

A photograph of a person working in a greenhouse, surrounded by rows of tomato plants. The person is seen from behind, wearing a dark hoodie, and is tending to the plants. The greenhouse structure is visible with curved metal frames and translucent covering. The entire image has a blue color overlay.

CAREER PATHWAYS

In Sustainable Food & Agriculture

A Note From CBEY

One of the most pressing issues facing humans today is how to best address the immense challenges and opportunities in our global and local food systems.

There are many entry points where food and agriculture sectors can have a positive impact on people and planet — climate crisis, workers' rights, land sovereignty, food security, racial and economic equity, biodiversity, human health, animal health, global equity, cultural heritage, technology, policy, business development—and they are all interrelated and critical.

We've witnessed a growing passion among students dedicated to working in this wide range of food and agriculture sectors. For many students however, the types of jobs and pathways into different careers, and ways to make positive change is not always clear.

This guide is intended to provide a place for students to start, and we hope it both informs and inspires you as you navigate *your* pathway. We've included a snapshot of Yale alumni working in various spaces in food and agriculture, and gathered resources (both at Yale and beyond) that we hope you'll find useful.

This isn't perfect, and will always need updating...but this is a start! We want to continue to build it, iterating and improving as more students move through their own pathways. We invite you to share your ideas and insights on where we should go from here. Reach out to us at cbey@yale.edu any time!



Why I Chose to Work in Food

Humans have been on this planet for millions of years, but we've never bumped up against the ceiling of resources so flagrantly as we have in the past few years – the environmental and health alarms have never been so loud. And our food system is at the heart of it – there is no other daily action we take that has such a profound impact on the planet, on human health and on all our fellow travelers on planet Earth.

The challenge of your generation will be to identify, design, implement and advocate more sustainable and equitable models of eating and living. There's never been a more opportune moment to redefine and disrupt the way we nourish ourselves. For decades business and government have been stuck in the paradigm that economic growth comes at the expense of natural resources. We now know that's a false dichotomy.

My own career is a testament to the fact that there is plenty of opportunity in navigating this terrain. In 1998 I applied the learnings from a Yale School of Management discussion on the soda industry when I launched Honest Tea with my Professor, Barry Nalebuff. We created the world's first certified organic and Fair Trade bottled tea, helping to spread organic drinks around the world. Then in 2012 my wife read an article about a California-based plant-based protein company hoping to launch in retail, and I sent an email to info@beyondmeat.com offering to help out. I became an advisor, board member, then Chair of the Board as we worked to democratize more sustainable alternatives to animal-based diets. I've just now entered my third entrepreneurial chapter with the

launch of PLNT Burger and Eat the Change®, a for-profit and non-profit platform to help people shift to more planet-friendly diets.

The world needs more talented, diverse, and passionate leaders to step up to these challenges. One of my favorite Honest Tea bottle cap quotes states “If we don't change the direction we are headed, we will end up where we are going.” In order to shift from where we are now, we need new ideas, new approaches, and new leaders. And you can be one of them.

I hope you will take advantage of all that Yale has to offer – the wealth of knowledge, the talent, the resources, the network, and perhaps most important of all, your classmates - to equip yourself to become a leader of our food system, whether as a manager, entrepreneur, activist, or ideally all of those roles over the course of your career.

Here's to a healthier future,
Seth Goldman, SOM '95



**SETH GOLDMAN,
SOM '95**

Founder, PLNT Burger
and Eat the Change

Co-founder, Honest Tea

Chair of the Board,
Beyond Meat

ALUMNI QUOTES

“I work in food because... Consumers care about the environmental and social implications of the food that they buy, but they haven't had the visibility, nor capability to weigh in all the way back to the farm. There is an opportunity to create the market to change the system.”
— ERIN HEITKAMP (YSE '99), SVP of Impact, Pipeline Foods

“I work in food because... There are still low-hanging fruits! Commercial food production has been optimizing the wrong variables (cost and convenience) for a long time. Suddenly, you're being asked to optimize for taste, texture, health, etc. There's lots of innovation available for creating healthy, good products.” — DAVE VOSBURG (SOM '09), COO and Acting CFO, Local Bounti

“I work in food because... I love the teaching aspect—Getting people to explore their value systems and understand why issues like cage-free eggs and animal welfare matter. Talking through those values reduces the weight of other factors, like cost, in decision-making.” — HELENE YORK (SOM '88), Chief Procurement Officer, ISS Guckenheimer

FOOD & AGRICULTURE CAREERS: FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR MAP





Sector Overview

We use the term agriculture to include land-based agriculture and agroforestry, as well as fishing and aquaculture. Careers in sustainable agriculture work to produce food in a way that improves the wellbeing of people and our planet. Careers can take many forms, from owning a small farm, to working in ag-tech, to crop research, to farm workers' rights, to community organizing.

