



THE ALABAMA
SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE
NETWORK

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ASAN UPDATE

Fall 2016

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POLICY CORNER: BUSINESS LICENSES AND SALES TAX

By Sheree Martin,
Attorney at Law

QUESTION: Do I need to purchase a business license?

The short answer: It depends on what you're selling and where you are selling it.

Generally speaking, farmers who grow any type of agricultural crop outside the municipal limits of an incorporated area are not required to buy a farm business license from the state. The same is true of livestock ranchers and producers.

If you're selling your farm products inside the limits of an incorporated area (I'll sometimes use the term "city" or "municipality" for convenience) then whether you need a business license from the city depends on what you are selling.

If you are the grower and you're selling ONLY the actual produce of your crops as harvested—without changing it into something new and/or improved—then you don't need a business license. In fact Ala. Code § 11-



Photo courtesy Greene Street Market at Nativity.

51-105 (1975) actually prohibits cities and towns from requiring a business license to sell crops as harvested.

If you are selling processed or value-added

(Continued on page 5)

ASAN EVENTS THIS FALL!

Fall is ASAN's busiest time of the year — we are burning up the highways and backroads and we hope to see YOU somewhere along the way!

2ND ANNUAL GRAZE: BIRMINGHAM (9/11/16)

HUGE thanks to all who made the 2nd Annual Graze: Birmingham such a success this year! Full write-up will appear in our Winter issue. Sneak peak on **Page 3!**



NEXT UP: REGIONAL FOOD & FARM FORUMS

ASAN's anchor training and networking series.

- Thursday Sept 29
- Friday Oct 28
- Monday Oct 10
- Thursday Dec 1

More details on pages 2 and 3.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD: HOW I SPENT MY SUMMER VACATION

It's an age-old writing prompt for students returning to school, adjusting to new teachers, and to the (non-)sensation of being inside and sitting still all day.

"Summer vacation" looks very different in adulthood, and the answer to that timeless question depends on a whole slew of personal, professional, and cultural variables.

All the same, we've asked several members of the ASAN family to share reflections from their unique summer experiences, as a report-back to the larger network.

David Meek reflects on his food-systems research in India on **page 6**. Madison Clark recounts her day spent collecting soil from lynching sites in Colbert County on **page 8**. And Caroline Grove shares about learning to drive a

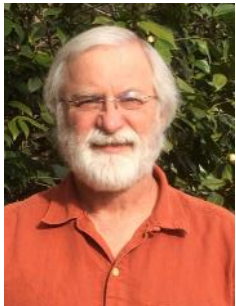
tractor in the Paint Rock Valley on **page 11**.

We hope that you are able to glean something meaningful, second-hand, from the first-hand experiences of our intrepid friends and neighbors.



Highly integrated agroecological multi-crop system, Sikkim, India. Photo courtesy David Meek

LETTER FROM THE ASAN BOARD PRESIDENT



It's the time of year many of us look forward to most. The farmers' markets are going full steam. Kids are back in school. Temperatures are finally beginning to cool in the evenings. Day

lengths shorten, leaves turning colors, marching bands practicing. There's only one thought on our minds this time of year ...

The ASAN Regional Food and Farm Forums!!!

These are our signature events each year. The "N" in ASAN is for NETWORK, and the Forums bring together and reflect the full ASAN network more than any other event we do. Each Forum is planned with the help of a local planning committee that determines the format and topics to be covered at the meeting. We bring together small-scale and sustainable farmers, gardeners, eaters, community leaders, and good food advocates to create four unique events every year. I have been to more than a few Forums by now, and no two are the same. It's always interesting to see how the character of the host site and host community shines through in each event.

The Forums feature a number of roundtable conversations on a wide variety of food and farming topics. These conversations include folks with extensive experience in the topic, and others who may be brand new — but all are interested in and committed to sharing and learning. There is also an experiential component to the day, such as a farm tour or mini-workshop, that provides some practical exposure. And always, of course, a locally sourced meal.

These events aimed at people of all levels of skill and experience, with the goal of promoting peer-to-peer exchanges and relationship-building in each region and across Alabama. At these Forums we find we are not alone in our interests; these gatherings are a great way to connect with each other. That's why we often describe the Forums as part workshop, part family reunion.

The series kicks off this year in southwest Alabama, on Thursday, Sept. 29 at the Wind Creek Casino in Atmore. We're excited to be partnering with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to host this Forum.

Monday, Oct. 10 we'll be in east central Alabama at the Kymulga Grist Mill in Childersburg. The Childersburg community has come together to renovate and sustain the Mill and the surrounding area, which

you'll definitely want to explore while you're there.

On Friday, Oct. 28 we'll be in northwest Alabama at the McDowell Farm School in Nauvoo. Our partner at this event will be the Sierra Club of Alabama, whose annual retreat will begin when the Forum ends. Friday evening our two groups will be hosting a joint cookout and campfire — if you're coming to the Nauvoo Forum, make plans to stay Friday evening or even the whole weekend!

Our fourth and final Forum this year will be in west Alabama on Thursday, Dec. 1, at the University of West Alabama in Livingston. We've had several meetings in this region and they are always a great time.

