



Tuskegee University  
121<sup>st</sup> Annual Farmers Conference

# Partnering for Progress

**February 21-22, 2013**

Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center at Tuskegee University  
Tuskegee, Alabama

# 2013 Merit Farm Family Award



## **The John Brown Family Selma, Alabama**

Tuskegee University Dallas County Cooperative Extension Office  
Gertrude Wall, County Agent  
Alphonso Elliott, Master Extension Agent Specialist  
Bobby England, Farm Management Specialist  
Miriam Montgomery, Secretary



The Farmers Conference at Tuskegee University is often cited as being the oldest conference of its type in the nation. The first Farmers Conference was held at Tuskegee University on February 23, 1892. The purpose was to convene farmers in an educationally stimulating environment to arouse public sentiment among the farmers and create a real interest in the common, mundane and practical affairs of life. The morning was spent identifying problems, while the afternoon portion of the conference focused on solutions.

Today, this conference has evolved into a two day event that provides intense course instruction, interactive demonstrations and discussions as well as an opportunity for producers to network with colleagues and university educators. The main focus of the conference is still on the problems and solutions for small-scale farmers, landowners, and their families in managing change in agriculture and lifestyles.

The objectives of this conference are to: (1) share up-to-date information relevant to small-scale farmers and landowners involved in production of traditional and alternative agricultural products; (2) create awareness about family health, nutritional challenges, and existing resources for rural families; (3) provide research-based information in a consumer adaptable format; and (4) strengthen networks and partnerships that address problems of small-scale agriculture and rural communities with respect to local, national and global markets.

# SCHEDULE

## **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2013**

**8:30 a.m.** .....Registration (Conference Registration Desk)

**9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**..... Exhibits and Health Fair Open  
Farm Equipment Mini- Expo

**10:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.** .....Plenary Session (Auditorium)

*This session will provide an in-depth learning experience of the best strategies to conserve and minimize contamination of groundwater resources. You will receive hands-on exercises to strengthen your knowledge on the various water quality concepts that will be covered during the session. The range of topics to be covered include: Bacterial Contaminants in Surface and Groundwater, Soil Testing and Fertilizer Recommendation for Groundwater Quality Enhancement, Strategies for Proper Well Maintenance, Benefits of Testing Your Well Water and Irrigation Water Conservation Strategies. During the session you will get a better understanding of how you can protect and manage our precious water supply. (Participants are encouraged to bring a sample of well, spring, pond and stream water they would like tested.*

### **Understanding On-Farm Pathogens for Human and Livestock Health**

**Facilitator:** Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** William Deutsch, Auburn University

### **Soil Testing and Fertilizer Recommendation for Groundwater Quality Improvement**

**Facilitator:** Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Goebena Huluka, Auburn University

**12:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.** ..... Opening Luncheon (Ballroom)

**Presiding:** Ntam Baharanyi, Tuskegee University

**Welcome:** Walter A. Hill, Tuskegee University

**Greetings:** William Puckett, NRCS/USDA

**Words of Inspiration:** Ron Smith, Tuskegee University

**Speaker:** Dollie Hambrick, ARISE, Montgomery, AL

***The Affordable Healthcare Act and Its Impact on Rural Communities***

**Remarks:** William A. Hodge, Tuskegee University

**2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.** ..... Concurrent Workshops

### **Diet, Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention (Meeting Room A)**

**Facilitator:** Leslie Clark, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Melissa Johnson, Tuskegee University

### **Well Management Strategies (Auditorium)**

**Facilitator:** Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Heath Davis, Davis Well Company

# SCHEDULE

**Financial Opportunities for Well Construction**

**Presenter:** Christopher Joe, NRCS

**Starting Up: Alternative Marketing Options** (*Meeting Room D & E*)

**Facilitator:** Decetti Taylor, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Deacue Fields, Auburn University

**Farm-based Business Plans and Record Keeping** (*Meeting Room F&G*)

**Facilitator:** Nii Tackie, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Youssouf Diabate, Tuskegee University

**3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.** ..... **Break**

**4:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.** ..... **Concurrent Sessions Continued**

**Diet, Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention** (*Meeting Room A*)

**Facilitator:** Jermelle Custer, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Melissa Johnson, Tuskegee University

**Annual Meeting of the Small Farmers Cooperative** (*Meeting Room B*)

**Facilitator:** Miles Robinson, Tuskegee University

**Water Sampling and Testing Procedures** (*Auditorium*)

**Facilitator:** Leah Osinuga

**Presenter:** Raymon Shange, Tuskegee University

**Irrigation Water Conservation Strategies for Limited Resource Farmers**

**Presenter:** Leonard Githinji, Tuskegee University

**Farm-based Business Plans and Record Keeping** (*Meeting Rooms F & G*)

**Facilitator:** Nii Tackie, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Youssouf Diabate, Tuskegee University

**Starting Up: Communicating in the Marketplace** (*Meeting Rooms D & E*)

**Facilitator:** Decetti Taylor, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Deacue Fields, Auburn University

**6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.** ..... **T. M. Campbell Leadership Awards Banquet** (*Ballroom*)

