



The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) presents
2016 Regional Food & Farm Forums

Wind Creek Hotel & Casino – Atmore, AL
Thursday, September 29, 2016

8:30-9:00am	Registration
9:00-10:15am	Welcome, overview, and group mapping exercise
10:15-10:30am	Load bus for tour
10:30-11:30am	Guided tour
11:30-11:45am	Disembark and return to meeting space for lunch
11:45am-12:45pm	Lunch + Lightning Talks <i>Lightning talks are brief (1-2 minutes) "elevator pitches" to inform the entire group about relevant projects, programs, resources, etc. If you have something to share, step up!</i>
1:00-1:50pm	Roundtable discussion (session I)
2:00-2:50pm	Roundtable discussion (session II)
3:00-3:50pm	Roundtable discussion (session III)
4:00-4:30pm	Group wrap-up, reflections, and evaluations <i>If you haven't already completed your evaluation, please do so now!</i>

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Be sure to visit the exhibit tables!

First South Farm Credit
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Creating and Sharing Inclusive Space:

Sustainable agriculture holds that a diverse, interdependent farm system is a stronger, healthier, and more resilient farm system – the same holds true for our human communities as well. Sameness may be easier, but it is weaker.

Please move through the Forum today with gentleness and openness towards other perspectives and experiences – they will not all be the same as yours, a fact that should be not feared but cherished and nurtured.

GENDER PRONOUNS:

If you don't know what your gender pronouns are, ask yourself: how do people refer to me in the third person? Most likely they use she (and her and hers) or he (and him and his). For example, "She invited me to visit her on her farm."

In English, as in many languages, we are typically taught that these are the only two sets of options. However many people do not identify with either of those two options, and may reflect that by using the pronouns they in the singular (and them and theirs), ze (and hir and hers), or others. For example "Pat invited me to visit them on their farm."

You can't actually assume someone's gender pronouns by their clothes, body, name, or appearance. To embrace and practice this, we ask you to **write your gender pronouns on your nametag**, along with your name. Please observe and respectfully use the pronouns people have written for themselves.

This may be a new concept for you, and it may make you uncomfortable because it is new. While this discomfort is perfectly okay, please **show respect by taking this process seriously**. Refrain from

saying that it doesn't matter what pronouns people use for you, or jokingly telling people to use the wrong ones. It may not be important to you, as your gender identity may not ever be questioned – but again, not everyone has had your experience.

If you have any questions, there are folks available to help – please feel free to seek them out at any point throughout the day.

TAKE SPACE, MAKE SPACE:

Central to ASAN's guiding philosophy is that **we are all experts, and we are all learning**. We opt for roundtable discussions instead of single presenters because we believe everyone around a table deserves some time at the mic, and that we all may benefit from what is shared at that mic.

So, recognize that **you are one among many**. If you are someone who normally dominates a conversation, pull back a little and focus on active listening, to make room for others to share. If you are someone who has a hard time jumping in, make a conscious effort to speak up and share something. Facilitator shorthand for this trade-off is "**take space, make space**."

Roundtable Discussions:

These discussions are open to all knowledge and skills levels! Facilitators have experience in their topic, and they will help keep the conversations going, but these are not lectures or presentations.

* **Your suggestion:** Passionate or curious about a topic you don't see here? Suggest it during the lightning talks, and see if others want to join!

Session I (1:00-1:50pm):

- Table 1) **Annual Fruits and Veggies 101** – Interested in growing your own food but don't know where to start? Learn how to choose a site for your garden, how to prepare it for planting, how to choose what to plant, and how to raise crops from seed to harvest! – *James Miles (ACES)*
- Table 2) **Mushrooms** – Edible mushrooms grow in a wide variety of conditions; some are easily "domesticated" while others are better foraged. Learn how to incorporate which mushrooms into your farm or garden, for home use and/or for sale. – *Robert Thrower (Poarch Band of Creek Indians)*
- Table 3) **Seed Saving and Seed Sovereignty** – Plant varieties are constantly evolving, and heirloom seeds tell a story that reaches back for generations (plant and human). Patents and high-tech genetic modification pose a threat to the future of community-"owned" seeds. Protect native and heirloom varieties by learning to save seeds. – *Charlotte Hagood and Lawrence Rives (Sand Mountain Seed Bank) and Lori Sawyer*

