

Virtual

# COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS 2021 ANNUAL EVENT



*Retail and Leadership within Community Food Systems*

**February 12<sup>th</sup>**

**#cfs21**

**IOWA STATE  
UNIVERSITY**  
Extension and Outreach

**COMMUNITY  
FOOD SYSTEMS**  
Planning, Consulting & Design



# agenda

CT

9:45 - 10:00

## Opening Programming

10:00 - 10:15

### Welcome

Bre Miller, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach  
Farm, Food and Enterprise Development

10:15 - 11:15

### Morning Keynote

#### Unlikely Partnerships and Local Food Retail: Best Practices and Shared Experience

Todd Manley, Mutiny Island Vodka  
Taufeek Shah, Lola's Fine Hot Sauces  
Karla Fennessy, Quality Food

11:15 - 12:00

## Breakouts | Morning Session

12:00 - 12:45

## Lunch & Lightning Round Presentations

12:45 - 1:30

## Breakouts | Afternoon Session

1:30 - 2:30

### Afternoon Keynote

#### Local Food Markets: Business Development Opportunities and Leadership

Debra Tropp, Debra Tropp Consulting

2:30 - 3:00

### Closing Remarks

#### Food Systems Practitioner and Education Resource Database

Courtney Long, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach  
Farm, Food and Enterprise Development

3:00

## Adjourn

# keynotes

Morning Keynote | 10:15 am

---

## Unlikely Partnerships and Local Food Retail: Best Practices and Shared Experience

Karla Fennessy, Todd Manley & Taufeek Shah

Join Todd Manley, owner of Mutiny Island Vodka; Taufeek Shah, owner of Lola's Fine Hot Sauces; and Karla Fennessy, marketing and business development director of Quality Food St. Croix for a discussion on their unique stories of growing their brands from local to national scale and becoming retail leaders in their areas, focusing on the importance of market development, partnerships, and values-based business opportunities.



**Karla Fennessy** | Quality Food St. Croix, Marketing and Business Development Director

Experienced sales, marketing and business development professional in various industries including food and hospitality. Currently working with Chef Todd Manley at Mutiny Island Vodka as Brand Ambassador for Iowa and the Midwest market, as well as Marketing and Business Development Director at Quality Food St. Croix. Mutiny Island Vodka came from Chef Todd Manley's vision of creating a distilled spirit utilizing breadfruit, indigenous to the Caribbean and Pacific Islands. We are committed to bringing breadfruit to the forefront and educating the world of its richness, history and versatility. Quality Food St Croix is a full service distribution company serving restaurants, hotels, resorts and small businesses. It is the largest purveyor of local produce on the island, offering a vast selection of competitively priced products, delivering value and services that cater to the local community. Responsible for direct sales to restaurants, chefs and businesses including product/inventory promotion and expansion.



**Todd Manley** | Mutiny Island Vodka, Founder

Whether exploring local and indigenous foodways, envisioning the future of new and historic ingredients or investing in the future of his adopted home, award-winning Chef Todd Manley brings passion and authenticity to everything he does. The creative visionary behind MUTINY Island Vodka®, Todd is originally from Virginia, where he was chef/owner of multiple restaurants, and is now Executive Chef and Partner of five diverse restaurants on St. Croix. The idea for MUTINY Island Vodka® came from his vision of creating a distilled spirit utilizing local ingredients that represent the richness of the island. Breadfruit, found on St. Croix and throughout the Caribbean and Pacific islands, is the basis for the vodka and a testament to Todd's commitment to using the finest, most authentic ingredients. Todd hopes to use breadfruit as a basis for other industries on the island.



