

TASTE THE FUTURE

CULTIVATING FORWARD THINKING STRATEGIES FOR LONG TERM SUCCESS.



Educational Sessions

NOVEMBER 16, 2016

BREAKOUTS Overview

SESSION 1 10:00am -11:00am

SESSION 1 – Track 1 (Room 103)

Food Safety Plan – Key to FSMA Compliance

Learn about the required regulations for food companies, due to the Food Safety & Modernization Act (FSMA) and see how a food safety plan is the vehicle for staying in compliance.

Speaker: Tim Slawinski – Emerging Issues Specialist, MDARD

SESSION 1 – Track 2 (Room 201)

Regulatory and Licensing for Beginning Food Entrepreneurs

This session is devoted to illustrating and explaining the licensing for various type of food products and what regulatory agency (MDARD, Local Health Department, USDA) would be the lead, based on the type of food business. If you are considering a retail product launch, this session is a must.

Speaker: Frank Gublo – Innovation Counselor, MSU Product Center

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NOVEMBER 16, 2016

BREAKOUTS Overview

SESSION 1 10:00am -11:00am

SESSION 1 – Track 3 (Room 203)

Making Sense of Social Media

Join the conversation about social media use and small business practices. Participants will leave with (1) new knowledge and (2) new resources to help you decide how to employ or improve your current business practices as they relate to the evolving world of communication innovations.

Speaker: John Mann – Faculty/Product Center staff –
Center for Economic Analysis – Ag, Food, and Resource Economics Dept., MSU

SESSION 1 – Track 4 (Room 101)

Navigating Legal Issues in Hiring Employees

A discussion of the legal issues for consideration in the recruiting, selection and orientation of new employees, including interviewing, nondiscrimination and documentation.

Speaker: Dr. Adam Kantrovich – Farm Management Educator, MSUE

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BREAKOUTS Overview

SESSION 2 11:15am -12:15pm

SESSION 2 – Track 1 (Room 101)

Preparing for Sound Record Keeping

Business structure, accounting, and taxes are important business items that affect profitability in a food business. This presentation will review all of these in a helpful, practical manner.

Speaker: Dr. Adam Kantrovich – Farm Management Educator, MSUE

SESSION 2 – Track 2 (Room 201)

Farmers' Market –What do they offer to my business? Part I – The Farmers' Market Concept

Hear from professionals who work in the Farmers' Market arena, describing how this venue can help your food company begin and grow in sales. There will also be a discussion on safe sampling of products at markets.

Speakers: Anika Grose – Program Coordinator for Detroit Kitchen Connect, Eastern Market

Dru Montri – Executive Director, MI Farmers Market Association

Katrina Sokol – Food Safety Specialist, MDARD

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SESSION 2 11:15am -12:15pm

SESSION 2 – Track 3 (Room 103)

Retailer Savvy – How Can I Be Better at This?

Hear from a variety of retail buyers describing the needs of their operations to meet the needs of their shopping consumers.

Retail Panel: Busch's Fresh Food Market – Tony Hall, Senior VP – Store Support
Kroger – Jarrod Pitstick, Grocery Sales Promoter
Meijer – Amanda McVay, Director of Merchandising – Dry Grocery
Spartan Nash – Karen Bakewell, Director of Grocery, Frozen and Dairy
Whole Foods – Mindy Hauge, Local Forager

SESSION 2 – Track 4 (Room 203)

Is Exporting a Good Business Decision for My Food Business?

A discussion of the programs offered on behalf of the State of Michigan to facilitate sales of exporting Michigan food products, as well as the legal realities of conducting such transactions.

Speakers: Jamie Zmitko-Somers – International Marketing Program Manager, MDARD
Partick Morin, JD, LLM – Partner & Founder, Morsel Law, PLC

LUNCH AND AWARDS PRESENTATION (Banquet Rooms 1-4)

12:30pm -1:15pm

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BREAKOUTS Overview

SESSION 3 1:15pm-2:15pm

SESSION 3 – Track 1 (Room 203)

Branding My Product and Marketing My Image

An introduction to the key elements to consider for branding and marketing your food related business. Whether you're launching a new product or updating the look of existing marketing tools, this session will teach you the most effective approach. Hear from a Product Center client who has participated in the MSU Design Center class project, in anticipation of increasing sales with their new image.

