

Minority Landowner



KELSEY DUCHENEAUX

**Fourth-generation
South Dakota Rancher
Calls the Cheyenne River
Indian Reservation Home**

2020 FARMERS OF THE YEAR ISSUE



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Will Lee - Sang Lee Farms
2020 New York AEM Leopold Conservation Award recipient



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EDITOR'S PAGE



During 2021 we celebrate 15 years publishing *Minority Landowner*. All things considered, that's a long time. When we hold our annual Farmers and Landowners Conference, we give a ribbon to attendees to recognize the number of years their family farm has

been in the same family. I remember that first year, we didn't order as many "100 YEARS" ribbons – and those were the first ones to run out. We haven't made it to 100 years like many of those farm families. But we're very proud of our first 15.

We've featured a lot of farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. From Alaska, to Hawaii, to Delaware to the U.S. Virgin Islands and many places in between. We also produced Special Editions to focus on a particular topic, including Urban Forestry, Forest Stewardship, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and an issue focused on USDA Outreach. But our most popular Special Edition has been our annual Farmers of the Year issue.

Our Farmers of the Year issue is an opportunity for state and federal agricultural and forestry agencies, university cooperative extension offices, and community-based organizations to nominate a farmer who is doing great work within their local community representing agriculture. It's our chance to recognize them on a national platform.

As usual, the 2020 Farmers of the Year have a varied background and come from different regions of the country representing diverse segments of agriculture. One thing most have in common is service to their community.

Some open their farm to other farmers by hosting workshops and demonstrations, and in the case of Milton

Nappier, his farm is designated a Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Demonstration Farm. Sara Dolan and David Vose in Arizona support local food banks and when COVID-19 hit they invited other farmers to sell their products, within their farm store! And in South Dakota, fourth-generation rancher Kelsey Ducheneaux calls the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation home. During the pandemic she provided families access to local and affordably priced beef. You'll find more examples of this service to community within this issue. Take some time to read through it, I think you'll enjoy meetings these farmers and I think you'll become inspired by their stories. Congratulations to all our 2020 Farmers of the Year!

Looking ahead, we'll mark our 15th anniversary throughout the year. Our next issue will be our official 15th Anniversary Issue. We'll announce the dates soon for our 15th Anniversary Farmers and Landowners Conference.

Thus far in 2021, we've begun a series of virtual webinars and we'll add more throughout the year. You'll be able to view recordings of previous webinars on our website beginning this summer. Visit the site, www.minoritylandowner.com, and follow us @minorityland for conference announcements and for updates on upcoming live webinars and access to the recordings.

Stay safe out there.
All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victor L. Harris". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Victor L. Harris
Registered Forester
victor@minoritylandowner.com



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FARMERS OF THE

Kamal Bell, farmer-owner of Sankofa Farms, holds a frame of bees from one of the farm's growing colonies



YEAR



Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy student Kamoni King holds the day's kale harvest.

KAMAL BELL

Sankofa Farms LLC
Efland, North Carolina

Kamal Bell owns and operates a 12-acre sustainable, regenerative teaching farm in Efland, North Carolina, that focuses on alleviating food insecurity, inspiring the next generation of young Black farmers and creating space for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) education outside the classroom.

Bell, a former middle school teacher, is now pursuing his doctorate in agriculture and extension education. He started Sankofa Farms as a way to provide sustainable food to his community. He quickly realized that to be truly sustainable, the farm needed to engage the youth.

Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy began as a summer program and has grown to a year-round intensive STEM-



Sankofa Farms Agricultural Academy students (from left), Kamron Jackson, Kamoni King, Jamil Ali and Mikal Ali show their high tunnel in production.

based program that seeks to educate students — young Black men ages 11 and up — on the existing problems within agriculture, the connection and contributions of Africans to farming, and regenerative techniques like no-till, no-spray and beekeeping.

Bell's Agricultural Academy is improving the perception of STEM- and agriculturally related professions among his students, increasing the dollars earned, improving their career readiness skills and improving school performance, all while providing a truly sustainable source of food for the community.

Selected by the Carolina Farm Stewardship Association
Marianna Spence

BRADFORD FAMILY

Bradford Family Farm
Charleston, Mississippi



Rico, Valda and Rickey on the Bradford Family Farm

Located near the Civil Rights Movement's epicenter, where a white mob savagely and brutally murdered Emmitt Till in 1955, is the Bradford Family Farm. Sixty-six years later, you can see remnants of unfulfilled dreams and realize that the Civil Rights Movement is needed more today than ever.

We recently traveled over to Tallahatchie County, Mississippi, for a field visit with Rickey Bradford. We inquired about his interest in farming. Rickey replied with a sound voice and stated, "I was raised on a small family farm as a young boy; however, my dad died in the early '80s, and my farming interest started dwindling. I briefly worked for several farmers in the surrounding area. After an extended disengagement from my childhood love, I was fortunate to connect with Coach Roosevelt Taylor at the beginning of the 2000s. This relationship allowed me to learn the art of growing row crops under the tutelage of Coach Taylor."