**Taufeek Shah** | Lola's Fine Hot Sauces, Founder & CEO

With a pinch of innovation, a dash of marketing acumen and a heaping helping of hard work, Taufeek Shah has turned a family recipe into an international brand. The Founder and CEO of Lola's Fine Hot Sauces, Taufeek graduated from Grandview University in Des Moines in 2012. Today, his hot sauce is enjoyed around the world. Taufeek says entrepreneurialism is in his blood. When Taufeek was 13 he would sell "fancy pens" that his mother, a physician, would receive from drug company reps. From there he branched out into selling baseball cards and launching his first eBay store at age 15. He says this experience continues to help him to this day. Taufeek has a passion for helping and a passion for delivering quality. All of which combines with his passion for food and family to lead daily with his brand Lola's. In addition to creating seven different hot sauces, five flavors of salsa and a bloody mary mix under the Lola's brand, Taufeek has also been instrumental in helping launch the first Filipino fusion restaurant in Iowa. The eatery was recently recognized as one of the Top 25 Filipino restaurants in the United States. Taufeek also donates his product and time to support local missions that align with his philanthropic passions. Taufeek has a desire to constantly find partnership opportunities and ways to develop collaboratives and initiatives with other small business owners. He always finds ways to be actively involved in all that is going on in Central Iowa. In addition to serving Make-A-Wish, Taufeek volunteers for Goodwill of Central Iowa and is a member of the Board at Proteus. Taufeek's passion for business and commitment to his community is more than just a flash in the pan.

# keynotes

Afternoon Keynote | 1:45 pm

---

## Local Food Markets: Business Development Opportunities and Leadership

Debra Tropp

Join Debra Tropp as she shares her reflections, experiences, and research with food-based businesses. She will share about her findings and work during her tenure at USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Transportation and Marketing Program, as well as her more recent work as a consultant. This presentation will discuss business development opportunities and practices around local and regional food and will feature highlights of leadership potential within community food systems.



**Debra Tropp** | Debra Tropp Consulting

Debra Tropp spent more than 26 years at the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service's Transportation and Marketing Program, retiring from federal service in early 2019. During her tenure at AMS, Ms. Tropp devoted much of her attention to identifying emerging marketing opportunities for suppliers of locally and regionally produced food in wholesale marketing channels, so that smaller/mid-sized producers could diversify their customer base, expand their sales volumes and improve their cash flow. She also played a key role in developing and overseeing the development of research projects and guidance material – aimed at a small/mid-size producer audience – that shared practical insights about market requirements/preferences and the economic benefits associated with changes in operational and marketing practices within the food supply chain.

Over the course of her career, Ms. Tropp served in a variety of roles of increasing responsibility, including Agricultural Economist, interim Staff Officer for the Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (a competitive grant program that supports market research projects), Team Leader and Chief of the Farmers Market and Direct Farm Marketing Research Branch, and finally, Deputy Director of AMS's Marketing Service Program, which focuses on local and regional food system research and development. In this capacity, she served as the primary editor for the AMS-sponsored report "The Economics of Local Food Systems: A Toolkit to Guide Community Discussions, Assessments and Choices" (March 2016), and as a member of the four-person task force that framed and produced the Federal Reserve/USDA book "Harvesting Opportunity: The Power of Regional Food System Investments to Transform Communities" (August 2017).

Since leaving USDA in January 2019, Ms. Tropp has continued to provide training, technical assistance and grant support on local/regional food system issues to communities, government agencies, foundations, NGOs and private enterprises. In her local capacity, she currently serves as an appointed delegate to the Montgomery County, MD Agricultural Advisory Committee and a member of the county's Food Economy Working Group a subcommittee of the food policy council. On a regional and national level, she is a member of the leadership circle for the Lyson Center for Civic Agriculture and the North American Food Systems Network, is an active participant in the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, and served as a member of the advisory board for the 2019 National Farm Viability Conference held in Red Wing, MN.

# keynotes

Closing Remarks | 2:45 pm

---

## Food Systems Practitioner and Education Resource Database

Courtney Long

This presentation will review a new database developed with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and several national partners. This database identifies food system educational resources across the nation in an effort to stabilize and strengthen our food systems workforce. You will learn how to navigate, share resources, and promote your work through the database during the presentation.



### Courtney Long

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development & Community Economic Development, Program Manager

Courtney Long is a program manager with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development and Community and Economic Development. Courtney manages the Food Systems Team and coordinates the Community Food Systems Program — a community process to develop and design local food systems in partnership with communities. As a part of this program she supports food business development ranging from supporting vision, mission and value creation; developing scopes of work and supporting business interest in local food procurement, processing and value-added product development, and design techniques. This support includes working with interdisciplinary teams across the university and within community to deliver comprehensive programming support for businesses and communities. Primary areas of interest and research include: Community Food Systems program, a multi-year process and partnership with communities to design and develop their food systems; Food Systems certification development (Local Food Leader and Community Food Systems); food business and supply chain research; and resilient community food systems. Long also supports food systems development and encourages community engagement around food through public health, food access and holistic programming. Courtney has been working with local food systems and design for access to healthy, local and regional foods since 2010 with various appointments and research.

