
- RISHA
- Can buy or rent
- Has a tomato-growing system
- Govee
- Cheap on Amazon
- Can use smart outlets
- Temperature and humidity controls
- iGrow 800 has 8-16 inputs and can be wired to other systems
- Inkbird now coming out with wifi
- Linkstyle
- Soil monitor, lumen, temperature
- Deco for mesh network
- eero for wifi extenders
- Low power radio is useful for sending and receiving data
- LoRa and LoRaWAN
- Farmhack.org as a resource

Session: Beneficials in Greenhouses
Convener: Brittany Zech

Key Topics:

- Current uses
- Suppliers
- Effective use

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Digital notes not found

Session: Task and Team Management
Convener: Matt Kronschnabel

Key Topics:

- Team culture and feedback
- How/when to meet
- Tools/methods of task/information dispersal

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Task management
- At start of each workweek, write tasks on a whiteboard after doing farm walkthrough
- Longer meeting on Monday morning to review week plan
- Come up with system to relay information to part-time employees who may miss meetings
- Instead of assigning tasks, let staff take ownership of what needs to get done
- Have employees report on how long tasks take
- Team management
- Do field walks with employees so they know what crops look like at different growth stages and can ask questions
- Empower seasonal employees by asking for their input
- Have a farm lunch at least once a week – at end of week is a good opportunity for team to decompress together
- Acknowledge that beginner farmers need to figure out if it works for them
- Set realistic expectations: new employees will be slower and that's OKAY
- Ask employees how they like to receive feedback
- Manage poor performance when it's noticed
- Pay attention to negativity – set standard for pleasant/positive conversations
- Click Up – team management software

Session: High Tunnel Growing
Convener: Heather-Marie Bloom

Key Topics:

- Plant varieties
- Season extension
- Design

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- No notes recorded

Session: Weed Suppression

Key Topics:

- Tilling, cultivation, tarps, hoeing, flaming, smothering techniques
- Tools: Making sure sharp and clean; renting tools
- Deep compost mulching

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- No notes recorded



WELLNESS

Farmer Summit on Wellness! This Summit was a space for exploring innovative approaches to well-being, self-care, and the personal and collective growth that wellness inspires. We shared insights on building balanced lifestyles, creating supportive wellness ecosystems, and fostering mental, physical, and environmental health.

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Session: Back + Neck Pain/Tension Convener: Kaitlin

Key topics or themes:

- 1) How to be preventative instead of reactive
- 2) Be aware of body movements, repetitive, long time, improper tools, etc.
- 3) How to treat: ice, stretching, massage
 - * Preventative stretches to avoid pain.
 - * Ideas for better tool handling.
 - * Out front shoulder muscles are stronger, how to strengthen to prevent injury.
 - * How to be aware of body mechanics (watch self in mirror)
 - * Slow down to speed up
 - * Using simple methods like Theraband + foam rollers
 - * 5-minute stretch to start day

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of preventative care, body awareness, and simple self-care techniques to manage and prevent back and neck pain.

Session: Emotional Burnout Conveners: Kaitlin + Claire

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Delegating: I feel like we need to “do it all” especially as women
- 2) What makes us keep going? Where do we draw the line?
- 3) Self-care + how to relieve burnout
- 4) What does burnout look /feel like for you?
 - * Variability of day/tasks - setting expectations and how it effects mental health
 - * Use a code word for when you need a pause
 - * Already experienced burnout in other careers
 - * End of year fatigue is an annual experience in July + August
 - * Willingness to continue and induce tolerance
 - * Women required to do it all
 - * Family planning and family balance
 - * Physical vs mental fatigue? Endurance/momentum
 - *How do I ask for help? Identify my strengths and weaknesses and release the rest
 - * When does diversification hurt or help us?
 - * “Not allowed to have fun” -- social time vs family time
 - * What does self-care look like when you see burnout approaching --> take a retreat?
 - * What do you do at the beginning of the season to plan for the rest/breaks
 - * Talking to other farmers – step outside of your normal
 - * Are we making farming harder than it must be? Why has fun been removed while we’re working?
 - * Practice taking breaks from farm + have coffee with friends in community or take a walk
 - * Reset mindset that the farm doesn’t control me, I control the farm
 - * Give yourself peptalks in preparation of tough times ahead
 - * Everything has a season
 - * FLO state of mind: practice/make time to do that (creative/creation)
 - * What makes it difficult for us to reach out when we are having a rough patch? People don’t understand or relate?
 - * Burnout looks different for everyone. Help us recognize this feeling with and in other farmers.
 - * Is burnout so common to farmers/farming that its hardly noticed or acknowledged?
 - * What might burnout look like to observers? Weak, not committed?
 - * Best practices: how to delegate! Training?

