

Bruce Presents

***From the Ground Up:
The Science of Sustainable Farming***

Jack Algieri of the Stone Barns Center and Steve McMenamín of Versailles Farms Discuss How Organic and Biodynamic Farming Practices Are Remaking the Agricultural Landscape

Thursday, February 4, 2021, 7:00 – 8:30 pm, Webinar via Zoom



Jack Algieri, Farm Director at the Stone Barns Center for Food & Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, NY.



Steve McMenamín, Manager of Versailles Farms, a market garden operation in Greenwich, CT.

GREENWICH, CT, January 26, 2021 — In the latest installment of *Bruce Presents*, the Bruce Museum’s monthly series of virtual programs featuring thought leaders in the fields of art and science, two innovators with “boots on the ground” experience discuss the emerging science of sustainable farming – the practice of using state-of-the-art, science-based techniques that maximize agricultural productivity while maintaining a harmonious, interdependent relationship with the environment.

Join us on Thursday, February 4, 7:00 – 8:30 pm for a webinar via Zoom, ***From the Ground Up: The Science of Sustainable Farming***, featuring **Jack Algieri**, Farm Director at the Stone



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Barns Center for Food & Agriculture in Pocantico Hills, NY, and **Steve McMenamin**, Manager of Versailles Farms, a market garden operation in Greenwich, CT.

Admission to *The Science of Sustainable Farming* webinar is free for Museum members and \$20 for non-members; students receive a 20% discount. To register, visit brucemuseum.org or call 203-869-0376. Support for *Bruce Presents* programs is generously provided by Berkley One, a Berkley Company, Connecticut Office of the Arts, and Northern Trust.

Jack Algieri is Farm Director at the Stone Barns Center, a nonprofit farm and educational center with a partner restaurant, Blue Hill at Stone Barns, located in the Lower Hudson River Valley. As the organization's first official employee back in 2003, Algieri has built an integrated farming operation rooted in land stewardship, innovation, and community, which also serves as a training campus for young farmers, chefs, changemakers, and the public.

Algieri has been actively farming for more than two decades and has trained a generation of young farmers in organic and biodynamic farming practices. He oversees the extensive farming operations at Stone Barns, integrating a holistic farm team that works together on multispecies grassfed livestock, grains, field crops, greenhouse, fruit, flowers, wild landscapes, and compost in a four-season regenerative system. Algieri leads the Center's programming in innovative tool design, breeding, and monitoring work that supports the efforts of small- and mid-size farmers, and was part of the core team that developed the Conservation Action Plan that led to the Center's management of 350 acres of public lands in the Rockefeller State Park Preserve. He is a frequent public speaker and has appeared at food and farming conferences and summits across the country. He holds a B.S. in horticulture from the University of Rhode Island.

Steve McMenamin is the Manager of Versailles Farms, a market garden operation based in the backcountry of Greenwich, CT. Steve and his wife, Ingrid, started the farm in 2013 after selling their French restaurant and patisserie, Versailles Brasserie. (The McMenamins rehabilitated Versailles, a Greenwich institution for 30 years, taking it out of bankruptcy and earning it a 4-star review by *The New York Times* in 2010). The mission of Versailles Farms is to grow food for the community with an emphasis on nutrient density, flavor, and good digestion. McMenamin is also the executive director of the Greenwich Roundtable, a nonprofit research and education group focused on long-term investing and on providing best practices for investors in non-traditional investing.



Steve McMenamin, Manager of Versailles Farms, harvesting tulips.

Using a combination of the French-intensive method of market farming with a blend of conventional and organic inputs, the McMenamins produce roughly four acres of greens on 1.5 acres of land. Their approach employs new technology, like soil moisture and irrigation sensors, with more old-time



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techniques, like the broad fork, which is used to crack the soil to allow more oxygen in without disturbing the soil web. They also work in harmony with the land, like growing shiitake mushrooms in the wetlands and recycling dead trees into charcoal and biochar.

"There are more than 2 million farms in the U.S.," notes **Leonard Jacobs**, who co-produces the *Bruce Presents* series and will moderate the program on February 4. "And those farms, according to the latest data, generate north of a trillion dollars in economic activity to the nation's GDP. So it is unsurprising that agriculture – and sustainable farming in particular – is driving so much technological and scientific innovation. But what does that term really mean? How will it change the way we think about what comes from the soil? This is why we're excited to present a spirited dialogue between two of our region's premier thought leaders in this field."

Conceived by **Suzanne Lio**, Chief Operating Officer and Managing Director of the Bruce Museum, and launched in 2019, *Bruce Presents* has received enthusiastic reviews for its topical programming about the arts and science. The most recent *Bruce Presents* was on January 19: *See Hear: Revealing the Links Between Impressionist Art and Music*. The virtual series continues on Thursday, March 4, with "*The Amazing and Unusual Artists of Instagram: Everything You Always Wanted to Know and Aren't Afraid to Ask*."

To participate in *From the Ground Up: The Science of Sustainable Farming* on Thursday, February 4, 2021, starting at 7:00 pm, visit brucemuseum.org or call 203-869-0376.

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About the Bruce Museum

The Bruce Museum is a community-based, world-class institution highlighting art and science. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, the Bruce has been voted the best museum in Fairfield County by area media in recent years. Located in a park setting just off I-95, exit 3, at 1 Museum Drive in Greenwich, Connecticut, the Bruce Museum is a 5-minute walk from the Metro-North Greenwich Station. For additional information, call the Bruce Museum at 203-869-0376 or visit brucemuseum.org.

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