

# AGROECOLOGY

FIELD SCHOOL AND RESEARCH SUMMIT



## Speaker Bios

**Faris Ahmed** joined USC Canada in 2005 and leads policy work in close collaboration with ecological agriculture, biodiversity and food sovereignty networks in the South and in Canada. He is an active member of the civil society networks of the Committee for World Food Security (CFS), the CBD Alliance and Food Secure Canada. Faris has worked at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Oxfam, South Asia Partnership, and as a photographer/writer covering environmental issues. He holds an MA in International Development Studies from the University of Toronto.

**Byron Beardy** is the Food Security Coordinator for Four Arrows Regional Health Authority Inc. and is from Wasagamack First Nation in the Island Lake region of North Eastern Manitoba. Heading into his 10th season as the Food Security Coordinator, Byron sits on various food security/"foody" committees locally, regionally, provincially, and nationally and he is frequently requested to speak, plan and/or present at schools, universities/colleges, gatherings/workshops and etc. related to indigenous food sovereignty & security/practices. Often referred to as the "Chicken Guy," he has, in the last 7 years, brought backyard family chicken-raising into the region.

Fluent in his Ojibway-Cree language, Byron utilizes his language skills in everyday life and with his busy hectic schedule, he also does Ojibway-Cree translation, interpretation, narration, transcription services for various clients throughout Manitoba. In the first few years of his life, Byron grew up in Wasagamack with his mother and maternal grandparents where he says he had the privilege of eating everything edible from the land to which he continues to enjoy today. He has also lived in the urban setting with his father, the late Jackson Beardy, and he was fortunate to have lived in and experienced both worlds in his early life and appreciating what each has to offer. At the Agroecology Field School and Research Summit, Byron will discuss his understandings of the connections of land-based language in the context of food from an indigenous lens.

**Francisco Paulo Chaimsohn** develops and manages farming research projects that focus on soils with low agricultural suitability, corn and bean cultivation, and the generation and adaptation of technologies appropriate for family agricultural production. He is currently developing research and outreach projects on non-timber forest species and agroforestry systems, particularly palm trees (Arecaceae) for the production of palmito and açai and yerba mate (*Ilex paraguariensis*). Through this research Paulo and his team are looking to generate and adapt technologies and cultivation alternatives in agroforestry systems that offer alternative income for family farmers and support soil, water, and biodiversity conservation in the Araucaria Forest and the Atlantic Forest. He has conducted extensive work to help improve the appreciation of yerba mate produced in traditional and agroforestry systems by family farmers and has developed projects aimed at the generation and adaptation of technologies for the production of açai fruit of the juçara palm (*Euterpe edulis*). His work combines research and outreach activities for and with family farmers, with the goal of contributing to income generation and environmental conservation.

**Aabir Dey** developed his passion for seeds while he was completing his Sustainable Farming Certificate at Everdale, a teaching farm in Hillsburgh, Ontario, and supporting research trials for Seeds of Diversity's collection of over 3,000 different Canadian seed varieties. After completing a Master of Environmental Studies at York University, researching organic seed systems in Ontario, Aabir joined the The Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security, as the Regional Program Coordinator for Ontario. Aabir has co-authored publications on Canada's seed system including the *Canadian Organic Seed Sector Environmental Scan* and the *Discussion Paper on Seed Policy in Canada*. He has been instrumental in shaping and leading the training, research, and policy programs developed for The Bauta Family Seed Initiative, and created their flagship vegetable varietal improvement program that involves over 100 farmers across the country. Aabir loves working in the field with seed producers and farmers all over Canada, and is thrilled to continue to steward The Bauta Family Seed Initiative at a national level into the future.

**Danielle Boissoneau** is Anishnaabe kwe from the shorelines of the Great Lakes. She embodies ancestral planting practices through acts of resilience and reclamation. As a writer and activist, Danielle focuses on topics of decolonization through love and encourages the practice of critical self reflection as an essential life skill.

**Ayla Fenton** is a new farmer and organizer based in the Kingston area. She has spent the past six years working on organic farms, and is currently working with Ironwood Organics, a mixed farm producing heritage grains, potatoes, dried beans, cut flowers, pigs, laying hens and quail. Over the past five years, Ayla has been involved with the National Farmers Union and has held elected positions including national Youth President and NFU-Ontario board member. She is also an active member of the international youth articulation of La Via Campesina (LVC). Through LVC, she has had the opportunity to travel extensively and learn about peasant & farmer movements around the world. She hopes to use these experiences to strengthen the movement for agroecology and food sovereignty in Canada.