Please plan to attend one — or several! — of these Forums. There's more information about them on page 3, including a rough map, and at <http://asanonline.org/RFFF16>, where you'll also find more information about joining the planning committee for the Forum in your region!

Hope to see you this fall!

Kirk Iversen
ASAN Board President

CONTRIBUTORS: FALL 2016

Sheree Martin is an attorney in Birmingham, producer of the Shinecast podcast, and part-time farmer at her family's farm in Leighton.

David Meek is a food systems scholar at the University of Alabama. His research focuses on social movements, agroecology, and critical education.

Brandon Crawford Smith is an outdoor enthusiast and librarian at the Birmingham Public Library.

Madison Clark will soon graduate from Auburn University Montgomery with a degree in History. Currently a museum docent at the Freedom Rides Museum in Montgomery, she aspires toward social justice work in the future.

Caroline Grove of Macon, GA, is a junior at Birmingham-Southern College, and was ASAN's fabulous summer intern.

Locky Catron lives in Paint Rock where she works for Cleber LLC, manufacturer of the Oggun Tractor.

Kirk Iversen is ASAN's Board President and a traveling soil-scientist with the NRCS. He lives in Auburn with his wife and turtles.

Alice Evans is the Executive Director of ASAN. She is a native of Huntsville, and now lives in Birmingham.

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ABOUT ASAN:

The mission of the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network is to support conservation practices, families who grow and consume natural food and fiber, and the communities where they live. ASAN provides peer-to-peer education, training, and networking opportunities to our broad network of farmers, gardeners, food-based businesses, agricultural resource organizations, and community leaders. We are a membership-based organization that seeks to improve the lives of small farmers and rural and urban communities and make a positive impact on the state's environment and health.

We define sustainable agriculture as farming that supports families and communities while conserving natural resources. We embrace the breadth of overlapping ways — ecological, economic, social, historical, etc. — that together, we can build a more sustainable food system. Find out more at <http://asanonline.org>.

THE REGIONAL FORUMS ARE HERE!

Join us this fall for one — or several—of our Regional Food & Farm Forums! These events form the foundation of ASAN's training and networking programming, and while every Forum is different, those who have attended one will assure you that they're worth returning to again and again. (Our Board President Kirk Iversen, for instance—be sure to read his letter on the opposite page!)

Cost is just \$5 to attend if you're an ASAN member (yet another reason to join today!) and just \$20 if you're not.

There's a delicious meal provided at every Forum, and child care and scholarships are available to help make them accessible to all who want to attend. Language interpretation is also available with enough notice.

Find all the info you need, including links to register, at <http://asanonline.org/RFFF16>!



Snapshots from our 2015 Forums series. Top: photo credit Alice Evans. Middle and bottom: photo credit Andrea Mabry.

SAVE THE DATE

for the ALABAMA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NETWORK'S

2016 REGIONAL FOOD & FARM FORUMS



- 1 Poarch** Thurs 9/29
In partnership with the Poarch Band of Creek Indians
- 2 Childersburg** Mon 10/10
- 3 Nauvoo** Fri 10/28
In partnership with the Sierra Club of Alabama
- 4 Livingston** Wed 12/1

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT
<http://asanonline.org/RFFF16>

ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR GRAZING

Big big BIG thanks to all the fantastic farmers, restaurants and chefs, volunteers, sponsors, musicians, and lovers of food and beer, for making this year's *Graze: Birmingham* yet another great success!

Events like these remind us of the immense talent that our network holds, and the amazing things we can pull off when we simply provide a platform for that talent. The food, especially, the point of it all, was exceptional. If you were there, we hope you

enjoyed it as much as we did! If you weren't, well why not?!

A full write-up will be featured in the Winter 2015-16 newsletter. In the meantime, go ahead and let your taste buds start gearing up for next year!



Clockwise from far left: Student chef team from Pelham Culinary Academy; food offerings from el barrio restaurante y bar; combined West End Gardens / West End Community Café team. All photos credit Brittany Ragland.



THANKS, CAROLINE!

Many thanks to our summer intern Caroline Grove! Caroline is a junior at Birmingham-Southern College, originally from Macon, GA. She worked full-time with ASAN this summer as part of Birmingham-Southern College's Hess Fellows Advocacy Internship Program, and she was wonderful! We're thrilled that she's



Caroline with the resident bunny at Ruffner Mountain Nature Preserve, one of many creatures to pop in this summer while ASAN shared RMNP's office space.

planning to continue to work with ASAN this fall, as she transitions into a food-sovereignty-focused independent study fellowship. Thanks Caroline! (And don't miss her piece on page 11 about her experience learning to drive a tractor and plow the land!)



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LEGAL CORNER (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 1)

products, such as juices from your fruits, lacto-fermented vegetables, cheeses and other processed dairy products, canned pickles, jellies and jams, wreaths and floral arrangements, boiled or roasted nuts, sausages and cured meats, jerkies, etc., then you may have to purchase a business license to sell those products inside a municipality.

The key in Alabama is whether the processed or value-added products “have been substantially processed or commercially bottled, packaged, or canned.” If your farm’s produce HAS been “substantially processed or commercially bottled, packaged or canned” (more on what *that* means, in the question below about sales tax) then the exemption is not available. (See Attorney General Opinions AGO 2000-120 and AG No. 90-00296). In other words: A city *could* impose a business license requirement through its municipal licensing ordinance process for something other than crops as harvested.