Underneath Coach's guidance, "I have learned the ins and outs of producing successful crops," Rickey said. "Farming is a great challenge because you depend on factors beyond your control. Farming is extremely costly due to the input cost of fertilizer, fuel, equipment, seeds, leasing land and labor. However, my greatest obstacle is the lack of

irrigation. Crops need rainfall promptly to achieve maximum production. We have been fortunate because my wife is a praying woman, and God has provided our farm with needed and timely rains. My family serves as the backbone of this farm operation. My entire family work collectively to plant, manage and harvest our crops. One of my brothers retired after 32 years of working at the Parchman prison system. He is responsible for harvesting all crops. My son Rico serves as the farm mechanic. This young man works a full-time job at night and spends his days repairing implements to keep the Bradford Family Farm operating."

Valda Bradford, Rickey's wife, chimed in and shared her thoughts about living on the farm. "I was raised on a small family farm in Gore Springs, Mississippi, and this is not unfamiliar work," she said. "I have learned how to do most of the maintenance on my personal car, and I will help repair the implements if needed. I am thankful for my family, and we are constantly praying to God for strength and hope."

The Winston County Self Help Cooperative provides the Bradford Family Farm with technical support.

Selected by the Winston County Self Help Cooperative
T'arie Todman

EARRAK AND ARNETTA COTTON

Cattle for The Kingdom
Wagoner, Oklahoma

Earrak and Arnetta Cotton have been married for 41 years. The Cottons' lives are distinctively marked by genuine strength, humility of spirit and integrity of character. As such, people gravitate to their common-sense approach to life. They have four married adult children and 11 grandchildren.

This couple has over five decades of farm and ranch experience as owners of Cattle for The Kingdom, a facet of their operation designed to raise grass- and grain-fed beef. This proficiency allows Earrak to serve on the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Technical Committee. The Cottons formed an Agriculture in Action program and partnered with two university agricultural extensions to host an eight-month Market Gardening School in 2020. They established Cottons' Country Markets and participated in farmers markets throughout the entire growing season.

Earrak is senior pastor of Unity Temple Family Church, while Arnetta is the facilitator of their community outreach programs. In 2020, their capacity was expanded to distribute over 2 million pounds of Farmers to Families Food Boxes to nearly 750,000 people — enough for the USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement to come from Washington, D.C., to visit their pantry in Inola, Oklahoma.

Earrak has received an honorary doctorate, and Arnetta has received Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach Grant Writer of the Year as well as an appointment to the USDA Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers.

Selected by the Wagoner County Conservation
District
Rhonda Bowman, District Manager



S. DOUGLAS DAYE

Rougemont, North Carolina



Douglas Daye grew up on his grandfather's farm in Rougemont, North Carolina, and felt that his destiny was already determined. He said, "You just did what you were told to do to help the farm thrive." Douglas, his five siblings and family grew everything they needed in their garden, including corn, wheat, oats and tobacco. It was hard work with seldom time for recreation, so when he became a teenager, he began to dislike the farm life and wanted to never return. His mother told him, "Be careful how you say the word never."

After high school Douglas volunteered to go into the Marines, where he met many guys from all parts of the United States who had similar or worse farming experiences and a disbelief of a Black family owning so much farmland. Sharing stories with fellow Marines made Douglas realize that his experience on the farm was not that bad. He decided if he survived Vietnam, he would return to the farm. Returning to the farm proved to be therapy for the traumas he experienced while in Vietnam. He began raising hogs and was the first grandchild to come back to the farm. While taking care of the farm, Douglas worked full time at the Liggett & Myers tobacco factory while completing degrees at Durham Technical Community College and North Carolina Central University.

Today Douglas raises beef cattle and grows hay for their



feed. Over the years, he has learned from advice from an uncle and lifetime experiences the importance of using rules and regulations to manage the farm successfully, as well as engaging and communicating with USDA agencies. His advice to other farmers is to become active on farming boards and committees, keep up with modern technology, and leave passed-down farm property in agriculture. Douglas is a widower with two biological sons, three adopted sons and four grandchildren. His biological sons help him on the farm.

Selected by United Farmers USA
Frances Gibson

KELSEY DUCHENEAX

DX Beef LLC
Gettysburg, South Dakota

Kelsey Ducheneaux is a fourth-generation Lakota cattle rancher who calls the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation home. She is also the owner of DX Beef LLC, a direct-to-consumer regenerative beef operation, as well as the natural resources director for the Intertribal Agriculture Council, a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit that promotes the use of Indian lands for the benefit of Indian peoples. Kelsey's passion lies in working directly with land managers and producers in promoting regenerative agricultural practices. She is excited to see how her work with producers can continue to enhance their connection to consumers in an effort to relocalize more resilient food systems.

