

# Minority Landowner

Summer 2012

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**2012 Farmers of the Year**



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**Victor L. Harris**  
*Registered Forester*

Once a year we stop to pay special tribute to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the country who have been selected as Farmers of the Year by universities, organizations, and state and federal agricultural and forestry agencies.

This is our 4th Annual Farmers of the Year edition, and the Class of 2012 is as diverse and as accomplished as any we've had before. They represent the best of American agriculture. And

it's not just what they do on the land; they're also active in their communities and take pride in helping to foster an appreciation of agriculture in the next generations.

This year they represent states from Hawaii, to Oregon, to Missouri, to North Dakota, to Illinois, to Kentucky and many more in between. Start meeting them on page 6, and you'll see why they're all worthy of being Farmers of the Year.

Mark your calendars for February 20-22, 2013 for our 7th Anniversary Conference: "Keeping Your Farm Productive, Profitable

and Yours." This time we're moving to Greensboro, North Carolina and the Greensboro Marriott Airport Hotel. Registration is now open. Find more information on page 27.

We continue to develop our website, [minoritylandowner.com](http://minoritylandowner.com). Check in for updates back issues, coming events and links to articles such as "Involving Private Landowners in Reforesting the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley" (<http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/news/minoritylandowner.html>). You can follow us on Twitter @minorityland to get the latest on minority and limited resource farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the country.

Enjoy this issue of *Minority Landowner*. Congratulations to the Class of 2012 Farmers of the Year, and to all who submitted their names and stories for special recognition.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "V. Harris". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Victor L. Harris  
[ccpublishing@earthlink.net](mailto:ccpublishing@earthlink.net)

# Want to Hunt Down Invasive Plants in Your Forest?

## There's an App for That!



A free tool, through the Apple iTunes store, can help you identify and manage invasive plants of southern forests. The smartphone application is based on research published by the Southern Research Station of the USDA Forest Service in a popular publication called *A Field Guide for the Identification of Invasive Plants in Southern Forests*. The application was developed by the University of Georgia Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health. So far, the Forest Service has distributed printed copies of its identification guide, and the guide's companion piece on management of invasive plants, to more than 200,000 landowners seeking help in identifying and eradicating invasive plants on their land.

Don't have a smartphone? You can download a 140-page printable version of the invasive plants guide by visiting this Web page:  
[www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/su/su\\_srs047.pdf](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/pubs/su/su_srs047.pdf).

Scientists and staff of the Southern Research Station, headquartered in Asheville, NC, conduct natural resource research in 20 locations across 13 Southern States (Virginia to Texas). The Station's mission is "...to create the science and technology needed to sustain and enhance southern forest ecosystems and the benefits they provide."

Learn more about the Southern Research Station at  
[www.srs.fs.usda.gov/](http://www.srs.fs.usda.gov/).

# FARMERS *of the Year*

**M**inority Landowner Magazine proudly present our Class of 2012 Farmers of the Year. This is our way of recognizing some of the farmers, ranchers and forest landowners across the country who are practicing productive and innovative agriculture in their communities.

We congratulate all of the Farmers of the Year across the country. Your farming success and community involvement are examples for others who aspire to be productive on the land and within the community. As always, we applaud you and wish you continued success.

*Victor L. Harris*  
Publisher and Editor

## *Andre Barbour*

Canmer, Kentucky



**NRCS District Conservationist Melinda Cave, parents Douglas and Maggie Barbour, Andre Barbour and USDA 1890 Program Liaison Ed Thompson, Jr.**

Andre and Douglas Barbour are a father and son partnership on this 3<sup>rd</sup> generation 150 acre family farm. They have a diversified farming operation, where they produce dairy and beef cattle, free range hogs, and poultry (chickens and turkeys). The Barbours produce vegetables for home use and resale at local farmers markets in south central Kentucky, Louisville and the Nashville, Tennessee areas. Tobacco has been the major cash crop for this farm in past years as they have moved toward a more diversified operation.

They have improved their dairy operation from a manufacturing graded dairy to a Grade A operation. The Barbours

have implemented conservation practices to control animal waste and facilitate improved grazing practices on the farm with assistance through USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service conservation programs.

Andre graduated from the Small Farm Agricultural Leadership Institute and is president of the local Hart County Farmers Market Cooperative, and also serves as an advisor of the Hart County Farm Service Agency County Committee. His website is [barbourfreshmeat.com](http://barbourfreshmeat.com).

Selected by the Kentucky Chapter of the National Organization of Professional Black Natural Resources Conservation Service Employees

## *Albert, Ada and Sonya Beatty*

Harrells, North Carolina

A Bladen County farm couple who manage more than 315 acres of pine forest and produce wood products from it are the 2012 North Carolina Small Farmers of the year. Albert and Ada Beatty, along with their daughter Sonya Beatty, operate as AA&S Farms Inc., which was honored in ceremonies at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro.