Panel

Members: Mark Bird – Faculty – Design Center, MSU Art Department , Bird Design
Jeff Hage – Green Frog Photography
Paul Gabriel & Brian Scherle – Owners, Browndog Creamery
Don Kirkland – President, ArborOakland Group

SESSION 3 – Track 2 (Room 201)

Farmers' Market – What do they offer to my business? Part II – All Farmers' Markets Are Not the Same

A panel of Farmers' Market operators describe how their vendors create sales for their food business, along with a Product Center client describing their sales success at the market.

Panel

Members: Kathleen E Sample – Owner, Argus Farm Stop – Ann Arbor
Joe Lesausky – Assistant Manager, Fulton Street Market – Grand Rapids
Tony Menyhart – Founder and Pizzaman, Easy Artisan Pizza Mix

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BREAKOUTS Overview

SESSION 3 1:15pm-2:15pm

SESSION 3 – Track 3 (Room 103)

Financing Beyond the Bank Loan: Alternative Choices

Financing is an on-going demand and stress in running a specialty food business. Learn in this session, what other options exist and how one should evaluate these for fit within your business. Product Center client(s) will share their experiences with funding sources beyond the bank loan.

Panel

Members: Rich Pirog – Center for Regional Food Systems – Dept. of Community Sustainability – MSU
Sandra Cochrane – Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
Mark Sarafa – Owner and President, Pop Daddy Popcorn

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Speaker Biographies

Tim Slawinski

Emerging Issues Specialist, MDARD

Tim Slawinski has 16 years of experience as a food safety professional in the food industry. He joined the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Food and Dairy Division in 2012 to help identify how government and industry can work together to address food safety issues. Tim is on the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) FSMA Technical Working Group and Produce Safety Implementation Team. He has played a large role in developing Michigan's feedback to the FSMA proposed rules and implementation plan. Tim has a degree in Microbiology from Michigan State University. Prior to joining MDARD, he worked for several companies in the industry including Cargill and Kellogg.

Frank Gublo

Innovation Counselor, MSU Product Center

Frank Gublo has been a MSU Product Center counselor since 2006, and has helped over 300 Michigan entrepreneurs start businesses and launch new products.

Prior to coming to the Product Center, Frank was an agriculture banker at Wells Fargo. Frank has personally launched six businesses, all related to agriculture and the food industry. Frank's most recent venture is Green Collar Foods, an agriculture tech company that captures data from controlled environment agriculture facilities, using sensors and cloud computing technologies. Green Collar Foods is a growing company with current operations in Detroit, MI and Bridgeport, CT, with expansion planned in Flint, MI, Tallahassee, FL, Sheffield, Yorkshire, UK, and other locations in the US and Europe.

Frank earned an MBA from the DeVos Graduate School at Northwood University in Midland, MI and a Bachelors Degree in Agriculture and Resource Economics from the University of Maryland, College Park.

John Mann

Faculty/Product Center staff - Center for Economic Analysis - Ag, Food, and Resource Economics Dept. - MSU

Dr. John Mann is an agricultural economist specializing in economic impact analysis and policy, technology transfer, and rural innovation ecosystems research. As an Assistant Professor with the Center for Economic Analysis he conducts economic impact and policy research on agricultural related topics, such as the economics of local food systems, which are relevant to Michigan and North Central region stakeholders. He also works closely with the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development where he leads the "Innovations in Agriculture and Rural Development" multi-state inventor-investor matching program and is project director for the "Launching Innovations from the University Starting Gate" multi-state effort. Dr. Mann also teaches the undergraduate course Market Information and Intelligence Gathering. He received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics from Oklahoma State University, and has 17 years of management, marketing and public policy experience in the private sector.

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Speaker Biographies

Dr. Adam Kantrovich

Farm Management Educator, MSUE

Dr. Adam J. Kantrovich is a Farm Management Educator with Michigan State University Extension's Farm Information Resource Management (FIRM) Team made up of campus faculty and field staff. Adam came to MSUE with a variety of experiences in the public and private sector. He has taught at the post-secondary level, worked for the USDA APHIS, and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, to name just a few. He received his undergraduate and Master's degrees from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and a Ph.D. from Virginia Tech.