# breakouts

Morning Session | 11:15 am

---

Business and  
Organizational  
Tools

## Financial Projects for Food Businesses

Brian Tapp

This presentation will discuss financial considerations for new or emerging food businesses with an emphasis on business plan development, financial projections, and resources. It will also feature detailed graphics and resources utilized in workshops and programming offered by Farm, Food and Enterprise Development.

Community Food  
Access

## Three Practical, Effective Community-Scale Strategies to Improve Access to Good Food Among Vulnerable Populations

Emily Dvorak, DaQuan Campbell, Anna Bandfield, Kamyar Enshayan

This presentation will share our five years of experience in implementing three community-scale strategies in the Waterloo metro area in improving access to more fruits and vegetables among vulnerable populations.

Minority-owned  
Business Strategies

## Immigrant Stores in Iowa; Oases in Food Deserts

Himar Hernandez

Almost every town in Iowa with more than 5,000 people has at least one immigrant-owned business, and some small towns have up to 15 or more. These small businesses are often located in what used to be empty storefronts in downtowns or neighborhoods. More often than not, these small businesses are overlooked as key components in downtown and neighborhood revitalization efforts. In many occasions these businesses fill a void in food access in communities. By being located in neighborhoods, downtowns and urban cores these businesses are able to compete and thrive by providing unique products that cater to immigrant populations as well as selling basic food staples that cater to a wider clientele. These businesses are often the only food stores and establishments available within walking distance for many residents who lack transportation. Through immigrant-owned businesses we can look at new ways of injecting life again into our downtowns and reverse urban decay and sprawl. Over the past 18 years, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach has been assisting immigrant-owned business owners in Iowa in an effort to support their growth and increase their share of value in the state economy. In partnership with SBDC, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach helps business owners in all the steps of their entrepreneurial journey – whether they need assistance with a business plan, obtaining permits or securing financing to grow and expand. Join this engaging presentation followed by a facilitated discussion with a panel of grocery store business owners from Mexico, Ethiopia and Burma. The panel will provide an opportunity to have a dialogue with the business owners and to learn about their experiences in Iowa.

# breakouts

Afternoon Session | 12:30 pm

Business and  
Organizational  
Tools

## Low-Cost Technology Solutions for Iowa's Local Food Coordinators

Jason Grimm & Anuj Mittal

For the last five years Iowa Valley RC&D's Food System Planning staff has been developing and implementing low-cost and easy to use technology solutions for Iowa's regional food systems. This training will present several examples of such tools that local food coordinators can use to improve their operational efficiencies. Examples include using Google sheets and forms, WordPress plugins, Squarespace and Microsoft Excel. Presenters will give short demonstrations of the tools, and will lead a discussion on their various applications within food systems.

Community Food  
Access

## Working with Food-Insecure Clients During the Pandemic

Aubrey Alvarez, Brigham Hoegh, Kate Olson, Teresa Wiemerslage

Hear from staff at three Iowa organizations working to ensure food access and security for their clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aubrey Alvarez, executive director of Eat Greater Des Moines, is spearheading efforts to rescue food in the metro area and get it to organizations serving Iowans facing hunger. Brigham Hoegh and Kate Olson of Cass County Extension and Outreach support a southwest Iowa coalition called Healthy Cass County with a wide variety of programs including donation gardens, a mobile food pantry and USDA food box distribution. Teresa Wiemerslage of Iowa State Extension and Outreach, Iowa Food Hub and Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness shares how partners in northeast Iowa communities created innovative solutions to get fresh local produce into the area food pantry and school lunches to go. After each organization gives an overview of their work, presenters will take questions and help brainstorm solutions to participants' place-based needs.

Minority-owned  
Business Strategies

## Pivoting Your Business Model During a Disruption: Guadalajara Restaurant Success Story

Victor Oyervides

Lupe Vazquez and Alejandro Vazquez, owners of the Guadalajara Restaurant in Muscatine, Iowa successfully pivoted their business model during the COVID-19 pandemic. They pursued an aggressive expansion of their Value Proposition which was based on preserving and enhancing local customer loyalty to the Guadalajara Restaurant brand. Victor Oyervides of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach will share their story and best practices for other small businesses facing pandemic challenges.