The Beattys run a diverse small farm that includes the forestland, as well as 73 acres of vegetable and animal production. Their Harrells farmstead includes two confined swine barns, each designed to nurture 1,530 feeder pigs, as well as 30 head of cattle and goats. Their sustainability practices include pumping nutrient waste from the swine unit to use in fertilizing cattle pastures – an irrigation method that reduces the farm's use of commercial fertilizer. Rotational grazing of the goats also helps reduce the amount of weeds on the farm and therefore the amount of chemicals needed for weed control.

The Cooperative Extension Program at A&T, which sponsors the annual Small Farms Week recognition ceremonies, also introduced the Beattys to plasticulture. By growing crops on plastic mulch with drip irrigation, the Beattys have been able to significantly increase their vegetable production for earlier yields, longer seasons and increased income.

Long-time area farm management agents, Nelson Brownlee of Bladen County Cooperative Extension, and James



**Sonya, Albert and Ada Beatty**

Hartsfield of Sampson County Cooperative Extension, have worked through the years helping the Beattys on various production initiatives.

The Beattys are the 26<sup>th</sup> N.C. Small Farmers of the Year, which recognizes the producers of small-scale agriculture in North Carolina who generate \$250,000 or less, annually, in gross sales. The honor comes with \$1,500, specially monogrammed jackets and other prizes. Activities for the week also included workshops, tours and demonstrations.

Selected by The Cooperative Extension Program  
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

## *Abraham Carpenter, Sr.*

Grady, Arkansas

Abraham Carpenter, Sr. and his wife began growing produce on their farm in Lincoln County more than 50 years ago. They raised five sons and three daughters, who work in the family business, Carpenter's Produce.

During peak farming time, the Carpenter farm is one of the largest employers in Lincoln County. They supply produce to their store in Pine Bluff, and a number of national chains, including Walmart, Kroger and Quality Performance Group.

Carpenter was inducted into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame October 15, 2011 and the Arkansas Agricultural Hall of Fame March 9, 2012.

Selected by the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff  
Dr. Henry English



**Abraham Carpenter Sr. (right), stands with his wife, Katie, and two sons, Abraham Carpenter Jr. and Danny Carpenter, after being named to the Arkansas Agriculture Hall of Fame on Friday, March 9, 2012. (Arkansas News Bureau/Rob Moritz)**

## *Faustino Castaneda*

Gustine, California



Faustino and Norma Castaneda grew up in Mexico. Faustino learned that agriculture is a way of life on his family's chicken farm. They moved to California's Central Valley in 1985 and worked on a chicken farm, then a turkey ranch near Gustine. After 14 years of steady work, his employer sold Faustino the turkey farm. Faustino got help from the Farm Service Agency to take over his employer's loan. Now they raise a total of 350,000 head per year or about 87,000 turkeys every four months. Faustino and Norma have raised a son and two daughters on the ranch and they have two grandsons. Truly a family farm, Norma does the books and their son, nephew, and Faustino's father help with the labor.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency-California  
Paul Lehman



## *Daniel Chin*

Klamath Falls, Oregon

Mr. Chin has farmed potatoes for over 35 years in this area and is a third generation Klamath/Tulelake Basin farmer. He has worked long hours for many worthwhile local and regional causes and has also served on the Oregon Potato Commission and the United States Potato Board. With almost 4,000 acres, both organic and conventional, in potatoes, onions, wheat, barley and alfalfa hay, he is a busy man. He oversees an operation spreading across two states and three counties (Klamath, Siskiyou, and Modoc). He farms as Chin Farms and markets his potatoes through Wong Potatoes Inc., a family business owned with his wife DeDe. They have two sons and one daughter and four grandchildren.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency-California  
Paul Lehman



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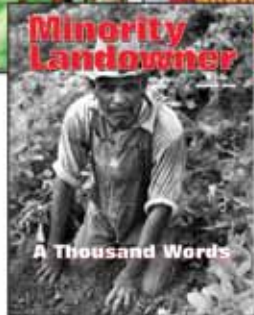
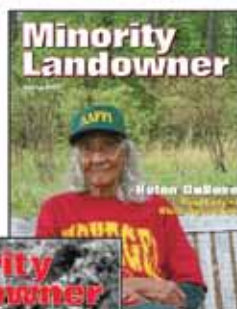
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Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, Inc. (Southern SAWG) is a 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1991 to promote sustainable agriculture in the southern United States.

## Linda Ni Chu

Hollister, California

Linda began assisting NRCS with translation and outreach to Chinese farmers in September 2010. As a result over 50 Chinese farmers have received conservation plans and financial assistance with EQIP. She continues to serve as translator and freely shares what she learns about conservation with non-Chinese farmers including her Hispanic neighbors. Linda converted her 60 acres of row crops to organic even though she will not get a higher price on the Asian vegetables she grows. She installed windbreaks, drip irrigation, and cover crops and manages her nutrients and irrigations to minimize impacts to the adjacent waterway.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-California



## Dr. Thomas J. Cooper

Fulton, Missouri



**Dr. Thomas Cooper, wife Sharlyn, granddaughter Jasmine and son Keith**



Dr. Thomas (TJ) Cooper is a family man, farmer, retired physician, recruiter for Missouri Medical School, Lincoln University of Missouri alumnus and MANRRS mentor.



