

# FIELD NOTES

Newsletter of the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group



## A Message from our Chairs

by Kristen Lowitt, GFASG Chair [kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca](mailto:kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca)  
and Russell Hedberg, GFASG Vice-Chair [rchedberg@ship.edu](mailto:rchedberg@ship.edu)

Greetings GFASG Members,

We hope this newsletter finds you well and settled into the fall season. It is hard to believe that over six months have passed since the AAG meeting in Denver. We are now looking forward to the upcoming AAG Annual Meeting to take place from April 16 -20, 2024 in Honolulu. We have heard that many of our members likely plan to participate virtually at the upcoming event, due to various considerations. As such, we are planning for our key Specialty Group activities - including our plenary event and business meeting - to take place in hybrid or virtual form to maximize opportunities for participation.

Following are some key dates to watch:

- November 16, 2023: Paper abstract submission deadline
- December 14, 2023: Session organizing deadline
- January 18, 2024: Program released
- February 29, 2024: Abstract/session editing deadline

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We hope to feature the work of our membership throughout the conference. To have the GFASG sponsor your AAG session, please email your request to Dylan Turner <[dtturner53@uncc.edu](mailto:dtturner53@uncc.edu)> with the session and title abstract. Once the request is approved, you can indicate GFASG sponsorship by selecting our specialty group from the drop-down menu when you register the session with the AAG. Sponsorship helps other GFASG members find your session through the conference app and allows us to feature it in our list of sponsored sessions.

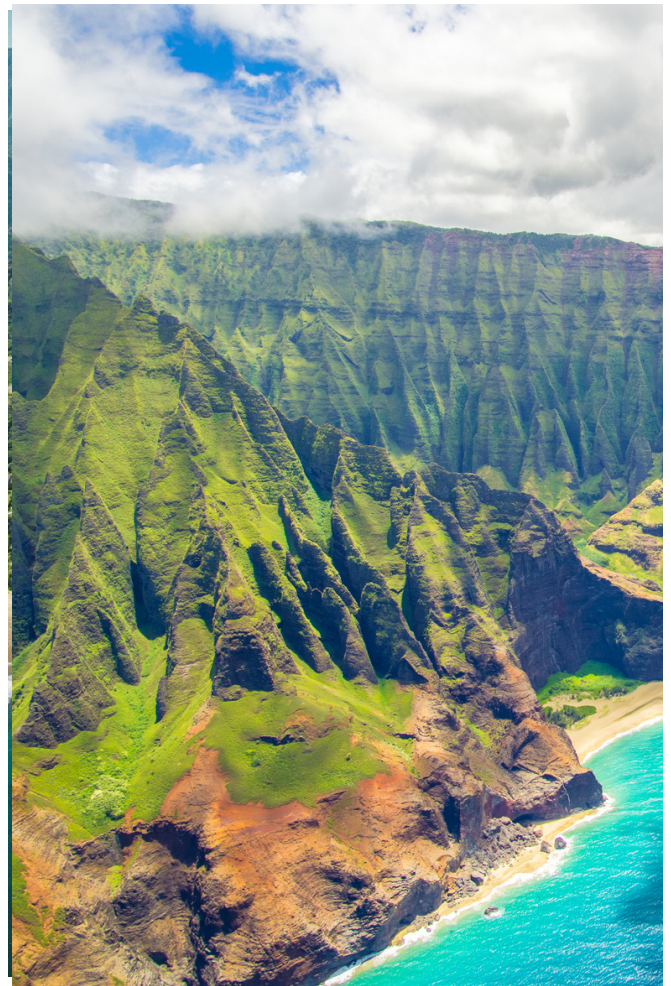
We have begun planning our plenary event and hope to feature local speakers and community organizations on food sovereignty related topics. We are also planning what promises to be a fun virtual mixer with the Rural Geography and Beer, Wine, and Spirits Specialty Groups! Stay tuned for details in the knowledge communities and social media! You can follow us on our Facebook page and Twitter (@GFASG\_AAG) and are encouraged to share your updates, news, and events. As always, if you are interested in contributing to conference planning or have suggestions for the upcoming 2024 meeting please do not hesitate to reach out to a Board member at any time.

