

AGRITOURISM

GREENE FIELDS FARM | GREENFIELD, IL

At Greene Fields Farm we bring the school to the farm! We aim to break down the staged environment of Agritourism and offer an authentic educational farm experience. Our customers will leave with more than a pumpkin—they'll also get an appreciation of how we farm and a desire to better understand agriculture.

BACKGROUND: My husband and I are 5th generation farmers. I have worked off the farm as an ag educator for nine years. I am leaving traditional ag education to raise our four young boys and to focus more on our farm. We want our farm to solely support us financially and allow us to raise our family on the farm. In addition to row crops and cattle, we run a successful U-Pick strawberry patch and are expanding into pumpkins. We have the opportunity to combine our experiences in specialty crop direct sales with my educational background to serve the need for real agricultural education in our rural communities.

TEAM LEAD: Christie Joehl

AG TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES



BIDDERBLOCK | HERMITAGE, TN

BidderBlock is the new marketing department for the auction industry. We are a user-friendly marketing service that connects Blocks (auction companies) with potential Bidders. We make it easy to find and remember auctions.

BACKGROUND: I was raised on a row crop and beef cattle operation in west Tennessee. After pursuing a degree in accounting from Murray State University, I went into the sales management field. For seven years, I have perfected business strategy, operations and sales tactics. The most important lesson I have learned is that a business can be the best in its field, but will fail if the proper marketing is not executed. While talking to my grandfather about his struggles with finding the right equipment for his farming operation, I had a wonderful idea that became BidderBlock.

TEAM LEAD: Brittany Clark

KROSE CATTLE COMPANY | THREE FORKS, MT

KRose Cattle Company is a marketing company that helps rural American agriculturalists reach their target customers by using new marketing. We provide quality photos and videos to use as marketing material, help businesses hire interns and employees and teach them how to do their own marketing.

BACKGROUND: I grew up in rural Montana in a family whose income was completely derived from agriculture. I was active in 4-H but truly found my love of agriculture in college. During my senior year of college, I turned down multiple job offers in order to chase my dream of creating a marketing company. I saw a need to use social media to increase the marketing channels available for rural Americans. I had a desire to connect farmers and ranchers to their customers using the power of social media, email and websites. I love the cattle buying business and realized that I could combine it with my marketing skills.

TEAM LEAD: Karoline Rose



WINDCALL MFG., INC. | VENANGO, NE

WMI has miniaturized a 15 ton grain combine to handheld proportions, powered by a commercially available rechargeable battery, significantly impacting the agriculture industry in agricultural and rural communities.

BACKGROUND: Since college, Martin has accumulated over 37 years of experience in the agriculture industry, including operating the family farm in Nebraska, ag-manufacturing and dairy management. This invention was born out of necessity. Over the past 30 years Martin realized that all grain farmers were challenged with finding fields that were ready to harvest. The only tools available were the full sized combine and the bite test. Both are impractical in this high-tech age of farming. He knew there had to be a better way to test moisture.

TEAM LEAD: Martin Bremmer

FARM

BEAGLE BROOKE FARM | MADISON, OH

Beagle Brooke Farm grows food with respect, care and integrity. We treat our animals with love and care because they are more than just livestock to us. There is too much of a disconnect between farming and the dinner table, and we hope to close that gap with wholesome food and community education.

BACKGROUND: I'm an Eagle Scout and an engineering student. Nature has a special spot in my heart. The purpose of Beagle Brooke Farm is to do the right thing the right way. We strive to provide wholesome food, with minimal handling and treatment, direct to consumers. We like to do things simply around here. We use composted manure instead of fertilizer. We have chickens for insect control. We do things this way because we find the extra effort makes our product and reward that much greater. Keeping overhead down allows us to sell our goods at a more affordable price, making healthy eating more accessible.

TEAM LEAD: William P. Potocar



EMILY WESTFALL HORSEMANSHIP | EFFINGHAM, IL

The goal at Emily Westfall Horsemanship is to develop correct riding by training both the rider and horse. The business is designed to help the general public learn about the western heritage and the horses that have evolved to help it.

