

## Practical Soil Health Specialist Training New York State



WORKSHOP TWO – CROPPING SYSTEMS AND COVER CROPS  
OCTOBER 23 AND 24, 2018 ● ITHACA, NY

---

## Producers

### Jaimie Baker

Owner and Operator, Sweyolakan Farms, [jjthbaker@gmail.com](mailto:jjthbaker@gmail.com)

Ithaca, New York

**Jaimie Baker**, of Sweyolakan Farms, milks 270 cows in Ithaca, NY and works approximately 1000 acres. He also does animal nutritional consulting and raises some organic crops. He has been planting cover crops for 15 years but in the last 4-5 years has gotten more aggressive with cover crops and double cropping and is in the process of converting to all no-till.

---

### Chaw Chang

Owner and Operator, Stick and Stone Farm, [stickandstonefarm@gmail.com](mailto:stickandstonefarm@gmail.com)

Ulysses, New York

**Chaw Chang** owns and operates Stick and Stone Farm with his wife Lucy. They have been farming in Ulysses since 2003 and raise 40 acres of certified organic vegetables. To produce this quantity, they manage approximately 100 acres, with most of the remaining land planted to cover crops. With this system, Stick and Stone Farm can utilize longer-term cover cropping schemes, where land is taken out of cash crop production for 2-3 years instead of annual cover cropping practices more typical for small scale vegetable production.

## Practical Soil Health Specialist Training New York State



### WORKSHOP TWO – CROPPING SYSTEMS AND COVER CROPS OCTOBER 23 AND 24, 2018 ● ITHACA, NY

---

#### Thor Oechsner

Owner and Operator, Oechsner Farms, [www.oechsnerfarms.com](http://www.oechsnerfarms.com)

Newfield, New York

**Thor Oechsner** is the founder and owner of Oechsner Farms. He grew up in the suburbs of New York City in Croton-On-Hudson. Through summer trips to his uncle's dairy farm in Pennsylvania, he became completely fascinated with agriculture. Eventually, he plowed his parents' lawn and planted corn. Since he wasn't born into farming, Thor had to build his farm bit by bit, scouting for abandoned fields to rent and restore to cropping. In 1991, he purchased his 15-acre home farm. In 1998, he started Oechsner Farms on 44 acres of rented ground. As Thor gained experience and equipment, he steadily added acreage until he could support himself exclusively by farming. In the meantime, he ran a Volkswagen shop and taught diesel mechanics at BOCES. By 2005, he had 400 acres in production, primarily for the organic dairy feed industry. Today, Oechsner Farms manages 1,200 acres, primarily for organic food-grade and craft beverage markets. The grandson of a German-born pastry chef, he is also one of Farmer Ground Flour's three business partners.

---

#### Rod Porter

Producer, Sales and Support, King's AgriSeeds, [rodporter@kingsagriseeds.com](mailto:rodporter@kingsagriseeds.com)

Trumansburg, New York

**Rod Porter** did not grow up on a farm but became interested in agriculture when he got a summer job detasseling seed corn production on a seed farm in Trumansburg, NY. He graduated from Cornell University in 1988 and has since worked nearly 35 years in the seed industry in NY. He has been with King's AgriSeeds since 2008 with responsibilities for seed dealer and producer support, training and development throughout NY and New England. In the last 5 years Rod, along with the support of King's, has put a strong focus on cover cropping systems and has worked with numerous organizations supporting cover crop testing and education. Rod's regular work responsibilities include teaching producers new methods and systems of which soil health and cover cropping have been an important part of many interactions. Additionally, he owns and operates a local ag supply business and a 700 acre organic crop farm. He began operating and transitioning his farm in 2007 with about 150 acres and has purchased and rented additional acres since then, all of which have been converted to organic. Rod grows hay, corn, soybeans and some small grains in rotation mostly to sell off farm and he also has a small beef herd.