Among her many accomplishments, the one that made the most direct impact was providing access to local and affordably priced beef for reservation families and residents amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. When shelves were going empty and prices were skyrocketing for consumers (as well as producers for processing), Kelsey was able to offer an alternative to not only families eating her beef but also other reservation producers who were not aware of opportunities such as this. Kelsey's advocacy efforts promote regenerative land stewardship, healthier communities, and food systems with producers at the forefront.

Selected by the Native American
Agriculture Fund
Cindy Farlee
Fayetteville, Arkansas



ALVIN GIBSON

Manning, South Carolina



Alvin Gibson's family has been farming for over 150 years, and he has been farming for 35 years. He is a Vietnam Army veteran who started helping on the farm by plowing with the mule for his granddad and dad. At that time, they grew corn, wheat, cotton, tobacco, hay, oats, watermelon, cucumbers and tomatoes. Today he grows mostly row crops, including wheat, corn and peanuts.

Alvin says he likes farming because it gives him comfort, he likes having his own business, and there are no restrictions. Over the years he has turned to seasoned farmers like Robert Wilson and the late Hezekiah Gibson, who were very helpful with advice and use of chemicals and finances. When Alvin started as a beginning farmer, he turned to NRCS, Clemson

Extension and FSA but at the time was unable to get their help. As a result, he did what his seasoned farm advisers told him: He never gave up. He said that although at times it was hard, he felt by going into military service, working at Sunbeam and working for himself, he has been able to maintain and keep his farm going while reaping benefits.

Alvin has four children — two boys and two girls — and 24 grandchildren. None of his children help him, but a few of his grandchildren help him on the farm.

Selected by United Farmers USA
Frances Gibson

CAROLINE LEVIAS

Call, Texas



Caroline and O.M. Levias Jr. were recently awarded the Conservation Rancher Award for Region 4 during the 2020 Texas Conservation Awards Program. Located in the Pineywoods of East Texas, the Levias' 126-acre operation is in the Call community in Newton County, Texas.

The Levias family has had a 67-year history of working with the Jasper-Newton Soil and Water Conservation District (JNSWCD), the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The Levias' history with cooperative agreements dates back to the summer of 1953, when O.M. Levias Sr. (O.M. Jr.'s father) signed his first Farmer-District Cooperative Agreement with the district (the same year that JNSWCD was formed).

On the 75 acres of hayland, the Leviases chose to harvest hay in a manner that allows wildlife to escape or flush. This benefits species of birds and animals by reducing the mortality of the animals that use the hay meadow for cover and nest-

ing. Also, on the 37 acres of pasture, O.M. Jr. chose to rotate supplement and feeding areas. The purpose of this enhancement was to improve water quality by reducing livestock concentration in one area.

O.M. Jr. remained ever vigilant about conservation until his death in 2019. Caroline now carries the torch for her husband, who is missed by family, friends and the community, and continues in the family's legacy of farming. Caroline accepted the Conservation Rancher Award for Region 4 on behalf of her and her late husband from Linda McMillan, JNSWCD director. Additionally, Caroline recently applied for her own Conservation Stewardship Program and Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts with the Jasper County NRCS office.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service — Texas
Kanika Davis

HARBERT EDWIN “EDDIE” MOORE

Moore Brothers Ag Inc. and Moore Brothers Beef Inc.
Red Springs, North Carolina



Harbert Edwin “Eddie” Moore (Lumbee) is co-owner of Moore Brothers Ag Inc. and Moore Brothers Beef Inc. 2021 marks the 35th growing season for him and his brother, Luther “Shorty” Moore. The first two decades they focused almost exclusively on tobacco farming, but as markets changed, Eddie led the charge to diversify the family’s agricultural operations by establishing a direct-market beef business. After years of marketing efforts, the Moore Brothers Natural label is recognized throughout North Carolina in high-end restaurants, health-focused grocery stores, farmer subscription boxes and — most importantly — the Moore Brothers Natural farm market in Prospect.

Eddie is an active member of civic affairs, regularly providing council to educational institutions, the county governing

board and farmer advocacy organizations in Robeson County. In 2020, his most outstanding accomplishment was keeping shelves stocked in a time of heightened supply chain issues. As demand for local beef outpaced the current supply, he found ways to manage inventory that respected the tribal community’s need for food security and safe retail environments. He launched a website for shipments, offered curbside pickup and retrofitted the farm market according to public health guidance. Eddie worked tirelessly to make sure his community had food during the pandemic.