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of understanding and managing burnout through delegation, self-care, setting boundaries, and seeking support.

Session: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Convener: Amber

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Understanding communication styles
- 2) Setting boundaries
- 3) Navigating conflict
 - Contact connections:
 - Amber Powless – kahneeka5@icloud.com
 - Felicity Merritt – felicity.s.merritt@gmail.com

- * Aspects of communication and how it can affect your well-being.
- * Verbal communication
- Communication styles:
 - Understanding different styles
 - Being mindful of your own communication

- * How do you know what someone’s communication style is?
- * Going from being hurt to resolve
 - Find research (self-help books, definitions)
 - Taking a break / step back
 - Self-reflection: how did I contribute?
 - Let go of grudges
 - Resolve instead of letting it build
- * Setting boundaries
 - How do you like to be communicated with?
 - When should I contact you?
 - Your own communication preferences?

- * What about when someone doesn’t want to communicate with you? - Know when to compromise? Both people need to do this.
 - Asking for accommodations. How to address this?
 - Age gaps in communication: online vs word of mouth
- * Dealing with hard-to-deal-with co-workers
 - Not taking women seriously
 - Resistance to new ideas
 - Stuck in their ways
 - Passive aggressive
- * Keep a journal for self-reflection and navigating conflict

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of understanding communication styles, setting boundaries, and employing strategies to effectively navigate conflicts and improve interactions.

Session: Allergies
Convener: Lauren

- Key topics or themes:**
- 1) Seasonal allergies: Nettle infusion; local honey; supplements
 - 2) Shower; change clothing; sinus irrigation; keep windows closed
 - 3) Wear respirators; goggles in field when pollen load is high
 - * Headaches + congestion, maybe something in the soil?
 - * Use natural remedies

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of combining practical measures with natural remedies to manage allergies, particularly in environments with high allergen exposure.

Session: Slow Down
Convener: Yolibeth

- Key topics or themes:**
- 1) fast-paced culture vs slow down

- * Opposite of our culture; mental and physical health as a result is lacking
- * Not cooking --> leading to sickness
- * Food is ultra processed
- * Pressure to be busy and keep busy
- * Need more strategic slowing down
- * More accident prone when you’re rushed
- * Honor what you are doing, soil, worms, what + why of what you are doing
- * Recognize the frenzy + experience differently
- * non-thinking actions vs savoring
- * Plan the work --> work the plan
- * Time pressures
- * Being grateful for what you are doing
- * Rushing into the day to save time and instead you waste time
- * Overstimulated type personalities are ticking time bombs for the fast-paced nature of our world
- * Prioritize yourself; kids; the land (put on your oxygen mask first)
- * How to navigate in the season of “have to”
- * Culture of very individualistic vs must have our tribe; we must have help to survive

Strategies to take time for yourself and be present
Ask for help – practice
Take on an area of life that is manageable to make a positive change
Take more time to eat + chew longer
21 days to start a new habit
Pay attention to breathing while driving and focus on snacking habits to sustain throughout the day

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of intentionally slowing down, prioritizing health and mindfulness, and seeking support to navigate a fast-paced world.

Session: Sun exposure + Extreme Heat
Convener: Lauren

- Key topics or themes:**
- 1) Applying sunscreen + wearing proper attire
 - * Eye protection
 - 2) Humidity is sometimes worse than actual heat
 - 3) Move slowly, take breaks
 - * Is it worth it to work if it’s too hot?
 - * Heat and irritability leads to high stress

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of taking precautions against the sun and heat, being mindful of humidity, and recognizing when conditions may be too extreme to work safely.