Table 4) **Building Strong Farm-to-Restaurant Relationships** – Many farmers are interested in selling their products to restaurants, and many chefs and restaurant managers are interested in supporting local farms... But it's rarely that simple. Farmers and chefs alike, discuss what to do and what NOT to do, to initiate and sustain strong, mutually beneficial purchasing relationships with one another. – *Samuel Spencer (Admiral Hotel)*

Table 5) **Assessing Soil Quality and Maintaining Good Soil Health** – Good soil grows good crops and livestock, and is the first line of defense against crop nutrient deficiencies, pests, and diseases – so it's worth investing in. Learn what makes a healthy soil, and how to understand and improve your soil's health. – *Michael Labelle (MightyGrow Organics)*

Table 6) **Growing in Water 101** – Hydroponics, aquaponics, and aeroponics are all agricultural systems in which you grow crops in water or a soilless medium instead of in the ground. Discuss the basics of these systems and share your experiences of what's worked and what hasn't, how to get started, etc. – *Venisha Taylor (Healthy Living Gardens)*



Session II (2:00-2:50pm):

Table 1) **Foraging** – The world around us is full of "weeds" that are actually "superfoods," and other edibles hiding in plain sight. Learn how to identify and harvest them, and what nutritional (and other) benefits you've been missing all this time. – *Robert Thrower (Poarch Band of Creek Indians)*

Table 2) **Small Livestock Production** – Learn the ins and outs of raising and marketing small livestock including rabbits, goats and sheep. – *Robert Spencer (ACES)*

Table 3) **Permaculture** – Derived from "permanent" and "agriculture," permaculture is about building your farm or garden to work with nature rather than against it, through everything from inter-planting annual and perennial crops, to using the land's contour lines to conserve water. Learn ways to draw on permaculture's philosophies to make your farm or garden more sustainable. – *Clint Burdette (Burdette Ecosolutions)*

Table 4) **Getting Started in Farming 101** – Are you ready to start your own farm, but don't know where to start? Or are you a beginning farmer looking to connect with other beginning farmers? Discuss everything to finding and acquiring land, financial support opportunities, business planning, crop planning, and more. – *Lee McBride (Crotovina Consulting)*

Table 5) **Culinary Skills 101** – You can't get good food from the farm (or garden) to the table without some basic cooking skills! And not everything needs to revolve around elaborate recipes with lots of one-time-only ingredients, either. Discuss basic ground rules about preparations and seasonings that will equip you with the skills you need to improvise and do more with less. – *Judy Johnson (Ridge Manor Community Garden)*

Table 6) **Beekeeping** – The basics of keeping bees, for honey, pollination, or just for the pleasure of it. Touch on the benefits, pitfalls, and challenges of beekeeping, and what supplies and knowledge you need to get going and keep going! – *Samuel Spencer (Admiral Hotel)*

Session III (3:00-3:50pm):

- Table 1) **Medicinal Herbs** - Learn how you can use different herbs and wild whole foods to treat and nourish your whole body, and support spiritual, physical, and digestive health. Discuss alternative, preventative, and holistic approaches to taking care of your health and body. – *Robert Thrower (Poarch Band of Creek Indians)*
- Table 2) **Growing (and Sustaining) Strong Community Gardens** – It takes a village to raise a garden. Whether you want to start a garden in your school or community, get involved with an existing one, or keep alive the one you have, share your successes and your lessons hardest learned. – *Darrell Hollinger (Poarch Band of Creek Indians) and Judy Johnson (Ridge Manor Community Garden)*
- Table 3) **Small-Scale Poultry** – The basics of raising free-range birds for meat or eggs. Discuss care for poultry, including nutrition, predators, and various living spaces. – *Gabriel Denton (Jubilee Promise Farm)*
- Table 4) **Compost** – Composting turns a linear process (raw materials > final product) into a cycle that feeds itself, converting kitchen waste, garden waste, and animal waste into living, nutrient-rich soil food. Discuss different ways to start, maintain, and utilize a healthy compost pile. – *Michael LaBelle (MightyGrow Organics)*
- Table 5) **Pest and Disease Management** – What ARE the pests and diseases plaguing your crops, and how (and when) should you manage them? Which “pests” are actually beneficial? – *Ayanava Majumdar (ACES)*
- Table 6) **Your suggestion***

Evaluations: *Please* take the time to share your feedback and reflections! Evaluations help us know how this Forum was, and how to improve future Forums. If you have to leave before the end, there will be a basket on/around the registration table where you can turn in your evaluation.



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