Selected by the Native American Agriculture Fund
Cindy Farlee
Fayetteville, Arkansas



COMING SOON

**Minority Landowner
15th Anniversary Conference**

Follow [@minorityland](https://twitter.com/minorityland) and www.minoritylandowner.com for registration announcements

RONALD JONES

BlackBerry Landscaping LLC
St. Louis, Missouri



Ronald Jones grew up in the Walnut Park and Hyde Park neighborhoods located in North St. Louis. As a young kid growing up in the '80s, Ronald remembers playing hide and go seek, playing red light green light, riding bicycles and raiding the neighbors' fruit trees. Back in those days, a lot of our elderly neighbors had vegetable gardens and fruit trees in their yards. He recalled this one alley he and his friends walked through — a shortcut to his friend Jermaine's house — that they nicknamed "Fruit Alley" because every other yard had a fruit tree growing in it. The branches that hung over the fence were easy pickings to a bunch of hungry 10-year-olds. Ronald made a promise to himself that when he was able to get his own home, he would grow a fruit orchard in his yard and give out the fruits to any neighborhood kid who was hungry.

In 2008 Ronald moved to JeffVanderLou and started planting a garden in the backyard. His first attempt was something simple. He planted hostas, and when they started to grow, he caught the bug. He found himself planting daylilies, ornamental lilies and Autumn Joy sedum. Over the next couple of years, Ronald read gardening books and watched 10,000 hours of YouTube videos on gardening. Ronald was looking for his next garden challenge; who would have known that an



article on the decline of the monarch butterfly due to the loss of milkweed plants in agriculture fields would light a fire in Ronald's spirit that still burns brightly to this day?

"After looking up information on how I could help the monarch butterfly population, I took a road trip to the Butterfly House located in Chesterfield, Missouri," he said. "Upon arriving, their staff greeted me with kindness, and I explained to them that I have a garden that I wanted to convert into a butterfly garden. The good folks over at the Butterfly House gave me tons of literature on all the butterfly species in Missouri, along with a list of host and nectar plants. From 2010 to 2014, my butterfly garden expanded to a pollinator garden, and it now takes up half the yard. It attracts not only butterflies but also hummingbirds and many species of native bees."

In 2015 Ronald started incorporating fruit trees into the garden. Over the course of three years, the garden expanded to an



edible landscape that includes two pawpaw trees, a peach tree, a plum tree, a mulberry tree, two fig trees, three grapevines, two cherry trees, a black currant shrub, a raspberry bush and a blackberry shrub. The first fresh-off-the-land fruit Ronald can recall ever eating was a blackberry — hence the name for his company and unique backyard garden, BlackBerry Landscaping LLC.

In June of 2019 Ronald decided to open his garden up to the public for the first time for the 2019 Sustainable Backyard Tour. There were over 100 guests that day, and they all loved the garden. Ronald's first time as a stop on the garden tour resulted in being featured in a book called "Your Edible Yard" by Illinois gardener Crystal Stevens. He also won one of three Sustainable Backyard Tour awards granted to that year's 30 participants and was nominated for St. Louis City's Urban Garden of the Year Award.

In January of 2020 Ronald enrolled in the St. Louis Master Gardener program and completed the program that following December. Becoming a certified master gardener was a dream come true. Ronald's garden was also featured in The New York Times. Rachel Wharton, a New York Times food writer, was writing an article on sustainable gardeners who grew pawpaw trees, which are tropical-like fruit trees, in their backyards. She found BlackBerry Landscaping's Instagram page and reached out to Ronald. Although it took a little convincing for Ronald to believe that The New York Times would be interested in his North City garden, he was honored to talk with Rachel about his garden and was featured in her story, "The Promise of Pawpaw." Ronald's New York Times feature landed him a meeting with, and ultimately a board seat at, Wild Ones St. Louis Chapter, an organization dedicated to native plants of Missouri.

In closing, Ronald, who is an advocate of growing your own food, eating healthy and promoting sustainability, wants to use his brand, BlackBerry Landscaping, to transform vacant properties in North St. Louis into community garden spaces where people (some who he says have never seen fruit on a tree) can learn about, see and taste fresh produce. Ronald's dream is one of connecting people to the same love for eating fresh fruits and vegetables he has had since childhood. At BlackBerry Landscaping's educational garden, it will be as simple as kids just walking in and picking fruit straight from the tree or maybe even getting an impromptu gardening lesson from Ronald himself. Ronald believes that all communities should know what fresh food looks like. As he says, "What's better than fresh food?" In the meantime, the garden at BlackBerry Landscaping is in full bloom from May to July!

Selected by Clair Wolff

SCOTT PALMA

Bucking Fit Urban Farm and Palma Farms
Covington, Georgia



Scott Palma grew up in Michigan, where his family lived off the vegetables and fruits they grew. He moved to Georgia when the auto industry failed. He has always raised horses and is a very talented individual who lets nothing stop him.

In 1981 Scott started his own landscaping business in keeping with the farm. He has also worked in theater, either dancing or acting. Some of his performances include productions by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Atlanta Opera and Georgia Ballet, plus a lot of Shakespeare. His most recent outstanding accomplishment is Bucking Fit Urban Farm and Palma Farms. Both are located at his present home site, where he grows a variety of green vegetables in both spring and fall, as well as tomatoes, carrots, eggplants, onions, beets, sunflowers, herbs, peanuts and asparagus.

