February 18-19, 2016
Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center at Tuskegee University
Tuskegee, Alabama

“A Century of Agriculture and Education in the South”
2016 Merit Farm Family Award

Mr. Charlie McAlpine
Forkland, Alabama
The first Farmers Conference was held at Tuskegee University on February 23, 1892. Its purpose was to convene farmers in an educationally stimulating environment that would arouse public sentiment and create an interest in the common, mundane and practical affairs of life. The morning was spent identifying problems associated with farming and the afternoon portion of the conference focused on their solutions.

Today, this conference has evolved into a two day event that focuses on the problems and solutions for small-scale farmers, landowners, and their communities in managing change in agriculture. Participants are engaged in intense courses of instructions, problem-solving and interactive demonstrations. Additionally, the conference provides an opportunity for small-scale farmers to network with colleagues and university educators.

From its inception, the Tuskegee University’s Farmers Conference has retained the following objectives: (1) to share up-to-date information relevant to small-scale farmers and landowners involved in production of traditional and alternative agricultural products; (2) to create awareness about family health, nutritional challenges, and existing resources for rural families; (3) to provide research-based information in a consumer adaptable format; and (4) to strengthen networks and partnerships that address problems of small-scale farmers and rural communities with respect to local, national and global markets.
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2016

7:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ........................................ Registration (Conference Registration Desk)

7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. .................................................. Breakfast Meeting
Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension State Advisory Council (Ballroom C)

9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ........................................ Exhibits and Health Fair (Continuing Education Foyer)

9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. ........................................... Tours and Workshops

Option A: ............................................................... (Off Campus)

Forestry and Natural Resources Tour

Facilitator: Ronald C. Smith, Tuskegee University Extension Forester

Unit 1
Longleaf Pine – Natural Regeneration – Tuskegee National Forest

Unit 2
Longleaf Pine Artificial Regeneration – University Properties – Farm Road

Unit 3
Loblolly Pine Management – University Properties, Franklin Road

The tour is an intensive review of forestry practices of interest to small acreage landowners and managers. This 24-mile shuttle tour will begin at the front door of the Kellogg Conference Center.

Option B: ......................................................... Meeting Rooms D & E

a. Empowering Farm and Ranch Women by Agricultural Risk Management/Annie’s Project

Facilitator: Lila B Karki, Cooperative Extension, Tuskegee University
Presenters: Ruth Brock, Alabama Cooperative Extension System/Auburn University
           Madeline Schultz, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
           Women in Agriculture

b. Money Management for Adults: Save for Your Future

Presenters: Lila B. Karki, Tuskegee University
           John Olsen, Federal Deposit Insurance Company (FDIC)
Pasture Improvement and Grazing Management for Productive Land and Profits
Facilitator: Uma Karki, Tuskegee University

This session is designed to educate livestock farmers and field-level livestock professionals on improving pasture and grazing lands, and managing them sustainably. Educational opportunities and materials are available through the eXtension website, along with other useful features of the site with a focus on Goat Industry Community of Practice. After the presentation, there will be a panel discussion and question and answer session with goat experts from various states. Participants will have an opportunity to interact and get to know renowned goat experts, and find solutions to several issues they may have in their goat operations. Also, there will be a video shown on Sustainable Year-Round Forage Production and Grazing/Browsing Management.

a. 9:30 a.m. -- Potential of improving existing pastures and its benefits - Uma Karki, Tuskegee University
b. 10:00 a.m. -- Erosion control plan in grazing land - Eddie Jolley, Alabama NRCS
c. 10:35 a.m. -- Implementing year-round grazing for beef cattle: Farmer’s experience - Rosia Jernigan, beef cattle farmer, Union Springs
d. 10:50 a.m. -- Reducing the production costs by expanding the grazing opportunity for goats: Farmer’s experience - Gregory Scott, goat & bee farmer, Selma
e. 11:05 a.m. -- NRCS support to improve pastures and grazing facilities - Steve Musser, Alabama NRCS Program Manager
f. 11:30 a.m. -- Adding honey bees to the pasture-based livestock production enterprise for additional incomes and pollination support – Presentation and demonstration Gregory Scott, goat & bee farmer, Selma

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.  Opening Luncheon (Ballroom)

Empowering Historically Underserved Communities
Facilitator: Miles Robinson, Tuskegee University

Energy Efficiency Opportunities for Your Farm: How to Get Started Saving Energy and Resources for Producers
Presenters: William A. Hodge, National Board Member, NARC&DC
Craig Metz, President and CEO of ENSAVE