Session: Loneliness + Isolation
Convener: Felicity Merritt

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Connecting to other farmers
- 2) Public awareness/connection
- 3) Methods of engagement
- * Sense of feeling like you are the only one doing the work, applies more in rural areas than organically farming locations
- * Consistently moving your farm feels like you are always going alone
- * More work establishing connections with customers
- * CSA or possibly having a farmer's guild
- * Many farmers are social
- * Getting farmers together at winter events because there is time – but farmers feel more isolated in the summer
- * Farmer Union can host events
- * Distance from other organic farms + farmers
- * Soil and water districts
- * Rural and organic farmers in traditional ag areas are distant from similar farmers
- * Sometimes there is a disconnect between research to farming and having conversations and one-on-one experience
- * Need a list serve for farmers
- * Avenues and resources for farmers – health insurance
- * Reaching out to individuals to build relationships
- * Benefits and disadvantages of farming with partners (sometimes it helps/hurts)
- * Finding support in other communities

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of creating supportive networks and utilizing various engagement methods to reduce loneliness and isolation among farmers.

Session: Sharing Wellness Resources

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Challenge around wellness resources
 - 2) Resources around connection
- Connection contacts:
Lindi Hagen --> lindi.hagen@usda.gov
Treva Wetherell --> treva.wetherelle@gmail.com
Amber Powless --> apowles7@oneidanation.org
- * So hard to have any for farmers
 - * Service agencies want resources to share with their client farms
 - * Idea: Group for older retired men/farmers to socialize
 - * Older supervisors resistant to new ways
 - * Wellness can be financially linked: stressing about finances and cost of care
 - * More communication and connection between people helps connect resources to those in need
 - * Sharing with others can alleviate pressure on individual farms and people
 - * Trying to do all-the-things and problems arise
 - * Wellness feels like “one more thing I need to do” sometimes another items for the to-do list that isn't being done and done well
 - * Develop a practice of letting go “What do I need to let go of?” Take the time to evaluate.
 - * Farm life and family life are so intertwined it is hard/impossible to separate priorities and needs
 - * Making business decisions based on personal boundaries/considerations like: scheduling farm visits, storefronts, etc.
 - * Social media presence feels like a cost of doing business to get customers but an encroachment on time
 - * Getting people together to talk helps people feel supported and get resources from one another
 - * How much info is old/irrelevant?
 - * Repurposing equipment/innovating through recycling?
 - * Where are the resources specifically for women?
 - * Call center/clearinghouse where people provide resources and people can learn from others all in one place
 - * Access to counseling resources and coaching resources – a place to show/vent.

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The need for better integration of wellness resources into the daily lives of farmers, increased community support, and innovative solutions to address specific challenges.

Session: Land + Water/Relationships

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Humans and native interconnected
- * We are inter-related with our environments, living and non-living
 - * “1st treaty” Human beings of the Earth, we depend on each other, we don't have dominion over each other
- * Interpersonal + Environmental issues arise from relationships that center domination over collaboration
- * Ripple effects of our every action, even staying to talk today is changing the future
- * “Finding the Mother Tree” and “The Entangled Life” two books that seem to address things like this
- * Mycelium/mushrooms, interconnectedness
- * Natural, “Non-Traditional” healing is powerful and important to our survival but also needs to be represented/honored there can be danger in uninformed use
- * The responsibility belongs to all of us
- * Need a more holistic approach to conservation
- * Making things accessible so more people know about how interconnected we are with the Earth
- * Silos of business affect conservation, messaging, etc

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of recognizing and honoring our interconnectedness with nature, advocating for collaborative and holistic approaches to environmental stewardship.

Session: Time Management
Convener: SJC

Key topics or themes:

- 1) Healthy time management skills (i.e. alarms)
- 2) Special relationship with time: personal stories
- 3) Naturally occurring time management cues
- * Fast-paced world out here
- * Want to have a better relationship with time so she wears an analog watch, building a sun dial, studying astronomy, finding other ways of looking at time because we all seem to struggle in our relationship with time and the different philosophies of the passing of time. It is stressful being under the weight of the clock. Farming is a fascinating way to connect with time and being responsive and responsible.
- * Managing a team means balancing task lists that are ambitious but are achievable. Pacesetters are the ones who set the pace for the crew.
 - * Going from being alone to working on a team means turning into her own rhythms also tuning in to our own monthly cycle, can't plan to be equally productive every day.
 - * Attending military school gave one a different relationship with time where they like to use alarms; trigger time to wrap up. Setting an alarm each day and keeping time managed for each day instead of being oppressed by the clock she is choosing to be bigger than it.
 - * In capitalism, time is monetized.
 - * From employees required to take 10-minute break, lunch break, her team forces her to take breaks. Their farm values breaks + wellness driven by social interactions knows that the others will be able to benefit.
 - * Knowing how to tune in to your internal clock, knowing when you're about to be hungry. Having a good meal is important.