Adam is a regular guest speaker at various programs across the country and offers group programming in a variety of farm financial management topic areas. Adam has statewide responsibilities in areas of agricultural tax management, farm/agri-business succession and estate planning, ag employer regulations for Affordable Care Act, and specific areas within ag labor management.

Anika Grose

Program Coordinator for Detroit Kitchen Connect, Eastern Market

Anika-Kafi Grose was hired at Eastern Market as the Detroit Kitchen Connect (DKC) Coordinator in August 2014. As the DKC Coordinator, Ms. Grose merged her gifts and talents in food start-ups, administration, leadership development, and education with food entrepreneurship and mentoring. During her first year at Eastern Market, Ms. Grose has continued to grow the number of businesses participating in DKC, while concurrently growing the number of community kitchens for local food entrepreneurs and coordinating the opening of the Eastern Market Community Kitchen in Shed 5 in May 2015.

Ms. Grose is proud of the work being done enabling food entrepreneurs the opportunity to fulfill their dreams of successful business development, as well as contributing to the growth and economic development occurring in Detroit and Southeast Michigan.

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Speaker Biographies

Dru Montri

Executive Director, MI Farmers Market Association

Dru (Bernthal) Montri grew up on her family homestead in Frankenmuth, Michigan. She was introduced to the agricultural industry through her family's third generation meat processing business, Bernthal Packing. Dru received a Bachelor of Science in Horticulture from Michigan State University (MSU), a Master of Science (M.S.) in Horticulture from The Pennsylvania State University, and a dual degree Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Horticulture and Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies with a Graduate Specialization in Gender, Justice and Environmental Change from MSU. Her M.S. research focused on the production and consumer demand for specialty crops. Her Ph.D. research focused on sustaining farmers markets in low-income, urban areas.

Dru and her husband, Adam, own and operate Ten Hens Farm, a year-round farm in Bath, Michigan, where they sell twelve months of the year through farmers market and restaurant outlets. Their small-scale, diversified vegetable farm has a strong focus on season extension utilizing field production and six production hoopouses totaling approximately 17,000 square feet.

In addition to managing their own farm, Dru has been committed to regional food system work since the early 2000s. Dru has been the Executive Director of the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA) since its inception in 2006. In the past nine years, together with a diverse group of stakeholders, she has led MIFMA's organizational and membership development as well as its strategic planning in support of the organization's mission to create a thriving marketplace for local food and farm products. During this time, Michigan has seen the number of farmers markets grow from 150 to more than 300 today. Simultaneously, MIFMA has grown from an idea to an association of 400 members with programming for farmers market managers, farmers, and small businesses focused on professional development, marketing, state and national policy, and food access. Dru and the association are committed to sustaining, supporting and promoting farmers and farmers markets throughout Michigan. At the same time, she has remained involved with the Michigan meat industry through her role as Executive Secretary of the Michigan Meat Association (MMA). In January 2014, Dru was appointed by Governor Rick Snyder to the bipartisan Michigan Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development. The Commission has the responsibility to recommend, and in some cases determine, policy on food, agricultural, and rural development issues.

Dru believes that the overlapping nature of her work with MIFMA, the MMA, owning and operating her own farm, and serving on the Commission of Agriculture and Rural Development strengthen and support each other. She is also the proud mother of two daughters, Lydia (7) and Alison (3), and enjoys spending free time with family and friends, cooking, reading, traveling, and enjoying the beautiful outdoors.

Katrina Sokol

Food Safety Specialist, MDARD

Katrina Sokol began her career with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development early in 2016. Prior to joining the MDARD her experience included working in the baking industry and academia research. She holds a B.S. from Michigan State University in Animal Science. Katrina worked as a Research Assistant in the Environmental and Animal Toxicology Department. Later, in pursuing a passion for cake decorating, she earned a degree in Baking and Pastry Arts from Schoolcraft College. Using that expertise, she worked as a baking production manager for Achatz Handmade Pie Company, Whole Foods Market, and Espresso Royale. Katrina also had her own business under the Cottage Food Law providing baked goods for parties, weddings and holidays. Her varied work experiences have laid the groundwork for her position as a Food Safety Specialist for Ingham County.