**Bonita Ford** teaches permaculture, facilitates community edible forest garden projects, coaches individuals and small businesses, and grows much of her own food. She has been leading workshops and groups around the world for over 15 years. Bonita co-founded LivinghEARTH, Permaculture Eastern Ontario, and Transition Perth. She has a Diplôme de Permaculture Appliquée from l'Université Populaire de Permaculture in France, a M.A. in Holistic Health Education from John F. Kennedy University in California, and a B.Sc. in Biochemistry from Queen's University. At the heart of it, Ford's work is about cultivating more harmonious relationships with ourselves, our communities and Mother Earth.

**Laura Gomez** is a co-founding member and Associate Researcher at the Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Integrated Rural Development at Mexico's University of Chapingo, as well as a Professor in the Agroecology Department. Her area of research focuses on improving rural livelihoods through increasing market access for small-scale ecological farmers, developing payment mechanisms for ecological goods and services, and facilitating adoption of eco-technologies. She works in different regions in Mexico to apply agroecological techniques to citrus, coffee and corn production. She has expertise in Participatory Action Research, particularly with Indigenous communities; and a strong record of mentoring students in this area. She works closely with Mexico's farming sector in the development of regional and local markets and is recognized as a national leader in that field.

**Dr. Sally Humphries** is a Professor at the University of Guelph in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology specializing in international development studies. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on rural and agricultural development in Latin America. Prior to starting at the University of Guelph, she received a Rockefeller Social Science Fellowship in Agriculture, which she took up at the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), Cali, Colombia. Between 2005 and 2016, she served as Director of Guelph's International Development Studies (IDS) program. Since 1993, Sally's research has been associated with Honduran farmer researchers and their supporting NGOs, in particular La Fundacion para la Investigacion Participativa con Agricultores de Honduras (FIPAH).

**Dr. Marney Isaac** is an Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in Agroecosystems Development at the University of Toronto, Canada. She conducts interdisciplinary research on plant strategies and the nutrient economy of agroecosystems while concurrently charting the human dimension of agroecological management. Her research provides mechanistic insights into the ecological principles, nutrient cycles, and plant-soil interactions that govern the structure and function of agroecosystems, with particular attention on identification of strategies for environmental services, system resilience and sustainable livelihoods. Her research approach makes use of a diverse set of technical tools and employs various temporal and spatial scales: from manipulative trials at the rhizosphere scale to large agroecosystem dynamics. She also supervises an international research program investigating agrarian management networks and environmental governance, with an emphasis on understanding innovation in social-agroecological systems

**Raquel Koenig** is the Food Security Program Planning & Administration at Four Arrows Regional Health Authority. She plays a key role in providing assistance to the food security coordinator as well as aiding in the coordination of food security projects and research. Raquel is a member of Wikwemikong First Nation in Ontario and a graduate from the University of Manitoba. She has considerable experience working with Indigenous and Northern communities on their local food initiatives.

**Greta Kryger** is owner of Greta's Organic gardens, a small seed Farm and seed company in Ottawa Ontario. She has been a seed farmer for over 25 years, also running a market garden and a CSA in the earlier years. In 2000 Greta switched 100% to seed production. She is involved in breeding projects and EFAO farmer led research projects and conducts various variety trials every year to find the varieties better suited for short seasons.

**Dr. Andre de Lacerda** has worked for 15 years in ecology and forestry research, conducting multidisciplinary projects on biodiversity, sustainable forest management, genetics, and community-based agroforestry. He is currently leading several research projects in Southern Brazil that explore complementary aspects of applied ecology and natural resource management. Dr. Lacerda's long-term engagement with local communities has led to many productive partnerships and research outcomes, including the Caçador Model Forest in collaboration with local stakeholders and the Centre for Education and Development of Erva-mate (CEDErva), a collaborative effort to develop networks of knowledge around traditional erva-mate agroforestry systems. Dr. Lacerda's team is developing research and outreach projects to enhance biodiversity, restore ecological functions, and develop innovative ways of using forest species as an alternative source of income for land owners.

**Geneviève Lalumière:** Always with a view for food sovereignty, this Montreal-based seed-saver and craftswoman is passionate about preserving, transmitting and developing artisan and peasant know-how, according to a horizontal methodology of course. She is vice-president of the only education centre recognized within the international agroecology school network of La Via Campesina in Canada, le Centre paysan. As an involved member of Union paysanne, she is committed to promoting and facilitating the agroecological process.

**Lise-Anne Léveillé** is a founding member of the BeetBox Co-operative Farm. A new world opened to Lise-Anne 10 years ago when she discovered the concept of food sovereignty. Getting interested in food and where it comes from allowed her to expand her understanding of social and environmental justice. Since then, her involvement in different local and international organizations and movements inspired Lise-Anne decided to contribute her grain of salt to a shift in our food system. Her masters in International Development and Globalization explored the contribution of farmers to the creation of an alternative agriculture system. When not on the farm, Lise-Anne manages Latin American programs at USC Canada, an organization that promotes seed security, sustainable farming and resilient agricultural system globally.