To summarize, if you are selling substantially processed, value-added products inside the limits of a municipality, you need to check with the license office of each town where you sell processed or value-added products to see if a license is required (it probably is).

Two other factors might trigger a requirement that you purchase a municipal business license. One is related to deliveries of farm products into a municipality (separate from the direct sale of the farm products). The other comes up if you operate a farm “store” within the municipal limits.

Delivery License

Ala. Code § 11-51-194 (1975) provides that municipalities can impose an annual delivery license fee of up to \$100 for businesses that deliver into a city but do not otherwise have a physical presence in the city.

If you regularly deliver value-added products to a

Legal Disclaimer!

This column provides general information about farm and agricultural-related law in Alabama and does not constitute legal advice.

If you have a specific question you should consult an attorney licensed to practice law in the state where your farm is located. Every situation is unique and legal outcomes depend on the facts and circumstances of each situation, as well as applicable laws, regulations, administrative procedures, and jurisdictions. You should not act on or rely on any information provided in this column without first seeking the advice of your own attorney.



reseller (like a grocery store or restaurant) located in a municipality you should check with each city to determine if there’s a delivery license that might be applicable.

The argument can be made that Ala. Code § 11-51-105 – remember, the one prohibiting municipalities from requiring a business license for growers selling crops exactly as harvested – supersedes this provision about delivery licenses, for those same growers. So, most likely the delivery license fee provision would only apply for products that have been “substantially processed.”

On-Farm Stores Inside City Limits

If you set up a farm owned/operated store that is located within a municipality, you may also run into business license requirements that are distinct from direct sales by a farmer. That topic is beyond the scope of this response.

Zoning

If you are growing crops inside the incorporated area

of a municipality for anything more than a backyard garden for personal consumption, make sure you’re in compliance with the town’s zoning ordinances and related regulations. If you have farm-related zoning questions, let ASAN know and we might be able to address zoning in a future column (although we can’t answer specific legal questions or give legal advice).

Health Department Regulations

If you’re selling processed food and/or beverage products, you also have to comply with Health Department Regulations and licensing procedures. This response does not address those health department rules, regulations or licensing requirements.

QUESTION: Do I have to collect and remit sales tax on the farm products I sell?

This question takes a look at Alabama sales tax exemptions with a focus on sales BY farmers, ranchers, growers.

As with most matters of law and taxation – to no one’s surprise – the answer is complex and it depends on who’s doing the selling and what is being sold.

This answer is intended to provide a big picture overview of the Alabama law related to sales tax on farm-produced and farmer-sold produce and related farm products. In an attempt to make it easier to follow, this response does not address the “use tax” counterpart of Alabama’s tax law. There are also some exemptions to farmers from having to pay sales tax on certain types of purchases, but those are not covered here.

As a starting point, remember that unless there’s an exception, Alabama sellers are required to pay sales tax on the gross revenue from sales of products. Sellers add the required sales tax to the price of the product, collect the tax from the buyer at the time of sale, and then periodically “remit” the tax collected to the relevant state or city tax collection department in the time frame required by law.

Thanks to several exceptions in Alabama law, farmers and livestock producers are able to sell **certain categories or types of farm products** without having to collect and remit sales tax on those particular sales.

This column will focus on the two main

(Continued on page 13)



... but check first if you need to get a business license and charge sales tax! Photo credit: Julie Hunter

FIELD NOTES: GOING GREEN IN INDIA

By David Meek

Sustainable agriculture is taking root throughout India, and the people and forces propagating it range from rural social movements and urban elites, to NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and the government itself. These groups rally around sustainable agriculture for a diversity of reasons. For some agrarian social movements, advocating for sustainable agriculture is part of a critique of Green Revolution agricultural policies, which have arguably played a role in the degradation of land and society. For many NGOs, alternative agriculture is a way to empower marginalized farmers. And for state governments, it can be construed as a way to “go green” and simultaneously pursue national-level funding opportunities.

I spent six weeks in India this summer, visiting small-scale farmers, NGOs, and state agencies. My research took me from the Himalayan foothills, where renowned Indian scholar and activist Vandana Shiva’s Navdanya Biodiversity Conservation farm is located; to Kerala and Karnataka in India’s South where an innovative agricultural movement known as Zero-Budget Farming is widespread; to Sikkim—a state in the country’s Northeast—that has mandated organic farming. I will share some of my experiences in this short report-back.

The southern state of Karnataka is a fascinating place to explore India’s diverse approaches to sustainable agriculture. In the city of Bangalore—renowned in the U.S. for being a hub of information technology companies—there is substantial interest in urban gardening, and many are developing organic school and community gardens. This urban interest in sustainable agriculture is partially connected to the rising middle and upper classes. With access to greater disposable income, interest in ‘organics’ is for many a status symbol, denoting class and also, in India, caste status.