USDA Strike-Force Initiative: Bringing Resources and Opportunities to Your Community

Presenters: Ronald Davis, State Director, USDA Rural Development
Ben Malone, State Conservationist, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Cassondra Searight, USDA Farm Service Agency
Devina Lee, RMA, USDA
Cynthia Price, USDA, NASS

2:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.  Break

3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.  Plenary Session (Auditorium)
Farmer-to-Farmer: Lessons Learned – Opportunities to Share with a Bonus Presentation from the USDA Risk Management Agency

**Facilitator:** Raymon Shange, Tuskegee University  
**Presenter:** Michael A. Alston, Associate Administrator USDA Risk Management Agency  
**Panelists:**  
Russell and Jewell Bean, S& B Farm  
Lawrence Carter - Florida A&M University/Farmer  
Nimrod Stephens, Quiet Oak Farm  
Josie Gbadamosi, Shady Grove Blueberry Patch  
Michael Jackson, Aunt Katie’s Garden  
Charlie Adams, My Secret Garden  
David Copeland, Copeland Farm

4:45 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.  Tour (Legacy Museum at Tuskegee University)

6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.  T. M. Campbell Leadership Award Banquet (Ballroom)  
**Facilitator:** Lawrence Haygood, Tuskegee University  
**Introduction of Speaker:** Thomas Turner, Treasurer, Small Farm Agricultural Cooperative  
**Presenter:** Dexter Gilbert, 2016 T.M. Campbell Leadership Awardee

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2016

7:00 a.m.  Registration (Conference Registration Desk)

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.  Breakfast Buffet (Ballroom)

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  Exhibits and Health Fair

8:00 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.  General Session (Auditorium)  
**Facilitator:** Robert Zabawa, Tuskegee University  
**Climate and Environmental Changes in Rural Alabama**  
Carl Petrick, Forest Supervisor, National Forest in Alabama

9:15 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.  Break

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.  Concurrent Sessions  

**A. Cattle Production Concepts for Small Scale and Limited Resource Producers (Meeting Room B)**  
**Facilitator:** Decetti Taylor, Tuskegee University
1. **Herd Health** ................................................. E Rick Bridges, TUSVM
2. **Pasture Management** ................................. Kenneth Newkirk, TUSVM
3. **Catch Pen Design** ........................................
4. **Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy** .............. Mel Stephens, APHIS
5. **Field Visit Veterinary School Facilities** (See Friday afternoon schedule for Tours and Workshops)

B. **Affordable Health Insurance: Opportunities and Challenges for Alabamians**  
   **Meeting Rooms F & G**

   **Presenter:** Jim Carnes, Policy Director  
   Arise Citizens’ Policy Project

C. **AgrAbility – Options for Farmers With Disabilities and Limited Mobility**  
   **Auditorium**

   **Facilitator:** William Hodge, Tuskegee University  
   **Presenter:** Paul Jones, National AgrAbility Project,  
   Breaking New Ground Resource Center, Purdue University  
   Bill Begley, Life Essentials, Brookston, IN

   The vision of AgrAbility is to enhance quality of life for farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural workers with disabilities. While the term “disability” often brings to mind conditions such as spinal cord injuries and amputations, AgrAbility addresses not only these but also many other conditions, such as arthritis, back impairments, and mental/behavioral health issues. This session will provide information on the services and resources AgrAbility provides, how farmers can obtain assistance, the structure of the AgrAbility Program, and how states are awarded an AgrAbility Project. Since technology plays an important role in overcoming function limitations in agriculture, emphasis will be given to types of technologies available with practical examples provided by Life Essentials, LLC.

   Paul Jones is manager of the National AgrAbility Project, a USDA-funded program for agricultural workers with disabilities that is administered through the Breaking New Ground Resource Center at Purdue University. He has been a member of the Purdue Agricultural Safety and Health Program staff since 1998 and specializes in educational outreach and resource development, including print, electronic, and audiovisual materials.

D. **Property Taxes (Meeting Rooms D & E)**

   **Facilitator:** Lawrence Haygood, TuskMac CDC, Tuskegee University  
   **Presenters:** N. Reed, Bullock County Revenue Commissioner  
   Iverson Gandy, Macon County Revenue Commissioner

   This workshop will discuss annual property taxes, responsibility, timeframe, payment, tax sales, property redemption, and other general questions
The Tuskegee University 2016 Merit Farmer recipient is Mr. Charlie McAlpine of Forkland, Alabama.