**Marie-Eve Levert** works at USC Canada, where she manages their national program that aims to increase the quality, quantity, and diversity of organic and ecological seed in the country: The

Bauta Family Initiative on Canadian Seed Security (BFICSS). She joined USC Canada in 2017, but has been involved in the early stages of BFICSS as the author of their report on the market for organic and ecological seed in Canada, the first study of its type in the country. Marie-Eve is active in the organic community. She currently serves as a member of the Organic Value Chain Roundtable (OVCRT), a forum that brings together the Organic industry and the federal government to discuss sectoral issues. Before joining USC Canada, Marie-Eve worked as the Director of International and Regulatory Affairs at the Canada Organic Trade Association where she worked on the development of policy strategies in the interest of the organic sector. Marie-Eve studied Canadian seed governance as part of her Master in Public Administration at the University of Ottawa.

**Charles Levkoe** is the Canada Research Chair in Sustainable Food Systems, the Director of the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, Research and Engagement and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Health Sciences at Lakehead University. His community engaged research uses a food systems lens to better understand the importance of, and connections between social justice, ecological regeneration, regional economies and active democratic engagement. Working directly with a range of scholars and community-based practitioners across North America and Europe, Dr. Levkoe studies the evolution of the broader collective of social movement networks that views the right to food as a component of more sustainable futures.

**Dr. Angel Leyva** is a researcher in the Department of Sustainable Agroecosystem Management at Cuba's National Institute for Agricultural Sciences (INCA). He holds a degree in Agronomy from the University of Havana and a PhD in Agronomy from the University of Leipzig. His work began with research on weed control in sugarcane production, however, in 1989 he expanded his focus to crop rotation, polyculture, green manures, and allelopathic effects on weed-crop interactions. His particular area of expertise is the application of agroecological principles and practices to multiple crops, and he has led a number of projects looking at the development and evaluation of agroecological farms, as well as more general sustainability evaluations at the local and regional scale. In addition to his work in Cuba, Dr. Levva has led projects to foment agroecological production internationally, most notably in Colombia and Mexico, and has developed and/or taught in Agroecology graduate programs in Ecuador and Venezuela. He has authored a book on agroecology in the tropics, and has more than 60 other publications to his name. Among other honours, he has been the recipient of the Carlos Juan Finlay Medal, the highest award for scientific merit granted in Cuba

**Laurie Maus** is a scientist by training and a farmer by choice. She has a Masters degree in Biology and had a professional career in research, regulation and education. She has raised purebred and commercial livestock on and off for the last 45 years. Currently Laurie and her husband are focusing on breeding and preserving heritage breeds of chickens and sheep. She offers training to livestock producers on monitoring and management of internal parasites.

**Phil Mount** was born and raised on a dairy farm in what is now east Ottawa. Phil is currently a Research Associate with the Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, Associate Director with Just Food, and Board Chair of Sustain Ontario, while developing Flat Earth Farm with his wife

Denise. Flat Earth Farm is on the south edge of the City of Ottawa and includes 17 acres of land for agro-ecological food production. With the goal of maximizing biodiversity, the farm contains a mix of over 100 edible trees and bushes (17 varieties), and a large selection of perennial and annual crops standard to the region, as well as test plots of a number of grains, cover crops and legumes (including grain amaranth, sorghum, flax, chickpeas, millet, kamut), and a mix of small livestock. Flat Earth Farm works in partnership with a local beekeeper and the Women Warrior's healing Garden. Flat Earth Farm is also breeding new varieties of wheat, oats and potatoes, as part of The Bauta Family Seed Initiative's participatory plant breeding program with Dr. Martin Entz at the University of Manitoba.

**Erin Nelson** is Assistant Professor in the Sociology and Anthropology Department at the University of Guelph. She conducts research in both Canada and Latin America on issues related to sustainable food systems, local food networks, food security, and community development. This work is grounded in close collaborations with a wide variety of stakeholders, including civil society organizations, policy-makers, farmers, and citizen groups. In addition to her research activities, Erin has led a number of agroecology education programs in Cuba and has a strong interest in building South-North partnerships to facilitate knowledge-exchange and capacity-building for agroecology.

