Carrie Mess aka “Dairy Carrie” is a Wisconsin dairy farmer who is passionate about agriculture and the cows that make up her family-run farm. She writes the blog The Adventures of Dairy Carrie.

“I am a dairy farmer. More days than not, I feel like instead of saying that I am a dairy farmer, I should claim some sort of title along the lines of “Dairy Farmer’s Apprentice” or “Dairy Farmer in Training.” You can blame it on growing up in the city, the proverbial three generations removed from the farm. But even typing “I am a dairy farmer” feels weird to me. I am fairly certain that six years on the dairy farm doesn’t make me a dairy farmer, but six years on the dairy farm does make me an expert on what we deal with on a daily basis. My name is Carrie Mess. I am a former city kid turned dairy farmer, and I am an advocate for agriculture. Almost six years ago, shortly after getting married, I left my office job to become the herdswoman on the dairy farm my husband grew up on. Unsure if my love for cute and fuzzy animals would translate into the needed skills to keep a herd of dairy cows alive and milking, I stepped into the world of cows, crops, tractors and family business and found my passion. Today, my husband and I farm in partnership with his parents on our 100-cow, 300-acre dairy farm near Lake Mills, Wisconsin. Along that path going from city kid to dairy farmer, I noticed there was a great need for people like me; a person on an actual farm to connect with the same types of people that I grew up with in the city. I could see a widening chasm between the people who grow our food and the people who do not. In 2011, I started to share my story – and our farm’s story – on my blog; The Adventures of Dairy Carrie (dairycarrie.com). Since 2011, I have used my blog and social media to help facilitate these much-needed conversations.”

Keynote speaker: Friday, October 17th

Sheri Salatin is the marketing director at Polyface Farm and stay-at-home mom of three children. Sheri is passionate about clean food and enjoys working the land along-side her husband, Daniel. Sheri was influential in getting the buying clubs up and running and now oversees 25 drop locations throughout Virginia and Maryland with over 3,000 families. The buying clubs are nurtured under her direct oversight and she is the go-to person for all questions about marketing to metropolitan areas.

Through real life experiences, Sheri has honed her skills and shares some of the best ways to approach and sell to some of the top chefs in the world. Polyface services more than 4,000 families, 10 retail outlets, and 50 restaurants through on-farm sales and metropolitan buying clubs with salad bar beef, pastured poultry, eggmobile eggs, pigaerator pork, forage-based rabbits, pastured turkey and forestry products through relationship marketing. In July 2014, Sheri launched a website called Eager Farmer - Connecting experience, education and enthusiasm in farming. The site is a world-wide online help wanted for farmers to find interns, apprentices, land, employees and farm managers. For land owners to find someone to manage their farm or teach them to farm. And for wannabe farmers to find a place to get the experience they need to launch their own farming endeavors. Today Sheri spends her days juggling marketing, website maintenance, blogging, motherhood, and farming. At thirty-four, Sheri is married to husband Daniel and has two sons Travis and Andrew and one daughter Lauryn. Keynote speaker: Saturday, October 18th.
**Kathy Harris** has been involved in Holistic Management since the late 1990's and has experienced first-hand the life-changing impact of making decisions based on a holistic goal. Her love of the land and passion for nutrient dense, traditional foods pulled her from suburban life to begin a small farm to provide good food and a farming experience for home-schooling her two daughters. After a decade of homesteading (dairy, poultry, bees, fruit/veg), she managed the start-up of a 250-acre ranch (grass-fed beef & lamb, pastured poultry and native pecans) in North East Texas. Her faith in the effectiveness of Holistic management prompted her to pursue training as a Certified Educator, serving as mentor and helping facilitate the Beginning Women Farmers in Texas program, volunteering with the Kids on the Land program which connects kids to the land while sparking a love for science, and fostering the creation of holistic land management clubs. She can be reached at kathyharrisTX@gmail.com or 214-417-6583