Scott has been farming for over 20 years. He does it because he has worked outside all of his life and learned how it works. He is a one-man operation who bought his own machines. When his barn burned to the ground, Scott started over. He enjoys learning how nature works, and he loves to see people use the produce he grows on his land and for others to come and look at what he grows.

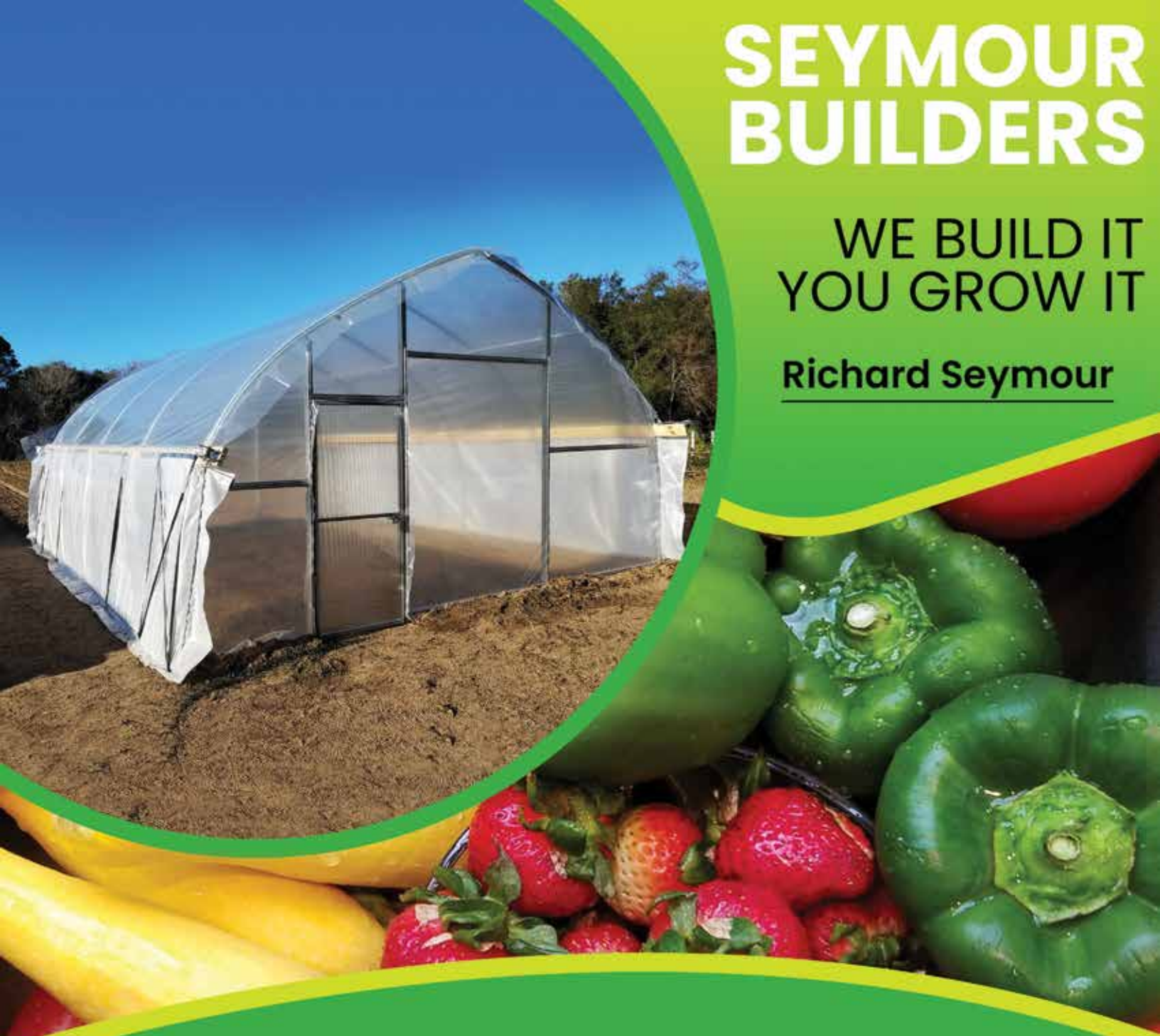
His marketing skills are limited. He sells his produce by word of mouth and has the best-variety urban country farm this side of the Dixie. Scott has incorporated farm tours and eating fresh-grown vegetables. His farm is to live for!

Selected by United Farmers USA
Frances Gibson

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FRED NICKERSON

Sweet Home, Arkansas



Fred Nickerson owns and operates a cattle/hay operation in Pulaski County. He has implemented conservation practices on his operation by working with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and USDA Farm Service Agency. Practices were installed to improve his water management as well as improve soil health.

He has served in multiple leadership positions in Pulaski County since his retirement from Union Pacific Railroad. He has served as president of the Pulaski County Farm Bureau and participated in congressional visits.