**Alain Olivier** is a Full Professor and director of the Interdisciplinary Group of Research in Agroforestry as well as of the Chair in International Development of Université Laval. His research program focuses on analyzing the constraints and incentives to the implementation of agroforestry systems, in an interdisciplinary perspective, including insights on technical, ecological, social, economic and policy aspects. He is also interested in the contribution of agroforestry to food security and to the mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

**Dr. Sherry Pictou** is a Mi'kmaw woman from L'sitkuk (water cuts through high rocks) known as Bear River First Nation, Nova Scotia and is an Assistant Professor in the Women's Studies Department at Mount Saint Vincent with a focus on Indigenous Feminism. Her research interests are decolonization of treaty relations; Indigenous women's role in food and lifeways, Indigenous refusal politics; Indigenous knowledge systems; Indigenous Food Sovereignty; Indigenous struggles for social justice; National and International legal jurisprudence regarding the rights of Indigenous women and children. She has served the broader Mi'kmaw community in several capacities including being elected Chief for her community and as a former co-chair of the World Forum of Fisher People. Currently, she is a collaborator on a SSHRC Connections Grant: Looking Back to Move Ahead: Outreach, Knowledge Mobilization and Intersectional Exchange to Advance Food Security in NS with the Food Action Research Centre at Mount Saint Vincent University. She is also a collaborator for the Atlantic Indigenous Mentorship Network, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research – Institute of Aboriginal Peoples' Health Project at Dalhousie University.

**Chef Johl Whiteduck Ringuette** is the chef and proprietor of NishDish, a business built on traditional Anishnawbe (Nish) food. Over the last twelve years, NishDish has grown as a catering business and on April 28, celebrated the first anniversary of the storefront marketeria. Johl

recently founded and now sits on the board of a new nonprofit: Ojibiikaan Indigenous Cultural Network, which is focused on Indigenous Food Sovereignty, language and teachings, and cultural advocacy. Ojibiikaan has established two traditional mound gardens in Toronto and Milton, and is currently developing holistic cultural programming for youth and families. Johl also does food demos, workshops and speaking engagements on topics like Indigenous cuisine and food sovereignty.

**Dr. Peter Rosset** is a professor of agroecology at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur (ECOSUR) in Chiapas, Mexico, is co-coordinator of the Land Research Action Network (<http://www.landaction.org/>), and is a member of the staff team of La Via Campesina (<https://viacampesina.org/en/>). At ECOSUR, he is part of the Research Group of Scaling-Up Agroecology (<https://www.ecosur.mx/masificacion-agroecologia/>). With his co-author, Miguel Altieri, he recent published the book: “Agrecology: Science and Politics” (Fernwood, 2017; <https://fernwoodpublishing.ca/book/agroecology>).

**Dr. Pratap Kumar Shrestha** holds a Master’s degree in agricultural economics from the University of East Anglia, UK, and a PhD in local knowledge and participatory technology development from the Bangor University, UK. He has more than 25 years of experience in participatory research and development in the field of agriculture, biodiversity and natural resource management. He worked initially as a socio-economist and later as Head of the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit at Lumle Agricultural Research Centre in Nepal (funded by DFID, UK) from 1990-1998. He is a founder member of Local Initiatives for Biodiversity, Research and Development (LI-BIRD), a Nepal-based NGO, and headed the organization as its Executive Director from 2003-2009. Dr. Shrestha joined USC Canada as Regional Representative and Scientific Advisor for Asia in 2009.

**Paul Slomp** has loved working with cattle and soils since his early days on his family’s farm first in the Netherlands, and then in Rimbey, Alberta. His love of mathematics and science led him to study civil engineering. The diverse puzzles found on ecological farms brought him to work with smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa and later in the local food sovereignty movement back in Canada. When he isn’t with the herd, moving fences, or engineering a new winch system for feeding whey to the pigs, you can find Paul planning new play structures with two very excited young farm kids.

**Dr. Liette Vasseur** is a full professor in the Biological Sciences at Brock University, and member of the Women and Gender Studies program and the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre. Since 2014, she has held the UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability: From Local to Global. Her research program is highly interdisciplinary and links issues such as community-based ecosystem management, climate change adaptation and sustainable agriculture. She works in China, as a visiting scholar at Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University. She also works in Ecuador focusing on the community sustainability in rural native communities in the Andean region of the Chimborazo. In 2011, she received the Latornell Pioneers Award from Conservation Ontario for her community-research work. She currently chairs the Sectoral Commission on Social, Human and Natural Sciences at the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, is the vice-chair

for North America of the Commission for Ecosystem Management at the International Union for Conservation of Nature and leads the thematic group on Ecosystem Governance.

**George Wright** first grew his own crop of oats with his father when he was in 4H at the age of 13. Who knew that oats would become his main cash crop 30 years later? For the last 20 years he has been growing grains organically and for the last 6 years has been selling them at his local farmers' market. He mills the grains right at the market into flour. Rolled and steel cut oats are his most popular products. Even though grains are absent from farmers' markets, they are his best place to sell. Being only interested in his local market, he freely gives out information and tips on how he has done it and how it can be copied, modified and improved upon by any aspiring farmer/market vendor throughout North America.