



Farming in the Margins

A 2020-2021 Needs Assessment
of Alabama Sustainable Producers



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About ASAN:

The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) is a grassroots membership-based network of sustainable and family-scale farmers, agriculture-related organizations and businesses, and other local food supporters, from across Alabama. ASAN's mission is to deepen relationships between the people of Alabama, the food we eat, and the place we live, to realize our vision of a resilient agricultural system in our state. Learn more at asanonline.org.

Gratitude:

We would like to extend our gratitude and appreciation for: all Farmer Needs Assessment (FNA) participants, the FNA Fellows (Darren Beachem, Nonhlanhla Jones, and Olivia Cleveland), the ASAN Board of Directors, ASAN staff (Charlotte Pate, Alice Evans, Marian Mwenja), Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE), and the Deep South Food Alliance. And, special thanks to Southeastern African American Farmers' Organic Network (SAAFON) for support conceptualizing the process and developing the survey tool, Ashley Bachelder, MPH, MPS for data analysis, and Brilliant so Brilliant for graphic design.

Project Coordinator's Note:

We have learned so much through this process. Thanks to the overwhelming generosity of farmers and their deep willingness to support one another, we were able to compile hours and pages of data and stories, additional resources, oral histories, and visions to support ASAN's work to come. Some of these are reflected in this report, and all will be incorporated in both the daily work of ASAN to connect farmers with each other and our organizational push towards lasting systems change in Alabama. As we conducted over a hundred hours of interviews, we learned things about our own survey and process, both questions that elicited powerful stories of triumph and struggle, and things that didn't quite land the way we anticipated they would. One of our 158 questions was "What challenges stop you in your tracks?" Over and over, as participants responded with gentle correction, we realized the question was fundamentally flawed. Farmers had plenty of challenges, plenty of barriers, but almost nothing "stopped them in their tracks." My hope is that in reading this report, it is abundantly clear how unstoppable farmers are, especially collectively.

-Charlotte Pate, ASAN Farmer Support Coordinator

About the Farmer Needs Assessment:

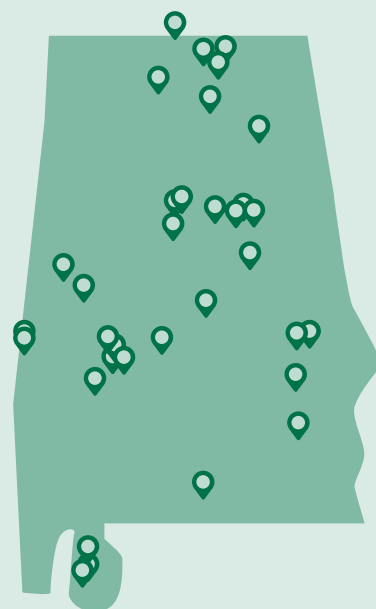
This report is a synthesis of the findings of our 50-participant Farmer Needs Assessment (FNA) conducted by ASAN in fall/winter 2020-21, funded by a grant from Southern SARE. The FNA was designed to be participatory and relational in nature, with a focus on ongoing relationship-building, as on the data itself. Interviewers (all farmers or past farmers themselves) visited participants' farms in order to conduct a 2- to 3-hour in-person (COVID-safe!) interview. The data gathered went beyond the "nuts and bolts" of farm production and marketing, to bigger-picture context about the farm family, their vision for the farm's legacy, and broader systemic challenges. Farmers were included in the building of the assessment tool, the delivery, the analysis and reporting of the results; they were compensated for their time and contribution. Grounded in ASAN's ongoing investment in building farmer leadership, these results will continue to inform our programming and organizational direction in the years to come.



Assessment Participants

The FNA reflects data gathered from farmers located all across Alabama. We targeted farmers who align themselves with the sustainable agriculture movement in one way or another, though each farmer defines this somewhat differently. Most participants use sustainable or regenerative growing practices on their farms already, while some are interested in adopting more sustainable practices, or are primarily interested in sustainability from the standpoint of community wealth-building and/or farmland preservation. Participants were by and large farmer-owners or co/collective owners of their farms. The map shows where farmer-participants were interviewed by ASAN's Farmer Support Coordinator and the FNA Fellows.