BACKGROUND: I received my bachelor's degree in animal science/equine science from Murray State University in May 2016. While attending Murray State, I was the public relations officer for the rodeo team. I have also been a part of the management system at Culver's restaurants for many years, providing me skills in organization and communication. With a passion for teaching others and an education in animals and agriculture, instructing and training horsemanship was simply the next step in fulfilling my goals. Rodeo and western heritage have become my passion, and I hope that I will be able to share it.

TEAM LEAD: Emily Westfall

WILLOW HILL FAMILY FARM LLC | PALMYRA, VA

We are a small, diversified family farm in central Virginia. We raise pastured meats and eggs, as well as naturally grown vegetables, herbs, fruits, flowers and hops. Our goal is to provide the most nutritious and sustainably raised food possible to our local community and our growing family.

BACKGROUND: I have three years of small business experience as an owner and manager of a successful property maintenance company in Colorado from 2005 to 2008. I thrived with the task of networking with people, marketing myself and growing our clientele base. I knew I wanted to be my own boss, but was not fulfilled by the work. Since then, I have relocated to Virginia, worked as an intern at an organic farm and found my passion in sustainable agriculture. Fortunately, my wife (and partner) shares the same goals and aspirations as I do, having been incredibly instrumental in my inspiration process.

TEAM LEAD: Bryan Aycok



FARM TO TABLE

GARDENS 4 EDUCATION | HANFORD, CA

Gardens 4 Education sells tomato garden kits to schools as a healthy alternative to the cookie and candy fundraisers. We bring the community together to support local schools. We give the school a better deal, offer the consumer a better value and provide income for local farmers who grow the plants.

BACKGROUND: I grow organic stone fruit and run a hands-on agricultural program where I teach city folk how to garden like a farmer. I was fed up with the cookie dough fundraiser that ran year after year at my daughter's school. So I set out to create a better one, something healthy with a higher profit margin for the school and a good value for the consumer. I created Gardens 4 Education to meet these goals. I did it to help my daughter's class. I wasn't really trying to start a business, but I had found a niche market that needed a better product. And there's nothing better than home-grown tomatoes.

TEAM LEAD: Jeannie Williams

HIGH MOUNTAIN FARMS | WEST JEFFERSON, NC

We are a forage and grain farm that strives to provide local grains to our rural community. We are currently working toward being able to produce livestock feed and provide grains to brewery and distillery outlets. We are also providing grits, corn meal and flour to our local community.

BACKGROUND: As a young boy, I spent my childhood farming with both of my grandfathers. I learned the importance of soil maintenance, crop rotation and being a good steward of the land. They both instilled in me a passion for the land. My business started small as I produced silage for some local farmers for their cattle. This helped me to see the need to expand to more forage and grains to provide healthy, local grown feed for the expanding livestock market. I have just recently stepped away from my 8-5 job so I could follow my passion of farming full time.

TEAM LEAD: Brian Chatham



HOMETOWN HARVEST | FREDERICK, MD

Hometown Harvest is the farmers market...delivered. We are farmer owned and operated and working with over 150 local farmers to provide all of the produce, meats, breads and seafood directly to over 2000 customers. We are creating new innovative ways get more local food into the hands of consumers.

BACKGROUND: I was not born into a farm family, but I have been around and worked in agriculture for the past 20 years. Back in 2009, I was working as a vendor at a farmers market. The market was very congested and parking was an issue. I thought about how there were probably folks in the surrounding neighborhoods that avoided the area. If the goods could come to them though, they would probably purchase. I began to discuss the idea with fellow farmers and customers. About six months later we made our first delivery. Now seven years later, we have 2,000 customers and make about 1,000 deliveries every week.

TEAM LEAD: Tony Brusco

TRIPLE CREEK FARMS | SPERRY, IA

Triple Creek Farms offers direct to consumer sales of free-range eggs, whole chickens, beef and pork, located in s outheastern Iowa. All our beef is currently born and raised on our farm and the hogs that we finish are all purchased from in-county FFA members' Supervised Agricultural Experiences.

