

# West Virginia Food Desert Summit

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

Bridgeport Conference Center  
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## ***Acknowledgements***

This meeting is the third installment of an ongoing conversation around the West Virginia food system and the complex problem of food deserts. Recognizing the importance of food access to human health and community well-being, the objective of this convening is to understand what we are already doing and where the opportunities exist to address food deserts.

From retailers, to farmers, to researchers, to food systems advocates, and government agencies, the contributions of each sector are of vital importance in solving a critical problem in West Virginia.

You were invited to this special convening of thought leaders on West Virginia's food system because of your willingness to consider solutions to food deserts and to come together with key players who have various perspectives and diverse methods for building a stronger food system in West Virginia.

This effort was organized by West Virginia University's Davis College of Agriculture and School of Public Health, West Virginia University Extension Service, and the West Virginia University Foundation, and was supported by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Thank you to the Steering Committee who helped guide the formation of this event: Susan FunkaPetery, Cindy Fitch, Jennifer Williams, Paul Kinder, Lauri Andress, Jack Thompson, Josh Cook, and Shelley Birdsong-Maddex.

# ***Agenda***

**10:00 - 10:15** Arrive and Networking

**10:15 - 10:55** Opening Remarks

**Provost Maryanne Reed** - *West Virginia University*

**Terrell Erickson** - Regional Conservationist, Northeast, *USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service, West Virginia University Health Sciences Center*

**Sue Day-Perroots** - Interim Dean, *West Virginia University Extension Service*

**William D. Ramsey, MD, FACEP** - Associate Vice President for Coordination and Logistics & Chief Collaboration Officer, *West Virginia University Health Sciences Center*

**Norm Bailey** - Chief of Staff, *West Virginia Department of Agriculture*

**Lauri Andress, PhD, JD** - Assistant Professor, *West Virginia University School of Public Health*

**10:55 - 11:45** Presenters of Five Local Perspectives of Food Systems Work

**Lynne Ryan:** The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

**Peter Butler:** WVU School of Design and Community Development

**Fritz Boettner:** Sprouting Farms and WVU Center for Resilient Communities

**Tom McConnell and Lisa Jones:** WVU Extension Service, Small Farm Center

**Amy Jo Hutchinson:** West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families

**11:45 - 12:45** Lunch and Setting the Stage for the Second Half of the Day

During this working lunch, two speakers engaged in financing initiatives to address food systems issues will present their framework and take questions:

**Molly Hartman** - *National Healthy Food Financing Initiative*

Partnering with PolicyLink and The Food Trust, Reinvestment Fund has worked with policymakers and advocates to push for a smart, sustainable way to invest in healthy food and good jobs in underserved communities. The national Healthy Food Financing Initiative is a viable, effective, and economically sustainable solution to the problem of limited access to healthy foods and can achieve multiple goals: reducing health disparities and improving the health of families and children; creating jobs; and stimulating local economic development in low-income communities. This is a smart investment in the health and economic well-being of the country and its citizens. As part of this effort, PolicyLink, The Food Trust and Reinvestment Fund are also working together to promote healthy food and healthy economies through priorities in food and agricultural policy.

**John Glazer** - *The Social Enterprise Ecosystem (SEE)*

Led by Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, SEE is a partnership with Foundation for Appalachian Ohio, Parkersburg Area Community Foundation, Rural Action and experienced local expert consultants. SEE strengthens Ohio and West Virginia economies by helping social enterprises gain resources and operational capacity to expand activities and markets while addressing Appalachia's most challenging determinants of economic and community wellbeing. SEE provides social entrepreneurs with customized venture development services and funders with qualified deals and investment services to maximize measurable impacts. SEE is sponsored by the Appalachian Regional Commission's POWER funding. Since its May 2017 launch, SEE has assisted 95 social ventures in obtaining over \$10 million in resources and creating over 80 jobs while generating significant social return on investment for funders and local communities.

- 12:45 - 2:25** Develop recommendations that institutions in West Virginia can pursue to solve food deserts at a statewide level
- 2:25 - 3:00** Report Out, Next Steps, Adjourn

## ***Speaker Bios***

**Jennifer Williams** - *West Virginia University Extension Service* - Jennifer Ours Williams began her career in 1993 as the Upshur County agent working with agriculture, natural resources and youth programs. Currently the associate dean for programs and partnerships, she has also served as the program director for agriculture and natural resources. She recently co-chaired a statewide agriculture strategic planning process. Williams is active in many groups and organizations and has been recognized for her commitment to further agriculture in West Virginia. Jennifer and her sister own and operate a farm in Hardy County, West Virginia.

