

## Faculty Research Interests

**Loka Ashwood**, 310 Comer, [lla0008@auburn.edu](mailto:lla0008@auburn.edu)

Loka Ashwood is a rural sociologist. She has worked on designing participatory solutions to water pollution and closing legal loopholes used by farmer-investors to sidestep democratic processes in the siting of large hog confinements. Loka's currently co-editing a Special Issue in the Journal of Rural Studies on the rural as a dimension of environmental injustice. She's coauthor with Michael M. Bell of the Fifth Edition of the textbook An Invitation to Environmental Sociology. She currently is writing a book on the alternative politics of rural protest that affront conjoined corporate and state environmental injustices.

**Patricia A. Duffy**, 302 Comer Hall, [pduffy@ag.auburn.edu](mailto:pduffy@ag.auburn.edu)

Professor Duffy's research centers on two areas: food policy and farm management. She is interested in the impacts of nutritional programs on health and welfare of low-income families. Also, she is interested in costs and returns of farm enterprises.

**Deacue Fields**, 212 Comer, [fieldde@auburn.edu](mailto:fieldde@auburn.edu)

Professor Field's main areas of research are agribusiness, horticultural crops, and farm analysis. For recent publications, see his online resume at:  
<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/agec/Faculty/dfields/dfields.pdf>

**Brittney Goodrich**, 213 Comer, [bkg0007@auburn.edu](mailto:bkg0007@auburn.edu)

My research interests focus on the choices farmers make to address uncertainty in their operations, whether it be through diversification, insurance, forward contracting, new technologies, or alternative farming practices. I am particularly interested in researching how individuals within the agricultural supply chain use contracts to manage risk and align incentives. Additionally, I am concerned with how agricultural policy impacts individual agricultural production decisions at the firm level.

**Valentina Hartarska**, 210 Comer, [hartavm@auburn.edu](mailto:hartavm@auburn.edu)

My research focuses on financial markets and institutions, agricultural finance and microfinance, and economic development. I study the efficiency and governance of (non-traditional) financial institutions (MFIs and other dual-objectives organizations). My research also includes studies of microfinance impact, legislative impact on farmers and businesses, the role of gender in leadership, governance and in financial decision-making, and as well as topics on financial literacy and real estate finance. I am also interested in how shocks affect farmers (their finances and exit), especially as this pertains to young and beginning farmers, minorities, and women.

**Henry W. Kinnucan**, 213 Comer, [kinnuhw@auburn.edu](mailto:kinnuhw@auburn.edu)

My main areas of research are agricultural prices, marketing, and trade. In recent years I have also done some research on what might be termed “rural development.”

**Emir Malikov**, 304A Comer, [emalikov@auburn.edu](mailto:emalikov@auburn.edu)

Dr. Malikov’s research interests primarily lie at the intersection of econometrics and production economics. His current research focuses on the issues pertaining to (i) productivity and efficiency analysis, (ii) modeling of production processes in the presence of socially and economically undesirable outputs such as pollution, (iii) valuation of adverse effects of non-marketable environmental disamenities, (iv) estimation of the climate change effects on agriculture, (v) analysis of structure of the financial services industry (including banks, credit unions and microfinance institutions) and (vi) semi/nonparametric estimation and testing techniques for longitudinal data with spatial dependence.

**Ruiqing Miao**, 208B Comer, [rzm0050@auburn.edu](mailto:rzm0050@auburn.edu)

Ruiqing Miao’s research interests are centered on decision making under risk and uncertainty, with applications in agribusiness, agricultural production, and environmental and resource economics. Ruiqing has worked on investment decisions in new technologies such as wheat protein segregation devices and cellulosic biofuel refineries. He has also been working on the US federal crop insurance program’s effects on land-use change and the program’s interaction with conservation and innovation within the agricultural sector. Currently, Ruiqing is working on farmers’ adoption decision about perennial energy crops such as miscanthus and switchgrass, as well as this adoption’s environmental impacts. Ruiqing Miao received his Ph.D. in economics from Iowa State University in 2012 and worked as a post-doctoral research associate at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for three years before he joined the Department.

**Joseph J. Molnar**, 301 Comer, [jmolnar@acesag.auburn.edu](mailto:jmolnar@acesag.auburn.edu)

A central theme of my research is the adoption of technology on farms, constraints, barriers, and enabling conditions. I have a half-time appointment as Coordinator, Office of International Agriculture. I teach courses in Rural Sociology, Research Methods, Statistics, Agriculture and Society, and Extension Programs and Methods. I have edited four books and authored more than 65 articles, 35 chapters, and 65 other publications. These include seven articles in Rural Sociology. Recently, I was a PI or co-PI on projects funded by USDA-NRI, NOAA, AQUAFISH CRSP, and the Alabama Land Grant Alliance.

**Denis Nadolnyak**, 209 Comer Hall, [nadolda@auburn.edu](mailto:nadolda@auburn.edu)

My research program combines the related areas of risk analysis and climate impacts on agricultural production and finance. In particular, I am interested in the effects of climate variability and change on the agricultural sector and land values and on how financial risk

management tools mitigate the related risks. In the area of agricultural and development finance, my research focuses on the impacts of financial services, firm heterogeneity, and legislative changes on productivity and growth. Recent research looks into the issues of farmer exit and entry.

**Michelle R. Worosz**, 308A Comer, [mrw0016@auburn.edu](mailto:mrw0016@auburn.edu)

Michelle R. Worosz is an Associate Professor with an interest sustainable food and agricultural systems. Dr. Worosz holds an M.S. degree in Resource Development and a Ph.D. in Sociology from Michigan State University, where she focused on technological risk, technoscience, and agroindustrialization in pest management and fruit production systems. She worked in the Food Safety Policy Center and the Institute for Food Laws and Regulations at MSU, prior to joining the Auburn University faculty in 2008. Her work has been focused on agrifood system governance including the effects of formal statutes and regulations and informal rules and habits as they relate to raw milk cheese, beef, and gluten, as well as consumer perceptions of food safety oversight. Her work in Alabama has included studies on the state's small-scale supply chains for beef and seafood. Current studies incorporated consumer attitudes toward, and perceptions of local red meat food safety, access to and willingness to pay for local foods, and food security. Dr. Worosz is a recipient of the 2013 Rural Sociological Society Excellence in Instruction award and the 2014 Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station Director's Research Award (Junior).