**Dr. Thomas Cooper (right) with son Keith and granddaughter Jasmine**

Dr. Cooper is a 5th generation farmer. His children do not lack an interest in farming. Farming duties are shared among sons TJ and Keith, and granddaughter Jasmine. His wife Sharlyn manages the family.

The family owns three farms in the Fulton, Missouri area. He manages cattle, grows hay, fruits and vegetables. He donated time to Lincoln University MANRRS to promote heirloom seeds and has helped initiate a cooperative for minority farmers in Missouri.

He describes himself as a family man who gave his best. Lincoln University MANRRS calls him a renaissance man.

Selected by Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)

Trevion Scott – Lincoln University MANRRS President

## Conetoe Family Life Center Community Garden Committee

(Intergenerational group of farmers that includes 58 youth 5-17 years old)  
Conetoe, North Carolina



Conetoe Family Life Center Garden Committee's intergenerational gardening project initiated and manages five gardens. They provide community public housing residents and YMCA members with local produce, giving away part and selling the rest at the farmer's market. They produce and sell honey and honey butter through chemical-free beekeeping, have commercial contracts for produce with a grocery store and restaurant, are learning skills for a niche market by organically growing and selling Asian vegetables, improve local health through better nutrition and activity, and benefit youth who learn leadership, business, math/science skills and receive school supplies and scholarships.

While the folks involved in the community agriculture efforts may not be considered "traditional" farmers they are, literally, farming for their lives and working to grow healthy foods that are not available to the young people and their neighbors even though they are surrounded by farmlands.

Some of the devastating realities young people face in Conetoe — there is a 65% unemployment rate among the church members, and 30 congregation members under the age of 32 died last year due to diabetes, stroke and heart disease. The total population in Conetoe is 365.

Young people and elders are working together to grow and share food, and young people are leading the planning and implementation. Farming is being connected in a very fundamental way to individual and family health, and to educational opportunities as income generated in the program is used to purchase school supplies and provide scholarships for the young people. Young people are developing business skills as well as farming skills, and they are leading the program efforts to identify new crops, new markets, and new enterprises. The youth are being encouraged to embrace farming as a career and a lifestyle, and are growing niche crops to strengthen their potential for making a living.



We see the Conetoe project as being incredibly significant because of the Church's leadership role in helping congregation members see farming as a critical component of community well-being. It's an incredible, innovative initiative that is making a real difference and I believe will result in young people from Conetoe going into agricultural careers.

Selected by The Conservation Fund  
Cynthia Brown and Mikki Sager  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

## Josie Gbadamosi

Tuskegee, Alabama

Josie Gbadamosi migrated to Tuskegee, Alabama from Los Angeles, California in 1969. Forty-two years later, she is retired, widowed, and has four daughters and eight grandchildren. She retired in June 2010. In September 2010, she embarked on her new career of farmer. It was after being invited by a friend to pick blueberries in a blueberry patch that had been neglected for years that her long held fantasy to be a farmer was rekindled. She purchased the 46 acre farm and has not regretted one day of the demanding work. Tuskegee University staff, students, NRCS staff, family members and occasional paid laborers helped Josie clean and restore the two and a half acres of the 20 year old blueberry bushes. Today Josie markets her blueberry product through pick/pay, pick/share, direct sales, wholesale to two local grocery stores, and sales at the farmer's market.

Her future plans not only include selling blueberries, but to restore the historical model farm site that was established in the late 1970s as a demonstration family farm.



Selected by National Women in Ag Association

## Liz Graznak

Happy Hollow Farm LLC, Jamestown, Missouri

Happy Hollow Farm's Certified Organic Farm in Moniteau County was accepted into the Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in 2010. EQIP provided Liz Graznak, manager and operator, and Katie Jacobson, Happy Hollow Farms LLC business partner, the financial assistance needed to construct a 2,178 square foot seasonal high tunnel. In conjunction with the high tunnel practice, EQIP provided financial assistance to install micro irrigation, cover crops, pest management and conservation crop rotation. Liz and Katie rely on their high tunnel to produce vegetables almost year round and provide numerous families in Mid-Missouri with fresh organic vegetables through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). CSA members receive a box of seasonal products every week during the 25 week growing season (mid-May through the end of October). In exchange, members help harvest and distribute the weekly boxes. The farmer and the consumer thus provide mutual support and share in the risks and rewards of food production. Liz's goal is to "give back more to the soil than I take." Her farming techniques provide a combination of highly managed cover crops, cropping rotations and compost applications that match the needs of



the organic produce being grown and harvested on the farm. "Working with Liz has expanded my knowledge of organic farms and has given me the opportunity to work outside the traditional crop farmers in Mid-Missouri," NRCS District Conservationist Tony Hoover said.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Jefferson City, Missouri



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## *Samuel Harris*

Wentzville, Missouri



Samuel (Sam) Harris is a retired McDonnell Douglas employee. He and wife Dorothy are owners of Harris Westplex Taxi and Personal Transport Inc. and have a 97-acre farm that was previously in grain production. In October of 2010, Sam investigated the opportunity of improving his small cattle operation and pasture management techniques on 46 of the 97 acres. Sam is now in the process

of establishing a prescribed grazing system to manage the forage while providing for his cattle's nutritional needs. He is well on his way to having an effective and efficient grazing system.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Peters, Missouri

## *Tiffany Helgoe-Furstenau*

Cavalier, North Dakota

Tiffany started her farming operation in 2008 with the assistance of Farm Service Agency (FSA) by purchasing 20 shares of beet stock and farming 187.6 acres. In 2009, she purchased 15 more shares of beet stock. In 2010, she expanded her farming operation to include livestock and purchased some livestock equipment. In 2011, she put up a Morton cattle shed for her cattle and purchased 20 acres of real estate. In 2012 she purchased more livestock and equipment. She is now farming 243 acres and owns 30 head of cattle. Tiffany has used FSA's programs to make her dream of farming/ranching a reality.