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Speaker Biographies

Tony Hall

Senior VP – Store Support, Busch’s Fresh Food Market

Tony Hall has 20 years in grocery retail with the past 16 at Busch’s Fresh Food Market. After having various roles in finance and operations, he was promoted to Senior Vice President overseeing product procurement in 2013.

Jarrod Pitstick

Grocery Sales Promoter, Kroger

Jarrod Pitstick has been with Kroger for 16 years. He is currently responsible for all dry grocery categories, including dairy and frozen. As most of Kroger’s assortment is managed corporately, it is his job to identify unique local items that are meaningful to his customers. His previous roles include store manager, corporate grocery buyer, corporate grocery category manager and regional sales planner in deli/bakery.

Amanda McVay

Director of Merchandising – Dry Grocery - Meijer

Amanda is currently the Director of Merchandising for the Dry Grocery Division at Meijer. She leads the buying team that determines the strategy for the selection of the product, promotion, and placement of the Meijer Dry Grocery assortment. Previous to this role, Amanda was the Divisional Merchandise Manager for the Housewares and Home Décor division at Meijer. She started her career with 10 years of various corporate merchandising roles at Target Headquarters. She was a recipient of the 2015 Progressive Grocer Top Women in Grocery, Rising Star award. Amanda has her Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from Indiana University and is currently pursuing her Executive MBA degree at the University of Michigan, Ross School of Business. She enjoys being active and spending time with her family including her 3 year old daughter and 5 year old son.

Karen Bakewell

Director of Grocery, Frozen and Dairy, SpartanNash

Karen Bakewell is Director of Grocery, Frozen and Dairy at SpartanNash where she is responsible for category management and profit and loss for both the Retail and Wholesale Distribution divisions. During her twelve-year tenure with SpartanNash she also held the position of Director of Health & Beauty Care, General Merchandise and Non-Food Grocery.

Prior to joining SpartanNash, Karen spent 20 years with The Kroger Company where she held a variety of merchandising and operations roles including Store Director, Grocery and Dairy Category Manager, GM/HBC Merchandiser, culminating in the role of Coordinator of Seasonal and General Merchandise strategy for the entire enterprise at Kroger headquarters in Cincinnati.

Karen has more than 30 years of experience leading and developing teams that focus on serving the customer by leveraging vendor collaboration, analytics and strategy, merchandising and category management. In addition, she has received the Top Women in Grocery Award from Progressive Grocer twice - once as a Store Director for Retail Merchandising and as a ‘Rising Star’ while a Director at SpartanNash. Karen is a summa cum laude graduate of Walsh College and holds a bachelor degree in Business Management.

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Speaker Biographies

Mindy Hauge

Local Forager, Whole Foods Market

Mindy started her career with Whole Foods Market ten years ago making salads in the deli. She worked her way up to a management position in the store and then transitioned to the regional office. She worked as a category analyst for four years, evaluating product performance and determining shelf placement. In her current role as Local Forager, she works with small local suppliers in the Midwest looking to sell their product in Whole Foods Market.

Jamie Zmitko-Somers

International Marketing Program Manager, MDARD

Jamie Zmitko-Somers is the International Marketing Manager in the Agriculture Development Division at the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD). Jamie has worked for MDARD for 19 years with the last 15 years working in the International Marketing program. Jamie has traveled to Canada, Mexico, Asia, Europe, Central and South America and the Caribbean promoting Michigan products through trade shows and various promotions and missions. Jamie assists Michigan companies in establishing and expanding their exports of food and agricultural products. Jamie serves on the Mid-Michigan Global Business Club Committee and has served on the Food Export Association of the Midwest's Board of Directors. Jamie attended Michigan State University and received her B.A. in Business Administration Pre-law in 2000. Jamie grew up on her family's cash crop farm in Owosso. She currently resides in Henderson with her husband on the family farm where they have a 2,400 acre farm growing corn and soybeans.