You will also find in this newsletter (on pages 9-12) announcements for our upcoming awards, including our Graduate Research Awards and Book Award. We encourage you to share these calls widely among your networks.

In solidarity,

Kristen Lowitt, GFASG Chair  
[kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca](mailto:kristen.lowitt@queensu.ca)

Russell Hedberg, GFASG Vice-Chair  
[rchedberg@ship.edu](mailto:rchedberg@ship.edu)



## **Save the date for the 2024 AAG meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii!**

The annual AAG conference will run from April 16, 2024 to April 20, 2024 in the 'Honolulu, Hawaii. The conference will feature both virtual and in-person components. We look forward to gathering together and learning from each other during the 2024 conference.

## 2023 GFASG Graduate Student Award Winners

PLEASE JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING OUR 2023 AWARD WINNERS OF THE GFASG GRADUATE STUDENT AWARDS!

### Doctoral Award: Peter Duker

Peter is a Ph.D. student in Geography at the University of Guelph. His research explores issues of sustainability and environmental justice through an examination of the environmental governance issues between states and Indigenous and other marginalized peoples. He is particularly interested in inland fisheries and the intersections of food security/sovereignty and conservation in Thailand. He holds an M.A. in Geography from York University and a B.A. in Environmental Science from Colorado College. Previously, Peter was a field instructor and academic coordinator at the International Sustainable Development Studies Institute (ISDSI) in Thailand and a Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone. He has published articles on community-engaged research, the impact of COVID-19 on migrant fish workers, and community-based conservation of inland fisheries in Thailand.



PETER DUKER

### Masters Award: Nethmi Bathige

I am a first-year Masters student from Colombo, Sri Lanka, at the University of Kentucky's (Lexington, Kentucky) Geography department. My research interests are studying the feminist political ecology of climate-smart home gardening programs in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. For my MA thesis, I will conduct fieldwork on how home garden programs shape women's traditional ecological knowledge of agrobiodiversity and nutrition and vice-versa. As an undergraduate at Macalester College in Saint Paul, Minnesota, I was a geography major and a Food, Agriculture, and Society concentrator. For my undergraduate honors thesis, I researched food security and dietary diversity among tea smallholders in Sri Lanka. During college, I also interned for the Congressional Hunger Center (Washington, DC) and worked at a food bank and community urban farm in Minnesota. A continued interest in food insecurity, nutrition, and climate-smart agriculture among agrarian communities in Sri Lanka will drive my future research work.



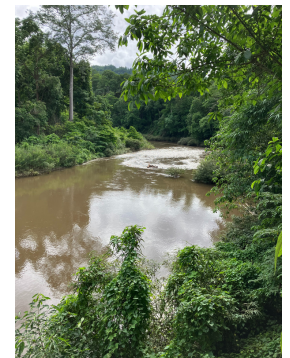
NETHMI BATHIGE

## 2023 GFASG Research Fellowship Assists Summer Fieldwork

### Doctoral Award Winner Peter Duker Reflects on Summer Fieldwork in Northern Thailand

Sponsored in part by GFASG's Research Fellowship, this past summer I conducted preliminary fieldwork in my partner communities in the Ngao River basin of Northern Thailand. Importantly, through this trip I was able to (re)kindle relationships with various leaders and other community members. I also arranged community meetings and attended other gatherings to learn about how their issues have been progressing and what, if any, are emerging. Some of the key issues that I may target with my future research include the continued progress on a state-led dam project that threatens community life, livelihoods, and food security; the mysterious decreases in riverine fish populations in the last year; decreasing water availability; and the impending finalization of a national park that also threatens community life, livelihoods, and food security; among others.

I also accompanied my research assistant to go fishing and, fortunately for me, he and others in the community have much more skill than I (seen the attached photos). Moreover, due to my time there, I am now developing a partnership with the Pgakenyaw Association for Sustainable Development, a local Indigenous-led NGO that does important work with Pgakenyaw (also referred to as Karen) communities, like my partners in the Ngao River basin, throughout Northern Thailand. I am grateful to the GFASG for the help in making this important trip possible.