BACKGROUND: I grew up in a small town and was involved in a farming operation for part of my high school FFA SAE project. After taking a job in SE Iowa, I meet the local FFA Advisor, whom I later married. We both had a dream of living on a farm and raising not only our future kids there but livestock as well. At first, we wanted to raise animals to be able to feed our family but soon found out that others wanted our fresh eggs and meat, too. We started out small and continue to grow as space allows. My wife and I want to be able to continue to serve our community's need for local, fresh product.

TEAM LEAD: Steven Imhoff



LOCAL FOOD & PRODUCTS



BLUES BERRY FARM LLC | PLANT CITY, FL

We are a small family owned and operated blueberry farm in Florida. We practice sustainable water and energy-saving practices to reduce our environmental impact in bringing our product to market, whether it be fresh blueberries, or one of our many other products.

BACKGROUND: My husband and I are both Corporate America Drop-outs, and we decided to sell everything we owned and start a blueberry farm from scratch. We purchased a dying orange grove over 10 years ago. During a time when people were planting houses, we decided to plant blueberries instead. Today, we have a thriving blueberry farm, and we wish to begin the next great adventure by expanding into farm-based products as well.

TEAM LEAD: Susan Dumke

SASS BREWING COMPANY AND BAKERY | BARRY, IL

Sass is one of five dedicated gluten-free breweries in the country. Sass is female co-owned and fully operated. Sass offers something for everyone!

BACKGROUND: I have a master's in political science, so I've worked as a legislative analyst for three states and a chief financial officer for a state department. In 2015, I decided I wanted to move home after being ill for two years and bed-ridden for eight months. The number one reason I wanted to start a business was to help other people who are or were sick. I tell our customers my story and am able to give hope to people also fighting health problems.

TEAM LEAD: Christina Butler-Triem



THE MAUI COOKIE LADY | MAKAWAO, HI

The Maui Cookie Lady (MCL) creates distinctive, gourmet cookies featuring the tropical flavors of Hawaii. Started as a fundraiser at a Maui farmers market, the cookies are now featured at top hotels, Costco roadshow and other quality markets. Flavors include Kona Coffee Espresso, Vanilla Slurry, Mango, Lilikoi, Pineapple Lychee, Nutella Dark Chocolate Truffle, and the Original Triple Chunker. MCL aspires to be the first cookie company from Maui to achieve international distinction, and is building distribution channels to achieve that dream. In addition to the cookies, we are planning to launch a line of tropical cookie butters, a new product category that's high margin, easy to manufacture and easy to export. We have large pending contracts for the NHL and high end department stores and needing funding to expand.

BACKGROUND: A longtime cookie enthusiast, founder Mitzi Toro began baking cookies to raise funds to thank the nurses who took care of her terminally ill father. She did this for a few weeks at a Maui farmers market, and then was encouraged to turn it into a regular business by customers who didn't want her to stop. She started the company and built her own commercial kitchen, and the cookies garnered fans from as far away as UK, Japan and Dubai. Mitzi just resigned her job as a middle school counselor and is now developing the company full time and looking to expand her current kitchen and buy equipment.

TEAM LEAD: Mitzi Toro

WHITE RIVER CREAMERY | ELKINS, AR

We at WRC produce artisan cheeses from our own Nigerian goat herd and local certified cow milk. We sell directly to customers as well as several grocery stores. We give tours of our sustainable dairy and creamery to school groups ranging from preschool to the university as well as private tours.

BACKGROUND: We had both grown up working on the family farm, but we took a different path teaching science and math. But after a hard year with medical troubles and then a house fire, we decided it was time to follow our dream and start a family farm. Scott was trained under Spanish and French cheesemakers in advanced fresh cheese making and cultures. We learned about goats and the demand on goat products. Tessa used her admin degree; Scott used was he learned from working in shipping/receiving, and he built our home in his spare time. All these skills came in handy when starting White River Creamery.

TEAM LEAD: Scott McCormick



WINERIES, BREWERIES & DISTILLERIES

LE PETIT CHEVALIER VINEYARDS AND GRAPE EDUCATION CENTER | CREOLA, OH

We currently plant, cultivate and sell wine grapes to local wineries. We are planning to open a winery and grape education center. We see our company as a way to promote Ohio agriculture and to encourage others to become involved in viticulture and oenology.