Partick Morin, JD, LL.M.

Partner & Founder – Morsel Law, PLC

Patrick Morin is a Partner at and founder of Michigan-based law firm Morsel Law PLC, where his practice focuses on representing businesses in the food and beverage industry. His experience includes regulatory compliance (labeling, marketing, safety), commercial real estate, finance, commercial transactions (licenses, contracts, leases, agreements), intellectual property protection, and business entity structuring and governance matters. Prior to founding Morsel Law, he practiced at several national law firms headquartered in Boston, Nashville and Detroit. Before attending law school, he served as an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps and is a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is also active in military veteran issues and serves on the board of directors of the Veterans Bar Association. Mr. Morin graduated from Northeastern University and University of New Hampshire School of Law, and earned an L.L.M. in Agricultural and Food Law at the University of Arkansas School of Law. Mr. Morin is also a graduate of Louisiana State University's Entrepreneur Bootcamp at the E.J. Ourso College of Business.

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Speaker Biographies

Mark Bird

Faculty - Design Center, MSU Art Department

In 1995, Mark launched Bird Design which provides strategic branding, marketing and advertising support to a variety of clients. Since then, he has produced campaigns, led teams, developed corporate brand identities, designed product literature systems and provided project management for a wide range of clients.

A few of the clients Bird Design has served include Applied Textiles, Award Properties, Beene Garter, Davenport University, Franklin Community Health Network, The Atlantic Group, The Grand Rapids Art Museum, The Grand Rapids Symphony, Haworth, Hospice of Michigan, Meijer, Michigan State University, Mol Industries, Paul Goebel Group, Rangeley Region Health Center (Rangeley, Maine), Steelcase, Stokes and Stocking, United Way, Universal Forest Products, Varnum, X-rite, and YWCA.

Mark began his career in 1978 in his family's printing company where he developed the foundation for what he does today. He started by sweeping the floors and stocking paper. He worked as a pressman for the following 5 years. From 1984 to 1990, Mark worked as an artist, illustrator, designer and art director for publishing houses and design studios locally and in Los Angeles, California. In 1990, Mark was hired as a staff designer at Jensen Design Associates of Los Angeles, California. He served as a senior designer on the Apple Computer, Canon Computer Systems Division, New Oji Paper of Tokyo and Toshiba accounts.

In addition to providing consulting and design services, Mark currently teaches in the graphic design program at Michigan State University. Current classes include Design Center, a practicum providing real experience to students with clients spanning multiple industries and Senior Seminar which prepares students as they transition away from the University and into their careers as professional designers. Mark also taught various courses in design theory, typography and computer graphics at Kendall College of Art and Design from 1997 to 2001.

In 2002, Mark co-founded Polishing Center, a portfolio and career development service whose primary purpose is to assist newcomers to the advertising and design industry in their pursuit of improving professional creative standards and making connections for potential employment.

Mark holds a Bachelor of Fine Art degree from Kendall College of Art and Design. He is currently a board member of the Mid Michigan Create Alliance and also served as a board member of Ad Club of West Michigan.

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Speaker Biographies

Jeff Hage

Green Frog Photography

Jeff Hage has been an award winning, commercial photographer specializing in food, product, people, and location shooting since 1985. He attended the Center for Creative Studies College of Art and Design in Detroit while working for several commercial studios. Hage operated his own studio in Detroit until 1996, serving clients such as Harley Davidson, Chiat-Day, AT&T, Sears, Campbell-Ewald, Kmart, GM, Oglvy-Mather, J.C.Penny, Ross Roy, Little Caesars, J. Walter Thompson, Valassis Worldwide, Amway, The NBA, The NHL, The PGA, Chrysler, FTD, and others. Upon relocating to West Michigan Hage honed his digital photography skills producing ads for Meijer. After a stint as a videographer and photographer for a medical equipment company he returned to freelance the world. His unique sensitivity for light and composition along with an extensive knowledge of marketing give his clients the confidence to rely on him for any of their photographic needs from simple product shots, web images or ornate catalogs to large sets, industrial shots or annual reports and videos.