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The importance of finding personal and natural ways to manage time, balancing the demands of modern life with individual well-being.

Session: Feet
Convener: Allison Rian

Key topics or themes:

- Footwear is so expensive, often use past its life
How to extend its life?
- * Feet are our foundation
 - * Replace foot soles often
 - * Find a comfortable shoe and buy a few pairs of the ones that work best for you immediately

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

The value of investing in good footwear and taking steps to prolong its usability, given the critical role feet play in overall health and mobility.



GROWING ORGANIC

Growing Organic Farmer Summit. We imagined this Summit would explore various aspects of organic agriculture, from production methods, to integrity, to certifications. There is incredible investment to increase organic acreage and organic farms. Perhaps you have insights into the barriers and opportunities to growing the community or organic farmers.

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Session: Specialty Crops
Convener: Laura M.

Key Topics:

Start small and know your market
Research is great to help learning curve
Value Added products increase profitability
Cottage production laws allow growers to test market at smaller production levels
Leasing certified kitchen is a good way to ramp up production
Diversity in crop production (don't put all the eggs in one basket)
Blueberries
Acid soil required
Roughly 5 years until blueberries are at production level
Aggressive harvesting will minimize fruit fly damage
Plastic mulch increases insect pressure when soil moisture is excessive
Fruit & Veggies – local markets vs Grains – typically shipped
NRCS great for high tunnel

Key takeaways:

Do your research and seek help from grants and Farm Programs. Diversification is a good safety net

Session: Living Mulch
Convener: Connor Ruen

Key Topics or Themes: Living mulch establishment / Cover Crop and Native Plant selection
First year living mulch sees yields decrease from competition, lowered nitrogen
Second year establishment not as much yield loss as year 1
Producers are looking for alternatives to plastic mulch
One Producer planted soybeans with potatos and received the “best potatoes I've ever seen.”
Knocked down living mulch can help prevent weeds
People have experienced good luck with cover crop mixes as a living mulch
Interested in using purslane for weed suppression around established plots
How to maintain living pathways with raised beds?
Mowing, stirrup hoe

Do you irrigate living mulches?
Yes – especially during the first year
Suggestion: dig a hole around transplants so cash crops have enough space
Cost effects of organic cover crops
Certified organic seed is expensive
Oats and peas are great starters
Cut flower production & living mulches
Living pathways and strip tilled management rows may work
Prairie stripgrass may be a good native grass as a living mulch
Research has been done on clover nodules and water infiltration for living mulches in vegetable production
Creeping Charlie & chickweed may be good natural weeed suppressants
Dr. Elaine's soil food web school/blog about living mulch is a good resource

Session: Improvement Areas for working with Certifiers
Convener: David A.

Key Topics or Themes:

1. NOP standards can be vague
2. More inspectors are needed
3. Inspectors/certifiers need to be prepared up arrival at a farm site
Negatives:
Document tracking sheet needs improvement
What is expected to be documented (i.e. seed search_
Better herbicide drift stance is needed to avoid trust issues on CPG label claims
Perfer inspectors that use internet to access portal where producers upload their documentation and proceses
The lack of inspectors is a problem
Certifiers turn away farmers
Positives:
Inspectors are the main point of contact with certifier
Work with expert contractors that can provice additional context for things like soil amendmments
On the spot documentation (pictures of taskboards)
Organic cost share reimbursement for certification

Session: Weed Management
Convener: Lara Z.

Key Topics or Themes:

1.Bed Prep
2. Tarps and Mulches

Bed Prep - 15 acres weed management with tine harrow and basket weeder prep
Canada thistle – planting sudan grass for a full season (also good for bind weed)
Organic herbicide is expensive and not super effective
Buckwheat cover crop right after herbicice
Bed prep with flame weeder is effective on broadleaf plants but no so good for grass
Plant beets and radishes – when radishes germinate, you can flame weed beet beds
Prep bed in fall nd leave the seeds at the top of the soil so they die over winter
Tarps and mulches
Acres prepped with tarps have fewer weeds
Use caution because tarps attract rodents
Time crops so you can free up time at the end of the season to focus on weed control
Clear tarps? One farmer found them less effective. Research is indicating that black tarps are more effective
Greenhouse effect doesn't kill all plans. Some farmers don't have enough wun/warmth to make this work
After removing black plastic wait 5-7 days then flame weed before planting. This doesn't kill all weeds
Tarp management
Fold immediately and store on a pallet (weeds will grow on them if left in the field)
Buy silage plastic from diary farmers – sometimes they will even give it away
Keep tarp tight with sandbags
Use every 3 feet around the perimeter
2 shovel scoops of sand per bag is plenty
Only place sandbags l the center to reduce likelihood of it blowing away
Order your sand from garden supply
A 50 x 100’ tarp was used over one acre to start season
Soil is warmer
Maintains tilth
Ready to plant into
Can plant before the rest of the field
Tarping before planting garlic leads to less weeds in the spring
Working with implements to push soil over the edges to secure
Heavy snow pack on a tarp left over winter will compact soil
Mulching
Straw mulch works great although it is labor intensive and expensive