BACKGROUND: I've been an educator for most of my working life, and I've enjoyed it. My passion, however, is working outdoors. When I began to think about my retirement, I wanted to make sure that I could retire into farming. We bought our 21-acre farm about 10 years ago, and started planning and then planting. My wife grew up on a farm in Germany and has a degree in biotechnology. She also sees farming as a long-term goal. Her engineering skills and scientific background has been a real asset in planning the vineyard.

TEAM LEAD: Mark Chevalier



THREE BROTHERS' DISTILLERY, INC | DISPUTANTA, VA



Three Brothers' Distillery is a startup distillery located in Sussex, VA which is opening to meet a growing demand for premium craft and artisan whiskeys and spirits, especially those with unique flavor profiles. We produce naval strength gin, straight rye whiskey and un-aged corn whiskey.

BACKGROUND: As a retired US Navy Veteran, I looked for an opportunity to combine my desire to make a difference in my community, like I felt I did when I was on active duty, and with something that I was passionate about. I am now making that come true by opening a craft distillery on a fellow veteran's 85-acre farm. I hire local people and buy local grains to make a product that is local. We have spent the past 12 months building our distillery from an open patch of ground to a 1,400 square foot facility with a 250-gallon still and a fantastic tasting bar to share our passion with friends and customers.

TEAM LEAD: David Reavis



RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGE

About the Initiative



The **Strong Rural America Initiative**, sponsored by the **American Farm Bureau Federation®**, fosters the growth of agriculture and food businesses in rural communities across the United States. American Farm Bureau® developed a business competition called the **Rural Entrepreneurship Challenge** to identify dynamic entrepreneurs and provide them seed money to jumpstart growth.

The Farm Bureau® Challenge is the first national business competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs working on food and agriculture businesses. Now in its third year, rural entrepreneurs pitch innovative business ideas to a team of judges with expertise in business development and agribusiness. Entrepreneurs compete for \$145,000 in startup funds. Judges award the entrepreneur with the strongest business \$30,000 and the title of Farm Bureau Entrepreneur of the Year. We appreciate the valued partnership and contributions of Farm Bureau Bank and Farm Credit.

The Strong Rural America Initiative map highlights dynamic rural entrepreneurs who submitted applications to the Farm Bureau Challenge. Over 360 applications were submitted for the 2017 Challenge competition by entrepreneurs from 37 states, including Alaska and Hawaii. This map showcases the diverse businesses Farm Bureau has helped grow in rural America through the Challenge competition.

StrongRuralAmerica.com



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®



Strong Rural America Initiative

AGRITOURISM

- 1 Alpha & Omega Corn Maze | Hamptonville, NC
- 2 Discovery Gardens Farm 2 Fork | Hanford, CA
- 3 Franny's Farm | Leicester, NC
- 4 **Greene Fields Farm | Greenfield, IL**
- 5 Lavender Hills of Kentucky, LLC | Brooksville, KY
- 6 Raised In A Barn Farm | Chocowinity, NC
- 7 Smiley's Family Farm | Industry, IL
- 8 Tuff Girl Livestock Productions LLC | Okeana, OH
- 9 Wild Hearts Zoological Park | Lewisburg, OH

FARM TO TABLE

- 1 Covey Rise Farms LLC | Randor, OH
- 2 Delta Glow | Gainesville, FL
- 3 Do GOOD N Be GOOD LLC | Loudon, NH
- 4 Double B Meats | Warrensburg, IL
- 5 Downtown Development Authority of the City of Tifton | Tifton, GA
- 6 DW's | Western, NE
- 7 Floating Fields and Farms (3F) | Berea, KY
- 8 **Gardens 4 Education | Hanford, CA**
- 9 Greenlands Farm, LLC | Bolivar, NC
- 10 **High Mountain Farms | West Jefferson, NC**
- 11 **Hometown Harvest | Frederick, MD**
- 12 Jelinek Custom Cleaning | Scottsbluff, NE
- 13 Johnson Creek Farm | Iva, SC
- 14 Kodiak Bounty Cooperative | Kodiak, AK
- 15 Lowcountry Street Grocery | Charleston, SC
- 16 Mother Earth Produce | Asheville, NC
- 17 New Appalachia LLC | Fleetwood, NC
- 18 Onchenda Open Global Food Co-op | Alpine, UT
- 19 The Dub Truck | Lincoln, AR
- 20 Theilen Produce Gardens | Schuyler, NE
- 21 Three River Farmers Alliance | South Hampton, NH
- 22 **Triple Creek Farms | Sperry, IA**
- 23 Velo Marrow Market | Lincoln, NE
- 24 Village Trough LLC | Berea, KY

