

New England Feeding New England Research Team Bios

Dr. Sarah Amin is an Assistant Professor and Director of Community Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed & EFNEP) in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. Her research lies at the intersection of health promotion and community-based research. She works in partnership with the community to develop and test innovative nutrition education approaches that promote positive health outcomes and reduce disparities among racially and ethnically diverse families with a focus on school-age children. Dr. Amin's early research addressed the application of dietary assessment methods including digital imaging to evaluate national school nutrition policy and on food literacy as a framework for nutrition education in schools. This has recently expanded to the out-of-school environment and summer learning loss through a USDA grant, which addresses the dietary behaviors and STEM academic achievement of at-risk youth attending summer camps. In her spare time, Dr. Amin enjoys doing anything that gets her outside and active. She is an avid hiker and is half way through peak-bagging the NH48 4000 footers. [Dietary Needs Team]

Laura Barley is the Program Manager for American Farmland Trust's Farms for a New Generation initiative based in Northampton, MA. Through her work at AFT she has co-authored the 2020 *Farms Under Threat: New England* report that examines recent trends in farmland loss and has launched an interactive *Agricultural Viability* Index website to analyze the Northeast regional agriculture system. This work will inform the development of the production milestones methodology for the New England Feeding New England project, including the analysis of current production levels, soil suitability, and future conversion of agricultural land. Laura will also contribute to connecting current dietary patterns to regional food production, as well as analyzing local food market trends. Laura has previously worked as an analyst for Organic Valley CROPP Cooperative on best pasture management practices and milk nutrition, as a farmers market manager in Boston, and has completed the Tufts' Agriculture Food and Environment masters' program. [Dietary Needs, Market Demand, and Production Teams]

Ramón Borges-Méndez, PhD, born in Puerto Rico, has worked in the US, Latin America, and Asia. He is an Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Community Development at the International Development, Community, and Environment Department at Clark University (Worcester, MA), where he is coordinator of the undergraduate Urban Studies concentration, and he teaches graduate courses on food systems, inequality, labor economics, migration, and globalization. He holds a PhD and an MCP in Urban and Regional Planning from MIT. Prof. Borges-Méndez is co-founder of *Fundación Bucarabón* in Maricao, PR, and currently Co-Chair of the board of Worcester Common Ground Community Development Corporation. He has occupied leadership positions in other organizations and non-profits such as the Massachusetts Endowment for the Humanities, Farm-to-Institutions New England, the Mauricio Gaston Institute/UMASS-Boston, and ARNOVA, and has consulted for the World Bank, US Dept. of Labor, The Ford Foundation, SEIU-1099 NYC, the Brookings Institution, and the United Nations. His work has been published in *CENTRO* Journal, the *Economic Development Quarterly*, *Local Environment*, *Agriculture and Human Values*, and the *Journal of Extreme Events*. [Market Demand and Production Teams]

Brian Donahue is Associate Professor of American Environmental Studies on the Jack Meyerhoff Fund at Brandeis University, and Senior Conservationist at Highstead. He teaches courses on environmental history and sustainable farming and forestry. Donahue holds a BA, MA, and PhD from the Brandeis program in the History of American Civilization. He co-founded and for 12 years directed Land's Sake, a non-profit community farm in Weston, Massachusetts. For three years he was Director of Education at The Land Institute in Salina, Kansas, and now sits on the board of the Thoreau Farm Trust, the Massachusetts Woodland Institute, and The Land Institute. Donahue is author of *Reclaiming the Commons: Community Farms and Forests in a New England Town* (Yale University Press, 1999), which was awarded the book prize from Historical New England; and *The Great Meadow: Farmers and the Land in Colonial Concord* (Yale Press, 2004), which won book prizes from the New England Historical Association, the Agricultural History Society, and the American Society for Environmental History. He also published *American Georgics: Writings on Farming, Culture and the Land* (Yale Press, 2011), an anthology co-edited with Edwin Hagenstein and Sara Gregg. Donahue is co-author of *Wildlands and Woodlands: A Vision for the New England Landscape* (Harvard Forest, 2010) and *A New England Food Vision: Healthy Food for All, Sustainable Farming and Fishing, Thriving Communities* (Food Solutions New England, 2014). He and his family co-own and manage Bascom Hollow Farm, in Gill, Massachusetts, which raises beef cattle, pork, pumpkins, and timber. [Dietary Team Lead, Production Team]