Paul Gabriel and Brian Scherle

*Co-Owners, Stuart's of Novi - Novi, MI; Browndog Creamery & Dessert Bar - Northville, MI;
Browndog Dessert Bar, Microcreamery and Cocktails - Farmington, MI*

Paul Gabriel and Brian Scherle founded Browndog Creamery in Northville, MI in 2015. They were looking to open a restaurant and instead found a place suited for an ice cream shop, but the core concept never changed. They strive to take twists on classics and bring together classic flavor profiles in order to create innovative food.

Paul Gabriel grew up in Novi, MI where his parents owned and ran their own businesses. Upon graduating from high school he attended Central Michigan University where he obtained a Bachelors Degree in Entrepreneurship. After working for his parents at the seasonal family ice cream shop he decided to attend Schoocraft College to pursue a culinary degree. He later took over the seasonal ice cream shop and started to expand the menu. When he met Brian they discussed the opportunity to open something that could put to use both his entrepreneurial and culinary skills.

Brian Scherle grew up in Canton, MI where he had a successful career as a competitive figure skater. He began coaching figure skating which helped him earn a BA from the University of Michigan. He continued coaching, but then chose to change careers. He attended Wayne State University and obtained his Masters of Science in Physician Assistant Studies and continues to work as a Physician Assistant at the University of Michigan Health System. His love of food came from his mother, who taught him how to cook and bake. He continued to experiment in his own kitchen throughout the years and always thought he would love to own a bakery. When he met Paul and discussions turned to restaurants and desserts he saw an opportunity to realize a distant dream.

While running the stores they also enjoy raising two Boston Terrier rescue dogs (Flash aka "Browndog" and Stuart) that have become the namesakes of the businesses.

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Speaker Biographies

Don Kirkland

Owner & President, ArborOakland Group

Don has spent the last 25 years in a variety of positions in the marketing, manufacturing and consulting industries. His experience and perspectives can be found both inside the business with experience in business transformation, supply chain optimization, team member development, process improvement and the use of enabling technologies, as well as on the outside as he works with clients to build brands, improve marketing efforts, and generate marketing traction.

Through a quite varied career, Don has worked with a broad cross-section of industries including automotive and industrial products, building products, consumer products, medical device, printing, pharmaceutical, and process. Prior to his role as owner and President of ArborOakland Group, Don held the position of President at A&M Label, a flexographic label printer in Wixom, Michigan and previously was a consultant with Deloitte Consulting and Arthur Andersen.

Don's educational background includes a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University with an emphasis in Personnel Administration and a Master of Business Administration with an emphasis in Finance and Operations from Southern Methodist University.

Kathleen E Sample

Owner - Argus Farm Stop – Ann Arbor

Kathy co-founded Argus Farm Stop in Ann Arbor, MI with her husband Bill in 2014, with the goal of growing the focus on and size of local food economy. Argus Farm Stop is a new retail model designed to grow local food availability by offering a year-round, every day venue for farmers to sell their locally grown products. Kathy has worked over the past 25 years in the chemical, medical gases and automotive industries, in marketing, strategy and business planning capacities on international projects. She started out as a chemical sales representative on the East Coast working for Hercules Chemicals. She was General Manager of BOC Gases Medical Gases Division in Murray Hill, New Jersey, providing medical and special gases for use in medical applications such as hospitals. After moving to Michigan to work for GKN Automotive, she lead efforts to grow their non-automotive industrial business portfolio, and subsequently to establish automotive joint ventures in China and elsewhere as Vice President of Global Development.

Kathy has a master's degree in business administration from the University of Michigan and a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Michigan State University. She and her husband, Bill Brinkerhoff, have 3 children, and have made Argus a family adventure.

Joe Lesausky

Assistant Manager, Fulton Street Market – Grand Rapids

Joe Lesausky is a graduate of Grand Valley State University with a degree in Public and Non Profit Administration. He has spent the last nine summers working at Farmers Markets across the state of Michigan, and was part of the original Market Manager Certificate Program offered by the Michigan Farmers Market Association. Joe has called Grand Rapids home for the last four years and is currently the Assistant Manager at the Fulton Street Farmers Market. He enjoys spending his time helping Farmers and Food Creators to better their business plans and their social media presence.