Photos taken by Peter in the Ngao River basin of Northern Thailand

## GFASG Scholar-Activist Award

### **The GFASG is Delighted to Select Kelly Beym as the the Inaugural Recipient of the GFASG Scholar-Activist Award!**

The committee was impressed by Kelly's commitment to her tribe and potential as a young scholar and community leader. Below is Kelly's bio.

Yá'át'ééh! Shí éí Kelly Beym yinishyé. Táchii'nii nishł́, Bilagáana bashishchiin, Tódich'íí'nii dashicheii, Bilagáana dashinalí. Ákót'éego diné asdzáán nishł́. (Hello! My name is Kelly Beym. I am Red Running into the Water People Clan. In this way, I am a Navajo woman.)

My children motivate me to dream big and I am so incredibly thankful to them for taking this journey with me. I recently graduated with a Bachelor of Individualized Studies with a minor in Agricultural Business Management with honors from New Mexico State University. I am now continuing my graduate education at the University of Kansas in the Department of Geography and Atmospheric Science. I hope this will provide me the knowledge necessary to advocate for equitable policy impacting Indigenous communities. Fun fact: I was a certified baby cuddler! Prior to the pandemic, I volunteered at my local NICU with an Eat, Sleep, Console (ESC) program that utilized holistic healing methods for infants born with substance abuse dependencies. Substance abuse is a critical problem in Indian Country and this experience truly made me more empathetic to this as a societal problem rather than a personal one. It also heightened my desire to someday foster/adopt!



KELLY BEYM

## Member Accomplishments

**Sharing GFASG membership accomplishments-- be they personal or professional-- is always a joy. Please join us in congratulating our colleagues on their many accomplishments and publications over the past year!**

**Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern, Associate Professor, Syracuse University**

Minkoff-Zern, Laura-Anne, Walia, Bhavneet, Gangamma, Rashmi, and Zoodsma, Anna. "Food Sovereignty and Displacement: Gardening for Food, Mental Health, and Community Connection." *Journal of Peasant Studies*. Early Online August 10, 2023.

Funded new research: 2023-2024. "Food Policy Councils as a Vehicle to Address the Racial Wealth Gap in Food System." Labor Lender Center for Social Justice Grant Program supported by MetLife Foundation, \$63,826, PI: Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern, Co-Investigator: Jonnell Robinson

**Gabi Kirk, PhD candidate, UC Davis**

Kirk, Gabi. 2023. "Commodifying Indigeneity? Settler Colonialism and Racial Capitalism in Fair Trade Farming in Palestine." *Historical Materialism* 31 (2): 236–68. [https://brill.com/view/journals/hima/31/2/article-p236\\_9.xml](https://brill.com/view/journals/hima/31/2/article-p236_9.xml)

Gabi Kirk will start a new position as Assistant Professor in Geography, Environment, and Spatial Analysis at Cal Poly Humboldt (Arcata, CA) in January 2024.

**Stefan Chavez-Norgaard, PhD Candidate in Urban Planning at Columbia University**

For the 2023–2024 academic year, Stefan Chavez-Norgaard is a Scholar-in-Residence at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in Cambridge, MA. With the Institute, Stefan will help continue to hone and develop the Institute's program in Africa, and craft deliverables related to how land, law, and property regimes condition possibilities for social and spatial justice.

**Asif Ishtiaque, Missouri State University**

Ishtiaque, A. (2023). US farmers' adaptations to climate change: a systematic review of the adaptation-focused studies in the US agriculture context. *Environmental Research: Climate*. 2 022001. DOI 10.1088/2752-5295/accb03

**Samantha Ruth Brown, University of Oregon**

I'm excited to share that I passed my comprehensive exams and prospectus this spring! Additionally, I had a book review and co-authored book chapter published.

Brown, S. R. (2022). Denmark and the New North Atlantic: Narratives and Memories in a Former Empire. Eds. Kirsten Thisted and Ann-Sofie N. Gremaud. *The Bridge*, 45(1), 76–78.