Selected by USDA – Farm Service Agency  
Cavalier, North Dakota



## *Kao Her*

Noel, Missouri

Kao Her, a Hmong landowner, manages his poultry and farming operation in an environmentally friendly manner. Active in multiple farmers markets, Her sells fruits and vegetables grown on his small-acre operation and sells broilers to a nearby processing integrator.

Her constructed his poultry operation of 222,700 broilers in 2005. On average, Her raises six flocks a year. Her began working with NRCS on a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and recently signed a second EQIP contract that involves construction of a dead bird compost-er, litter stacking shed and seasonal high tunnel.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Neosho, Missouri



## *Annie Pearl Jones*

Sallis, Mississippi



Mrs. Annie Pearl Jones is a retired medical records clerk, with over 12 years of farming experience. Along with her husband, two boys, and three grandchildren, she runs a diverse farming operation in Sallis, Mississippi. Her farm consists of livestock, vegetable production, and over 300 acres for hay production.

Mrs. Jones is a member of Attala County Self Help Co-operative and currently serves as assistant secretary. Amazingly, between farming and family Mrs. Jones still finds the time for her community and New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church where she serves as secretary and sings in the choir.

Selected by Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

## *Colonel Carl Holden*

Pearl, Mississippi

Colonel Carl Holden of Pearl, Mississippi is a retired United States Army Officer of 20 years. He's the president of South Rankin County Farmers Association Cooperative for the past 10 years. Along with his military service, he taught for 18 years in the public school system as a JROTC instructor. He has a bachelor's in education, a master's in aeronautical science, and a master's in animal science. His farming operation has included cattle farming where he produced some of the best quality livestock in the state, watermelon and blueberry production, and he bales 180 acres of hay each year.

Selected by Mississippi Association of Cooperatives



## *Geraldo (Jerry) Jimenez*

Cobden, Illinois



**Karis T. Gutter, Deputy Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services and Jerry Jimenez**

Geraldo Jimenez is currently a State Committee member on the Illinois Farm Service Agency State Committee and a pepper farmer in Cobden, Illinois in Union County. Geraldo is a landowner and raises habanera peppers and started his own company, "Darn Hot Peppers" that markets his homemade pepper jellies, salsas and jams from his website and through local farmer's markets. He was the founder of the



Hispanic/Latino organization titled IAACOMA (Illinois Association of Agencies & Community Organizations for Migrant Advocacy) and is still very active in the organization.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency  
Springfield, Illinois

## *Toshiharu and Christine Kuratomi*

Roseville, California

Tosh and Chris Kuratomi have farmed Otow Orchards for 38 years selling peaches, plums, persimmons and seasonal vegetables. The Kuratomi family has farmed here for over 100 years. Chris' 94 year old mother held on to the farm through the Japanese Internment and is still active in the operation. Tosh has served seven years on the Farm Service Agency County Committee. He is active in Placer County Farm Bureau and has been an important supporter and speaker for PlacerGROWN, a regional community organization that promotes agriculture to consumers and beginning farmers. Tosh and Chris are also long-time 4-H supporters. They have preserved the traditional Japanese art of hand-dried Hoshigaki persimmon and ship the delicacy worldwide.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency-California



## *Jesus Limon*

East Wenatchee, Washington



Jesus Limon came to the U.S. in 1972 from Mexico. His goal was to be his own boss by the time he was 45. He met his goal early. He worked in agriculture in California, moved to Washington and worked for a fruit company for 15 years. He saved his money and bought 10 acres of bare ground. While

working full-time, he planted and operated an orchard. With Farm Service Agency loans, he expanded his apple orchard and now farms full-time on about 75 acres.

### Volunteer activity:

- Board member - Dollars for Scholars for the Orondo School District
- Member of the board of directors for Blue Bird, Inc. (fruit company)
- Past president of a men's soccer league, youth soccer coach



- Speaker on the topic of leadership at Latino farmer meetings
  - Advisor for the Farm Service Agency Chelan County Committee from 2001-2009
  - Appointed by the Obama Administration, he represents Washington farmers on the FSA State Committee
- One of his proudest achievements has been to raise four boys.

Selected by USDA Farm Service Agency  
Spokane, Washington

## *Marc and Melanie Marsh*

M. Marsh Farms & Turf Connections, Cheraw, South Carolina



**Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District President Dwight Johnson (left) present Melanie (center) and Marc Marsh (right) the 2011 Farmer of the Year award at the CSWCD banquet.**

The Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) recently honored Marc and Melanie Marsh of M. Marsh Farms & Turf Connections as their 2011 Conservation Farmer of the Year. The award is given for the past year at our annual awards banquet in March of the current year.