This class-based aspect of sustainable agriculture’s rise should be no surprise to those from Alabama; after all, where is organic produce found in our state? Most often in higher-end supermarkets, and “new wave” farmers markets—themselves a largely middle-to-upper class space. What I found striking is how visually similar Indian organic markets are to their U.S. counterparts—

from the ‘artisanal’ marketing to purportedly rustic color patterns, the idea of ‘organic’ feels like a readily digestible cross-cultural phenomena.

One place I observed this in the extreme was Mysore, Karnataka. Mysore is one of the major yoga hubs of India, and as a result, the sections of the city near the yoga centers are thronging with well-heeled international tourists. As a result, organic markets proliferate (I counted five within a city block), selling expensive produce, spices, and Ayurvedic remedies to international tourists and upper-middle class Indians alike. Particularly interesting here is how this confluence of international tourist and upper-middle class consumer demand is producing a market for small farmers. Further research is needed on how these production pathways are influencing changes in the lives and agricultural systems of family farmers.

The state (i.e. the various institutions of local, state and national government) is also a major player in advancing alternative agriculture in India, which is perhaps most visible in India’s Northeastern region. This year, the Himalayan state of Sikkim made headlines as India’s first state to go 100% organic. I travelled to Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, to meet with farmers, state officials, and NGO representatives to learn more about what this transition looks like. The transition began in 2003 when Chief Minister Pawan Chamlin proclaimed that the entire state would go organic. At that time, pesticides, chemical fertilizers, and genetically-modified seeds were prohibited



Terraced mountain agriculture, Sikkim, India. Photo courtesy David Meek.



Karnataka farmer prepares organic fertilizer slurry. Photo courtesy David Meek.

for sale within the state starting in 2010. The state government subsequently began the process of certifying farmers land as organic—free of charge—a process which it completed in January 2016.

According to government officials I spoke with at the Sikkim Organic Mission—the state agency responsible for the organic transition—the rationale for the state transition was that Sikkim was already largely organic by-default. Sikkim is a mountainous state, to which roads only provided access in the 1970s; additionally, the steeply terraced form of agriculture does not benefit as markedly from pesticides and chemical fertilizers as agricultural systems in the plains. As a result, the conversion process was relatively more straightforward than it would have been in states with a greater industrialized agriculture presence.

Lastly, the push for organics makes political sense in Sikkim, which has been at the forefront of other ‘Green’ transitions—in 1998 plastic bags were banned in shops. While Sikkim’s organic transition seems laudable, it also opens up a suite of questions. A central question I was left with, in my conversations, is how this policy initiative is precipitating changes in people’s livelihoods. Part of the rationale for going organic at the state level is the government’s belief that going organic can increase production. However, the state is interested in encouraging small-scale farmers to transition away from highly diversified agricultural systems, and towards producing one or two crops for market; by reducing the number of types of crops, they say, farmers could produce higher quantities of particular crops for market. Such policy implications raise serious questions about the potential role of sustainable agriculture in the loss of agrobiodiversity and cultural traditions.

(Continued on page 7)



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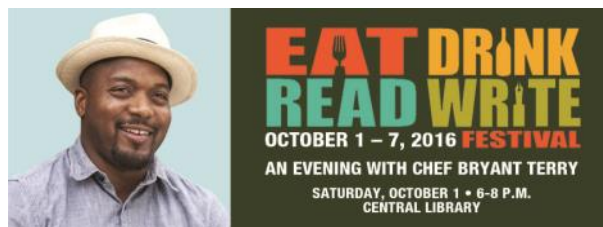
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EAT DRINK READ WRITE FESTIVAL RETURNS TO BIRMINGHAM

By Brandon Crawford Smith

The Birmingham Public Library's annual Eat Drink Read Write festival will be held this year from October 1-7. This year's festival is dedicated to the idea that taking a risk and seeking out adventurous foods can result in great culinary experiences. Whether it is trying a Thai restaurant located in a gas station, buying ribs that have been cooked in a 55 gallon steel drum smoker in a parking lot, or foraging for paw paws in a forest, there are countless opportunities for culinary adventure in our daily lives.

This year's main event is an evening with Bryant Terry on Saturday, October 1st. Terry is a 2015 James Beard Foundation Leadership award-winning chef, author, and food-justice activist. This will be a ticketed event (see the library website for ticket information) and will include samples of fare from several Birmingham restaurants.



We will also have a fermented & foraged foods panel on Tuesday, October 4th with Harvest Roots Ferments, Deep Roots Apotheké, and Chef Thyme Randle of the Underground Cooking Academy. This free event will include samples of kombucha, curtido, herbal tonics, and lacto-fermented pickled vegetables.

Thursday, Oct 6 will be a cocktail event in which several of Birmingham's top bartenders will compete to create drinks inspired by works of Latin American literature.

And finally, the library's popular Bards & Brews spoken word poetry and craft beer tasting event will close the festival. Poets will compete in a slam for cash prizes while attendees sample beer from craft breweries including and hors d'oeuvres from area restaurants.

For more details, visit the Birmingham Public Library's website (www.bplonline.org) or check out Eat Drink Read Write on Facebook.

INDIA (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 6)

I found numerous similarities between the push for sustainable agriculture in the United States and India. In both countries, complicated cultural politics and histories are intertwined with the desire to go "green". Various actors—with diverse motivations—are also advancing this agricultural transition for disparate political and economic reasons. How this transition will affect the livelihoods of small farmers and markets themselves in both countries has yet to be seen.