**Cindy Fitch Ph.D., RD** - *Extension Professor and Associate Dean for Research- West Virginia University Extension Service* - Cindy Fitch is a Registered Dietitian with many years of experience working with children and their families. She received her undergraduate degree in home economics from Texas Tech University, a master's degree in nutrition from Texas Woman's University and a PhD in nutrition from Case Western Reserve University. Dr. Fitch joined the WVU Extension Service in 2008 as the Extension Specialist in food and nutrition. She is now the Associate Dean for Research, which gives her the opportunity to facilitate faculty success in developing, implementing, and evaluating applied research that makes a difference in the lives and livelihoods of West Virginians. She is an advocate for food security, particularly in children.

**Provost Maryanne Reed** - *West Virginia University* - In April 2019, Maryanne Reed was named Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs at WVU. Prior to this appointment, Reed served for 16 years as dean of the WVU Reed College of Media, where she began as a faculty member in 1993. Widely respected as a gifted higher education administrator, Reed was tapped to lead WVU's largest college, the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, as interim dean from 2015-2016. She also has led searches for deans and senior academic administrators and, most recently, co-led a strategic transformation process at the University. Reed has been recognized both regionally and nationally for her achievements, including as the 2016 Scripps Howard Administrator of the Year award, a 2016 West Virginia Wonder Woman by WV Living Magazine and the president of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication in 2016-2017.

**Terrell Erickson** - *Regional Conservationist, Northeast, USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), West Virginia University Health Sciences Center* - Since May of 2018 Terrell has been serving as the Regional Conservationist of the Northeast. As one of four Senior Executive

Regional Conservationists for the agency, she oversees and directs NRCS conservation programs and activities for 14 Northeastern States, including supervising 14 State Conservationists and staff across Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. The work includes delivering over \$400 million of program funding on agricultural and private forest lands across the Northeast, building relationships with agriculture and conservation interests within the region, and partnering with the business center and FPAC agencies to accomplish improved efficiencies and effectiveness within the region. She oversees strategic planning for the NE and human resources hiring modeling and workforce analyses to determine priority hires.

**Sue Day-Perroots** - *Interim Dean, West Virginia University Extension Service* - Sue Day-Perroots is no stranger to West Virginia University and the State of West Virginia. After 34 years of service in key roles at the University, she retired as associate provost in 2017. When WVU President E. Gordon Gee presented her with an opportunity to return “home” to lead West Virginia University Extension Service, she jumped at the chance to bring her trademark energy, enthusiasm and focus on results to the role. During her career at WVU, Day-Perroots focused on improving access to education for students and adults and became known as an out-of-the-box thinker who is adept at managing change. Day-Perroots, who was named interim dean of WVU Extension has lead efforts to prioritize WVU Extension Service programs and strengthen WVU’s land-grant mission to the state.

**William D. Ramsey, MD, FACEP** - *Associate Vice President for Coordination and Logistics & Chief Collaboration Officer, West Virginia University Health Sciences* - Dr. Ramsey has over 30 years of experience in health care as a provider, researcher, and policy leader, particularly in the area of the development, implementation, and evaluation of unique and innovative methods and systems for providing quality and cost-effective medical care with a focus on trauma, cardiac, and stroke systems of care. He was born and raised in West Virginia and received his undergraduate and MD degrees from West Virginia University and his specialty training at Akron General Medical Center.

**Norm Bailey** - *Chief of Staff, West Virginia Department of Agriculture* - Mr. Bailey has more than two decades of public service, leadership and experience in state and federal governments. Before joining the West Virginia Department of Agriculture, he was a project manager for the United States Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Services division, a Conservation Services state cultural resource coordinator and a resource conservation and development

coordinator. He was the senior area director for the West Virginia Conservation Agency and worked with West Virginia Conservation Districts implementing projects and programs. Bailey is a West Virginia native and has a bachelor's in resource management in Agriculture from the West Virginia University Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design

**Lauri Andress, PhD, JD** - *Assistant Professor, West Virginia University School of Public Health* - Connected to her broader interests in social justice and uneven power relations, as assistant professor in the Department of Health Policy, Management, and Leadership, Dr. Andress' research interests have focused on policies affecting the social determinants of health and the role that ideas, framing, narratives, and political ideology versus science, facts, and evidence play in policy discussions. She has conducted research on important infrastructure issues in rural communities, with a focus on barriers to population health including transportation and food access for low income women, children, the homeless, and seniors in West Virginia. Dr. Andress has a Masters of Public Health and Ph.D. along with a law degree from South Texas College of Law.

