

FOOD SUMMIT

A FARMER, RANCHER, & COMMUNITY EVENT



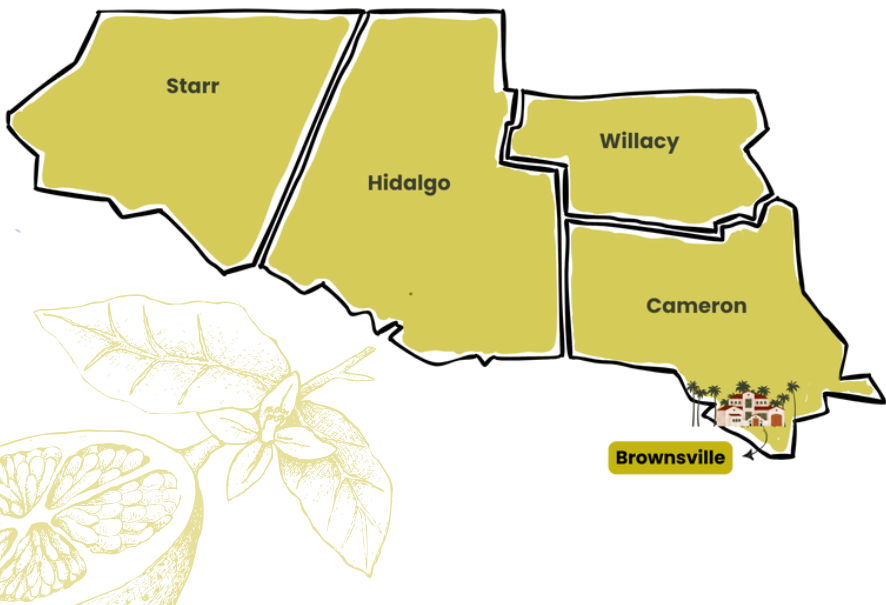
Moving from Vision to Action



WELCOME!

Over the last several years, food system leaders have gathered to develop and refine the vision for the Rio Grande Valley Food System. The first year of the Food Summit was dedicated to **building a foundational conversation** to develop the RGV Food System Vision. The second year focused on **showcasing the region's agricultural offerings and uniting all stakeholders** in one space to highlight the wealth of resources and opportunities in the Rio Grande Valley.

Now, in its third year, the Food Summit is **shifting from vision and conversation to collaborative action and implementation**. This year's focus is on turning ideas into tangible solutions by strengthening partnerships, mobilizing resources, and launching coordinated efforts that address the key challenges identified in previous years.



EXHIBITORS



SENTLI



Rio Grande
Valley

Center for Sustainable
Agriculture &
Rural Advancement
UTRGV



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Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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**FARM & RANCH
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RIO GRANDE COLONIAS



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Nutrition

TEXAS A&M
**AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**

BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

AGENDA

8:00 – 8:30 AM | Breakfast & Registration

Grab-and-go by Crepe Town

8:30 – 8:45 AM | Opening Remarks

Bella Wood, Institute of Ecology, Scholarship, and Health (IESH)

8:45 – 9:30 AM | Keynote

Dr. Luis Ribera | Dr. Ribera brings deep expertise in food systems and regional agricultural economics.

9:30 – 10:15 AM | Session 1:

Unlocking Funding for Farm and Food Businesses

Moderated by Hernán Colmenero, Social Entrepreneur

This panel will provide a region-specific look at funding opportunities, through federal programs, private investment, and community-based financing models.

Panelists:

- Eligio Sanchez, People Fund;
- Veronica Dimas, Big Green DAO;
- Diana Padilla, Yahweh's All Natural Farm & Garden

10:15 – 10:45 AM | Break and Technical Assistance

10:45 – 11:30 AM | Session 2:

Market Opportunities for Farmers and Food Businesses

Moderated by Katie Lavalley, Texas Center for Local Food

This panel will focus on real-world market opportunities in the RGV, what buyers are looking for, and how farmers and food businesses can build effective sales channels.