FIELD NOTES: COLLECTING SOIL, BEARING WITNESS TO LYNCHING VICTIMS

By Madison Clark

The ugly stains of the United States are often covered with pride and patriotism, attempting to shine as the brightest country on the planet. Yet, the South has its scars, and many still-open wounds that have yet to heal. Lynchings that took place in the 19th and 20th centuries are among those wounds, those stains, that our country tries to bury. The Equal Justice Initiative

in Montgomery is helping to break the silence surrounding hundreds of lynchings that took place right here on our own home soil, by memorializing the soil itself.

The Equal Justice Initiative was founded in 1989 by Bryan Stevenson, and since has been a model in the social justice community. EJI is a nonprofit that “provides legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons,” in addition to their equally provocative and important work focusing on culture and policy change. (Read more at eji.org/about-eji.) EJI has gained exposure in the past few years thanks to Bryan Stevenson’s best-selling memoir *Just Mercy*.

Recently, EJI has launched a Community Remembrance Project, in which staff members and community volunteers are creating a memorial to the thousands of African Americans ruthlessly lynched throughout the southeastern US. Lynching became commonplace shortly after the Civil War, during a period known as Reconstruction, when angry white Southerners facing social and economic upheaval, sought to remind newly freed slaves of their appropriate “place” in society. In the decades that followed hundreds of innocent black men and women were lynched, overwhelmingly as punishment for “crimes” or misdeeds that were greatly exaggerated, or outright fabricated. In Alabama alone, there are over 350 documented lynching sites. EJI’s project seeks to honor those lynching victims whose voices have been silenced.



Above: jars of soil collected from the sites where — Jordan and Jesse Underwood were lynched in Colbert County in 1885 and 1891, respectively. Right: The author collecting soil in remembrance of Mr. Jordan. Photos courtesy of Madison Clark.



Collecting the soil from the earth and holding it in my hands was beyond my expectations. Just as the soil holds and conveys nutrients to the vegetation surrounding it, it holds and conveys memories of the vivid and tragic last moments of innocent men whose only crime was being black in a hatred-filled society.

I tried to picture Mr. Underwood and Mr.

Jordan as they inhaled

their last breaths before leaving this world. I wondered if they prayed, if they thought of their families, if they believed that soon better times would arrive for their people. Looking around the area where we collected the soil, there were no markers, no proof of the lynchings occurring, no trace of the angry mobs who once stamped their feet in this soil while committing murder. In a sense, it left me with a feeling of hopelessness, that so many would never know about the persecution committed. I am confident this is the feeling Bryan Stevenson and EJI are working to eradicate.

The jars were only two among the several dozen collected at EJI’s office, waiting to be part of a larger memorial exhibit. Observing the variety of different colors on the wall is sobering. With so many shades of soil and clay lined up next to each other, one can’t help but reflect on how so many lives were lost in such terrifying and inhuman ways. How soil, such a fundamental and yet often-overlooked element of the world around us, carries our stories, and stories from generations before us. As Bryan Stevenson explains, the tears, blood, and sweat of those murdered are mixed in the soil. Their cries are still heard through the glass mason jars. The visual representation of this terrorism can’t help but move a person to acknowledge the history and continued oppression of African Americans — and while acknowledging these open wounds will not in and of itself, heal them, it is an absolutely necessary first step.

On July 30, 2016, my partner, Mark, and I received our assignment to travel to two lynching sites in northwest Alabama, Tuscumbia and Sheffield. Our mission was to collect the soil from where Mr. Jesse Underwood and Mr. Jordan were lynched in 1891 and 1885, respectively. Among the volunteers, Mark and I traveled the furthest that day, giving us plenty of time on our four hour drive to reflect and meditate on the lives and deaths of these two men.

Very little is known about Mr. Jesse Underwood. Lynchings were so common during his lifetime that newspaper reports would often leave out details regarding the murder. All that is recorded is that a party of over three hundred were present to witness and carry out the attack.

Mr. Jordan was accused of attempting to sexually assault a well-known white woman. After his arrest and jailing, a mob of 150 men broke into the jail, took Mr. Jordan, and delivered their rendition of “justice” by hanging him from the Country Bridge. As EJI notes, “almost 25% of documented lynchings were sparked by charges of sexual assault, at a time when the mere accusation of sexual impropriety regularly aroused violent mobs and ended in lynching. During this era, the deep racial hostility that permeated Southern society burdened black people with a presumption of guilt that often serve to focus suspicion on black communities after a crime was discovered, whether evidence supported that suspicion or not.”

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FIELD NOTES: LEARNING TO DRIVE A NO-FRILLS ALABAMA MADE TRACTOR

By Caroline Grove

As a student at Birmingham-Southern College, I don't often find myself in a situation that allows me to learn how to drive a tractor, much less plow a piece of land. However, this summer, I had the opportunity to intern with ASAN. I found a bit of unexpected excitement in northeast Alabama, when I was invited by Locky Catron of Cleber LLC, to experience their Oggún tractors first-hand.