Bentley, A., Brown, S. R., Figueroa, S. L., Serry, S., & Saffar, C. (2023). School Meals in Multicultural/Multi-Religious Contexts – Denmark, Dubai (the United Arab Emirates), France and the United States. In *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Schools and Religion* (1st ed., pp. 266–286). Bloomsbury Publishing.

## GFASG BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Technical State University

## Member Accomplishments

### Dylan Turner, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Earlier this year, Dylan advanced to candidacy in his PhD program. He has since received IRB approval to start data collection for his dissertation, which is a participatory action research project focused on the potential for the Community Land Trust (CLT) model to empower a historically African American neighborhood in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

He was also selected as one of the Early Career Scholars for the the 12th Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference, where he will engage with peers and mentors in a Critical Cartography and Pedagogy Workshop.

### Nethmi Bathige, MA Student, University of Kentucky

Perera Bathige, N.S. and Moseley, W.G. (2023), Snapshot of a crisis: food security and dietary diversity levels among disrupted conventional and long-term organic tea-smallholders in Sri Lanka. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjtg.12511>

In this article, we examine how economic status (income and wealth) and method of tea farming (organic or conventional) influences food security and dietary diversity outcomes in the midst of a fertiliser supply shock in Sri Lanka. We used data collected in the summer of 2021 from among 47 organic and 67 conventional tea smallholders in five rural communities in southern and central Sri Lanka. Our findings show that long-term organic farmers had higher dietary diversity measures than the conventional tea smallholders who were unevenly disrupted by the aforementioned fertiliser ban. The haphazard ban on conventional fertilizer adversely impacted dietary outcomes of conventional farmers. We also discuss how the transition to organic farming would have worked better with more time and planning.

### Bryan Collins, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

In April, Bryan completed his PhD in Environmental Studies at Queen's University where he researched resilient agriculture in rural Southeastern Ontario (some pictures from fieldwork are below). He has since started as a Postdoctoral Scholar in Cooperative Extension at North Carolina A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina.

At Queen's University, Bryan was awarded the Julian Szeicz Award for Excellence in Teaching by the Department of Geography for the 2022-2023 school year.



## TWEET, TWEET!!

The Geographies of Food and Agriculture Speciality Group is on Twitter!

We invite you to follow along @GSASG\_AAG, and to engage with us during the conference.

We look forward to connecting with you.

**The GFASG board is looking for help managing our Twitter presence. If you have a passion for social media, please contact the board by emailing <bcollins@ncat.edu> about getting involved.**

## Member Accomplishments

### Garrett Graddy-Lovelace, Provost Associate Professor, American University School of International Service

Graddy-Lovelace, G. "Towards Abolitionist Agrarian Geographies of Kentucky" *Environment & Planning E: Nature & Space*. Special Issue: "Geographies of Hope in Praxis: Collaboratively Decolonizing Relations and Cultivating Relational Spaces"

Limeberry, V. and G. Graddy-Lovelace "Data & the Seed: Democratizing Research for Emancipatory Policy & Agrobiodiversity Governance" *Droit et Cultures: Revue internationale interdisciplinaire*. Special Issue: "Collaboration in Crop Diversity Management" (Invited) {OA}

Graddy-Lovelace, G., Krikorian, J., A. Jewett, A. Vivekanandan, K. Stahl, B. Wilson, I. Shekhar Singh, G. Naylor, P. Naylor, J. Pennick. "Parity as Radical Pragmatism: Centering Farm Justice & Agrarian Expertise in Agricultural Policy" *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*. Special Issue: "Critical Praxis and Social Imaginary for Sustainable Food Systems"

Auerbach, J., Muñoz, S., Walsh, E., Affiah, U., Barrera de la Torre, G., Börner, S., Cho, H., Cofield, R., DiEnno, C., Graddy-Lovelace, G., Klassen, S., Limeberry, V., Morse, A. and Natarajan, L. (2022) Call for reimagining institutional support for PAR post-COVID. *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems*, 6. doi:10.3389/fsufs.2022.916384 {OA}