Sample Organizations



Yale Alumni in This Sector



DAVE VOSBURG
SOM (MBA) '09

Chief Operating Officer and Acting CFO, Local Bounti (Greenhouse-grown produce)
Co-Founder, Conception Nurseries (Cannabis biotech)



CHELSEA CHANDLER
YSE (MEM) '10

Co-owner/Farmer, Plowshares and Prairie Farm
Climate Solutions Director, Clean Wisconsin (Environmental protection nonprofit)



HOLLY MCLAUGHLIN
YSE (MEM) '18

Sustainability of Breeding and Product Supply, Bayer Crop Science



CORTNEY RENTON
YSE (MEM) '19

Executive Director, CitySeed (Farmers' markets & economic development)

What they love

- Good farm and off-farm land management practices support one another
- It's never boring or routine
- Great Yale connections in AgTech and AgFinance
- Food as a tool to build economic power, racial equity, health, sustainability, and intercultural connections

What they find frustrating

- Owning your own farm business means wearing all of the hats—you are spread thin
- When farming, a lot is out of your control
- Yale / Millennial language about environmental and social justice are foreign to big ag
- Philanthropy not supporting non-profits to tackle big issues that government and corporations miss or even generate



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Agriculture



Salima Jones-Daley

Interim Executive Director/Board
Member National Young Farmers
Coalition

Principal Consultant/Founder of Daley
Bread Consulting

YALE DEGREE

**YSE, MEM 2011 (Urban Ecology &
Environmental Design)**

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Senior Management Consultant, DB&A**
(DeWolff, Boberg & Associates)
- **Director/Co-Principal Investigator**
The East New York Food Co-op
- **Environmental Program Coordinator**
Local Development Corporation of East
New York

FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR > Agriculture

Please describe your current roles:

I currently serve as Interim Executive Director/Board member to the National Young Farmers Coalition a non-profit farmer advocacy organization, and Principal Consultant/Founder of Daley Bread Consulting, a practice specializing in business management and operational process improvements, R&D of community enterprises and environmental initiatives.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

There are so many things that make Food and Ag work frustrating because it involves changing hearts and minds to relinquish power in favor of a more sustainable and cooperative future. At the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC), our work is now guided by principles that focus decision-making squarely on racial justice and collective liberation, farming for climate resilience, uplifting BIPOC farmers, supporting a culture of farmers in solidarity with farmworkers, and respecting farmworkers expertise and rights. We advocate for policies that support the shift from extractive forms of agriculture and power to regeneration of resources, and climate action with reverence for indigenous practices. Every milestone achieved towards broadening this community of stewards and improving accessibility to resources is quite fulfilling and recharging.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

My early career experience involved managing a farmers' market and coordinating environmental justice programs in my historically red-lined hometown. I became increasingly involved in designing and influencing more equitable food systems at progressively broader scales. While at YSE, I sought opportunities to engage in community-led efforts, local policy, and USDA initiatives to shape a sustainable food environment. My working relationships led to an invitation to join the Board of the NYFC in 2017. My environmental and business management consulting expertise positioned me for the roles of Treasurer, Chair of the Planning Committee, and now as Executive Director. I've realized that consistent presence and follow through builds trust, which contributes to people (ourselves included) being willing to take risks to achieve real change where progress is elusive within discriminatory power structures.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Seek to build mutually beneficial partnerships, and check your privilege and personal biases. Seek to understand who is doing the work well in this field and how you may be able to add, innovate, or defer. Particularly as all of the work involves addressing racial inequities, reflect on whether permission is required by the community that will be impacted to avoid harm before well-intentioned actions are taken.

FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR > Agriculture



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Agriculture



Myles Gaines

Head of Farm Innovation and Experimentation, Jubilee Justice

YALE DEGREE

Yale College 2017

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Outreach & Development Associate, Service Channel** (Software for multi location facilities management)
- **Lazarus Summer Intern, Yale Sustainable Food Program**
- **Intern, Hummock Island** (Oyster aquaculture tech company)

Please describe your current role(s):

Jubilee Justice is building a cooperative of Black rice growers in the south using a multi-generational approach to addressing the climate and economic crisis. As Head of Farm Innovation and Experimentation, I co-manage System of Rice Intensification (SRI) trials exploring which rice varieties thrive in our southern climate, and what regenerative practices we can incorporate into our farm system for optimal growing conditions.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

I love being inspired by and building relationships with my fellow agriculture nerds. SRI is no-till, uses substantially less water and releases less methane gas than conventional rice production. It also requires less agricultural inputs and sequesters carbon, all while maximizing yields and profits and with an approach seeking to sustain farm operations beyond a single farm generation and build generational wealth. I see this work as directly addressing the systemic injustices faced by generations of Black land stewards and continuing the legacy of Black American cooperative resiliency, which is incredibly satisfying. In some other farming experiences I've had, I've been frustrated by an unwillingness of others to adapt and innovate.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

After my unforgettable summer as a Lazarus intern with the Yale Sustainable Food Program, I began intentionally asking myself how I could make an impact in the food system, particularly with Black Americans. With this leading my compass, I began looking up organizations and people doing the work and reached out to them. My journey had a few moments of discouragement as it seemed like I'd never find my place. The path to finding Jubilee was a multi-year journey that came to fruition after having many conversations with those doing the work and those in my social network.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

If you have a rough idea of the direction you wish to pursue in this space, lean on others to help you make it happen. There's so much power in relationships, especially when the path ahead isn't exactly clear. Through conversations, sharing your interests/passions with others, and leaning on relationships (simply asking for help along the way) can go a long way towards building momentum on your path.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Agriculture