Together, Marc and Melanie own and operate M. Marsh Farms and Turf Connections based in Cheraw, South Carolina. They were recently recognized for their outstanding conservation practices both on their turf farm as well as their contract poultry operation.

The SWCD recognized Marc and Melanie for their commitment to manage their farm in a conservation oriented manner, in addition to their efforts to create efficient energy. The Marshes are active supporters of local sports teams including YMCA, Dixie Youth and several local high school teams.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Chesterfield Soil and Water Conservation District  
Chesterfield, South Carolina

## *Sadie Neztosie*

Tsaile, Arizona



As a Farm Board member, I elect Sadie Neztosie for the 2012 Farmer of the Year. Of the 100 Navajo farmers I work with, Sadie demonstrates to be the most active farmer. She is a Navajo Indian woman who constantly works to improve her farmland. She is always willing to learn and try new farming practices. Water conservation is her biggest concern. Currently, she is working on laser leveling her farmland and will be planting switchgrass. Her decision was due to the drought condition and the result of collecting data from the prior farming practices.

Selected by Tsaile-Wheatfields Farm Board  
Dorthea Litson

## Wayne K. Ogasawara

Mililani Agricultural Park, Mililani, Hawaii



Wayne Ogasawara grew up in a Poamoho plantation community. As a local boy with an interest in plants and farming he joined the 4-H Club in high school. Later, he operated and owned a modest fertilizer and agriculture supply business in Honolulu. He became aware of the many farm problems confronting the majority of growers such as lack of knowledge of plant nutrition and pesticide use, scarcity of farmland, and lack of skilled workers.

The closing of sugarcane and pineapple operations in late 1990s created massive unemployment in the agriculture sector. Wayne realized that former plantation workers, mostly Filipino immigrants and Pacific Islanders, would prefer to work the land since they often lack language and specific skills to work in other occupations. Unless the farmer leased large acreages, the opportunity to farm the then vacant fields would be impossible.

In 1998 he decided to forego his fertilizer business and lease about 500 acres of former pineapple fields from Castle and Cook Hawaii. This leased land became the Mililani Agricultural Park (the Park), a well-established farm and business operation in Central Oahu. Many minority farmers subleased small acreage where they learned farming skills. In 2000 Wayne estimated that truck farming acreage in Mililani shot up by about 25% during the first three years. It is still increasing.

The current 53 tenants are mostly immigrants, predominantly Filipinos, some Laotian and Vietnamese. They grow assorted vegetables and ethnic herbs, bananas, cucumbers, and papayas for home consumption and the local market. Wayne himself has been farming and managing his business for 14 years, growing papaya, dragon eye fruit, several varieties of bananas, bread fruit, and other exotic fruits in addition to numerous nursery and landscaping trees and flowering plants. Okinawan sweet potato, a preferred variety by the locals, occupies him. By staggering planting to have a continuous supply, he is able to manage both weeds and occasional nematode infestations. The eight acres he cultivates could hardly meet his buyers' demand nor can he meet their demands for goat meat. At one time he also raised catfish and ducks.

For a long time the Park has had problems with erosion and an old irrigation system. Wayne approached the Natural Resources Conservation Service Hawaii for assistance. In the last few years he has completed or has ongoing four Environmental Quality Incentives Program contracts. Among those are improving or building 4,710 feet of access road, installing 8,220 feet of windbreak, 5,290 feet of water diversion, 1.8 acres of grassed waterways, two structures built for water control, preparing and planting 6,115 feet of vegetative barriers, preparation and establishment of 4.6 acres for tree/shrub site and 35



acres of field borders. The installation of these practices has resulted in reduced erosion from wind and water, reduced sediment leaving the agricultural park, and better management of runoff between tenant farms.

Wayne also worked with Oahu Resources Conservation and Development to upgrade the Park's water, and was an important partner in their very successful Vetiver Conservation Innovation Project, hosting a field planting site and a field day. Wayne has been making the Park an example of how a sustainable agriculture business is operated for his tenants and others in the community.

Between 2005 and 2007 his farmer-tenants attended the Risk Management Training program for the Socially Disadvantaged Filipino and other Southeast Asian Growers otherwise known as Outreach Program for Immigrant Farmers. It is federally funded by USDA in collaboration with the University of Hawaii. He has encouraged the Park's tenants to benefit from federal programs that mitigate farming risks to become successful farmers.

Last year Wayne addressed the lack of skilled farm workers by stepping up to the Oahu Drug Courts' employment assistance program offering drug offenders a second chance to succeed in the community. He currently has eight felons being trained to operate farm machinery or conduct other farm operations. Based on his and others' observations the felons are succeeding. He envisions some of the felons becoming full time workers at the Park or being hired by other farm owners. Felons are not the only ones hired at the Park. People with mental illness were also hired. In 2007 Wayne was recognized by Mental Health America Hawaii, a non-profit organization for his work with the mentally challenged. Many of these workers live in care homes but work on the

farm providing them employment, dignity, and respect.