# presenter bios



**Aubrey Alvarez**  
**Eat Greater Des Moines, Executive Director**

Aubrey Alvarez is co-founder and Executive Director of Eat Greater Des Moines, a nonprofit organization based in Des Moines. Launched in April 2013, Eat Greater Des Moines unites the community in providing quality food access for all through connection, advocacy, and collaboration. As a natural includer, asker of “why” and the always popular “why not?” her focus on empowering community partners to connect, support one another, and move ideas into action has been a natural fit. With an inclination towards action and willingness to “try it out,” Eat Greater Des Moines has quickly been recognized as a leader in food system development. Aubrey is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa (bachelor of arts in health promotion) and Drake University (masters in public administration). She is also a member of the board with Les Dames D’Escoffier of Greater Des Moines, Hunger Free Dallas County Coalition, and Wallace Centers of Iowa. She also is active in the OpportUNITY Food Insecurity Work Group, Iowa Hunger Coalition, and Hunger Free Warren County. She was selected as a 2019 Health Connect Fellow and is a 2015 graduate of the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute.



**Anna Bandfield**  
**University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education, AmeriCorps Member**

Anna Bandfield is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa where she received a bachelor’s degree in Public Health and Education. Anna is currently an AmeriCorps VISTA member in the Center for Energy and Environmental Education at UNI. During the summer of 2020, she served as a manager for a community garden located at Peoples Community Health Clinic, and ran the Veggie Voucher program. Both of these projects helped improve food access within the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area.



**DaQuan Campbell**  
**University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education, AmeriCorps Member**

DaQuan Campbell is currently serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA member for the UNI Local Food Program working to improve food insecurity in underserved communities. Born and raised in Waterloo, DaQuan is a graduate of Waterloo East High and earned his Bachelor of Arts in Business Management with an emphasis in Organizational Leadership from the University of Northern Iowa. He became interested in VISTA work as it aligns with his passion to help members of his community develop and maintain healthy lifestyles. DaQuan has worked to improve local farmers' markets, mobile produce stands, and the urban farming movement. DaQuan enjoys building relationships with local food producers and connecting members of the community with resources that are available to help improve their level of access to affordable, locally grown foods through education and systems work with schools, early care, and out-of-school programs.



**Emily Dvorak**  
**University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education, Environmental Health Program Associate**

Emily is an alum from the University of Northern Iowa, with her BA in Public Health and Education, with emphasis studies in Global Health and Humanitarian Assistance. She has also received her Certified Nonprofit Professional Credential (CNP). Emily has worked at the UNI Center for Energy and Environmental Education since 2018, where she first completed a year of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA. Emily now manages the statewide public health education campaign, Good Neighbor Iowa, which aims to reduce urban pesticide use for the health of children and the environment. She also assists with furthering the development of the Community Food Security AmeriCorps VISTA cohort, based out of the CEEE.





## Kamyar Enshayan

**University of Northern Iowa Center for Energy & Environmental Education, Director**

Kamyar Enshayan teaches environmental studies at University of Northern Iowa and has worked to strengthen Iowa's local regional food systems; he is an agricultural engineer.



## Jason Grimm

**Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development, Deputy Director**

Jason Grimm is the Deputy Director at Iowa Valley Resource Conservation & Development. Jason works with Iowa farmers and businesses as a value chain coordinator connecting producers to each other, to viable markets, and cultivates relationships within the food system. Jason manages his own farm business marketing specialty crops across the state of Iowa. He holds a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from Iowa State University.



## Himar Hernandez

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community Economic Development, Community Development Specialist**

Originally from the Canary Islands, Spain, Himar came to Iowa as an exchange student at the age of 15. He is the State Assistant Director for Community and Economic Development for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Prior to his current position, Himar served as Field Specialist in the same unit for eight years. Before joining Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Himar was the Director of the New Iowan Center in southeast Iowa. Himar is co-author of several research papers, and his work in small rural communities has been featured in CNN, Good Morning America, The Chronicle of Higher Education, The Wall Street Journal and NBC Today. He received the Passport to Prosperity Award in 2013 and was named one of 14 people to watch by the Des Moines Register. Himar and his wife Amy have two daughters, Belén and Noelia; they live in Ottumwa, Iowa.