Grace Oedel

Executive Director of Northeast Organic Farming Association in Vermont

YALE DEGREE

Yale College 2010

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Teen Program Director, Abundance Farm** (Community, Justice, and Education Oriented Sustainable Farm)
- **Founder and Director, Dig In Farm** (Educational, Sustainable Farm)
- **Executive Director, Ohavi Zedek** (Progressive, Inclusive Community Center and Synagogue)

Describe your current role:

I serve as the Executive Director of the Northeast Organic Farming Association in Vermont. We have a statewide team that works across a broad range of programs and strategies to build a food and agriculture system rooted in organic practices that is ecological, thriving, and just. We work programmatically and legislatively to push for holistic change.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

I love working in food and agriculture because the sector exists at the nexus of social and environmental justice. If we get food and agriculture right, we build a resilient future for people and planet—a future in which we are all thriving. The most frustrating elements are how big the forces are that we are up against with corporate control of the food system—but we are also many, and getting ever more organized and powerful by the day!

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

I value greatly the opportunity to do work I deeply believe in that is incredibly joyful. I have found that

I can work intensely hard in this space because I am so fed by the sense of purpose, the wonderful people, and the enormous sense of possibility to make the world better. The sense of meaning, and the community, truly makes this work nourishing for me.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

I think in general, build a strong community around you, and find as many mentors as you can. Literally ask people you admire to be your mentors, and find a way to reciprocate for the support they give you. I always ask myself how I can be of the most service. How can I use my position to center the voices of those most marginalized and oppressed by our food system in its current iteration? They are the people who know what we need to do to build another way!



Sustainable Logistics & Supply Chains

Sector Overview

Sustainable logistics and supply chains is a broad category. It includes those working in food or agricultural raw material production, sourcing and purchasing, food distribution, waste management, supply chain infrastructure, and sustainability positions. The sector is the connective tissue between agricultural producers and consumer-facing brands and companies. The supply chain role may be vertically integrated with the consumer-facing company, or separate.

Sample Organizations



Yale Alumni in This Sector



ERIN HEITKAMP
YSE (MEM) '99

SVP of Impact, Pipeline Foods (Logistics and supply chains for regenerative crops)



GABRIEL CHAIT
YSE (MEM) '14

Consultant for Specialty Coffee Supply Chains, SUCAFINA (Sustainable farm to roaster coffee)



HELENE YORK
SOM (MBA) '88

Chief Procurement Officer, ISS Guckenheimer (Contract catering)

What they love

- The system of agricultural production in the U.S. is so broken that it's an appealing sector as a problem-solver
- In supply chains, there's an opportunity to support consumers as well as farmers
- Showing people why the issues matter reduces the weight of other factors, like costs, in decision making

What they find frustrating

- There is a lack of consumer connectivity all the way back to the farm
- Keeping the momentum for change initiatives in organizations is extremely difficult
- It's overwhelming to be in the middle of independent parties making their own separate decisions



Sustainable Logistics & Supply Chains



Ariana Day Yuen

Founder and CEO of Forested

YALE DEGREE
SOM (MBA) 2019

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Co-Founder, Common Farms** (Indoor specialty produce farm)
- **Consultant, TechnoServe** (Business solutions to poverty org)
- **Senior Consultant, Booz Allen Hamilton** (Consulting firm)

Describe your current role:

I'm currently building Forested, an early-stage agroforestry venture with the mission to drive forest conservation around Global South forests, starting in Ethiopia. In partnership with indigenous communities, we're building supply chains of deforestation-free, carbon-neutral, and biodiversity-positive natural ingredients from Global South forests to global consumer products goods (CPG) businesses. We're working with these frontline communities most vulnerable to climate change, to increase their income from products that are produced utilizing conservation-agroforestry practices.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

I get to wake up every day and realize I have my first-choice job — working in the most magical forest ecosystems with incredible indigenous communities to produce (and taste) delicious forest products! The degradation of our environment is the single-most important issue we face. Being a part of solving this comes with irreplaceable fulfillment despite some of the hardships that come with building a start-up in emerging markets. It can be challenging engaging key stakeholders, notably in the investments and government side who either don't get the urgency of our climate crisis and the different approach needed to invest in nature-based solutions, and there can be a lot of bureaucratic red tape.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

The idea and drive to build Forested was largely inspired by my accumulated experiences working at the Global NGO TechnoServe in Ethiopia for almost three years. I learned first-hand about the bottlenecks and systemic issues and our ability to build more regenerative supply chains, especially in the food industry. I saw how forest ecosystems are packed with incredible ingredients and the potential of smallholder farmers as a supplier partner base. Forested was launched to be the missing market player unlocking this potential that ultimately would drive forest conservation.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Get to the field and accumulate your own first hand experiences. There is nothing as eye-opening and idea-generating as getting your hands dirty in the field, whether that's the forest, a food manufacturing plant, a laboratory, or other start-ups!