**Dr. F. M. (Monte) Rouquette, Jr.** has served Texas A&M AgriLife Research and the TAMU System for 44 years at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Overton. His primary research has been targeted at evaluation of forage persistence, forage cultivars, grazing systems, nutrient cycling, and beef production from birth-to-harvest for use in East Texas and the southeastern U.S. This area of research incorporates soil-plant, plant-animal, animal-human, and the integrated production systems and associated economic implications for peers and stakeholders. Although Dr. Rouquette has spent his entire professional career at an off-campus Research and Extension Center with a 100% research appointment, he has an excellent reputation for transferring soil-plant-animal technology to scientists, stakeholders, industry, students, and county Extension agents. He has bridged the professional gap between normally independent disciplines of Agronomy, Animal Science, and Range Science by participating and leading multidiscipline teams associated with plant-animal interface research. His role as chair or committee member of 62 graduate students, 2 interns, 2 post-doctorate students; and currently mentor to 3 faculty in the Department, is further testimony to his commitment to research and educational activities. During the past 5 years, Dr. Rouquette's research has focused on the following: FORAGE CULTIVARS FOR LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE, NUTRIENT CYCLING UNDER GRAZING, STOCKING STRATEGIES FOR FORAGE PERSISTENCE AND ANIMAL PERFORMANCE, DEFINING EFFICIENCY OF THE GRAZING ANIMAL, LIFETIME PERFORMANCE AND TROPICALLY-ADAPTED BREEDTYPES, CROPPING AND BIOENERGY SYSTEMS USING LEGUMES FOR N. Contact information: Dr. Monte Rouquette, Jr. PAS, TAMU Regents Fellow and Professor, Texas A&M AgriLife Research, Forage Quality & Pasture Utilization, Soil & Crop Sciences Department, Texas A&M AgriLife Research & Extension Center, PO Box 200 Overton, TX 75684, http://overton.tamu.edu, 903-834-6191.

**Dr. Jason Johnson** is an Associate Professor and Extension Economist with Texas A&M University and Texas AgriLife Extension. Over the past 13 years, his scholarly activities include participating as the principal investigator on 25 grants totaling over $2.8 million, 10 refereed journal articles, 35 Extension publications, and 25 published abstracts and proceedings. Additionally, Dr. Johnson has made over 150 professional presentations at the national, regional, and state levels and over 550 multi-county and county level educational presentations. His areas of programming expertise include: farm and ranch management and production, price risk management, range and natural resource management and marketing, and family financial planning. Dr. Johnson is a fourth generation rancher and has also completed the Series 65 Uniform Investment Adviser Law Exam and is a Registered Investment Advisor with the Texas State Securities Board. This has allowed him to develop and deliver relevant financial education programs, provide support and instruction to investment clubs, and present extensive seminars relating to asset allocation, retirement, and financial considerations for both farm and non-farm families. Dr. Johnson received his Ph.D. and B.S. in agricultural economics from Texas Tech University and holds a Master’s degree in agricultural economics from Louisiana State University.
Justin Duncan is owner/operator for Xeriscaping Solutions. He is also a director of region 5 of the Texas Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association or TOFGA. He has a passion and extensive knowledge in production utilizing organic techniques in gardens, landscaping and greenhouses. Plant Breeder at Dharma Initiative Past: Research leader at Prairie View A&M University. Contact info: Website http://www.facebook.com/XeriscapingSolutions , e-Mail region5@tofga.org

Kara Cosner ~ Natural Health and Healing,

Kara is an aromatherapy advisor, public speaker and educator on essential oils. She founded her own business, Anointed Health, and has clientele in several different states. As an Associate Pastor in the process of being ordained, she has dedicated her life to Non-Profit work, advocating for those with special needs and persons in crisis. The stress of such work caused her to look for better health solutions, leading her to the Young Living Company and essential oils. In the past four years she has achieved a rank of Executive within the company, spending much time researching essential oils and working with others to achieve wellness. Her personal experience with aromatherapy has inspired many to use essential oils for a better, healthier lifestyle.