## Brigham Hoegh

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Cass County, Wellness Coordinator**

Brigham Hoegh is Cass County's Wellness Coordinator, a position jointly funded by Cass County, Cass County ISU Extension, Cass County Public Health, and the Nishna Valley Family YMCA. In this role, Brigham serves as a connector and bridge-builder between local groups focused on community health and wellness initiatives. Brigham is a member of the Cass County Local Food Policy Council, and manages the group's Facebook page @CassCountyLocalFood. Separately from her Wellness Coordinator position, Brigham manages Produce in the Park, a farmers' market in Atlantic. She also runs a small nonprofit organization, Corn for a Cause, whose mission is to make fresh sweet corn accessible. The only thing Brigham loves as much as sweet corn is her pets.



## Bre Miller

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, Extension Education Specialist**

Bre is an Extension Education Specialist on the Food Systems Team with Farm, Food and Enterprise Development at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She works for the Community Food Systems (CFS) Program, assisting with food systems development in communities. Bre assists with various community projects and research, additionally conducting evaluation for the CFS program, as well as Local Food Leader and Community Food Systems Certifications. Bre received her BA from Iowa State University College of Design in 2018 and is pursuing her MA in Community Regional Planning. Originally from Ames, she is a Iowa State Cyclone at heart is proud to work with her local communities. Bre lives with her husband and two dogs in Story City, Iowa.



## Anuj Mittal

**Dunwoody College of Technology, Senior Instructor**

Anuj Mittal is a faculty member in the Industrial Engineering Technology department within the School of Engineering at Dunwoody College of Technology. Anuj holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from University of Delhi, India, and a M.S. and Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Iowa State University. His research interests include developing quantitative methodologies to study and propose effective design strategies of systems focused on promoting environmental, social and economic sustainability. Current application areas include regional food supply chains, renewable energy systems and food waste management.



## Kate Olson

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Cass County, Director**

Kate Olson serves as Director of the Cass County Extension Office in Atlantic, in southwest Iowa. Kate has worked with local food and food access issues from many angles, including through the Healthy Cass County Coalition, Cass County Local Food Policy Council, Cass County Farm to School Coalition and other community resource groups. Kate also serves as the coordinator for the Cass County Master Gardeners and has worked with that group on many food donation and food/garden education projects over the years. Beyond foods work, Kate also oversees a variety of local and regional extension programs in Agriculture, Human Sciences and Communities, networking partners and specialists to meet local educational needs. Outside of work, Kate is involved in the Atlantic Rotary Club and Cass County Farm Bureau. She resides on a multi-generation family farm near Atlantic with her husband and two teenage daughters.



## Victor Oyervides

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development & Iowa Small Business Development Center, Retail Business Specialist**

Retail Business Specialist, with Iowa State University Extension & Outreach – Community and Economic Development and Iowa Small Business Development Centers (SBDC). Victor Oyervides, native of Saltillo, Mexico, has been with Iowa State University Extension & Outreach for six years, initially as Latino Community Liaison and now as Retail Business Specialist, after having been the Southeast Iowa Regional Director of the Emprendedores Latinos de Iowa program at the Iowan Center for Economic Success. As a Retail Business Specialist, he provides educational opportunities and programs, consultation, and technical assistance for minority-owned retail business owners and for communities seeking to build stronger local retail economies. His passion has been equipping, empowering and building relationships with Latino businesses and communities statewide for the past 11 years. His personal motto for all entrepreneurs is “Rise and Shine.”



## Brian Tapp

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, Program Manager**

Brian serves as a program manager with Extension and Outreach at Iowa State University. He provides business assistance with feasibility studies and financial analyses, and assists in advising entrepreneurs and existing business owners through start up, expansion and acquisition services. Previously, Brian served as the Chief Operating Officer for the Missouri Innovation Corporation at Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO). He served as COO for a very diverse business development unit that included Small Business Development Center, the creation and management of a revolving loan fund, and initiated a regional entrepreneurship analysis program that identified best practices for continued entrepreneurship development. Brian has over 25 years in economic development technical assistance including loan packaging, incentive program formation, grant writing, and business plan development.



## Teresa Wiemerslage

**Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Farm, Food and Enterprise Development, Field Specialist**

Teresa Wiemerslage is a field specialist for the Farm, Food and Enterprise Development program at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. She specializes in food system development, food hubs, farm to school, on-farm food safety and helping farms achieve GAP certification.