Participant Map

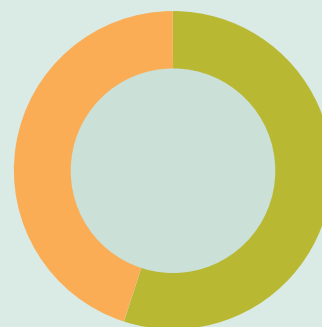


Participants Self-Reporting Demographics

Total interviewed

57 individuals (50 farms)

Gender

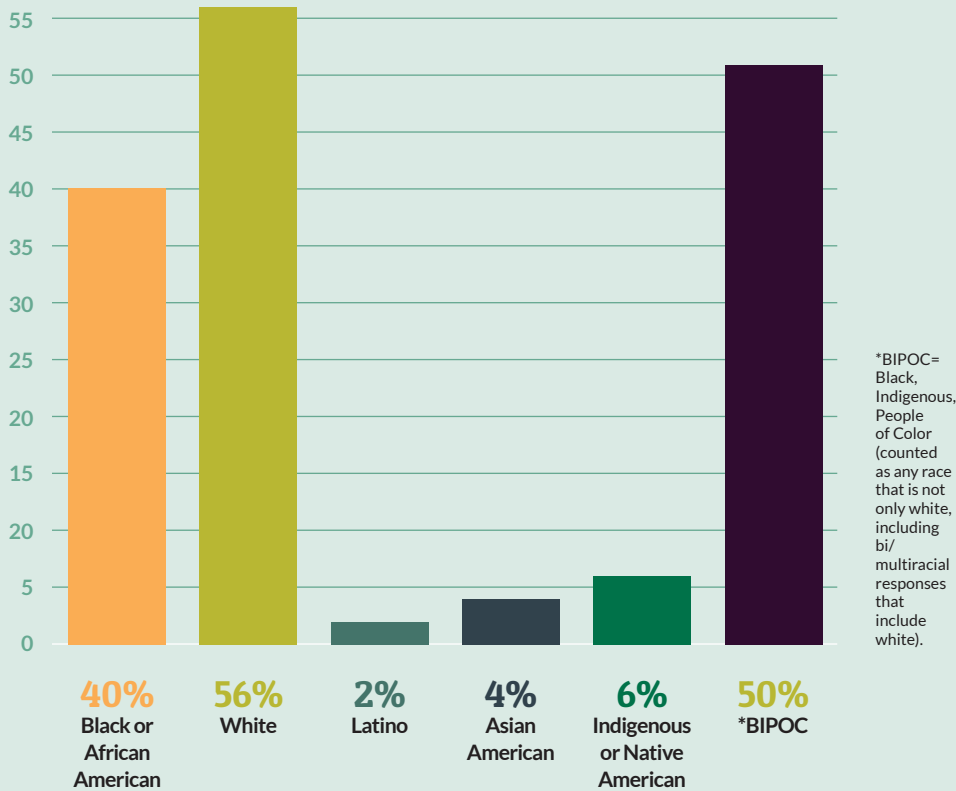


45%
Women

55%
Men

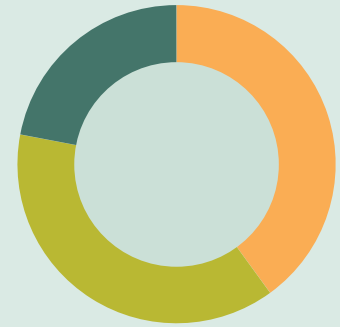
Demographics continued on next page

Race
(with selection of more than one race)