Plant the crop first then cultivate before adding straw mulch
Keeps moisture in soil and keeps soil cool in summer
straw mulch should be deep
Cardboard
Put it down, wet it, mulch over to hold it down.
Plant INTO it
Cardboard is mulch – good for worms
When planting is complete cardboard can be planted into a second time
Organic growers must remove all tape – black ink only
Quality tape in St. Paul sells rolls of coardboard
Walk behind cultivator
For this to be effective, you crop should be larger than the weeds
This is fast once you figure out your methods
Less tilling equals less weeds equals easier to plant after two years

Session: Post Harvest Systems
Convener: Mark M.

Key Topics or Themes:

1.Root bunching and washing
2. Greens washing and drying
3. Tools and technology for washing and storing veg
Discusson about bunching in the fields vs. post wash
Spray tables, flipping bunches
Shelf life of roots with greens is shorter
Converted schoolbus with a Coolbot cooler inside
Coolbots: what they are and how they work
Can sinks be used to wash roots and how often should water be changed?
Mark the bottom of the sink with a black “X” When you can't see the X, it's time to change the water
Sanidate – what is it and how to use it
Greens
What are bubblers? How often to change water
5 gallon salad spinners
Fans for air drying greens
University of Vermont resources showcase different wash/pack setups
Converted washing machines as spinner

How to clean them: scrub brushes

Session: Full Diet CSA
Convener: Adam B.

Key Topics or Themes:

What is a full diet CSA?
One grower already does a full diet CSA to 150 customers: Eggs, mushrooms, grains, chickens, flowers

We must work with the people around us that do what they do very well. Share work so that we are not running thin. Not feel like we have to do it all but partnering with others with different skills

Research the cost and how frequent the delivery will be

Size of shares: small, medium, large
Volunteers on the farm?
Co-op members can sign up

How to get CSA share Diet members?
Farmers markets
Food groups like Weston A Price Foundation

Is there a cap to the number of shares you can add?

Session: Soil Management
Convener: Mark M.

Key Topics or Themes:

Breaking New Ground
Soil Fertility
Breaking New Ground
Plow – Disk
Cover
SH, Cow Peas, Tillage radish, Clover, Sun hemp, Flax
Flail Mower
Spader
Compost N (can be cost prohibitive)
Cover crop selector tools (find websites)
Soil Fertility
Midwestern Bio Ag for soil testing
Chicken manure
Kelp fertilizer
Fish emulsion fertilizer
Plants for Profit
Measure brix >12% to minimize pest pressure
Use a control strip to measure (control for) applied amendments
Vermicomposting tea to inoculate seeds
Cover Crop scheduled in the crop plan vs. adding an an “after crop”
A buckwheat intercrop planting mimes phosphorusLivestock



LIVESTOCK

Farmer Summit on Livestock! We imagined this Summit would explore the various aspects of farming with livestock. Maybe you wonder or know a lot about pasture and grazing management, hatching, kidding, calving, farrowing. Maybe you are curious about animal housing, animal welfare, or predation concerns. Or maybe you have considered or have successfully integrated livestock into other farming enterprises.

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Session: Meat Aggregation as a Marketing Strategy

Key Topics:

Not Listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Fixed pricing is a draw
- Need to address processing barriers
- Standards need to be set
- Slaughter facility capacity & knowledge is paramount

Session: Selling to Ethnic Markets (Goat Meat) Convener: Joyce Kungoing

Key Topics:

Goats

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Demand in urban areas, but there is a need for more people to be interested to increase supply
- Challenges: Lack of processors for goat meat, parasites, and predators
- Need for research in northern breeds of goats
- Using University resources- University of Maryland has a calendar with festive days for the ethnic market. University of Nebraska has pictures of weight, height, markings, etc to sell to ethnic market.