**Presiding:** Lawrence Haygood, Tuskegee University

**Greetings/Welcome:** Gilbert L. Rochon, President, Tuskegee University

Ronnie Davis, RDA/USDA

**Speaker:** Kimble Forrister, ARISE, Montgomery, AL

**Presentation and Remarks:** Walter A. Hill, Tuskegee University

***Presentation of T. M. Campbell Award***

# SCHEDULE

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2013

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

7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. .... **Breakfast Buffet**

8:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. .... **Exhibits, Health Fair and  
Farm Equipment Mini Expo Open**

8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m. .... **Concurrent Sessions**

**Women in Agriculture** (*Auditorium*)

**Facilitator:** Rhonda Benton, Bullock County, AL

**Beginning Business Planning for Farmers and Food Entrepreneurs** (*Meeting Rooms D & E*)

**Facilitator:** Decetti Taylor, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Gary Matteson, Farm Credit Council, Washington, DC

**Urban and Container Gardening** (*Meeting Room A*)

**Facilitator:** Walter Baldwin, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Desmond Mortley, Tuskegee University

**Timber and Wildlife Management for Non Industrial Private Forest Land Owners** (*Meeting Room B*)

**Facilitator:** Ronald C. Smith, Tuskegee University

**Presenters:** Jerry Bettis and Ronald C. Smith, Tuskegee University

**Producing for Commercial Markets** (*Meeting Rooms F & G*)

**Facilitator:** Alfred Jackson, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

Miles Robinson, Tuskegee University

Audrey Zeigler, Tuskegee University

9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. .... **Break**

9:45 a.m. - 11:00 p.m. .... **Concurrent Sessions Continued**

**Women in Agriculture** (*Auditorium*)

**Facilitator:** Rhonda Benton, Bullock County, AL

**Pasture Poultry Start Up** (*Meeting Room A*)

**Facilitator:** Alfred Jackson, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Jannette Bartlett, Tuskegee University