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Speaker Biographies

Tony Menyhart

Founder and Pizzaman, Easy Artisan Pizza Mix

Tony was born above the family grocery store in South Bend, Indiana and he has been excited about food ever since. His memories of hot rye bread delivered by a German bakery to the store prompted his entry into the packaged bread and pizza mix market. Tony attended another great ag college, Purdue. In the seventies he played rugby in England, Australia and New Zealand. Returning to the US in the 1980s, Tony pretended to be a banker before becoming a serial entrepreneur. He started several printing companies through the 1990s, but decided to exit that market before the internet became too disruptive.

Tony has three children, one of whom, Stephen, is a Registered Dietitian and Supervisor in the Boulder School system helping children eat good food. Tony has a community garden plot, a front yard full of flowers, and on fine days he loves running through the woods.

Tony started Easy Artisan with experienced food marketer Sally Gralla in 2011. Their plan is to motivate people to eat healthier by making their own whole grain pizza. The goal for Easy Artisan is to get placement in the top 10,000 grocery stores in the United States, and then to expand worldwide. Easy Artisan is now sold in six states in Meijer, Whole Foods, Fresh Thyme, Kroger, and many top independent stores.

Rich Pirog

Center for Regional Food Systems – Dept. of Community Sustainability – MSU

Rich Pirog has been director of MSU Center for Regional Food Systems since January 2016. He joined the CRFS in May 2011 as senior associate director, having previously served as associate director at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at Iowa State University. Rich has more than 25 years of experience in sustainable food systems research and outreach. His research and collaborative work on food value chains, food hubs, economic impacts of local foods, and food networks and communities of practice has been cited in magazines and media outlets across the globe, used by local food practitioners and are often referenced in books and college courses. At the Center for Regional Food Systems, Rich has co-founded the Livestock Work Group and led the establishment of the Michigan Food Hub Network. Rich has a B.A. in Earth Science from Kean University and an M.S. in Agricultural Meteorology from the University of Missouri.

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Speaker Biographies

Sandra Cochrane

Michigan Small Business Development Center

Sandra Cochrane is a technology business consultant for the Michigan Small Business Development Center (SBDC), assisting high growth potential start-up and early-stage companies. Her services include business plan development, accessing capital, accessing state programs, and general business consultation. She is also well versed in crowdfunding, leading many seminars each year.

Ms. Cochrane has been active in the Association of Small Business Development Centers since 2008 and has presented various sessions at several national conferences. She is a former board member of the International Business Innovation Association (iNBIA) and remains a frequent speaker at its conferences. Currently she is president of the Michigan Business Incubator Association (MBIA).

Ms. Cochrane serves as a reviewer for the National Science Foundation's SBIR/STTR Program for Information Technologies; Electronic Hardware, Robotics & Wireless Technologies; and Educational Technologies & Applications. Additionally, she is an adjunct professor at Western Michigan University teaching strategic management and entrepreneurship. She earned a B.A. and an M.B.A. from Michigan State University.

Mark Sarafa

Owner and President, Pop Daddy Popcorn

Mark and Erin Sarafa were both born and raised in Southeast Michigan. They met in 1990 while working together for Coca-Cola Enterprises in Auburn Hills, Mi. They have been married since 1995 and find themselves back together in the Food and Beverage Industry. Erin was the proud owner of two National Franchise retail candle stores. She is a full time Mom and handles Human Resources for Pop Daddy Popcorn. Mark graduated from the University of Michigan in 1989 and received his MBA in Marketing from Wayne State University in 1992. Mark worked his way through the Food and Beverage Industry spending time at Coca-Cola (4 Years), Frito-Lay (9 Years), and Absopure Water (12 Years). With unwavering encouragement from Erin and the approval their 2 children, J.I. (16) and Grace (13), the family incorporated Pop Daddy Popcorn in 2012 and Mark made it his full time career in October of 2013. Mark credits his wife with the start of the business. "I am so grateful that my wife and children had the faith in me to run a family business. This is not something we have done alone. Our friends, neighbors, schools, and community in which we live have shown tremendous support through words and actions. We will be forever grateful, regardless of our achievements."