Sustainable Logistics & Supply Chains



Elysa Hammond

Vice President and Director of
Environmental Stewardship, Clif Bar

YALE DEGREE
YSE (M. Phil.) 1990

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES
• Ecologist, Clif Bar

Describe your current role:

I lead Environmental Stewardship at Clif Bar, a family and employee-owned company, nearly three decades old. Our team is small, but our vision is big—to integrate sustainability across the organization, field to final product. We have a focus on redesigning the business of food for Health, Equity, and Earth. Part of my role is to look for how we can have the greatest impact in the intersection of those areas.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

I've been inspired by the unflagging growth of the organic food industry, a movement driven by consumer demand. Organic farming practices solve a multitude of challenges and embody the ecological principles I learned in my classes at Yale. Organic supports ecological balance, protects biodiversity, and promotes the health of soils, ecosystems and people.

I've been frustrated by the lack of understanding among sustainability professionals about the co-benefits that organic farming can provide. These include climate benefits, increased agricultural resiliency and a significant reduction in people's exposure to toxic persistent pesticides.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

While at Yale, I was pursuing an academic career and conducting research on tropical agroforestry systems. When I was offered a part-time position to help take Clif Bar organic in 2000, I thought it would be a temporary gig. Twenty years later, I'm still here and still energized by the opportunity to help move the needle on food system sustainability from inside a company willing to do so. I never looked back.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Think holistically about food system solutions that can benefit people and planet. Get some experience on the ground, literally, with farmers and farm communities. Use your business voice to join with other companies and advocate for policies to support organic agriculture and climate action in ways that benefit everyone.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Marketing & Retail

Sector Overview

Marketing and retail encompasses the downstream efforts to reach eaters and purchasers. The sector includes those in brand management and strategy, and the grocery, restaurant, and food delivery industries— influencing trends, visibility, and flow of capital. It ranges from start-ups and small businesses to major international conglomerates.

Sample Organizations

interact



Yale Alumni in This Sector



SAEE PANSARE SOM (MBA) '19

Senior Manager, Category Marketing, Kraft Heinz



YONG ZHAO YSE (PHD) '15

Cofounder, Junzi Kitchen (Fast-casual Chinese food restaurant chain)



STEPH CHEN YALE COLLEGE '11

Founder/CEO at Anyday (Microwave Cookware Start-up)

What they love

- Connecting with people via food is personal and profound—you can expose people to new cultures through food
- Brands engage consumers directly, shifting consumer behavior and reinforcing or creating the market trends we want to see in the world
- Creating recipes and food content to engage people with our products

What they find frustrating

- Low appetite for risk taking and slower speed at large companies
- The larger the company, the greater the distance between you and the eater
- Gaining brand awareness as a new brand is tough and can be slow/expensive
- Creating and selling a physical product comes with a lot of challenges (supply chain, etc), many of which are outside your control



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Marketing & Retail



Alisha Stagg

Vice President of Product & Strategy
Brightland (Olive oil, vinegar, honey
company)

YALE DEGREE

YSE (MEM) & SOM (MBA) 2011

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Interim CEO, Dry Storage Co.**
(Artisanal flour brand)
- **Managing Director, Interact Boulder**
(Natural foods branding agency)
- **Senior Brand Director, KeHe Distributors** (Natural food and beverage distributor)
- **Senior Business Partner, Target**

Please describe your current role(s) in Food and Ag:

I am the Vice President of Product & Strategy at Brightland, a growth-stage Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) food company. Brightland was founded in 2018 and started as a direct-to-consumer brand selling high-design, responsibly-sourced California olive oil and vinegar. I am working to expand our product assortment in partnership with family farms and makers, as well as expand the brand's offline distribution.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

I love working in CPG food. It's an exciting space where I feel connected to agriculture, consumer behavior, marketing, strategy, the culinary world, and design. At Brightland, we attempt to have a positive impact within our sphere of influence. By expanding demand for premium California olive oil, we are helping to convert land use away from water and chemical-intensive almonds production to drought-resistant, lower-impact olive orchards. Our partner farms planted nearly 30,000 olive trees in California in the last two years alone. In addition, we work directly with growers that pay fair and legal wages in accordance with California law. I'd say the

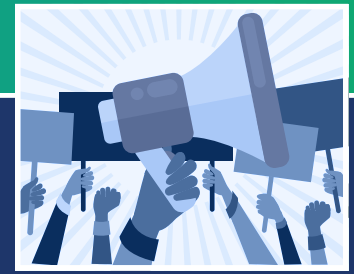
frustrations are twofold: 1) Scaling supply chains that simultaneously meet environmental, social, quality, and cost criteria and 2) building a successful brand in an incredibly noisy and competitive marketplace.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

I've held a lot of different types of roles in the food industry—across retail, distribution, agency, CPG, as well as at startups and big companies. I realized that I prefer being on smaller teams in growth stage companies where I get to wear a lot of hats and every day is different. At Brightland, I get to apply the breadth of my experience—from interning at a local produce distributor to running a food & bev focused branding agency—to help grow a company I believe in.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Focus on what you love doing day-to-day. Don't let idealism get in the way - sometimes building a career is a practical matter. Pay attention to where the industry is going and build up skills and experiences that are in demand. Don't be afraid to change jobs or roles, or take risks to find the right fit.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Policy & Advocacy

Sector Overview

Policy and advocacy groups influence public opinion and inform and create policy on key issues in the food system locally and globally. Organizations in this sector may support or push government action, partner with grassroots organizers to build power, or work with companies to improve their environmental and workers rights practices. The sector includes coalitions, worker-led organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think tanks, and government agencies.