Fred has also served on the Pulaski County Conservation District for over eight years. Fred is always asking questions and seeking to provide locally led leadership. One of his most outstanding characteristics is his willingness to step up and help elderly neighbors when problems arise. He has been known to help get neighbors' cattle back in the field as well as feed their cattle when called up.

Fred is married to Sondra and enjoys his children and grandchildren when not working on the farm.

Fred is an outstanding farmer, and, more importantly, he is a great example of the agricultural industry.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency — Arkansas
Pulaski/Lonoke Counties
Debbie Moreland



Fred, center, participating in the Arkansas Farm Bureau Resolutions Committee meeting

GREG AND EVELYN NICKS

Nicks Family Farm
Forest, Mississippi



The Nicks Family Farm is nestled in the Midway community, 14 miles northwest of Forest, Mississippi, in Scott County. Several poultry companies cover a large swath of Scott County. (You could call Scott County the poultry capital of Mississippi.) These poultry companies are generating millions of dollars to prop up the local tax base.

However, other farm-related entities are occurring across the flatlands in Scott County. The Nicks Family Farm (Greg and Evelyn) operates as a cow-calf entity. According to Greg, “Growing up back in the day, most families retained a herd of cattle to help supplement their incomes. Additionally, we would harvest beef yearly to help feed the family. Some families would sell their cows to help defray school or college tuitions. Today, we are operating a small herd to help maintain the pasture’s growth and generate income to pay the ad valorem taxes. I thoroughly enjoy watching my calves mature into adult cows and bulls. We have received numerous conservation practices through our local office of the Natural Resources

Conservation Service. These practices have been essential in developing our forages. Additionally, we have partnered with Alcorn State and Mississippi State Extension Service to ascertain pertinent information. We have established an extensive relationship with the Winston County Self Help Cooperative (WCSHC) to develop our group, the Scott County Small Farmers and Landowners Organization. WCSHC provided technical assistance and leadership in learning how to navigate USDA’s programs and develop connections with other community-based organizations. WCSHC co-hosted a field day here on the farm in April 2019.”

Greg currently is serving as the minority adviser for Scott County’s USDA County Committee.

Selected by the Winston County Self Help Cooperative
Jackson, Mississippi
T’arie Todman

JUAN AND SHAKERA RAYGOZA

Terra Preta Farm
Edinburg, Texas



Juan Raygoza and family

Juan and Shakera Raygoza, with their three children, own and operate Terra Preta Farm in Edinburg, Texas. They raise certified organic vegetables, herbs and flowers that they sell at local farmers markets and through their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) boxes.

The Raygozas started working with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2012 to install seasonal high tunnel systems to grow produce. They are working with NRCS to improve soil health through conservation crop rotation, cover crops, and nutrient and pest management.

The family sees the soil as the key to successful organic farming. “The soil is a whole universe below us where amazing things happen that can’t be replicated in even the most complex laboratory,” they say on their farm’s website. “We believe that Healthy Soils = Healthy Plants = Healthy People.”

Last year, the community rallied behind the family’s fight to gain the city’s approval for the seasonal high tunnel systems, which the family uses to grow produce that helps South Texas residents’ diets.

They have worked to bring soil back to life by adding compost, cover crops, mulch, compost teas, humates and over 70 mineral nutrients to compensate for what’s been lost throughout the years and to produce food that is not only free of chemical pesticides and fertilizers but also nutritionally dense. They believe that as the soils become replenished with nutrients again and plants grow healthier, pest attacks will decrease. Weeding is done by mechanical tillage, flame weeding or hand weeding.

Juan is project director for the Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Program at UT Rio Grande Valley (formerly UT Pan Am) and has presented at partner events for NRCS and other organizations in South Texas.

Selected by UT Rio Grande Valley Center for Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service — Texas

Aisha Cruz-Reyes

SARA DOLAN AND DAVID VOSE

Litchfield Park, Arizona



The Coalition for Farmland Preservation is nominating Sara Dolan and David Vose. They:

- Are community minded and support local food banks. When the pandemic hit, they extended a welcome in their farm store to other farmers and artisans to sell their products there.
- Participate in food benefit assistance programs, including SNAP/EBT; offer a SNAP match option; and participate in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program
- Take leadership on community boards
- Visit school classrooms to help students gain an understanding of where their food comes from
- Expanded their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) from 160 to 600 members between mid-March and early April to offer safe food options during the pandemic

- Employ 30 people full time and another 12 people in high season
- Are dedicated to keeping the connection with the land alive in everyone who consumes their food
- Pass their love of farming on by sharing their knowledge with the next generation of farmers
- Are visionaries who view farming as bigger than farming for themselves and their family. Their work and values encompass a commitment to growing the health and heart of our state through producing and sharing from seed to table all of the social and economic benefits of local food.

Selected by the Coalition for Farmland Preservation
Kimber Lanning
Phoenix, Arizona

MILTON E. NAPPIER

Arrington, Virginia



After 30 years off the farm, Milton Nappier returned to his home county with an interest in raising goats. He purchased 25 acres and learned all he could. In the process of reaching out to local extension at Virginia State University and Virginia Tech for technical expertise, he also learned about silvopasturing — integrating trees with livestock production.