Val Vetter and Debra Aaron – Piney Woods Ranch

Piney Woods Ranch is a Certified Naturally Grown Farm in northeast Texas. They raise heritage, slow growing breeds. Whether they are chickens, turkeys, or pigs their animal breeds are chosen for their heritage status and how well suited they are for the East Texas climate. You won’t find any chemicals, antibiotics, hormones, or GMO’s in their animal's food or on the land which they roam. They care for their animals which enjoy roaming free in the sun and fresh air, the way nature intended. Their produce is also organically grown. You can find them selling eggs, produce, and more during the months of April through October at the Winnsboro Farmers’ Market downtown on Market Street in Winnsboro, Texas. Their Winnsboro farm is Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) for produce and livestock. Additionally, they are members of: American Livestock Breed Conservancy (ALBC) Large Black Hog Association (LBHA) Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (FARFA) Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund (FTCLDF) Texas Organic Farmer and Gardeners Association (TOFGA) Winnsboro Farmers’ Market
Contact info: P.O. Box 381, Winnsboro, TX 75494, 903-629-3332.

Matt and Jerica Cadman - Shady Grove Ranch

Matt and Jerica Cadman partnered with Matt’s parents in early 2010 to found Shady Grove Ranch in Jefferson, Texas. Matt and Jerica met while pursuing engineering degrees at LeTourneau University in Longview, Texas. When Matt was hospitalized with an incurable autoimmune disease called ulcerative colitis, they decided on a major career change from engineering to farming. They felt convinced that diet would play a major part in his recovery, so using the principles taught by the Weston A Price Foundation which emphasizes nutrient-dense, pasture-raised meats and eggs, they began farming their own foods. Matt has been symptom-free and off medications since 2011, and he and Jerica and their three young children enjoy developing more efficient ways to restore soil and provide top-quality pasture-raised foods to East Texans. On roughly 185 acres, they raise grass-fed beef, pork, chicken, turkey, and eggs, and hope to expand into sheep, vegetables, fruits, and honey. The Cadmans share a passion for teaching young people a strong work ethic and providing internship opportunities in ranching and entrepreneurship. More info about Shady Grove Ranch can be found at www.ShadyGroveRanch.net
Andrew Whitehead - Axium Solar is a Residential Sales Manager NABCEP Certified PV Installer. Certification No. PV 092411-156, LEED AP. Andrew leads Axium Solar's residential sales program. He earned his "solar chops" as a PV field technician for a top solar company in New Mexico, where he specialized in the design and installation of residential solar systems. Andrew's sales background also includes years of experience working for developers of LEED certified residential properties. His passion for renewable energy is matched by his commitment to helping people meet their clean energy goals. Andrew received his bachelor's degree from University of Massachusetts Amherst and has a degree in Environmental Technology from Santa Fe Community College. Axium Solar is a trusted renewable energy EPC specializing in the engineering, procurement, and construction of grid-connected solar photovoltaic systems. Axium Solar has experience in the following markets: Commercial, Industrial, all levels of Government, K through 12, Higher Education, Healthcare, Mission Critical Facilities, and Residential. Axium Solar has proven success in turnkey, design-build solutions in both retrofit and new construction applications. **This is the company that installed the solar array for the NTCC Ag Complex.** Axium Solar contact info: 1005 Placid Ave., Suite 100, Plano, TX 75074, Toll-Free: 1-855-633-8680, Metro: 972-633-8680, [info@axiumsolar.com](mailto:info@axiumsolar.com)

Jeff Harrison ~ Farm Service Agency, Titus Co.  
Jeff has 22 years with loaning money to agriculture operations through commercial banks and the USDA, Farm Service Agency (formally the Farmers Home Administration). The Farm Service Agency loan programs division he is in charge of provides coverage for 9 counties in the far North East portion of Texas. He is 1992 Graduate of Oklahoma State University with a B.S. in Animal Science and minor is Business. He is a owner and operator of a family farm in Saltillo, TX and he is partnered with his mother to run a 100 head cow/calf and hay operation out of Hugo Oklahoma. He is deeply rooted in agriculture and well versed in the opportunities and difficulties facing American agriculture producers. Contact info: Farm Loan Manager -Mount Pleasant Service Center, Farm Service Agency, 903-572-5411 ext. 2, [jeff.harrison@tx.usda.gov](mailto:jeff.harrison@tx.usda.gov)

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