Sample Organizations



Yale Alumni in This Sector



LEE ANN JACKSON
YSE (MEM) & SOM (M.P.P.M.
PUBLIC POLICY) '93

Head of the Agro-Foods and
Trade Division, OECD
(The Organisation for Economic
Co-operation and Development)



MONICA MCBRIDE
YSE (MEM) '10

Director of Agriculture
and Environmental
Metrics, WWF
(World Wildlife Fund)



MAX POTTHOFF
YSE (MEM) '19

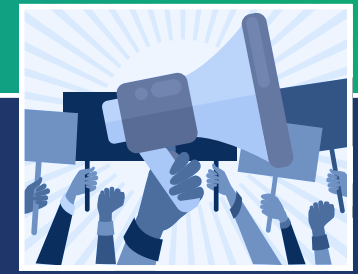
Agricultural Water Quality
ORISE Fellow, EPA
(US Environmental Protection
Agency)

What they love

- Large-scale impact
- Requires an interdisciplinary skillset, combining law, science, and economics to see how the parts of the whole fit together to impact health and the environment
- Affecting agriculture can have one of the largest impacts on climate change and land use

What they find frustrating

- Bureaucracy and strict protocols and procedures can restrict creative solutions
- Patience and consensus building is a good thing, but you need a lot of it
- You can only push companies so hard on voluntary goal setting and initiatives



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Policy & Advocacy



Latha Swamy

Director of Food System Policy,
City of New Haven

YALE DEGREE
YSE (MEM) 2016

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- Senior Advisor in Planetary Health, Rockefeller Foundation Economic Council on Planetary Health, Yale Center for the Study of Globalization
- Program Evaluator, Alam Sehat Lestari, Health in Harmony
- Junior Board Chair, EcoHealth Alliance
- Health Policy & Community Organizing Fellow, Physicians for a National Health Program

Please describe your current role(s):

As a municipal official in New Haven, CT, I work to support and help manifest community-led efforts to create an environmentally sustainable and socially just food system. To do this, I work on policy at the institutional, local, state, and federal levels and use a food justice framework of health equity, socio-economic justice, and environmental justice to support anti-racist food, farming, and land-use policies. I am also an active leader in international processes that relate to urban food policy.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

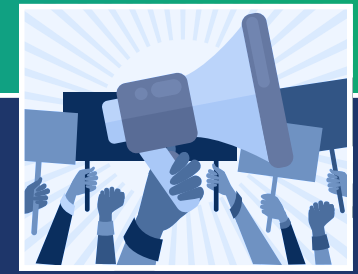
The most satisfying element of my work is working side-by-side with New Haven residents to build a local, state, and regional movement towards a just food system - one that New Haven residents envision. The value of the relationships, partnerships, and friendships I've built with lifelong residents of New Haven is immeasurable! I also appreciate the leverage I have as a City official to maintain focus on root-cause, systems-level solutions. What's frustrating is that New Haven is a challenging municipal environment for food policy change. Administrative conditions such as the lack of resources, lack of awareness of the full scope of food issues, and lack of capacity within departments act as barriers to change.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

My studies began as an M.D. and a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences. A memorable encounter with a patient helped me see the "big picture" that I was missing in my training – was I merely treating symptoms rather than tackling the root causes of systemic inequities? I transitioned to environmental studies and gained hands-on experience in urban farming, food justice, and community organizing. Subsequent international experiences in human health and innovative farming/fishing techniques to reduce global poverty and improve food sovereignty led to my role as Senior Advisor in Planetary Health to Ernesto Zedillo, former President of Mexico. Through these experiences, I realized that some of the most active nodes of policy action (and outcomes!) were in cities across the world.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Seek out ways to engage in food systems in unlikely places! I never thought about a role in local government, but through my engagement with the local food policy council, I learned of this unique Director role in New Haven. Local governments may also have roles such as planners, economic development officers, food procurement specialists, and even urban agriculture directors! Also look for opportunities to work at a state, national or international level through coalitions.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Policy & Advocacy



Saru Jayaraman

President, One Fair Wage
Director, UC Berkeley Food
Labor Research Center

YALE DEGREE

YALE LAW SCHOOL 2000

OTHER KEY ROLES

- Co-Founder, Restaurant Opportunities Centers United

Describe your current roles:

At One Fair Wage I lead organizing at a national level where we seek to eliminate the subminimum wage for all workers. I also direct the UC Berkeley Food Labor Research Center which focuses on the intersections of food and labor issues. I have been organizing restaurant and other service workers and responsible restaurant owners for 20 years to increase wages and working conditions in the service sector nationwide.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry?