**Timber and Wildlife Management for Non Industrial Private Forest Landowners** (*Meeting Room B*)

**Facilitator:** Ronald C. Smith, Tuskegee University

**Presenters:** Jerry Bettis and Ronald C. Smith, Tuskegee University

# SCHEDULE

**The Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)** (*Meeting Rooms F & G*)

**Facilitator:** Quinton Harris, USDA, Opelika, AL

**Presenters:** Youssef Diabate, Tuskegee University  
Richard Martin, Tuskegee University

**USDA/FSA Microloan Program** (*Meeting Rooms D&E*)

**Facilitator:** Anthony McCarty, USDA/FSA

**11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. .... Break**

**11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. .... Merit Farm Family Luncheon** (*Ballroom*)

*Hispanic and Women Farmers and Ranchers Claims Process*

**Presenter:** Vickie A. Lane, USDA/FSA

**Presiding:** William A. Hodge, Tuskegee University

**Greetings/Welcome:** Louis Maxwell, Macon County Commission Chairman

**Words of Inspiration:** William C. Lennard, Tuskegee University

**Greeting:** Daniel Robinson, USDA/FSA

**Presentation and Remarks:** Walter A. Hill, Tuskegee University

**Presentation of Merit Farm Family Award**

**1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. .... Concurrent Sessions Continued**

**Beginning Crop Production and Composting** (*Meeting Room B*)

**Facilitator:** Decetti Taylor, Tuskegee University

**Presenters:** Jan Garrett, Auburn University, Sunbright Farm, Tuskegee, AL and Joe Kemble, Auburn University

**Small Herd Health Management and Production** (*Meeting Rooms D & E*)

**Facilitator:** Uma Karki, Tuskegee University

**Presenters:** Nar Gurung, Tuskegee University

Uma Karki, Tuskegee University, Kenneth Newkirk, Tuskegee University

Wendell McElhenney, Tuskegee University, Byeng Min, Tuskegee University

**Producing for Commercial Markets** (*Meeting Room F&G*)

**Facilitator:** George Hunter, Tuskegee University

**Presenter:** Miles Robinson, Tuskegee University

Barrett Vaughan, Tuskegee University

Audrey Zeigler, Tuskegee University

**Seedco Financial for Small Farms and Rural Enterprises** (*Meeting Room A*)

**Facilitator:** Youssef Diabate, Tuskegee University

**Presenters:** Permell Jenkins and Melanie Bouyer, Seedco Financial Services, Inc., Montgomery, AL

# 2013 MERIT FARM FAMILY AWARDEE



Mr. John Brown, Jr. is a fourth generation Black Belt farmer from Selma, Dallas County, Alabama. Brown's great grandfather and grandfather farmed as sharecroppers. Brown's father, John Brown, Sr. purchased the farm John currently farms while serving two tours of duty in World War II. He sent money home every month to pay for the farm. After his tour of duty ended, John Brown, Sr. returned home and farmed full-time on his 40 acres of land. This farm provided all the necessary resources for the entire family. John Brown, Sr. grew cotton, peanuts, peas, watermelon, butter beans and greens.

Upon the death of John Brown, Sr. the farm passed to John, Jr. where he continues his father's legacy. John Brown followed in his father's footsteps not only with the farm but by serving in the Operation: Desert Storm War. After coming home from the war Brown continued to maintain the farm and grow the same crops that his father grew except cotton. According to Brown "he has doubled the production of the farm with technology, irrigation, modern equipment and chemicals." Brown is a year-round farmer growing peas, watermelon, corn, okra, sweet potatoes and greens.

Brown has always shared his knowledge and love of farming with other farmers. His farm serves as a demonstration site for Tuskegee University. Brown even opened up his farm to a delegation from Turkmenistan (Russia). This delegation was interested in learning about underground and above irrigation systems. Brown has been assisted by Tuskegee University to build a greenhouse. Other area farmers will use the greenhouse as well.



As president of the Dallas County Farmers Association, Brown assists farmers not only in Dallas County but across the Black Belt. He purchases seeds and collard plants for local farmers throughout the Black Belt. When other sources stopped supplying the "Puerto Rican sweet potato slips" John met with small farm staff at Tuskegee University to discuss this issue and now Tuskegee University is supplying the potato slips to the farmers in the area.



Brown, with assistance from Tuskegee University, and land donated by the Selma-Dallas County Farmers Association, has worked tirelessly to establish a farmers market research center in the Alabama Black Belt. These efforts came to fruition on December 4, 2011, when ground was broken to begin construction of the Black Belt Fruit and Vegetable Market and Innovation Center, on Highway 80 just outside of Selma.

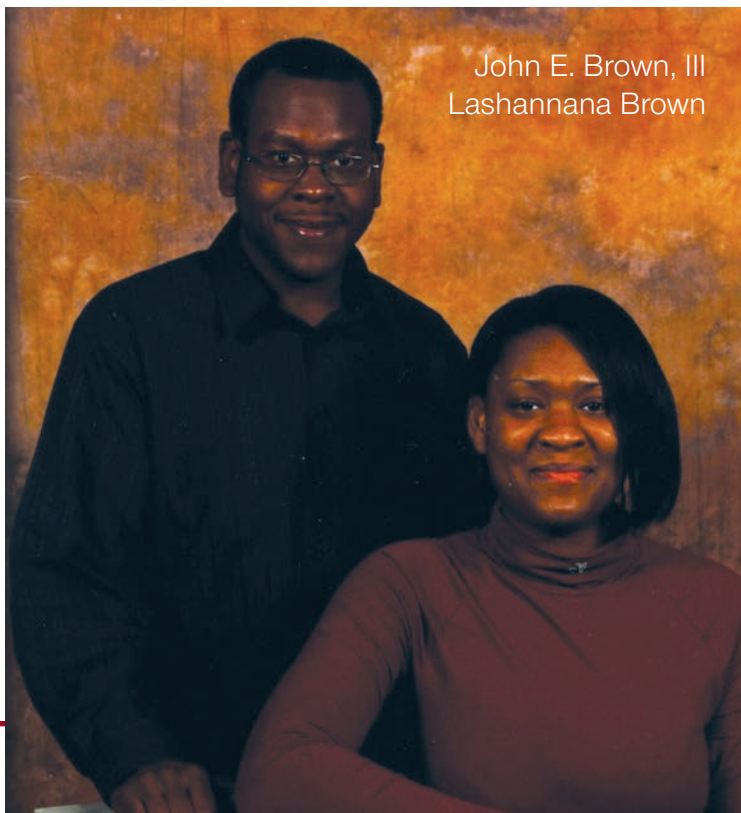
Brown served on a panel discussion at Tuskegee University entitled "Cultivating organic marketing opportunities for small farmers." According to Brown "you can take 40 acres and with plastic, irrigation and chemicals you can double your production." Brown believes that farmers must hold their crop as long as possible in



order to keep the middle man out increasing their profitability. He further states that he would like to do research on seeds that the farmer can use from year to year instead of buying seeds for each planting cycle. Brown was assisted in obtaining a two-year SARE Grant to provide research on marketing and sustainable vegetable production on his farm.