As a native of Georgia, I have never had the chance to explore this part of Alabama, but it is beautiful country—rolling peaks and valleys and perfect visibility of the blue Alabama sky. Upon arrival, I met Locky in the barn, where a cherry-red tractor sat parked in the shade. Locky explained to me that the Oggún tractors are based on the Allis-Chalmers model G built between 1948 and 1955. Horace Clemmons and Saul Berenthal, founders of Cleber LLC, hired an engineer to enhance the design of the Allis-Chalmers tractor in order to produce low-tech machinery for small-scale farmers. Their goal is provide no-frills, open sourced equipment that can be fixed in the field or local shop. Their motto on accessories is if 100% of the customers don't need it, then don't add it – don't make anyone pay for unwanted features.

After learning about the company and the company's goals, it was time to learn to use the tractor! Locky explained in a matter of minutes how to turn it on, how to raise and lower the belly and rear implements, and how to move forward and reverse. That was it! Cautiously, I climbed aboard the tractor, and off I went around the land surrounding the barn. The tractor

was so simple and easy to operate—I could move forward, backwards, and do a few turns after minimal instruction. Seeing that I had mastered the basics, we set off to plow a field for a fall garden.

I drove the tractor to the field, which was not too far from the barn, but there was quite a steep hill to climb in order to make it there—the tractor made it over the crest with ease. Locky demonstrated how to use the plow: drive the tractor normally, and once you've gained a little speed, drop the rear implement using a lever. Pretty simple. And the best part was that the row was completely visible at the belly. Locky's fall garden was ready to plant in no time!

I had mastered the art of using a tractor in an hour's time. I am sad to say, the only feature I didn't nail perfectly is the tractor's zero-turn feature, but I'll keep working at it, when I get another chance. I'm not sure when that will be, though the prospect of purchasing a tractor for only \$10,000 and showing my friends at BSC a thing or two about farming is certainly tempting. I feel confident that I could teach them to use it in a matter of minutes just as Locky did for me.



Top left: courtesy Oggun. Top right and above: courtesy Caroline Grove.

Oggún Tractors – “An example for the world”

By Locky Catron

Granma, the official voice of the communist party of Cuba, described our company's Open System Manufacturing model as an example for the rest of the world, starting in Cuba. They realize that the Oggún Tractor is not only a solution for their farmers who are using oxen to cultivate, but it is a solution to the 80% of world farmers who are small-scale and have been abandoned by the equipment industry.

Our business model stems from both the Cuban vision for self-sufficiency and their agroecological growing methods. Rarely has a Cuban farmer used machinery in the field, and if they have, it's because they rigged up a 30-year old tractor that has been left behind without replacement parts. The Cubans expressed a need for basic equipment that would fit their low-input production methods, and would not leave them reliant on one company for parts and service. We agreed to produce a simple tractor from off-the-shelf components, designed to fix with nothing more than a wrench. We've published the designs in order for local companies to start supplying the necessary parts. This was a model that fit with the government's goals and their farmers' needs.

Cuba is definitely eager for the arrival of the Oggún manufacturing plant. But they're not the only ones. We've listened to the cries of US farmers who just want to fix their own dang tractor, and have set up shop right here in Fyffe, Alabama. We support a thriving sustainable agriculture community in Alabama, and want to be the leader in holistic, inclusive business. We're excited to work with the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network, and be a connection point between small farmers around the globe. Learn more at www.thinkoggun.com.

COST SHARE PROGRAM MAKES ORGANIC CERTIFICATION MORE AFFORDABLE

Growers and handlers of organic agricultural products now can recover part of the cost of their USDA certification. The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) will be allocated \$23,072 to reimburse farmers, ranchers and handlers who have received organic certification or a renewal of certification from an accredited certifying agent between October 1, 2015 and September 30, 2016 are eligible to participate. The reimbursement covers up to a maximum of \$750, or up to 75% of certification costs.

The Organic Certification Cost Share Programs (OCCSP) consists of two programs authorized by separate pieces of legislation: the National Organic Certification Cost Share Program (NOCCSP) authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill, and the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) Organic Certification Cost Share Program authorized by the Federal Crop Insurance Act of 2001. The goal of the OCCSP is to reduce the cost of organic certification and to strengthen

market support for U.S. agriculture.

"Organic producers are encouraged to participate and we hope that the program will help them recoup some of the expenses associated with becoming a USDA certified organic operation," said John McMillan, commissioner of Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries.

The ADAI will administer this non-competitive grant program by processing applications for cost share funds, and USDA will reimburse them. USDA distributes funds on a first-come, first served basis until funds are exhausted. Organic operators typically submit a one-page application form, a W-9 Tax Form, proof of USDA organic certification, an itemized invoice of certification expenses, and proof of E-Verify to ADAI. The ADAI reviews the application and then may reimburse the operator for 75



percent of the cost of certification, up to a maximum of \$750 per category of certification per year. First-time certifications are eligible, as are renewals. Farms still transitioning to organic production are not eligible.

Most certification-related costs are eligible for reimbursement. Eligible costs include: application fees, inspection costs, travel or per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage. Ineligible costs include: equipment, materials, supplies, late fees and inspections for transitional certifications or due to violations of NOP regulations.