Wayne Ogasawara is a prominent and valuable member of the farming and business community. He believes that everybody needs a chance especially the immigrants, the felons, and the mentally challenged. They need an opportunity to live a life with dignity and respect.

As president of the Waipahu Community Association, he is the founding father of the Waipahu Festival Marketplace, a booming 3M market with 20 vendors of fresh produce, seafood, flowers, clothes, dry goods and everything else! The produce market is an outlet for the immigrant farmers. Wayne's biggest accomplishment, "...being able to help the underserved improve their quality of life, offering them a place to farm, a place to work, a place to heal, so that they become successful contributing members of the community."

Submitted by Sabina F. Swift, retired University of Hawaii Extension Specialist, Jari Sugano and Stuart Nakamoto, Local Immigrant Farmers Education/Risk Management Hawaii Programs, University of Hawaii/College of Tropical Agriculture and Human Resources

## *Sun (Sue) Tong Sanns*

Hallwood, Virginia



Sun “Sue” Tong Sanns operates a four-house broiler poultry facility in northern Accomack County, which grows out more than a million birds a year. The Perdue top producer also oversees many of the day-to-day activities on the 60-acre farm that includes rented cropland, woodland, and a small vegetable operation, while her husband John works as an IT security officer/network engineer. They are models of stewardship in all aspects of their operation. They first began working with NRCS and the Eastern Shore Soil & Water Conservation District in 2009 on an animal mortality facility and two waste stacking sheds. The funding was provided through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Virginia Best Management Practices program. Since then, NRCS has helped them install heavy use area pads adjacent to building entrances for better clean up and management of poultry litter. They have also planted vegetated environmental buffers around the poultry houses to filter emissions from the cooling fans. More recently, they conducted an energy audit and this year plan to install new tunnel fans and solar panels on the poultry houses. Next year, they will plant pollinator habitat and hedgerows that support both pollinators and wildlife.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Virginia Civil Rights Advisory Team

## *Rabiah Y. Seminole*

Chase City, Virginia



Rabiah Seminole, a Native American, who owns and operates Blue Horse Mukwa Equine Retirement and Rescue Center, is passionate about horses and the environment. Her farm is home to more than 40 rescued animals. Rabiah worked with Lake Country SWCD, NRCS and others to install a watering system and fence out surface water to provide clean water for the animals. She is working to stabilize access lanes and denuded areas. The farm assists with programs for abused, neglected or at-risk youth. Rabiah’s future plans include expansion of the farm and opening a camp for volunteers and or youth on site.

Selected by Lake Country Soil and Water Conservation District  
Boydton, Virginia

## *Eugene and Mary Louise Radford*

Houston County, Georgia



The Radford farm is located near Clinchfield and Haynesville in Houston County, Georgia. The farm is composed of 15 acres owned and another 15 acres rented. Mr. Radford has been around vegetable growing his whole life. He graduated from Perry (GA) High School and began working as a construction worker and electrician helper. During that time he developed skills for converting machines to new uses, became skilled in repairs, and was able to complete fabrication of new pieces. Those skills are now applied to food production for middle Georgia.

Radford's farming career began early as a child so farming is in his blood. The drive to continue farming brought him back to the land where he was born. He now raises and sells a variety of produce, including turnips, mustard, collards, rutabaga, okra, peas, green beans, squash, onions, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, sugarcane, and watermelons. On his property he has 40 mature pecan trees and 25 saplings. He has a land utilization plan which includes production beef cattle and goats for meat.

As an innovator Eugene, family members, and some local skilled labor constructed the only high tunnel hoop house in the area. He has learned how to manage it well enough to enhance the level of efficiency and production. Major pieces

of equipment on the farm are a walk-in cooling unit, mobile cooling vehicles, and numerous pieces of tillage and harvesting equipment. Eugene gives keen attention to quality and promotion of wise food choices. He is willing to share information about eating well and staying healthy through food choices. His enterprises are sustainable in part because he maintains good farm and enterprise records which are used in key decisions.

A love for farming and a passion to see all people live healthy, happy lives caused Radford to return to farming as a career. He used Extension recommendations to ensure his vegetables are getting the right amount of fertilizers, are protected from pests, and create a product of good quality. A key advisor has been Leon Porter, FVSU Extension program assistant based in Perry, Georgia.

Eugene is always learning and giving. He has learned well the principles of land use and food production from past generations and maintains deep ties within the community. His experience has been hands-on and he is constantly adapting so as to fit into specific ecological systems and marketing niches.

Selected by Cooperative Extension Program  
Fort Valley State University  
Fort Valley, Georgia

## Sandra Simone

Huckleberry Hills Farm, Talladega, Alabama

Sandra Simone is a limited resource farmer in rural Talladega County, Alabama. She was one of the first four farmers in the state to become Certified Organic through a project with the Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network (SAAFON). She owns and operates approximately 100 acres located in Alpine, called Huckleberry Hills Farm, named so because of the numerous volunteer huckleberries that grow on her property.

