

# SAVING AMERICA'S WORKING LANDS

A National Conference Hosted by American Farmland Trust

**DALLAS, TEXAS | APRIL 23-25, 2025**

## Session: Public and Private Capital in Land Access and Ownership

### SPEAKERS



#### **Tammy Nebola**

Agricultural Development Program Specialist

Iowa Finance Authority

Tammy Nebola is a Program Specialist for the Iowa Agricultural Development Division of the Iowa Finance Authority. She started with the Division in 2008 and manages the two loan programs, the Beginning Farmer Loan Program (Aggie Bond Program) and the Loan Participation Program. Iowa continues to have the most active Aggie Bond program in the nation. Tammy has assisted many other states with best practices when creating or enhancing their Aggie Bond programs. Tammy serves as a Board Member and Treasurer for the National Council of State Agricultural Finance Programs. They are an association of public and private agricultural financing entities working passionately for the promotion and financing of agricultural development. Tammy attended the University of Iowa and Iowa State University, pursuing a Degree in Accounting. She has over 23 years of banking and finance experience, specializing in agricultural and commercial lending, and agricultural bond financing.



**Brett Melone**

Chief Credit Officer

California FarmLink

Brett Melone is the Chief Credit Officer at California FarmLink, a statewide nonprofit Certified Community Development Financial Institution with a mission to invest in the prosperity and well-being of farmers, ranchers, and fishers who have limited access to financial resources. In his role, Brett oversees FarmLink's lending activities, and ensures its programs promote just and resilient economies and natural resource conservation. He became a board member of the organization in 2004, served as a member of its Loan Committee, and eventually joined the staff as a loan officer in 2013. Brett has served in numerous leadership positions in nonprofits that serve farmers and rural communities, in Latin America and California, with a particular focus on ensuring equitable access to resources, and supporting their business success and natural resource management.

Brett currently serves on the boards of directors of several nonprofit organizations, including Sustainable Agriculture Education, MEarth, Feed the Hunger Fund, CAMEO Network, and his rural community water system, and is an adjunct instructor of sustainable agriculture policy at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. He has a BA in International Relations, Business and Spanish from the University of San Diego and a MA in International Environmental Policy from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies.



**David Mancera**

Founder

La Cultiva

David Mancera is an experienced business advisor with over 20 years in the agriculture industry, specializing in business planning, finance, compliance, and sustainable practices. He is the founder of La Cultiva, a nonprofit supporting Latino regenerative farmers' access to land in California; he also sits on several nonprofit boards, including the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and holds an undergraduate degrees in Agriculture Business from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and an graduate degree in Agriculture and Resource Economics from UC Davis.



*Facilitator*

**Deborah Nares Paredes**

California Senior Manager

American Farmland Trust

Deborah joined the AFT team as the California Senior Manager in March 2022 where she is co-leading and managing CA programs. Deborah is a 3rd generation Californian born and raised in the beachfront town of Oceanside, CA. Her passion for farming started on her grandparent's small diversified vegetable farm in Aguanga, CA where she first learned to drive a tractor. Deborah has 2 decades of technical assistance and non-profit management experience centering the Latino farming community on the Central Coast of California. She specialized in soil health & water quality planning for many years. Then in 2017, she shifted her focus to supporting small-scale farm business with access to capital, land and markets as a farm business advisor with CA Farmlink, Kitchen Table Advisors in CA, and Kitchen Table Consultants in PA. Her current goal is to continue to build out more farm viability and land access programs for underserved farmers throughout California. She loves all things beach and water; dance and music; friends and family; food and farming. She is the mother of 2 smart and silly girls who keep her active and laughing. She invites you to reach out to her on LinkedIn or by email to learn more about how to advance the work of supporting the next generation of farmers.