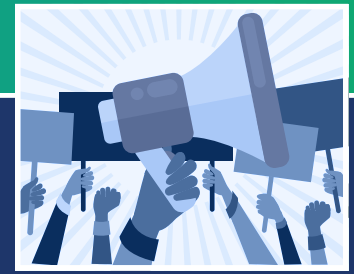
The most satisfying component of the work is developing the leadership of service workers and responsible restaurant owners to lead their own struggle for change, by sharing their stories to the press and policymakers, organizing their peers, and leading their victories for change. Right now millions of workers nationwide are standing up, refusing to work for poverty wages in really historic ways. It's a thrilling time to be doing this work.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

Being exposed to organizing as a methodology for social change was the most important turning point in my career. As opposed to service work, advocacy, or activism, organizing involves collective action led by the people most affected (not me) to take direct action targeting those in power to ultimately change the balance of power and improve their lives. It involves a very different approach to social change and I believe is the most transformative path to social change.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Spend time interning or working for someone who does exactly what you think you want to do—it's important to make sure that not only the field and the issue but also the type of work you are doing every day - whether it be writing and research or organizing people or lobbying—aligns with what you enjoy doing all day, every day.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Policy & Advocacy



David Burns

Senior Manager, Tropical Forests and Agriculture, National Wildlife Federation

● **YALE DEGREE**
YSE (MEM) 2010

● **KEY PREVIOUS ROLES**

- **Carbon Finance and Land Use Consultant, The World Bank**
- **Associate, Climate Focus** (Climate Policy Think Tank)
- **Conservation Science Intern, World Wildlife Fund**

Describe your current role:

Covering international conservation issues at a primarily domestic non-profit, I get to wear a lot of different hats. Broadly, I work to sever the link between the production of major agricultural commodities (like palm oil, soy, beef and leather) and tropical deforestation through engagement with key corporate and government actors. I also represent NWF at major international fora such as the U.N. climate negotiations.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

Focusing on agricultural supply chains across disparate geographies can make you feel removed from the impacts of your work at times, but hearing about improved local livelihoods or the return of extirpated species lets you know that it's vitally important. Unfortunately, companies and governments are still moving too slowly to match the urgency of the twin climate and biodiversity crises. We need less greenwashing and greater ambition and leadership.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

I started my career with stints in consulting, and I owe those past opportunities to relationships with other YSE alumni who were willing to help me get a foot in the door. While alumni want to help each other, it's also important to be intentional in your networking and to be clear with others about how they can best help you.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Agriculture is inherently local and context specific, whereas the ensuing supply chains may operate on much larger scales. This mismatch can lead to unintended consequences, so it's important to think through the long-term sustainability of potential solutions. Given the systemic nature of the challenges, we're only going to succeed through collaboration—and that means connecting with people in other constituencies, figuring out what they value, and then how to achieve shared wins.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Finance

Sector Overview

The financial sector provides the capital for people, projects, and ideas to grow and flourish in sustainable food and agriculture by connecting funds to projects. The sector includes corporate finance and investing, including CFO and treasury positions, as well as traditional investing, impact investing, integrated capital, reparative capital, angel investing and philanthropy. Investments can target everything from land ownership for farmers, to funding for entrepreneurial food brands and retailers from under resourced communities.

Sample Organizations



Yale Alumni in This Sector



ERIN WIRPSA EISENBERG
SOM (MBA) '09

Private Consultant for
Foundations and Nonprofits
working on Sustainable and
Regenerative Ag
(Network and resource for
regenerative ag funders)



DAN PULLMAN
YALE COLLEGE '80 &
SOM (MBA) '87

Founder and Managing
Partner, Fresh Peaks Capital
and Fresh Source Capital
(Sustainable food and ag
investment firms)

What they love

- Collaboration between investors, non-profits, philanthropists, and stakeholders
- Solving complex problems
- Bringing additional resources to people on the ground who are stewarding the land
- Investing in diverse leadership teams that are driving high growth technology companies in food systems

What they find frustrating

- Matching long timescales of landscape restoration with traditional investment horizons
- Balancing financial return and mission can be a delicate act
- Consumers who speak to strong impact values but purchase on pure economics



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Finance



Dominick Grant
Director of Investment,
Dirt Capital Partners

YALE DEGREE

YALE COLLEGE '01 & SOM (MBA) '12

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Director, Finance and Operations, BioCarbon Group** (Global private-equity impact investment firm)
- **Investment Associate, Working Lands Investment Partners** (Private-equity real asset investment firm)
- **Student Fellow, US Dept of Agriculture Office of Environmental Markets**

Please describe your current role(s):

As Director of Investment for Dirt Capital Partners I source and evaluate regenerative farmland investments, deploy capital and manage a portfolio of existing investments. We work with regenerative farmers with climate-smart practices to enable land access and pathways to ownership. We provide stability and a platform for growth for those farmers who are excellent stewards of the land. We are working on projects providing land tenure and ownership to first and second generation Latino immigrant growers, and have a focus on supporting BIPOC farmers.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

It is very satisfying to support collaborations between stakeholders and innovative farmers who are implementing transformative practices on the landscape. This has often included bridging the gaps between multiple disciplines and approaches, including sourcing blended capital for projects from foundations, non-profits, private investors and traditional banks. Being able to weave together these disparate sources and their many different requirements around a common goal has been very

rewarding. A frustrating element is that prices and transaction timelines for land have become more challenging, particularly during COVID.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

Working on project finance and land-based investments has had a huge impact on my career decisions. Working in a number of different sectors has allowed me to combine conservation finance, policy, and finance in my current work.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Spend time on farms and with farmers to understand the fundamentals of a farm business and the challenges faced by farmers.