**Lynne Ryan** - *Monongalia County Health Department's Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) Program* - Originally from New York, Ms. Ryan has lived in the Morgantown area since 1975 and is a WVU graduate. A breastfeeding counselor with the Monongalia County Health Department's Women, Infant and Children's (WIC) Program since 1997, she became an International Board Certification Lactation Consultant in 2002, a nutritionist at WIC several years ago, and then breastfeeding coordinator for a six-county region in 2016. Lynne has a small lactation clinic at WVU Medicine's Cheat Lake Physician's office and teaches breastfeeding classes for WVU Medicine at their UTC location. Lynne has a passion for helping families get off to a strong start through breastfeeding and good nutrition. She is the mother of four and grandmother of four (all breastfed!)

**Peter Butler** - *Director of the School of Design and Community Development, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Extension Specialist in Landscape Architecture, West Virginia University*. Peter joined the WVU faculty in 2008. His research interests include cultural landscape research and planning; community design process; industrial landscape reclamation and interpretation; and design studio pedagogy. His research projects include cultural landscape inventory, analysis and treatment; design visualization; brownfields redevelopment; land use planning; historic transportation corridor planning; participatory design methods; and methods of community engagement. Peter leads the Community Engagement Lab through the Family and Community Development program at WVU Extension Service by integrating experiential



service-learning courses in the curriculum to build and strengthen partnerships with communities and stakeholder groups across West Virginia.

**Fritz Boettner:** Mr. Boettner is the founder of Sprouting Farms and the Food System Development Director for the West Virginia University Center for Resilient Communities. Mr. Boettner has 15 years of professional experience in a wide array of project development and implementation activities. He holds a graduate degree in environmental management from West Virginia University and worked for a variety of planning and engineering firms in the northeast and western states. Former Principal at Downstream Strategies, Mr. Boettner led the development of the Land Program at Downstream Strategies, having pivotal roles in all of the local food and sustainable agriculture projects for the past 10 years. As a small farmer himself, he has worked in his local community to create Sprouting Farms and the Turnrow Appalachian Farm Food Hub.

**Tom McConnell and Lisa Jones:** *West Virginia University Extension Service Small Farm Center* - WVU Extension Service experts know West Virginia farms are unique. With advice that's sized "just right" for all of our producers, there's something for budding farmers who want to sell at their local farmers market all the way up to large-scale poultry farmers who want to increase efficiency. The Small Farm Center equips West Virginia small farm families with the information and education required to make them both sustainable and successful.

**Amy Jo Hutchinson:** *Northern Regional Organizer, West Virginia Healthy Kids and Families Coalition* - Amy Jo views her position as the Northern Regional Organizer for the Our Children, Our Future campaign as a way of advocating for thousands. Being raised by a single mother and, in turn, raising two daughters of her own alone for more than eleven years now, Amy knows firsthand the struggles and obstacles faced by children and families living in poverty. Amy Jo has worked with at-risk populations since the age of 16, ranging from the elderly to the homeless. Some of her favorite successes are associated with her years as an infant/toddler teacher for Early Head Start. She has served as a volunteer in various leadership roles in an effort to raise awareness and provide opportunities for those struggling with socioeconomic issues. Amy Jo designed and served as the leader for Borrowing A Dad (BAD) ministry, which serves single-mom families as a whole through volunteer male mentors, who serve as borrowed dads for the children, and small group discussion for the moms.

**John Glazer** - At Ohio University since 2008, John Glazer collaborates with program leaders, research faculty, and external partners to support programs in economic development, social enterprise, impact investment, and a variety of community engagements. He is the Technical Director of the Federally-funded Social Enterprise Ecosystem program assisting social entrepreneurs and impact investors in Ohio and West Virginia. From 2008 to 2019, he oversaw a State-funded technology commercialization program working with inventors, entrepreneurs, and investors to start companies and bring new technologies to market. After a career as a university instructor, John was the owner and CEO of the largest organization of independent bookstores in the U.S. He also founded four other startup companies. John has organized technology-based economic development projects in the U.S. and internationally.

**Molly Hartman** is Program Director for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative at Reinvestment Fund, a national initiative to improve access to healthy food in underserved rural and urban areas, to create and preserve quality jobs, and to revitalize low-income communities. Previously, she was Senior Advisor for Food Policy in the Office of the Mayor of New York City. She has a Master in Public Policy degree from the University of Southern California and a BA from Wesleyan University.