His interests and farm plans aligned with Virginia Tech's needs, and he agreed to create a silvopasture for an on-farm demonstration. He stepped out in faith, working with a spectrum of new (to him) professionals — extension agents, foresters, loggers and researchers — to convert a site for the silvopasture demonstration.

He has been a great asset for our outreach efforts, offer-

ing his farm for field days and tour stops. His farm is now designated a Virginia State University Small Farm Outreach Demonstration Farm. He also has spoken as an invited panelist at the 2017 North American Agroforestry Conference and in a USDA National Agroforestry Center video highlighting mid-Atlantic farmers utilizing goats in silvopastures. Land ownership and intergenerational wealth transfer are key motivators for Milton and primary drivers of his efforts to improve his herd, the land and their value for his family.

Selected by the USDA National Agroforestry Center
Susan Stein
Washington, D.C.



KIMBERLY RATCLIFF

Caney Creek Ranch and
Farm to Freezer Beef
Oakwood, Texas

Kimberly Ratcliff manages Caney Creek Ranch, a diversified ranch in east-central Texas started by her parents. She joined the ranch in 2007 after leaving her job with Bloomberg as a branding specialist. In addition to managing Caney Creek, Ratcliff also owns Farm to Freezer Beef, a locally owned, family-run business that offers fresh, wholesome beef direct from east Texas ranches. They provide the highest quality ranch-direct beef possible, in a simple, convenient and responsible manner.

In 2008, Ratcliff helped start 100 Ranchers, an organization composed of minority members across counties in Texas. The organization promotes agriculture at the local level and holds educational meetings for its members. The primary mission of 100 Ranchers is to unite production agriculture producers by strengthening and promoting agriculture.

In July 2020, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the appointment of 15 members to serve on the USDA Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers. Ratcliff was chosen as one of these 15 members.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation
Service — Texas
Kanika Davis

ODELL RUFFIN AND FLOYD RUFFIN

Georgetown, South Carolina



Brothers Odell, left, and Floyd Ruffin

Odell and Floyd Ruffin work the farm they grew up on. They are partners and grow a variety of vegetables through winter and summer.

I began working with the Ruffins in 2013 with the Environmental Quality Incentives Program to convert the farm from sprinkler irrigation to microirrigation. Their management and conservation goals grow each year. They have added two high tunnel houses and participate in the Conservation Stewardship Program with cover crops and pollinator habitat.

Any time there is a request to see the high tunnels, they welcome a visit and make sure they are available to answer any questions other farmers may have. They share farming practices and how the microirrigation system fits into the management of the operation. Improved soil sampling has also been an important part of management. They are always willing to share their knowledge and what they are doing on the farm with others.

While the conservation practices are important, their advocacy as farmers and members of the community goes beyond their work on the farm. Odell has been a member of the Farm Service Agency County Committee for two terms and has just been reelected for a third term. He served in other capacities as a member, most recently as chairman.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service —
South Carolina
Debbie Mann





HAROLD SINGLETARY

Charleston, South Carolina



Harold Singletary as a minority landowner has demonstrated through determination, vision and execution the perfect example of how Blacks in South Carolina and, more specifically, the Low Country can take legacy heirs' property with massive legal cleanup problems and transform it into a positive trajectory of wealth for their future family legacy. With his years of business experience and love for his parents, who grew up farming on James Island, Harold took family land that had been handed down as heirs' property, untangled it and created a business model to



grow then-recently legalized hemp.

Through research and travel, Harold and his team knew the best route to success would be a greenhouse. So, Harold wrote the business plan, hired the team, raised the capital and built the greenhouse.

The family property — once a tax burden and in danger of being purchased by an outside entity — is now an income-producing asset. Harold has truly led the way in the Low Country as a Black farmer businessman and family man: All these things Black families in the South made building blocks to strength and longevity, Harold Singletary continues to do today.

Selected by Ascue

JERRY SMITH

Smith Family Tree Farm
Philadelphia, Mississippi



While walking the back roads of Winston County, Mississippi, Jerry Smith learned the art of working under his parents' tutelage (John W. and Edna Houston Smith). As most Southerners in the '60s, Jerry grew up on a small, diverse farm, including timber, vegetables and animal production. He attended and graduated from the historic Camile Street High School (Trojans) in Louisville, Mississippi. After achieving his first milestone in education, Jerry matriculated at Alcorn State University in Lorman, Mississippi, where the "grass is greener, the air is cleaner, and the water is sweeter."

This lifelong journey prepared Jerry for a brilliant work career at International Paper Company. However, the yearning to serve humanity propelled Jerry into civic engagement. He presently serves as Goodway Missionary Baptist Church's deacon and on the Board of Trustees for East Central Community College.