FOOD SYSTEM SECTOR

Finance



Michael Sesko

Co-Founder and Managing Partner,
Frontier Farmland

YALE DEGREE

YSE (MEM) & SOM (MBA) 2010

KEY PREVIOUS ROLES

- **Senior Manager of Corporate Strategy, The Climate Corporation** (Ag software)
- **Strategy, Woolf Farming & Processing** (California farm and processor)
- **Co-Founder and CEO, Encendia Biochar** (Biochar start-up)

Describe your current role:

Frontier Farmland applies underutilized technologies to improve the financial returns and sustainability of our farmland investments. As Co-Founder and Managing Partner, I am tasked with building the organization (team, technology, partnerships, etc.) and raising the LP capital to deploy into our projects. My background straddles finance and ag technology so I spend an equal amount of time communicating our investment thesis to institutional investors as I do diving into agronomy and data science.

What are the most satisfying elements of your industry? What are the most frustrating?

Farming is a real, tangible industry that has tremendous scale and impact potential. And farmers are Renaissance people with an entrepreneurial bent so they are a ton of fun to work with. They command an expertise in biology, chemistry, engineering, finance and so many other disciplines.

Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) has become a hot topic for institutional investors in recent years and I am frustrated by the lack of coordination and conviction around ESG metrics. Agriculture is a complex industry with many tradeoffs when it comes to impact, so it is difficult to standardize. However, there are a lot of incumbents who are taking all the credit while doing very little.

What are the career realizations, decisions, or opportunities that led you to your current position?

Data will be the driver of the next agricultural revolution. When I was launching a biochar company with a mission to improve soil health, we found that trial data was key to proving efficacy amongst heterogeneous soil products and farming systems. While working at Woolf Farming & Processing, we didn't have enough granular data across our operations to make key agronomic decisions that had huge economic and environmental implications. And while at The Climate Corporation, data was the key to driving value for the farmer in the form of decision support tools because it allowed them to better manage risk and optimize their existing tools and resources.

What is one piece of advice you would give someone who wants to work in sustainable food and agriculture?

Trust yourself and take chances. Be creative in where you see solutions and don't hold yourself to a linear career path. Developing a network is also super important for growing your perspective and getting things done.

INTERNSHIP AND RECRUITING TIMELINE

	FALL 1ST QUARTER	FALL 2ND QUARTER	SPRING 1ST QUARTER	SPRING 2ND QUARTER
Agriculture		Networking	Interview	Offer
Supply chain, Sustainability, & Procurement		Networking	Interview	Offer
Marketing & Retail	Preparation	Interview	Offer	
Advocacy & Policy		Networking	Interview	Offer
Finance	Preparation	Interview	Offer	

Additional Recruiting Resources

- [Yale Office of Career Strategy](#)
- [Yale YSE Office of Career and Professional Development](#)
- [Yale SOM Career Development Office](#)

THINGS TO CONSIDER WHILE FINDING INTERNSHIPS AND JOBS

Preferred Candidates	Informational Interviews	Networking Events
<p>Some sectors prefer candidates with specific degrees. Most will be flexible on their preferences depending on your professional background.</p>	<p>Build a target list of potential organizations. Identify contacts associated with the organizations and hold brief phone interviews with them to learn more about each organization and identify key contacts. Don't be afraid to ask professors or staff for suggestions or help.</p>	<p>SOM hosts networking events for formal recruiting tracks, while YSE hosts more informal networking events. Both SOM and YSE hold job treks. Attend these to demonstrate your interest and meet contacts in this sector.</p>

Formal Case Interviews	Create Your Own Internship	Formal Internship Postings
<p>Some industries use formal cases to interview candidates. Prepare using the curriculum from management school professional clubs (Marketing or Finance).</p>	<p>Some industries are better suited to customized summer internships. Follow up with key contacts. Send your resume and a brief explanation of what you are seeking in an internship.</p>	<p>Set alerts for online job postings from target organizations. Submit customized resume and cover letter.</p>

RESOURCES AT YALE

YALE KEY

YSE: School of the Environment | **SOM:** School of Management

YDS: Divinity School | **YLS:** Law School

YSA: School of Architecture | **YSPH:** School of Public Health

If we are missing anything please contact cbey@yale.edu to submit more info!

Grad School Clubs:

- [Animal Law Society, YLS](#)
- [Common Ground, YDS](#)
- [Cross Yale Food Systems Initiative](#)
- [Food, Agribusiness, and Beverage Club \(FAB\), SOM](#)
- [Food Law Society, YLS](#)
- [Plant Based for Public Health Group, YSPH](#)
- [Sustainable Food SIG \(Student Interest Group\), YSE](#)

Centers, Programs and Departments:

- [Environmental Leadership and Training Initiative, YSE](#)
- [Global Health Justice Partnership YLS](#)
- [Global Health Leadership Initiative YSPH](#)