Holly Fowler is co-founder and CEO of Northbound Ventures Consulting, LLC, a sustainable communities and food system consulting firm that works with clients who have ambitious goals to improve health and economic outcomes, primarily for low-income, underserved populations and areas. Holly routinely supports communities nationwide through facilitation and technical assistance to identify strategies that prioritize equitable development through food system assets and policy interventions. Prior to starting Northbound, Holly served as the Senior Director of Sustainability & Corporate Social Responsibility for Sodexo North America, the world's second largest provider of institutional food service, where she guided progressive operational and sourcing practices across all markets - corporate, academic, healthcare, leisure and government. Holly holds a Professional Certificate in Sustainable Food Systems Leadership from the University of Vermont, a Masters in Business Administration from Babson College, and a BA from Bowdoin College. [Market Demand Team Lead]

Hannah Leighton is the Director of Research and Evaluation at Farm to Institution New England, a six-state cross-sector regional network that is transforming the food system by mobilizing the power of New England institutions. By 2030, FINE envisions New England institutions and the FINE network playing leadership roles in cultivating a region that is moving towards self-reliance. FINE envisions an equitable and just food system that provides access to healthy and abundant food for all New Englanders, and is defined by sustainable and productive land and ocean ecosystems. Hannah oversees FINE's metrics project, manages internal and collaborative research efforts, and leads FINE's efforts to measure the impact of farm to institution activity across the region. Prior to her work at FINE, Hannah spent several years writing about food, working in hospitality, and farming on vegetable and small-scale livestock farms across the country. [Market Demand Team]

Ashley McCarthy is a Research Associate on the New England Feeding New England project working on the production team to estimate suitable land area for crop production and develop production milestones for 2030. Ashley is also a Postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences at the University of Vermont. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on meeting the food and nutrition needs of the growing population while improving sustainability and resiliency to disruptions in the food system. She's particularly interested in the role that regional food systems could play in overall food system resilience and sustainability. Ashley uses a variety of methodological approaches in her work, including geospatial analysis, quantitative food systems modeling, and statistical analysis. Ashley is located in Burlington, VT. [Production Team]

April McIlwaine is a masters student at the University of Vermont in the Food Systems program. She holds a degree in Biology from SUNY Purchase and was the recipient of the Women in Tech award in 2019. She has worked on a number of urban organic farms and taught farm and environmental education to NYC youth through the educational non-profit City Growers. For this project she will be working alongside Eric von Wettberg on the production milestones team where part of her role will be to consider land needs for the next generation of farmers. [Production Team]

Dr. Christian Peters works with the USDA ARS, and is the research leader for the Food Systems Research Center on the University of Vermont campus. In this role, he collaborates with the Center's associate director and the UVM College of Agriculture dean to lay a foundation for the Center, and to set the research agenda. He comes to the USDA and UVM from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University where he taught in the Agriculture, Food and Environment graduate degree program for 11 years. He joined Tufts University as an assistant professor in 2010 and was promoted to associate professor, with tenure, in 2016. Dr. Peters studies the sustainability of food systems using computational modeling and through interdisciplinary research. He is interested in understanding how dietary patterns influence sustainability, how much food can be supplied through locally and regionally-scaled systems, and how transdisciplinary approaches can help to design and study such systems. Some of his best-known work includes development of a framework for estimating land requirements of diets and human carrying capacity, and a spatial modeling approach for mapping potential foodsheds. His work is well grounded in New England, but also national and global in scale, and he is a widely acclaimed researcher in food systems. He received his BS in Environmental Sciences from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and his MS and PhD in Soil and Crop Sciences from Cornell University. [Production Team Lead]

Scott Richardson is co-founder and Partner of Northbound Ventures Consulting, LLC. He brings to this work a broad range of finance, operations and strategy experience serving the private, philanthropic and public sectors. Previously, Scott was the Director of Research and Strategic Initiatives for Project Bread, Massachusetts' statewide anti-hunger organization, where his responsibilities included identifying, implementing, and measuring the impact and feasibility of new projects to improve access to healthy food for underserved populations. Scott's work to improve public school nutrition specifically has been documented in several academic journals. Scott holds a Professional Certificate in Sustainable Food Systems Leadership from the University of Vermont, a Masters in Business Administration from Babson

College, and a BA from Rutgers University. In 2021, he completed his PhD in Population Health Sciences with a focus on nutrition at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. [Market Demand Team]