Immigrant or refugee: **4%** | LGBTQ+: **4%**

Farmer experience

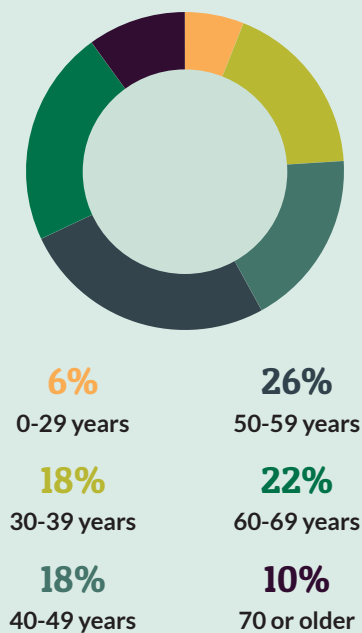


40%
Beginning Farmer
(0-10 years)

38%
Middle Farmer
(11-39 years)

22%
Elder Farmer
(40+ years or over
the age of 65)

Age



We prioritized the voices of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color), LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer) and women farmers for interviews, always aiming for majority. We believe in robust participation and ownership in Alabama food systems by these and other marginalized groups, and we acknowledge that in order to counteract the historical decentering of these farmers, we will need to make explicit and intentional efforts to center their needs and voices within ASAN spaces.

Of the 50 farms interviewed, a majority (54%) are owned or co-owned by women¹. The average age of participants was 52 years old. In spite of the South being home to 1 in 3 LGBTQ+ people nationwide, and more trans people than any other US region², only 4% of FNA participants identify as LGBTQ+. This could point to a weakness in outreach, a lack of LGBTQ+ farmers in ASAN's network, and/or a lack of LGBTQ+ farmers in Alabama, particularly among those who own farms.

Vision and Legacy

When participants reflected on their vision for the future of their farm and the legacy they want to leave behind, their original motivations for becoming a farmer shone through. About 40% of participants became farmers because it was a viable business model or the business model that they learned about and inherited through a family business, whether from parents, grandparents, or a spouse. Some farmers described the ways in which their farming work is a measure of addressing broader social inequities and environmental crises, or a way to improve the food system.

“ I started my own farm to serve my community.”

“ There’s an ecological and environmental responsibility of growing your own food.”

Participants’ visions were revealed throughout interviews in plans for collectivism and collective ownership, intentions to expand their businesses to allow for multiple farmer-owners, and goals to preserve land, particularly preserving BIPOC-owned land for future generations.

“ Interconnecting constructs of food and every facet, community members live and work in the area working together as a cooperative that is composed of other cooperatives [and there are] Black and Brown and marginalized women in leadership positions.”

When asked about their plans for the future of their farm, participants’ plans largely fell into the following categories:

Diversify and expand what the farm produces (28%): These responses focused on expanding and/or diversifying the type and quantity of products that they produce.

Diversify and expand the farm’s role (22%) : Several responses spoke about expanding the farm’s scope of work in terms of its role in the community or services beyond production of crops or livestock. Most of the responses envisioned the farm as vibrant spaces for community learning and as hubs that would attract people to visit and be in community together.

New financial models (22%): participants spoke about the desire and need to become more financially stable and self-sustainable, including the necessity of finding a way to pay staff to sustain the farm.

“ Long term goal [is to become] financially self-sufficient. We would like the farm to be our main source of income... We need employees and we are not at the point where we can pay a living wage.”

Keep it in the family (15%): Several participants’ visions were centered on keeping the farm in their family, or growing the farm within their family’s current practices and traditions.

Unsure about the future or not planning for it (13%): Some farmers shared that they do not plan to be farming 20 years from now, or that they are uncertain of the fate of their farm and who would take over the business in the future. They hold the reality of the challenging and sometimes unsteady life that comes with farming and question whether they want to keep farming or want that life for their children.

“ I’d like someone to take it over. It has taken a serious toll on our bodies. Sometimes we wonder if we should get another job.”