Mr. McAlpine, a lifelong farmer, is a recently retired employee of the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. He had been employed as a Soil Conservationist (several positions), District Conservationist, 19 years as Coordinator of the Mid-South Resource Conservation and Development Council in Montgomery, Alabama, NRI Coordinator, Outreach Coordinator and Agriculture Advisor/expert in Afghanistan.

Currently, McAlpine manages a 520 acre operation in the heart of Alabama’s Black Belt Region. This farm property that now encompasses acreage Mr. McAlpine spent his formative years on, boasts an 80 head cattle herd and timber operation. Charlie started his cattle herd in early 2013 with five (5) cattle and increased steadily as new fencing were constructed on 358 acres. He is the sole operator of this enterprise and occasionally he employs seasonal assistance from his local community.

Mr. McAlpine, a longtime supporter of Cooperative Extension at Tuskegee University, currently receives management advice and assistance by participating in the West Alabama Herd Health Initiative. With the support of Extension Agents and Specialists, along with students and professors from the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine, Charlie receives the latest advice on a variety of topics including parasite manage-
McAlpine is also a community advocate and has partnered with Cooperative Extension at Tuskegee University to establish a computer center for senior citizens for his home community of Forkland. This computer center is one of several sites throughout the Black Belt designed to help bridge the digital divide that exists throughout rural Alabama. This project is a cooperative venture between Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension, the Alabama Association of RC&D Councils and local technology consultants.

Charlie attends several Extension workshops and seminars and enjoys an open relationship with the Extension agents and local farmers in his area. Having completed a successful International Advisors assignment, he credits the success of that agricultural development mission to his natural farming background, his professional career experiences and his advice from specialists of Cooperative Extension and Carver Sustainability and Innovation Agricultural programs at Tuskegee University.

Plans for McAlphin’s farming operation include providing management techniques to achieve the maximum usage of every acre. He operates with an EQUIP plan prepared by USDA/NRCS to maximize his grazing through rotational grazing. Charlie rotates his cattle every six days during the growing season, while stocking three cows per acre.

Mr. McAlpine is a graduate of Alabama A&M University and has a MPA from Troy University. Charlie has three children, two of which are graduates of Troy and the youngest is a sophomore at the University of Alabama.

Charlie expresses his thanks to Tuskegee University for providing him quality assistance that has allowed him to build a quality herd and enhance environmental stewardship while maximizing his productivity.
**T. M. CAMPBELL LEADERSHIP AWARDEE**

**DEXTER GILBERT**

Dexter is a third generation farmer who grew up raising corn, soybeans, peanuts, hogs, cattle and vegetables with his parents and grandparents. As Dexter was growing up, his family minimized their farming operations in order to obtain more consistent and stable income from work off the farm. However, when Dexter graduated high school, he and his late brother, L.T. Gilbert, decided they wanted to go into farming full time.

In 1997, the Gilbert brothers grew 70 acres of corn, 40 acres of peanuts, 30 acres of soybeans, and operated a custom harvesting business. From these small beginnings, Gilbert Farms grew to what it is today: a farm that grows 2,000 acres of peanuts and is spread out across Jackson County from Blue Springs to Graceville.

Gilbert has been willing to try new ways of doing things on the farm. Because their operation is so spread out, the Gilberts usually grow one crop per year, rotating all of their land at the same time. The last two years they grew only cotton and this year they grew only peanuts. When asked about his rotation strategy, Dexter recognizes that it may not be the ideal situation in terms of risk management, but says that focusing on one crop helps to get the job done, since they farm over such a large area.

Gilbert has also done some of their own on-farm testing. They have compared twin row versus a single row planting pattern. They tested the two methods side by side and saw a 30 percent increase in production from twin row planting.

Gilbert Farms have also combined conservation tillage and cover to help reduce input costs while improving their cotton, peanut and corn yields. They have seen more organic matter in the soil and are also happy with soil’s pH levels.

Gilbert is a member of St. Paul AME Church, and very active in his community. He is a board member of the Campbellton Browntown Development Council. He was nominated as Businessman of the Year by the Jackson County NAACP Branch and in 2014 received the Jackson County Peanut Farmer of the Year Award. Mr. Gilbert has also been a board member of the National Black Growers Council of Washington, DC since 2008. He works very closely with the Jackson County Cooperative Extension in Florida and extended collaborations with the 1890 Land Grants in the region in general, and with Tuskegee University in particular.
Loans to young, beginning, small and non-traditional farmers.

Direct loans from First South or participation with the USDA Farm Service Agency and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

First South supports individuals seeking financial avenues to enter Alabama's retail agricultural markets.