Nicolas Rockler is an economic consultant specializing in regional impact measurement, modeling, and assessment. He is highly experienced in the development and application of regional econometric, input-output, and hybrid models. He has more than 35 years experience as a regional economist. Since 2006, Dr. Rockler has been CEO of Kavet, Rockler and Associates, a Vermont consulting firm. He has served on the staff of the Multiregional Planning Group at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). While there, he conducted research on climate change, completed several studies for the Economic Development Administration on the long-run impact of public infrastructure investment, done research for the Joyce Foundation, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Current project work concerns the State of New England's food industries and agricultural sector performance, evaluation of Vermont Capital Improvement Program, and development impact consequences of hazardous waste disposal in Western New York State. Dr. Rockler completed his Ph.D. at MIT with his dissertation titled, "Regional Economic Performance and Public Infrastructure Investment." He received BA and MA degrees in regional science at the University of Pennsylvania. Prior to attending MIT, Dr. Rockler was a senior economist at Data Resources, Inc. (DRI, now Global Insight, Inc.) and F.W. Dodge, both subsidiaries of McGraw-Hill, Inc. at the time. Prior to that position, he was an economic analyst at Abt Associates, Inc. and an economist at HSMM, an engineering firm (now part of AECOM). [Economic Impact of the Food System]

Scott Sawyer, PhD, is the research director for the San Diego Food System Alliance, where he helped to develop [San Diego County Food Vision 2030](#). He formerly worked at Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, where he contributed to the development of [Vermont's Farm to Plate Initiative](#). Scott lives in Southern California with his wife, daughter, and bernedoodle. [Jobs & Establishment, Food Flows, and Occupational Segregation by Race/Ethnicity]

Sarah Schumann is the principal of Shining Sea Fisheries Consulting, a mission-driven research and education firm specializing in fisheries, wild seafood, and environmental information and decision-making. Shining Sea combines roots in the commercial fishing community with a commitment to sound science, public engagement, and systems thinking to support coastal and ocean environments and the fishermen who make their livelihoods in these places. Shining Sea's business model blends contract consulting with pro-bono services to support fishing communities and their allies in advancing healthy fishery habitats and resilient seafood systems. Sarah is also a commercial fisherman in Point Judith, RI, the author of *Rhode Island's Shellfish Heritage: An Ecological History* and *Simmering the Sea: Diversifying Our Cookery to Sustain Our Fisheries*, and editor of the online multimedia journal *Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Marketing*. [Production Team]

Joshua Stoll

Joshua Stoll is an assistant professor in the School of Marine Sciences at the University of Maine. His research focuses on questions about coastal community resilience, ocean governance, fisheries policy,

and food systems. Joshua is the co-founder of the Local Catch Network and has been working to elevate the role of seafood in local and regional food systems for more than a decade. He holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Bates College, a Masters in Coastal Environmental Management from Duke University, and a PhD in Ecology and Environmental Sciences from the University of Maine. Prior to returning to Maine, he was an early career research fellow in the Global Economic Dynamics and the Biosphere Program at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Sweden. [Production Team]

Eric von Wettberg is an associate professor in Plant and Soil Science and the director of the Food Systems graduate program at the University of Vermont. He has studied the genetics and agroecology of a number of legumes over the past decade, with an aim towards improving the climate reliance of nutritious, culturally meaningful crops. His work aims to preserve crop genetic diversity, introduce new crops to the northeast, and improve the sustainability of crop rotations and cropping systems. He is keen to bring his experience working with the Vermont Land Trust, the Association of Africans Living in Vermont, and the Vermont Indigenous Heritage Center to bear on providing farmland access to new farmers, and facilitating the production of climatically resilient and nutritious crops. [Production Team]

STAFF BIOS

Sarah Axe joined the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund in 2021 as the New England Feeding New England Project Manager. She is responsible for implementing and overseeing a project work plan that is bringing together organizations, businesses, government entities, and institutions from around New England to strengthen the viability, sustainability, reliability, and resilience of the region's food economy. She previously worked as a consultant to public and private entities working on food systems projects, such as the Good Food Purchasing Program and Double Up Food Bucks. Prior to consulting she worked in the City of Austin's Public Health Department as the Food Access Coordinator, where she managed a portfolio of healthy food access initiatives. Sarah moved to Western Massachusetts from Austin, TX where she received her Master's Degree in Public Affairs at the University of Texas LBJ School of Public Policy.

Ellen Kahler is the Executive Director of the VT Sustainable Jobs Fund which manages Vermont statewide food system development efforts known as VT Farm to Plate. VSJF/VT Farm to Plate is part of the New England State Food System Planners Partnership and they are providing grants management and administrative support to the New England Feeding New England project. Ellen is actively involved in working with all the researchers associated with this project and in ensuring the project deliverables are achieved. She also serves on the Food Solutions New England Network Team and helps provide connectivity between the NEFNE project and the New England Food Vision update project. Ellen helped shape and publish the 2011-2020 Farm to Plate Strategic Plan and the 2021-2030 Vermont Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan, as well as support the development and work of the statewide Farm to Plate Network. Ellen has served on the Working Lands Enterprise Fund since its inception in 2012, which annually distributes grants to food system businesses and service provider organizations, and was appointed by Governor Phil Scott to serve on the Future of Agriculture Commission in 2021.