AG TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES

- 1 AGcorp LLC | Newport, AR
- 2 Ag for Hire | Davis, CA
- 3 Ag News Now Mobile App | Wendell, NC
- 4 **BidderBlock | Hermitage, TN**
- 5 Bird Dog LLC | Lebanon, IN
- 6 Dairy Dealer LLC | Roswell, NM
- 7 Demeter, Inc. | Irwin, OH
- 8 DustCap | Visalia, CA
- 9 Equine Design | Ithaca, NY
- 10 FarmAfield | North Bend, NE
- 11 Farmzie | Raleigh, NC
- 12 Feed Right Buckets | Omaha, NE
- 13 Foliagelink | Coral Springs, FL
- 14 Food-Origins | Salinas, CA
- 15 GoAdvising.com | Connell, WA
- 16 Grow Bioplastics | Knoxville, TN
- 17 Hazel Green Holdings | Hopkinton, IA
- 18 Kakaxi | Macon, GA
- 19 King Industries | Burr Oak, MI
- 20 KinoSol SBC | Ames, IA
- 21 **KRose Cattle Company | Three Forks, MT**
- 22 Levrack | Seward, NE
- 23 Matzke Diesel | Monroe, WI
- 24 Moore Angus | Artesian, SD
- 25 Motege South Branding | Statesboro, GA
- 26 NetWire | Miami, FL
- 27 Oak City Bees | Raleigh, NC
- 28 Performance Livestock Analytics | Osage, IA
- 29 Planting Profits | Masonville, CO
- 30 Pluck'em Poultry | Larwill, IN
- 31 Pure American Naturals | Millerstown, PA
- 32 Smart Ag LLC | Ames, IA
- 33 Sweet Life | Pleasanton, NE
- 34 SwineTech | New Sharon, IA
- 35 Tanglewood | Boonville, IN
- 36 The Little Farm | Gray, GA
- 37 Top of the Hill Boarding Kennel | Berwyn, NE
- 38 UniCM | Graham, NC
- 39 Universal Select A Catch | Conrad, MT
- 40 Walddie | New York, NY
- 41 **Windcall Mfg., Inc. | Venango, NE**

LOCAL FOOD & PRODUCTS

- 1 Arkansas River Valley Farms | Atkins, AR
- 2 Bakers' Southern Traditions, Inc. | Roxobel, NC
- 3 Beaman's Restaurant LLC, Inc. | Snow Hill, NC
- 4 Birdy's Bees | Cedar Key, FL
- 5 Blue Ridge Fiberworks | Sparta, NC
- 6 **Blues Berry Farm LLC | Plant City, FL**
- 7 Buckeye Country Creamery | Ashland, OH
- 8 Cattle Cakes | Bridgeport, IL
- 9 Common Supply | Raymond, NE
- 10 Dairy Goddess Farms | Lemoore, CA
- 11 Doe's and Diva's Dairy, Inc. | Honey Creek, IA
- 12 Earth Grown Shades | Trumansburg, NY
- 13 EllieFinn's Veggie-Infused Snack Bites | Crab Orchard, KY
- 14 Fergus Foods | Ada, MN
- 15 Grandpa Joe's Sugar House | East Baldwin, ME
- 16 Grassroots Farm & Dairy | Marshall, NC
- 17 Green-Go | Napa, CA
- 18 Harrison Family Farm | Monticello, GA
- 19 Hat Creek Jerky Company | Ocilla, GA
- 20 Hawfields Honey House | Mebane, NC
- 21 Hemp and Honey Plus, LLC | Columbus, OH
- 22 Kanza Konez | Topeka, KS
- 23 Marie Antoinette's Gluten-Free Bake Shoppe | Wathena, KS
- 24 McKenzie Acres | Rising City, NE
- 25 Miller Evolve LLC | North Platte, NE
- 26 M.R. Wilde and Sons/Wild Valley Farms | Croydon, UT
- 27 Neomega Nutritionals, LLC | Cary, NC
- 28 Olive Loom | Fayetteville, AR
- 29 Pilot Knob Comforts | Oneida, IL
- 30 Pulses of Montana | Joliet, MT
- 31 Redhead Creamery LLC | Brooten, MN
- 32 **Sass Brewing Company and Bakery | Barry, IL**
- 33 **The Maui Cookie Lady | Makawao, HI**
- 34 Toggenburg Butter LLC | Moline, IL
- 35 T's Divine Sweets & More, LLC | Cambridge, MD
- 36 **White River Creamery | Elkins, AR**