Applications will be accepted through September 30, 2016. For application forms and additional details, call Johnny Blackmon with the ADAI at 334-240-7257 or email at Johnny.Blackmon@agi.alabama.gov.

If you are seeking organic certification, you can find information on the process for certification at www.ams.usda.gov.



SPENCER FARM

Pig roasting class with Rustik Rooster Farms' Carl Blake and his American Hot Box - 8AM - \$40 includes Breakfast & Lunch
Farm to Table Dinner, includes singer/songwriter performance after hours - 6 PM - \$75

Musicians - Veigh Kaye Spencer, Eric Erdman, Bubba Hall, and Heather Lutrell
Proceeds go to Grow Selma and Mill Village Community Garden and Food Park



Fall Farm to Feast presented
by Blackbelt Benefit Group

Saturday, Sept. 24th

at Spencer Farm

796 Co. Rd. 201

Marion Junction, AL 36759

tickets: www.fallfarm2feast.bpt.me

POLICY CORNER (CONTINUED)

(Continued from page 5)

statutory exemptions available to farmers and livestock producers regarding the sale of agricultural products for food uses.

Exemption #1: This one covers sales of livestock, poultry and “other products of the farm, dairy, grove or garden, when in the original state of production or condition of preparation for sale, when such sale or sales are made by the producer or members of his immediate family or for him by those employed by him to assist in the production thereof.” Ala. Code § 40-23-4(a)(5) (1975).

Exemption #2: This one covers the “sale or sales of fruit or other agricultural products by the person or corporation that planted, cultivated, and harvested such fruit or agricultural product.” Ala. Code § 40-23-4(a)(44) (1975).

It’s enough if you qualify for one of the two exemptions--you don’t have to qualify under both.

In plain English, before the “fine print” explanations: If you plant, grow, and harvest crops you probably do not have to collect and remit sales tax in Alabama on the sale of your harvest, UNLESS you do some type of processing (and this is covered in more detail on the website version of this article). Washing



Photo credit: Julie Hunter

and shelling is OK. Any other processing may cost you your exemption. For some examples and a bit more explanation, read the rest of this article on the ASAN blog. If you are a livestock producer selling meat and poultry, it’s a bit more complicated.

Overview for Livestock Producers

Note that Exemption #2 is limited to produce that is planted, cultivated and harvested (crops, fruits, and nuts), but Exemption #1 is not. Exemption #1 is where livestock producers need to focus. If you sell livestock as a live animal, it’s clear from Alabama law that that the sale is exempt from sales tax, provided your animal meets the definition of livestock. If you sell meat or poultry that has been cooked there’s no exemption from sales tax under

Exemption #1. If you sell meat or poultry that has been cured, or processed into sausage, etc. it’s likely this changes the condition and your eligibility for Exemption #1 is probably lost.

The question which is not obviously answered by the statute or regulations is whether Exemption #1 is available to a producer who is selling raw, cut meat or poultry, to a consumer at a farmers market or to the consumer in a one-on-one sale not at a farm-owned store.

For a bit more about Exemption #1 and livestock producers, read the full blog post on the ASAN website.

Read the full article at <http://asanonline.org/blog!>

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR BEGINNING FARMERS

Calling all aspiring and beginning farmers! The Alabama Cooperative Extension System is beginning its second year of outreach to beginning farmers through a grant funded by the USDA’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program. ACES is close to unveiling a self-paced online curriculum for beginning farmers with topics including crop production, pest management, food safety, and marketing and financial planning. Working with Farmscape Solutions and Crotoovina Consulting, the program also provides individualized technical assistance for beginning farmers. Last year over 20 farms around the state received ongoing support to get their farm to the next level and connect to existing resources. For more information, check out www.aces.edu/beginningfarms.







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NEWS FROM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Congratulations to **Andrew Shea**, farm manager at the **McDowell Farm School**, and **Whitney Moore** assistant director at Camp McDowell, on getting hitched on September 17!

CLASSIFIEDS & RESOURCES

Pecan Point Farm and Creamery in Hartsboro is looking for a fall/winter intern. Duties related to cow dairy and creamery, grassfed beef, layer hens and ducks, pecans, beehives, commercial kitchen, and more. Housing and food from the farm provided. Small stipend may be paid depending on skills or as skills grow. For more information contact George Rogers (706-835-5985) or Becky Ward-Rogers (334-667 6902), or email pecanpointfarm@bellsouth.net. Farm website is pecanpointfarm.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

DETAILS FOR THESE EVENTS
AND MORE, AT
WWW.ASANONLINE.ORG/EVENTS

September 24 – Selma
Fall Farm to Feast

September 24 – Hazel Green
Specialty Vegetable Production Field Day

September 29 – Poarch
ASAN Regional Food & Farm Forum (Poarch)

These sections appear in every newsletter and feature updates both personal and professional, on ASAN members and friends: anything from a new farm, to a new baby.

They make existing resources known to others, and help spread the word for those looking to connect. Connecting people in this, the barest-bones of ways, we hope to provide a jumping-off point for folks to connect on their own in deeper ways.

Have something you want us to publish? Send it to alice@asanonline.org or (256) 743-0742.