Simone has worked closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Talladega Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and Coosa Valley Resource Conservation and Development staff for some time. She has received financial assistance for plasticulture with micro-irrigation, fencing, water troughs, and pipelines through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to address her resource concerns and conservation needs. Her primary crops are a variety of vegetables and fruits. She also raises meat goats, hosts farm tours, mentors youth about farming, and serves as a consultant for other gardening groups.

Simone held a demonstration tour to highlight a solar energy system installed through an NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) to the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, partnering with the Sustainable Rural Regenerative Enterprises for Families. The system allows her to use an established well to pump water to fill tanks to use for micro-irrigation and to water her meat goat herd.

Simone had no electricity on the portion of land across the road from her homestead. She had an established well but used an electric generator to pump the water for her goats. Commercial power to pump water was not affordable because the property had no dwelling. She would not even consider city water because she wanted to keep the farm as natural as possible.

"Through the CIG grant, I became a demonstration farm for the solar energy project," Sandra said. "I am able to pump enough water from my well to fill two 1,500 gallon tanks to micro-irrigate about an acre of crops using plasticulture and to water my goats."

NRCS State Conservationist William Puckett said, "Ms. Simone is pioneering the way for other farmers in Alabama to use solar panels for renewable energy production." CIG-funded projects use innovative technologies and approaches to address natural resources issues. Agricultural producers volunteer to participate in the program because they want to do something on behalf of conservation.



Simone is also realizing one of her ultimate goals -- helping children learn about farming. During the summer she conducts an entrepreneurial program for youth 8-13 years of age to plant, cultivate and harvest watermelons. Each child cultivates a row of watermelons in plasticulture and each is responsible for the business of growing and marketing their product. There is no charge to the youth; and they keep what they earn.

"It was a good way for the kids to learn about farming hands-on," Simone said. "They are so enthusiastic about doing it. They learn about composting, organics, marketing, business planning, and all kinds of agricultural things during the process. It was a joy to watch them and how they began to work together as a team and to take pride in what they were doing." She also takes the opportunity to introduce the youth to nutritious foods by providing fresh snacks from the fruits and vegetables grown on the farm.

Simone is a SAAFON board member and has been selected as a delegate to attend the Slow Foods International Food Conference in Turin, Italy.

Selected by USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Alabama  
Fay Garner, Public Affairs Specialist

## L. B. Taylor

Little Rock, Arkansas



**L B Taylor, Sr., George Harris, and LB Taylor, Jr.**



**Taylor with NRCS' Ralph Harris and Roger Gold**

Mr. Taylor took over his father's farm in 2008. The Taylor family is one of the few African American families that have owned their land since the end of slavery. Taylor operates a beef cattle farm on 140 acres.

Taylor works with a University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) extension associate who helps him use USDA programs and extension production recommendations. Taylor adopted production and conservation practices recommended by the extension associate and other professionals. He was

recognized in the USDA StrikeForce news release for the outstanding job he did in managing his farm loan and livestock operation.

He enjoys sharing knowledge with others. He is grateful for his wife, Naomi, who provides spiritual and moral support.

Selected by Silas H. Hunt Community Development Corporation and University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff  
Texarkana, Arkansas

## *Barbara Thomas*

Decatur, Georgia



Barbara Thomas is the secretary of the Community of Farmers that teaches small, new and beginning farmers how to grow vegetables in little or no space in Decatur and surrounding counties and she is co-director of Overcomers Support Groups which provides a place for people to share in a small group setting those things that keep them from becoming successful.

As a member of the Community of Farmers, Barbara was the first to take the challenge to grow sweet potatoes. She had already tried her hands at growing other vegetables such as collards, squash, tomatoes, green peppers, cucumbers, and watermelons, as well as basil and parsley. As you may or may not know, a lot of Georgia is red clay and this is what she had until she decided to do something about it and mix that red clay with a load of black dirt to produce the best greens you could grow.

Barbara received the Esther Award in May 2012 for her outstanding work in the community and the Angel Award in December 2011 for her outstanding and committed service to the Overcomers Support Groups. Her goal is to continue helping those who desire to better themselves by facilitating a group, "Self Matters" and sharing with others the wonderful ways to be healthy by growing your own vegetables.

Selected by United Farmers USA

## *Cater Woods*

Crockett, Texas



Cather Woods is from Crockett, Texas. She owns a Tree Farm and has named it Katoya's Playhouse. It also serves as an educational classroom for children and adults centered on nature. The property features a fishing pond, four outdoor classrooms, and three food plots along a 15 mile educational hiking trail.

Ms. Woods' main objective is to provide opportunities for urban youth, socially disadvantaged and underprivileged children and to provide exceptional experiences in urban and rural forestry.

Ms. Woods' plans for the future are to provide more opportunities to urban youth in farming activities. Katoya's Playhouse attracts about 200 to 300 participants a year. More information on Katoya's Placehouse can be found at [www.katoyasplayhouse.com](http://www.katoyasplayhouse.com).