Session: Urban Meat Markets

Key Topics:

Bees, Fish, birds, Rabbits

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Farmshare for meat
- Bees- easy to extract honey, easy to have in urban areas
- Chickens, squab, quail all options
- Ducks for eggs
- Mini breeds are an opportunity for urban areas
- Pigs good for confined spaces and assist with food waste
- Integrate livestock with urban gardens
- Mink could be good value added for oil, meat, raw food diet for dogs.

Session: Finding the Right Market: Livestock Sales

Key Topics:

Not listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Size of operation is relative to sales: wholesale vs. Direct
- Processor instrumental for quality of meat. Working with processor to get the right cuts.
- Direct sales can build relationships
- Marketing through farm store, Facebook for direct markets
- Wholesale- Guaranteed buyers allow for farmer to scale up with a known buyer.
- Wholesale can be difficult given the price cut. ~ 20%
- Licensing is important to consider when holding meat cuts.

Session: Organic Meat vs. Synthetic

Key Topics:

Education of farming practices, showing value product, resource utilization, carbon credit variabke, local education.

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- How can organic livestock compete with alternative proteins? (Pulse crops, synthetic meat, insects)
- Fluctuation of conventional, organic beef and the alternatives.

Session: Row Cropping with Livestock

Key Topics:

Concerns, Rotation, Infrastructure, Alternatives.

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Issue with compaction with cattle
- Incorporation of clover is a concern with cattle bloating in the spring.
- Rotation: Corn (cattle graze in winter) Soybeans, Cover Crop (cattle graze in summer)
- NRCS funding for 80% cost of fence for cattle on crop ground.
- Goats can be used to graze small grain stubble
- Radishes and turnips are easy to seed by flying-in

Session: Certified Organic Pastures

Key Topics:

Not listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Bird friendly beef
- Animal welfare approved
- NRCS can push you to conventional
- Three years to transition
- Multi-species grazing to reach goals

Session: Livestock Synergies

Key Topics:

Ways to have livestock interact for additional benefits.

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Cows feed on hay, leftover hay can be fed on by pigs.
- Chickens can seek shelter from predators with cattle around
- Donkeys and llamas can be used to keep predators away

Session: Alternative Swine Feeding
Convener: Phil jahnke Sauer

Key Topics:

Growth, Flavor, Profitability
Take aways-Lessons Learned:
- Smithfield used to finish hogs on peanuts
- Tried brewers grains- pigs didn't respond
- Garbanzo beans as a replacement
- Tasting flax in pork

- Struggle with consistency when experimenting with feed
- Leftover vegetables after market
- Pigs introduced to alternatives seem to be more invested if introduced earlier in life.

Session: Regen Grazing for Ecosystem Function
Convener: Dylan

Key Topics:

All things silvopasture, Bale grazing and haybombing, Grazing as a service in the future

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Silvopasture & forage
- Fodder systems
- Invasive clean-up
- Using hay to move nutrients
- Strategically using hay for animal impact

Session: Making a living on Livestock Full-time

Key Topics:

Not listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Multiple enterprises: Sheep & Goats higher reproduction.
- Landscape adaption: optimize what grows on your land
- Targeted grazing
- Additional income fro contract grazing/browsing
- Livestock easier on the body than growing vegetables

Session: Working with Processors

Key Topics:

Not listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Timing of booking: Hogs a year out, cattle event further out
- Scheduling out processing is hard for beginning farmers
- On-farm processors: Southern WI
- DATCP inspectors have been very helpful & will explain the process
- Build a relationship with processor that builds the bets connection
- Educating the processors
- On-farm butchering: selling live animals, operating under the poultry limit

Session: Livestock Equipment
Convener: Ryan Sullivan

Key Topics:

Handling cattle & sheep, Electice Fencing, Pasture grazziers

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Temple Grandin- Guru of handling livestock
- Plug-in fencer for perimeter electric fencing
- Importance of ground rods
- Premier One handling system for sheep

Session: Land Access for Beginning Farmers

Key Topics:

Not listed

Take aways-Lessons Learned:

- Every situation is unique
- Bringing generational gaps together
- Absentee land-owners allowing younger generation to farm
- Word of mouth
- Creating relationships across generations: Values aligned.
- Easements
- Inflated/increased value of land
- Government policies