**Meeting Overview**

SERA-47 Local & Regional Foods annual meeting allowed extension and research colleagues in the Southern region to come and share the great work they are doing and explore how it might be expanded throughout the region. The 2021 annual meeting ‘Engaging New Frontiers’ took place virtually via Zoom due to COVID-19 and was hosted by the Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University.

The objectives of the 2021 Annual Meeting were to:

* Highlight the vision and priorities for the new 5-year proposal for SERA-47.
* Discuss work completed, identify future action plans, and select leadership for each working group.
* Learn what is happening around local and regional foods in the region and how colleagues can better collaborate across disciplinary and state lines. Total of 93 individuals registered for the Annual Meeting from 1862 Land Grant Universities, 1890 and 1994 Land Grant Universities, Non-Land Grant Universities, and individuals external to higher education. The registrant breakdown is as follows:
* 1862 Land Grant: 48
* 1890 Land Grant: 25
* 1994 Land Grant: 1
* Non-Land Grant: 4
* External to Higher Education: 15

The institutions and organizations represented included:

* Alabama A&M University
* Alabama Cooperative Extension System
* Americorps
* Aramark
* Clemson University
* Colorado State University Extension
* Delaware State University
* Florida Food Policy Council
* Florida A and M University
* Georgia Organics
* Hometown Foods, LLC.
* Iowa State University Extension
* Langston University
* Lincoln University
* Louisiana State University & LSU AgCenter
* Mississippi State University
* North Carolina State Extension, NC State, & NC A&T State University
* Oklahoma State University
* RAO Community Health
* Rural Organizing.org
* Southern Rural Development Center
* Southern University Agricultural Research and Extension Center
* Texas A&M University
* Tuskegee University & Cooperative Extension
* University of Arkansas & Extension
* University of Florida/IFAS Extension & University of Florida
* University of Kentucky
* University of Maryland Eastern Shore
* University of Puerto Rico, Agricultural Experiment Station
* University of Tennessee Extension
* University of Virgin Islands
* USDA Ag Marketing
* USDA – NIFA
* Utah State University
* Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, & Virginia State University

Actual meeting attendance throughout the annual meeting included:

* Day 1: 66
* Day 2: 31
* Day 3: 53

**Summary of Meeting Day 1 (Monday, 12/13/21)**

Time: 10 to noon CST

Day 1 comprised of welcoming the SERA-47 group meeting, going over and approving the meeting minutes from the 2020 annual meeting, updates and highlights from the administrators and working group leaders.

* Welcome & SERA-47 Overview

**Virginie Zoumenou**, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Chair

* Minutes from 2020 Annual Meeting

**Jayesh Samtani,** Virginia Tech, Secretary

* Administrative Advisor Updates

**Ed Jones,** Virginia Tech

* Southern Rural Development Center Updates

**John Green**, Director, SRDC

* Working group updates, from the working group chairs listed under leadership above.
* SERA-47 Resource Bank

**Janie Burnie**, University of Tennessee; **Russ Garner**, SRDC

* Iowa State University Food System Database

**Courtney Long**, Food Systems Program Manager, Iowa State Univ.

* Food Distribution Research Society

**Jonathan Baros**, FDRS President, North Carolina State Univ.

* Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education

**Jeff Jordan**, SSARE Program Director

* USDA AMS Minority Farmer Project Update

**Virginie Zoumenou**, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore

* APLU Extension Committee on Organization and Policy Urban Agriculture Initiative

**Brent Hales**, Penn State University Extension

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**Summary of Meeting Day 2 (Tuesday, 12/14/21)**

Time: 1 to 2 p.m. CST

On day two, Virginie Zoumenou presented an overview of the new SERA-47 proposal and we developed the working groups that will serve for the next 5 years.

**Proposal Objective 1:** Increase interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaborations and networking efforts among extension and research food system professionals across the region.

**Proposed Working Group(s):** Resource Bank; Learning and Engagement

**Proposal Objective 2:** Identify current and emerging issues specific to food system development in the Southern region.

**Proposed Working Group:** Food System Resiliency and Development

**Proposal Objective 3:** Assess local food system policy, opportunities for expansion, environmental change, and economic development issues, make policy recommendations, and develop best practices for communities across the region.

**Proposed Working Group:** Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

**Summary of Day 3 (Wednesday, 12/15/21)**

Time: 10 a.m. to noon CST

On day three, we had updates from several members of USDA and other foody system programs and center leaders. The annual meeting was concluded by reflecting on the meeting and the activities of the year and electing a new secretary for the group.

* USDA NIFA Updates

**Carrie Castille**, Director, USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

* USDA AMS Investments in Local/Regional Food Systems

**Betsy Rakola**, Acting Deputy Administrator Transportation and Marketing Program USDA Agricultural Marketing Service

* USDA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

**Alex Cordova**, Community Outreach Specialist USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement

* Innovative Ways to Connect Consumers in FCS

**Mike Whitesides**, Utah State University Health Communities Initiative

* Healthy Communities Initiative

**Denise Holston,** LSU AgCenter

* North Carolina State University Local Foods Program

**Dara Bloom & Hannah Dankbar**, North Carolina State University

* Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation

**Kim Niewolny**, Director, Virginia Tech

* Reflections

**Virginie Zoumenou**, University of Maryland-Eastern Shore, Chair

* Nomination/Election of a Secretary

**Naveen Kumar Dixit,** University of Maryland-Eastern Shore was elected as Secretary of SERA-47 for the 2022 calendar year.

* Moving Forward

**Marcus Coleman**, Tulane University, is the 2022 Chair-Elect