Selected by US Forest Service  
Washington, DC



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## *Herbert and Elouise Wooten*

Crockett, Texas

Herbert and Elouise Wooten were elected Farmer of the Year by Landowners Association of Texas for 2011. They operate W Ranch in Houston County, Texas, raising cattle and hay. Married 53 years, they are parents of three children, have seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Members of St. Luke Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas, they are active as deacon and deaconess, and in the Sanctuary Choir. Both are retired, Mr. Wooten from Vulcraft, a Division of Nucor Industries, and Mrs. Wooten from Crockett State School. Mrs. Wooten is also a former municipal court judge and former city council member.

Selected by Landowners Association of Texas



## *Armistead Ward*

Cordova, Tennessee



Mr. Ward first appeared in my office five years ago with an insatiable appetite to learn how to become a better woodland steward. He told of how his grandfather introduced him to the woods as a child and how those early experiences led him to purchase his own woodland in his retirement. Since then, he has become a regular attendee at University of Tennessee Extension educational programs, participating in forestry field days and the acclaimed, week-long Teacher's Conserva-

tion Workshop. His woodland now has an approved stewardship plan and he is a Certified Tree Farmer through the American Forest Foundation.

If attitude is worth anything, then Mr. Ward's value is vast. He is pleasant, determined, intelligent – a great inspiration.

Selected by University of Tennessee Extension  
Dr. David Mercker, Extension Forester



VOTE VOTE VOTE VOTE

# County Committee ELECTIONS 2012

**June 15, 2012** Nomination period begins. Forms are available from your local FSA Office and online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

**August 1, 2012** Last day to file nomination forms at the local FSA Office.

**November 5, 2012** Ballots mailed to eligible voters.

**December 3, 2012** Last day to return voted ballots to the local FSA Office.

**January 1, 2013** Elected committee members and alternates take office.

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## Annual Report



**By Jerry Pennick**

**T**he Federation of Southern Cooperative/Land Assistance Fund celebrated its 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary on August 16-18, 2012. Following is the introduction to its annual report. Hopefully, it will give our readers a snapshot of what I believe is the premier and most effective advocate for minority landowners and farmers in the country and it is needed now more than ever. You can learn more about the Federation and become a member and supporter at [www.federation.com](http://www.federation.com).

*Jerry Pennick can be contacted at [epennick@yahoo.com](mailto:epennick@yahoo.com).*

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The Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund is proudly celebrating its forty fifth anniversary. Our longevity is due in large part to a strong and supportive membership as well as mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with both the public and private sectors. We have also remained steadfast in our belief that cooperatives are vital to the economic survival and prosperity of not just our membership but rural America in general. It is therefore fitting that during this “International Year of the Cooperatives” the Federation’s annual meeting and report are focused on our cooperative members and how, with the help of our many partners and supporters, they are making a positive difference in their communities.

We are proud of the diversity of our cooperative members. They represent livestock, vegetable, fishing and commodity producers as well as community credit unions. Membership ranges from ten to one hundred individual producers per co-op, and thousands of credit union members. These cooperatives are in the forefront of the Federation’s efforts to help create local food economies and systems that can sustain the communities in which our members live. Together they have produced and marketed agricultural products that have brought millions of dollars to their communities and are rapidly expanding into the value added market which will increase income for the farmer and provide more jobs for the community; co-ops are also an invaluable tool in

the Federation’s ongoing struggle to reverse the trend of African–American land loss by making land an asset rather than a liability. Our cooperatives have long been a training ground for leadership development and are cultivating a growing cadre of new and emerging leaders that will ensure the continuation of the cooperative movement in the rural South far into the future.

Unfortunately we are currently in the mist of a political environment that threatens the very survival of African–American farms as well as family farms throughout the country. The 2012 Farm Bill is currently being considered by Congress and the focus seems to be on how and where to cut rather on how to develop a fair and equitable agricultural system. Many of the Farm Bill programs that have proven to be beneficial to our members are in serious jeopardy of major cuts or total elimination. In order to confront this growing assault on family and minority farmers, the energy, dedication and creativity of individual farmers needs to be harnessed and focused toward a common vision - cooperatives are the best way to accomplish that vision. We encourage you to visit our many cooperatives, help organize cooperatives, join existing cooperatives and support the cooperative movement wherever you are, whether or not you are a farmer because we all are impacted by the national and global agricultural system and cooperatively we can determine what kind of system it will be.

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NATION, AND WORLD

## FEATURING

- Tomorrow's Agricultural Professional: Youth Pre-Conference
- Alabama Blackbelt Tours
- Agricultural Marketing Pre-Conference December 1-2, 2012
- Student Paper & Poster Competitions
- Tuskegee University Christmas Concert

## SPECIAL TOPICS

- Irrigation: Needs and Solutions
- Veterans and Agriculture: Opportunities and Challenges
- Alternative Natural Resource Based Industries in the South
- Small Farmers and Walmart Working Together: Regional Perspective
- Using Multi- and Social Media to Better Serve Youth and Communities
- Farm Bill 2008 vs. 2012: Implications for Farmers, NGO's & Communities
- Impact of SOPSEC and IFADS Partnerships at 1890 Institutions: 10 Years Later
- Microenterprises and Social Businesses in Rural Communities: A new look and role for small businesses

Limited scholarships are available for small farmers, youth, community based organizations, and rural business owners.



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