September 29 - Montgomery
Workshop: Food Safety, Tunnel Houses and Crop Insurance

September 30 – Tuskegee
Training on Sustainable Agroforestry Practices

September 30 - Montgomery
Bryant Terry Lunchtime Lecture and Cooking Demo

October 1 – Mobile
Documentary Screening – Perennial Vegetable Gardening with Eric Toensmeier

October 1 – Birmingham
Eat Drink Read Write: An Evening with Bryant Terry

October 2 – Birmingham
Cahaba River Fry-Down

October 2 – Jemison
Fall is for Gardening

October 3 – Robertsdale
Income Tax Workshop

October 4 – Headland
Income Tax Workshop

October 4 – online
Residue and Tillage Management in Organic Farming: Central States (webinar)

October 4 – Birmingham
Eat Drink Read Write: Fermented & Foraged Food Panel Discussion

October 5-8 – Moundville
Moundville Native American Festival

October 6 – Russellville
Income Tax Workshop

October 7 - Epes
[CoopEcon](#)

October 7 – online
Webinar: All Bugs Good and Bad

October 8-9 – Blount County
Solar Homes Tour

October 10 – Childersburg
ASAN Regional Food & Farm Forum (Childersburg)

October 10 – Marion Junction
Income Tax Workshop

October 11 – Columbiana
Income Tax Workshop

October 11 – Fairhope
Mobile Bay Green Drinks – Fairhope

October 11 – Montgomery
Veg Out Potluck

October 13 – Livingston
Planning Meeting for Regional Food & Farm Forum in Livingston

October 13 – Birmingham
Cahaba Group of the Sierra Club Meeting

October 13 – Gadsden
Coosa Valley Sierra Club Meeting

Advertise in the ASAN Newsletter!

Print / digital distribution to 3000+ across Alabama

Diverse, informed readership of farmers, foodies, community leaders, and more
Support ASAN's ongoing work to unify and amplify statewide efforts in sustainable agriculture and local food systems

Contact alice@asanonline.org for details

(Continued on page 15)

Help us build a better Alabama.

Join ASAN or renew your membership today!

Name _____

Business _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please send me: ☐ monthly e-updates
☐ quarterly print newsletter

If you're interested in making a larger donation to ASAN, or have any other questions, contact
info@asanonline.org or (256) 743-0742.

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

Donations and annual dues are tax-deductible.

☐ Individual Supporter: \$25

☐ Farm or Household: \$50

☐ Business or Organization: \$200

\$_____ Additional donation

\$_____ **TOTAL enclosed**

Not sure if you need to renew? Check your address label to see when your membership expires.

Please mail checks made out to ASAN to:
 PO Box 2127, Montgomery, AL 36102.

UPCOMING EVENTS (CONT'D)

(Continued from page 14)

October 14 – Fairhope
 Alabama Pomegranate Association Annual Meeting

October 14 – Prattville
 Farm Tax Seminar for Accountants and Attorneys

October 15 - Birmingham
 Collard Green Cookoff and Wellness Expo

October 19 – Mobile
 Mobile Bay Green Drinks

October 21 – Tupelo, MS
 Alliance Field Day

October 22 – Cullman
 Farm Day at Peinhardt Living History Farm

October 23 – Birmingham
 Wild & Scenic Film Festival

October 28 – Nauvoo
ASAN Regional Food & Farm Forum (Nauvoo)

October 28-30 – Nauvoo
 Alabama Sierra Club Retreat

October 28 – Tuskegee
 Training: Integrated Approach for Managing Diseases and Parasites in Small Ruminants

November 1 – Gadsden
 Income Tax Workshop

November 3 – Shorter
 Income Tax Workshop

November 4 – online
 Webinar: All Bugs Good & Bad

November 7 – Hartselle
 Income Tax Workshop

November 8 – Fairhope
 Mobile Bay Green Drinks

November 8 – Montgomery
 Veg Out Potluck

November 10 – Birmingham
 Cahaba Group of the Sierra Club Meeting

November 10 – Gadsden
 Coosa Valley Sierra Club Meeting

November 11-14 - Montgomery
 Wise Traditions Conference (Weston A Price Foundation)

November 16 – Mobile
 Mobile Bay Green Drinks

November 17-18 – Clanton
 Alabama Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association Conference and Tradeshow

November 17-19 – Jackson, MS
 Mississippi Food Summit and Agricultural Revival

November 18 – Brookhaven, MS
 Alliance Field Day

November 21 – Mobile
 Lunch and Learn: Long Leaf Pines, A Southern History

December 1 – Livingston
ASAN Regional Food & Farm Forum (Livingston)

December 2 – online
 Webinar: All Bugs Good & Bad

December 4-6 – Tuskegee
 Professional Agricultural Workers Conference

December 9 – Winona, MS
 Alliance Field Day

December 13 – Fairhope
 Mobile Bay Green Drinks

December 13 – Montgomery
 Veg Out Potluck

January 25-28 – Lexington, KY
 SSAWG

February 15-17 – Tuskegee
 125th Annual Farmers Conference

February 17-18 – Atlanta
 Georgia Organics Conference & Expo

ASAN

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Montgomery, AL 36102

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healthy foods,
healthy communities.*