Panelists:

- Lori Atwood Ramos, Region One Education Service Center;
- Shakera Raygoza, Terra Preta Farms;
- Elizabeth Chavez, Junior's Supermarket
- JD Hogan, McAllen Farmers Market

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | Lunch

Grab-and-go by Crepe Town



AGENDA

1:00 – 2:00 PM | Session 3:

Building the Next Generation of Agriculture Leaders in the RGV

Moderated by Mackenzie Feldman, Re:Wild Your Campus

This panel will discuss how farm-to-school programs, community gardens, and hands-on agricultural education have shaped their perspectives, career aspirations, and vision for the future of farming in the Rio Grande Valley.

Panelists:

- Marcos Cano, Mission CISD
- Andrew Nieto, UTRGV Hub of Prosperity
- Katelynn Lopez, Hanna Early College High School

2:00 – 2:30 PM | Break and Technical Assistance

2:30 – 3:30 PM | Session 4:

Coordinating People, Services, and Infrastructure for Success

Moderated by Analicia Perez, RFBC

This panel will highlight available programs, funding opportunities, and networks that can support the Rio Grande Valley Food System. Panelists will also discuss the impact of labor conditions on agriculture and share solutions for strengthening human capital in food systems.

Panelists:

- Hilda Gutierrez, Feeding Texas;
- Jose Aguirre, UTRGV Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Advancement;
- Laura Holbrook, City of Brownsville
- Lyn Saenz, RGV Meat Producers, INC

3:30 – 3:45 PM | Break and Technical Assistance Ends

3:45 – 4:45 PM | Session 5:

Harnessing Data for Impact in Food, Agriculture, and Policy

Moderated by Dr. Alexis Racelis, UTRGV

This panel will focus on how data can be used effectively in the RGV, practical tools that producers can access, and real-world applications of asset mapping, evaluation, and policy.

Panelists:

- Gabriela Gallegos, UTHealth Houston School of Public Health in El Paso
- Lisa Mitchell Bennet, UTHealth Houston;
- Rocio Hernandez, IDEA Farms;
- Paul Figueroa, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance.

4:45 – 5:00 PM | Closing Remarks

SPEAKERS

Keynote



Dr. Luis Ribera
Texas A&M University



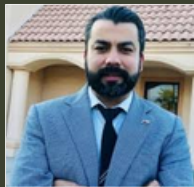
Diana Padilla
YHWH Farms



Katie Lavallee
Texas Center for Local Food



Veronica Dimas
Big Green DAO



Eligio Sanchez
People Fund



Shakera Raygoza
Terra Preta Farms



Elizabeth Chavez
Juniors Supermarket



Dr. Alexis Racelis
UT Rio Grande Valley



Lisa Mitchell Bennet
UT Health Houston



Gabriela Gallegos
UT Health Houston



JD Hogan
McAllen Farmers Market



Lori Atwood Ramos
Region One ESC



SPEAKERS



Rocio Hernandez
IDEA Public Schools



Paul Figueroa
FARFA



Jose Aguirre
UTRGV SARA



Analicia Perez
RGC RFBC



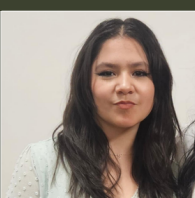
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Hanna Early College Highschool



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Re:wild Your Campus



Hilda Gutiérrez
Feeding Texas



Marcos Cano
Mission CISD



Hernán Colmenero
Social Entrepreneur

EVENTS

~ ALL ATTENDEES WELCOME ~

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

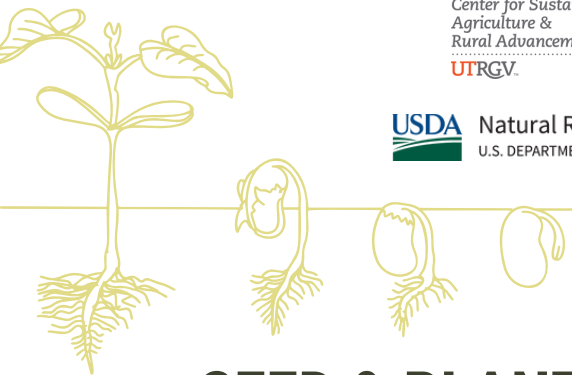
10:15 AM – 3:45 PM

This event will **provide** local farmers, ranchers, distributors, and food business owners with **one-to-one technical assistance** from:

Center for Sustainable
Agriculture &
Rural Advancement
UTRGV



Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



SEED & PLANT SWAP

1:00 – 4:00 PM

This event is a **full-on interactive** seed and plant swap. All seeds and plants are welcome (veggies, natives, etc...).