Brown believes in giving back to his community. He shares his produce with adult day care centers and allows the participants of the centers and other non-profit organizations to gather produce. He provides fresh vegetables to senior citizens that can't afford to pay for them, and currently serves as president of the New Small Farmers Agricultural Cooperative..

John Brown and his wife of 28 years, Delphine, have two children, son John E. Brown, III and daughter Lashannana, who represent the next generation of Browns on the land in the Alabama Black Belt.



John E. Brown, III  
Lashannana Brown



# YOUTH FORUM

**Friday, February 22, 2013**

**Millicent Braxton, Facilitator**

8:30 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Student Registration John A. Kenney Hall Bioethics Center
9:00 a.m. 9:10 a.m.	Welcome Miss Tuskegee University & Court
9:10 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Agricultural Careers and Internships  ■ Terry Bradden, Jr. Presentation: <i>Brother Speak to Me</i> ■ Rodney Stone, USDA Liaison ■ Gwen Lewis, U. S. Forest Service Liaison ■ Nickey Jefferson, Extension Entrepreneurship Specialist Motivating Our Best in Leadership and Entrepreneurship (M.O.B.I.L.E.) Summer Health and Fitness Academy (SHAFa) Skegee Fit Forestry Camp Entrepreneurship Camp  ■ Olga Bolden-Tiller, Department Head, TU Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, AgriTREK/SciTREK AgDiscovery Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Related Sciences (MANRRS)  ■ Ralphenia Pace, Department Head, Food and Nutritional Sciences Tuskegee University Food and Nutritional Sciences Club (TUFANS)  ■ Rick Mosely, School of Veterinary Medicine VET-STEP Program  ■ Tuskegee University Office of Admissions
10:20 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.	From Facebook to Checkbook: Using Social Media to Make Career Choices Timothy E. Lewis, Research Associate, Tuskegee University
11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.	Travel to University Research Farm
11:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.	Tour of University Research Sites ■ Animal Unit ■ Greenhouses ■ Department of Food & Nutrition
12:15 p.m. – 12:30 p.m.	Travel back to campus
12:30 p.m.	Lunch

# ABOUT THE SPEAKERS



**Dollie Hambrick** is employed with ARISE Citizens' Policy Project as a Healthcare Organizer. Previously, she was a social worker with the Alabama Department of Public Health and taught Social Work at the University of Alabama. She has also served as a consultant with Home Health Public Health and the Office of Rural Health. Prior to coming to Alabama, she worked in Jackson, MS.

Ms. Hambrick earned her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Jackson State University, MSW from Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, TX and certification of "Teaching Bachelors Social Work at the University of Chicago.

## T. M. CAMPBELL LEADERSHIP AWARDEE



**Kimble Forrister**, a native of Nashville, Tennessee, joined ARISE in 1991 as state coordinator. He worked in urban ministry in the Northeast in the 1970s, completed a Master of Divinity at Princeton Theological Seminary, and served as Southeast Regional Organizer at Bread for the World for nine years in the 1980s.

Arise Citizens' Policy Project (ACPP), founded in 1994, is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan coalition of 150 congregations and community groups and some 1,400 individuals united in their belief that low-income people are suffering because of state policy decisions. Through ACPP, groups and individuals join together to promote state policies that improve the lives of low-income Alabamians. In a state that by many measures is the worst place for poor people to live in the United States, ACPP believes acts of charity are vital, but they are not enough; we must work to improve harmful state policies. ACPP provides a structure in which Alabamians can engage in public debates with the goal of improving the welfare of all Alabamians.

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Mid-South Resource, Conservation & Development Council, USDA  
Rural Business-Cooperative Service, USDA (through the Rural Energy Program)  
Farm Service Agency, USDA  
Small Farm Technical Assistance and Outreach Program, Tuskegee University  
Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program, Tuskegee University  
Seedco Financial Services, Inc.

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Alabama Farmers Federation  
Alabama Farmer's Market Authority  
Alabama Forestry Commission  
Farm Service Agency, USDA  
Federation of Southern Cooperatives  
Forest Service, USDA  
Southern Rural Development Council

## **TUSKEGEE UNIVERSITY**

College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences  
Cooperative Extension Program

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## COMMITTEE

Ntam Baharanyi, Chair  
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USDA-NRCS/William Puckett, Honorary Chair  
USDA-FSA/Daniel Robinson, Honorary Chair

William A. Hodge, Miles Robinson, Tasha Hargrove, Program Chairs



# 2013 MERIT FARMER



**John Brown**  
**Selma, Alabama**



# TUSKEGEE

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## UNIVERSITY

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