Jerry joined the Neshoba County Soil and Water Conservation District's Board as a deputy commissioner in 1992 and became a commissioner in 1996. After more than 25 years of serving, Jerry Smith, on January 24, 2019, became the first African American president of the Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts. He is the first African American to serve in this position nationally. The Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts helps to educate and manage our valuable natural resources (soil, water and air).

Jerry is currently working at the Smith Family Tree Farm, and he is married to Paulene Hartzog Smith.

Selected by the Winston County Self Help Cooperative
T'arie Todman

BILLY AND MARILYNN WRIGHT

Marlin, Texas



Billy and Marilyn Wright have been ranching on their 250 acres outside of Marlin, Texas, for over a decade now. They raise registered Charolais cattle, Tennessee Walker horses and chickens on their property, and they grow hay and vegetables as well. They sought technical and financial assistance from their local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff to develop a plan that would help them continue a high level of stewardship and conservation on their operation. Because of their history of implementing conservation practices, they were awarded a Conservation Stewardship Program contract, a program reserved for those consistently achieving high levels of conservation.

While the Wrights have worked hard and learned a lot through their experiences on the ranch, they don't keep that

knowledge to themselves. They regularly open their property to the public and host tours, workshops and hands-on training activities. They also sell produce and eggs from their property, sharing how they are grown and raised as well as the conservation practices used on the ranch.

The pair often travel all over the state to speaking engagements where they share their story of how they have worked with NRCS to improve their property and maintain a sustainable agriculture operation. Their passion for conservation is contagious, and they have impacted hundreds of people.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service — Texas
Dee Ann Littlefield

KEVIN AND TERESA SPRINGS

TKO Farming
McCool, Mississippi

Kevin Springs' mom and step-father retired in McCool, Mississippi, in 1980. In 2015, they passed their land, which had been in the family for more than 80 years, to Kevin and his wife Teresa.

Kevin and Teresa Springs relocated from South Florida in 2016. They both are founders of non-profit organizations that work with individuals affected by the criminal justice system. "Part of our work is to provide both pre- and post-release services. We realized our property could leverage an opportunity to marry criminal justice and food justice," said Kevin.

They are now a permanent fixture in a growing movement to combat racism in Mississippi food systems. As a result of commitment to the land, they have installed new fencing, vegetable plots, and a fresh, clean water source for both livestock and vegetables. This hard work continues to yield nutritionally dense foods for the surrounding communities.

What they've been able to accomplish in a few short years, with limited resources and even less experience, is inspiring. When you walk on their farm, it is obvious something magical is happening: The life they've helped cultivate. The harmony. As we walk past a row of squash, Teresa talks about the system of companion planting they use to keep away unwanted insects and pests; the beautiful marigolds are a part of how TKO Farming stays off chemical pesticides.

You'll learn an incredible amount about their diverse and innovative farming system, which includes cows, goats, chickens, intercropping, low-till practices, a low-flow irrigation system, a versatile hoop house and much more.

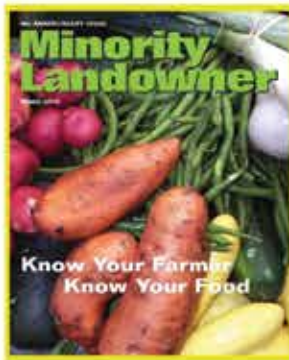


"Our goal at TKO Farming is fairly simple: to provide a space for groups, individuals and communities to collectively address issues concerning access to healthy food — more specifically, access within Black communities," said Kevin.

Selected by the Winston County Self Help Cooperative
T'arie Todman



MINORITY LANDOWNER MAGAZINE



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IMPROVE PRODUCTIVITY, INCREASE PROFITABILITY, AND
MAINTAIN OWNERSHIP OF THEIR LAND

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THE NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FUND



Healthy Lands
Healthy People
Healthy Economies

WHO WE ARE

The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) provides grants to eligible organizations for business assistance, agricultural education, technical support, and advocacy services to support Native farmers and ranchers.

OUR HISTORY

NAAF was created by the settlement of the landmark *Keepseagle v. Vilsack* class-action lawsuit. NAAF is the largest philanthropic organization devoted solely to serving the Native American farming and ranching community.

OUR IMPACT

**\$28 MILLION
IN GRANTS**

**158
GRANTEES**

**319
PROJECTS**

Visit our website at nativeamericanagriculturefund.org for more information

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) and its supporters are focused on a singular grand mission - to restore the beloved American chestnut to its native range in the eastern United States.

Prior to chestnut blight, these trees were among the tallest and fastest-growing in the forest. Its nutritious nuts were a reliable food source, and chestnut lumber was straight, strong, and rot resistant.

As we move closer toward the restoration of this keystone tree species, we must rely not only on public lands but also that of private landowners to create a contiguous, self-sustaining range of American chestnut.

We invite you to become part of this ambitious effort! Learn more about TACF, our research strategies, and how to become a member by visiting acf.org.