Sponsored by:



EVENTS

~ BY INVITATION ONLY ~

BUYER SUPPLIER EVENT

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM | Buffet Lunch Included

This event will **connect** local farmers, ranchers, distributors, and school nutrition staff to explore ways to **source more local foods for South Texas schools.**

11:30 AM – 12:00 PM: Grab and sit lunch

11:50 AM – 12:00 PM: Robert Meave, Region One ESC

12:00 – 12:15 PM: Jackie Cruz, Brownsville ISD Food & Nutrition Services

12:15 – 12:30 PM: Habraham Lopez, PSJA ISD Child Nutrition Program

12:30 – 12:45 PM: Collaborative Work Time

12:45 – 1:00 PM Allen Williams, Q&A and Closing Remarks

Hosted by:



INSTITUTE
FOR ECOLOGY
SCHOLARSHIP
& HEALTH



SENTI



MIXER

~ ALL ATTENDEES WELCOME ~

FARM TO TABLE MIXER

5:00 – 8:00 PM

El Almacén | 1101 E. Adams Street, Brownsville, TX

Join us for a celebratory evening mixer to **toast to our collective efforts** and **continue building relationships**. This mixer will feature free drinks, delicious local bites prepared by Jolie Petite, and sweet treats from the South Texas College Culinary Arts Program.

~Transportation Available~

To make transportation easy, we're providing a **charter bus** running between Brownsville Events Center and El Almacén Creative Space **every 30 minutes from 5:00 to 9:00 PM**. Look for **clearly marked pick-up and drop-off signs at both locations**. You're welcome to leave your vehicle parked at the Events Center during the mixer.

JOLIE PETITE



SOUTH TEXAS
COLLEGE

Moving from Vision to Action



Sponsored by:



INSTITUTE
FOR ECOLOGY
SCHOLARSHIP
& HEALTH

THANK YOU SPONSORS!



**Are you a food producer
or food business in
Texas or New Mexico?**

You may qualify for technical assistance, support, and capacity building resources from the Rio Grande Colonias USDA Regional Food Business Center.

**Visit our website for
more information!**

**¡Visita nuestro sitio
web para obtener más
información!**



rgcolonias.org



**¿Eres un agricultor o un
negocio que provee
alimentos en Texas o
Nuevo México?**

Podrías calificar para asistencia técnica, apoyo, y capacitación del Rio Grande Colonias Centro Regional de Negocios de Alimentos del USDA.



THANK YOU SPONSORS!



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Region One Education Service Center **Conference Center**

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THANK YOU SPONSORS!

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GET YOUR FRESH,
LOCALLY-GROWN VEGGIES & MORE.
PICK-UP OR. DELIVERY OPTIONS IN
3 EASY STEPS!



Order Fresh Veggies
& More Online



Select your pick up
site

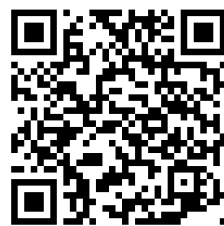


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Saturday

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THANK YOU SPONSORS!



THE TEXAS PRODUCE MARKETPLACE



verdantexchange.net



(956) 203-0742



info@verdantexchange.net

THANK YOU!

~ ORGANIZED BY ~

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~ SPECIAL THANKS TO ~

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KATIE LAVALLEE

HILDA GUTIERREZ

RUBY DE LA GARZA

SUE BECKWITH

ANGELA R GILES

SUZANNE EL-HAJ

**MEMBERS OF THE RGV EQUITABLE FOOD
SYSTEM WORKING GROUP**

**THE REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS
CENTER TEAM**

Thank you for joining us!

Creating a resilient and sustainable food system that benefits the community can only happen when we share ideas, learn from each other, and become intentional participants in the work that we do.



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