FARM

- 1 AF Farms | Lizella, GA
- 2 Alpacas of Willow Hill LLC | DeLand, FL
- 3 Angel Family Farms LLC | Bolivar, OH
- 4 Apafia Farm Fresh | Thomasville, GA
- 5 **Beagle Brooke Farm | Madison, OH**
- 6 Blomeke Blackberry Acres | Waterloo, IN
- 7 Cedar Hill Homestead | Flemingsburg, KY
- 8 Dickie Bird Farm LLC | Chillicothe, OH
- 9 **Emily Westfall Horsemanship | Effingham, IL**
- 10 Fehringer Feeds | Sidney, NE
- 11 Fruitland Station | Jacksonville, FL
- 12 Harrison Valley Farms | Fulton, MO
- 13 Havana Community Development Corporation | Havana, FL
- 14 Helios Farms | Yoncalla, OR
- 15 Henderson Hogs | Swan Lake, ID
- 16 Hoof Beat Farm | Hillsborough, NC
- 17 Inland Sea | Ames, IA
- 18 Master Blend Family Farms | Kenansville, NC
- 19 Merchant's Garden AgroTech Corp. | Tucson, AZ
- 20 Microbrewery Waste Reusal Program | Pottstown, PA
- 21 PathChoice, Inc. | Kinston, NC
- 22 Sam Wiese Farms | Anna, TX
- 23 South Mountain MicroFARM | Boonsboro, MD
- 24 TW Farms & Grazing Services | Lincoln, AR
- 25 Vertical Harvest Hydroponics | Anchorage, AK
- 26 Waller Dairy | Sugar Grove, VA
- 27 Whitehouse Specialty Crops | Whitehouse, OH
- 28 **Willow Hill Family Farm LLC | Palmyra, PA**

WINERIES, BREWERIES & DISTILLERIES

- 1 Bear Claw Vineyards, Inc. | Blue Ridge, GA
- 2 Brew Radly | Tallahassee, FL
- 3 Chesapeake Malting Co. | Havre de Grace, MD
- 4 Dragon Run Vineyards | Raleigh, NC
- 5 Free State Cooperage | Crownsville, MD
- 6 **Le Petit Chevalier Vineyards and Grape Education Center | Creola, OH**
- 7 McConnell Farms | Hendersonville, NC
- 8 Morning Song Vineyard | Stockton, MD
- 9 Pebble Brook Craft Spirits | Raleigh, NC
- 10 Prairie Ridge Vineyard | St. George, KS
- 11 The Federal Brewing Company, LLC | Federalsburg, MD
- 12 **Three Brothers' Distillery, Inc | Disputanta, VA**

LEGEND

-  **AGRITOURISM**
-  **AG TECHNOLOGY & SERVICES**
-  **FARM**
-  **FARM TO TABLE**
-  **LOCAL FOOD & PRODUCTS**
-  **WINERIES, BREWERIES & DISTILLERIES**

FARM BUREAU®
RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP
CHALLENGE