Auerbach, J., S. Muñoz, U. Affiah, G Barrera de la Torre, S. Börner, H. Cho, R. Cofield, C. DiEnno, G. Graddy-Lovelace, S. Klassen, V. Limeberry, A. Morse, L. Natarajan, E. Walsh. "Displacement of the Scholar? Participatory Action Research under COVID-19 and a Re-imagining of University Support" *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* {OA} - Republished as chapter in e-book: McAllister, G., Bhatasara, S., Claeys, P., Hoard, J., Lemke S., McKinnon, K., Moeller, N., eds. (2023) *Participatory action research in a time of Covid and beyond*. Lausanne: Fronteris Media SA. Doi: 10.3389/978-2-8325-2423-7.

Graddy-Lovelace, G. "From Obstruction to Decolonization? Contested Sovereignty, the Seed Treaty & Biocultural Rights in the United States/Turtle Island & Beyond." In *Biocultural Rights and Community Protocols: Protecting and Promoting Indigenous Peoples' and Local Communities' Ways of Life*. Eds. F. Girard, I. Hall, G. Filoche, C. Frisson. Routledge Press. ISBN 9781032000817

Organized and co-led the "Pointing the Farm Bill Toward Racial Justice" Summit and Congressional Briefing in May 2023, with Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (and AU Antiracist Research & Policy Center and UC Berkeley Food Institute)

### Matthew LaFavor, University of Alabama

LaFavor, M. C. (2022) Spatial and temporal changes in crop species production diversity in Mexico (1980-2020). *Agriculture* 12(7): 986. DOI:10.3390/agriculture12070985. (Cover Feature Paper)

LaFavor, M. C. (2022) Crop species production diversity enhances revenue stability in low-income farm regions of Mexico. *Agriculture* 12(11): 1835. DOI:10.3390/agriculture12111835

LaFavor, M. C. (2022) Characterizing agricultural diversity with policy-relevant farm typologies in Mexico. *Agriculture* 12(9): 1315. DOI:10.3390/agriculture12091315

LaFavor, M. C. and Pitts, A. K. (2022) Irrigation increases crop species diversity in low-diversity farm regions of Mexico. *Agriculture* 12(7): 911. DOI:10.3390/agriculture12070911 (Editor's Choice Article)



## 2024 Graduate Research Grant Competition

The AAG Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group (GFASG) invites proposals for the 2024 Graduate Research Grant Competition. The Master's and Doctoral competitions are designed to support graduate students in the early stages of their research and graduate student experience (whether field, university, or home-based). Submission of a budget is not required.

The master's level competition is intended to support their research-related expenses and funding in support of thesis research during the 2024–2025 academic year. Proposals should clearly demonstrate scholarly merit and the ability to be successfully completed during the time-frame of the master's research.

The doctoral competition is intended to support pilot research, or provide startup funds to help launch dissertation research. This award is not intended to supplement dissertation research that is already underway or near completion. Proposals should clearly demonstrate a scholarly contribution to geographic research on food and agriculture, an ability to successfully complete the proposed work, and a readiness to begin research in 2024.

The awards are competitive; applications are judged on the basis of scholarly merit of the project, organization and clarity of the proposal, qualifications of the student to conduct the proposed work, and their experiences and engagement with diversity. The Awards Committee is committed to equity in this process and especially encourages submissions from students of underrepresented groups including women, people of color, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, and LGBTQ2S+ persons. As part of the application process, we therefore ask students to submit a diversity statement reflecting on their personal experiences with diversity and/or how their proposed research may engage with broader questions of diversity and equity as they pertain to food systems.

Each applicant must be a student member of the GFASG at the time of application, and the proposed project should be part of their thesis or dissertation research. Again, please note that applicants should not yet have completed research, as this is a seed grant. The amount of the research grant prize will be determined by membership and funds available to the GFASG at time of award. Past awards have been in the range of \$400 - \$600. Awards may not be given if no proposals are deemed suitable. Entries undergo review by the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group's Executive Committee.