- [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Sustainability Initiative \(JEDSI\), YSE](#)
- [Landscape Lab – West Campus](#)
- [Law, Ethics, & Animals Program \(LEAP\) at YLS](#)
- [Regenerative Agriculture Initiative, CBEY](#)
- [The Divinity Farm, YDS](#)
- [The Forum for Religion and Ecology at Yale, YDS](#)
- [TSAI Center for Innovative Thinking \(Tsai CITY\)](#)
- [Ucross High Plains Stewardship Initiative, YSE](#)
- [Unite Here Local 35, Food Service Workers Union](#)
- [Yale Center for Business and the Environment \(CBEY\)](#)
- [Yale Center for Ecosystems in Architecture, YSA](#)
- [Yale Center for Environmental Justice, YSE](#)
- [Yale College Cultural Centers](#)
- [Yale Hospitality](#)
- [Yale Macmillan Center's Program in Agrarian Studies](#)
- [Yale-Myers Forest And Quiet Corner Initiative, YSE](#)
- [Yale Program on Social Enterprise, SOM](#)
- [Yale Program on Entrepreneurship, SOM](#)
- [Yale Sustainable Food Program \(YSFP\) & The Yale Farm \(Edwards St\)](#)

Media:

PODCASTS

- [Chewing the Fat](#)
- [When We Talk About Animals](#)
- [Impact & Innovation](#)

OTHER

- [Babylonian Collection at Sterling Memorial Library \(world's oldest cookbooks\)](#)

New Haven:

- **City of New Haven Food Systems Policy Division**
- **CitySeed** - Farmers' markets & food entrepreneurship, food justice
- **Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, and Environmental Education Center**
- **Community Alliance for Research and Engagement** - Neighborhood-based Health Equity Work
- **Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station**
- **ConnCAT** - Culinary Training Program
- **CT Food Launch Pad** - Early stage food venture support program through Atticus Market
- **Connecticut Foodshare** - Food Bank
- **Coordinated Food Assistance Network (CFAN) - Network of emergency food providers & List of food assistance programs, food pantries and soup kitchens**
- **Food Business Accelerator Program, Collab & CitySeed**
- **Gather New Haven** - Community garden network, programming, land trust, nature preserves
- **Greenwave** - Regenerative ocean farming training program
- **Haven's Harvest** - Food rescue organization
- **Huneebee Project**, urban beekeeping and honey production youth training
- **New Haven Bioregional Group**
- **Peels & Wheels Composting**
- **Sanctuary Kitchen**
- **The Sound School** - Aquaculture/Agriculture public high school
- **Witnesses to Hunger New Haven**

Near New Haven:

- **Hartford Food Systems** - Programs and advocacy to improve food access and policies
- **Brass City Harvest, Waterbury** - hub for local food access
- **CT Beekeepers Association**
- **CT Food System Alliance**
- **CT Farm Bureau**
- **CT NOFA** - Northeast Organic Farming Association
- **Dirt Capital Partners**, investment firm for farmer owned land
- **Food Solutions New England, Northeast Network**
- **Forge City Works, Hartford** - culinary training, farmers' market, housing
- **Green Village Initiative (GVI)** - Bridgeport-based urban farms and education
- **Hartford Food Systems**
- **Legal Food Hub** - A project of the Conservation Law Foundation, Pro Bono legal help

- **New CT Farmers Alliance**
- **ReSET** - Hartford food business incubator
- **Southern New England Farmers of Color Collaborative**
- **The Center for Food Equity and Economic Development (FEED) Bridgeport**, Culinary training and incubator
- **UConn Extension** - Ag extension offices and services throughout CT
- **Working Lands Alliance**

Farms with Yale Partnerships:

- **Clover Nook Farm**
- **Greenwave & Thimble Island Ocean Farm**
- High Hill Orchard
- **Marry Mountain Farm**
- **Massaro Farm**
- **Off Center Farm**

A Few Food & Ag Conferences:

- [Black Urban Growers Conference \(BUGS\)](#)
- [CT NOFA](#) - Northeast Organic Farming Association
- [Expo West + Expo East](#) - Giant natural products expo
- [Stone Barns' Young Farmers and Cooks Conference](#)
- [Agriculture, Food and Human Values Society Conference](#)
- [Yale Food Systems Symposium \(bi-annual\)](#)

Media:

PODCASTS

- [A Growing Culture](#)
- [America's Test Kitchen](#)
- [BevNet/Project NOSH](#)
- [Farmer to Farmer](#)
- [Feed: a food systems podcast by Table](#)
- [Gastropod](#)
- [Point of Origin](#)
- [Regenerative Agriculture Podcast](#)

- [Sporkful](#)
- [The Table Underground](#)
- [Toasted Sister](#)
- [Whetstone Radio Collective \(multiple podcasts\)](#)

MULTIMEDIA

- [CivilEats.com](#) - Comprehensive, daily foodnews source
- [AGrowingCulture.org](#) - Media and programming supporting smallholder farmers
- [WhetstoneMagazine.com](#) - Media company dedicated to food origins and culture

JOBSITES

- [Attra.ncat.org](#) - National Sustainable Agriculture Information Service
- [GoodFoodJobs.com](#) - Broad food-related jobs board
- [ForceBrands.com/jobs](#) - Consumer brands job board
- [FoodSystemsNetwork.org](#) - Jobs supporting sustainable and just food + ag systems
- [Tabledebates.org/jobs](#) - Exploring evidence and values in global food systems debates
- [Jobs.foodtechconnect.com](#) - Platform for good food innovation

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