# 2024 Graduate Research Grant Competition (Continued)

A complete application must be sent by email attachment (as a single PDF file with applicant's name and graduate level [master's or Ph.D.] in the title of the document). The submission and questions should be directed to Dylan Turner <dtur53@charlotte.edu>. Application Deadline: Feb 1, 2024. Decisions will be made by March 15th.

The application form is attached here, and available on the Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group's website: [gfasg.wordpress.com](http://gfasg.wordpress.com). The application consists of the application form and a one-page synopsis of the curriculum vitae. Submissions should be original, interdisciplinary, well-written and well-researched, and it should be obvious that the applicant is prepared to begin research AND has not already received full funding for the work.

Stefan Chavez-Norgaard (Columbia University)

Kate Nelson (Kansas State University)

Dylan Turner (University of North Carolina at Charlotte)

Kristen Lowitt (Queen's University)

## 2024 Research Grant Competitions – Application Instructions

**Eligibility:** Applicant must be enrolled in a Master's or PhD program in Geography or related fields at an institution of higher education. The proposed research must be an integral part of ongoing research toward the Master's or PhD degree. The applicant must be a member of the AAG Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group at the time of application.

**Application Deadline:** Feb 1, 2024

**Application Directions:**

1. Complete the Research Grant Application Form (see below). This form includes
  - Application information
  - 250-word description of research activities
  - 250-word diversity statement
  - 500-word research proposal
2. Provide a 1-page synopsis of your curriculum vitae.
3. Email all materials as one file (.pdf only) to Dylan Turner <dtur53@charlotte.edu>.

# 2024 Research Grant Competition Application Form

Name:

Email Address:

Mailing Address (through July 2024):

Phone:

Institution/Affiliation:

Department:

Degree Sought:

Year in Program:

Title of Proposal:

Advisor's Name:

Advisor's Email:

- In approximately 250 words, please list the work you have completed towards your Master's or Ph.D. degree with corresponding dates where applicable. Include courses taken that relate to your thesis/dissertation topic, background research completed, contacts you have made in regard to your thesis/dissertation, and conferences you have attended that relate to your research topic.
- In approximately 250 words, please provide a diversity statement reflecting on your personal, lived experiences with diversity and/or how your proposed research may engage with broader questions of diversity and equity as they pertain to food systems. Contributions to diversity and equity in food systems scholarship will be substantive criteria for the evaluation of proposals.
- In approximately 500 words, please provide a concise proposal including research context, question(s)/goal(s), data, methods, and significance. You may include a reference section that is not included in the word count. This proposal will be evaluated based on the originality and importance of the work's contribution to the geographies of food and agriculture, strong theoretical framework(s) and clear presentation/framing of the problem, and evidence of strong and appropriate methods.

## Call for Nominations: 2024 GFASG Book Award

The Geographies of Food and Agriculture Specialty Group (GFASG) is pleased to announce a call for nominations for the 2024 GFASG Book Award, which will go to an outstanding book on the geographies of food and agriculture. This award is given biennially to a scholarly, single or co-authored book (excluding edited volumes) published within the previous two calendar years. The nominated works should be highly innovative and impactful with strong relevance to the interests of specialty group members. This non-monetary award will be recognized at the GFASG business meeting at the annual meeting of the American Association of Geographers and through the GFASG newsletter, listserv, website, and social media.

The current call for nominations is for books published in the years 2022 or 2023. Nominations and copies of books are due by December 15, 2023.

To nominate a book, please email the following information to Dylan Turner ([dturne53@charlotte.edu](mailto:dturne53@charlotte.edu)):

- A nomination letter (maximum two pages) providing context on the nominee(s), arguing for the importance of the work for scholarship and/or practice on the geographies of food and agriculture, and explaining why it is an appropriate fit for this award.
- A recent CV for the nominee(s).
- Four copies of the book, either digital or physical, should be sent to the review committee. For relevant mailing addresses, please contact Dylan Turner at [dturne53@charlotte.edu](mailto:dturne53@charlotte.edu). Books should be received by the review committee no later than December 15th, 2023.