As conversations of farm vision led into conversations of legacy, the majority of participants’ answers revealed a desire to be remembered as good community members that contributed to the benefit of others while living within their values. Many farmers shared hope that their legacy is one of education and enrichment of their community and the land they farm, and as one participant put it, that they did their “very best along the way.”

“ That we took what we had and made something out of it.”

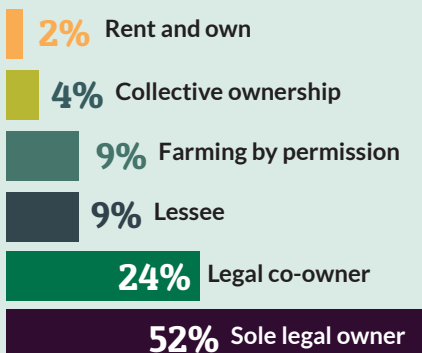
“ That I fed people and somehow took a very un-beautiful circumstance and turned it into something beautiful. Serve as an inspiration to other people to do the same thing.”

Land

Farmers vary greatly in terms of their legal relationship to the land they farm.

58% of participants did not inherit land and either rent land, farm on land they purchased, or co/collectively own land they purchased with others. Of the 42% of farmers on inherited land they own, 30% reported inheriting through heirs' property (property passed to family members by inheritance, usually without a will and/or estate planning strategy or legally designated owner which results in ownership divided among all living family descendants and often affects Black farmers, limiting ability to build generational wealth, and, according to the Department of Agriculture, is "the leading cause of Black involuntary land loss"⁴). A predominant theme in interviews was the difficulties farmers encounter in their efforts to obtain farmland. Some stressed the importance of programs geared towards supporting farmer-renters, others spoke to the systemic racism and colonization fueling decades of land loss (or land theft) from Black and Indigenous people, which extends into the present day. One Black elder farmer spoke of the many years she endured racial violence from white neighboring farmers who intended to scare her off her land. She still remains and farms on her land to this day.

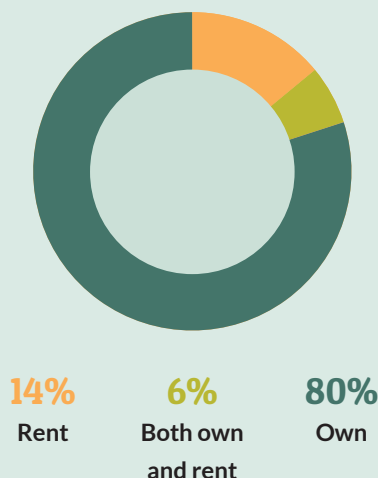
LEGAL RELATIONSHIP TO FARMLAND



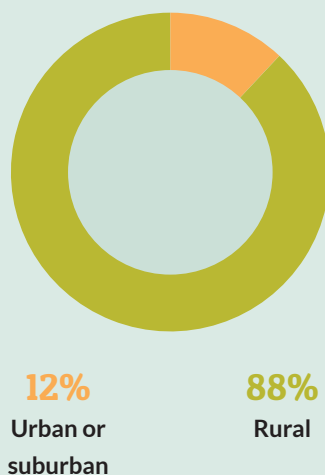
FARM SIZE*

	Total farm Acreage	Acres currently in production	How many acres would you LIKE to be farming?
Range	0.05-1,200	0.05-1,200	0 ³ -1,600
Median	41	19	30

FARM OWNERSHIP



LOCATION OF FARMS



Finding

Farmers face constant obstacles due to threats to the ecosystem on or surrounding their land.

Farmers are inextricably linked to the land they farm. Any threats to the surrounding ecosystem, in turn, threaten all major aspects of the farm. Almost an even number of participants get their water from municipal sources as from groundwater. Both sources come with their own set of challenges, both financial and environmental. These challenges include the high costs of municipal water, governmental zoning concerns, and neighboring properties' run off. The majority of farms interviewed are in rural areas, with six farms located within the Birmingham and Huntsville urban or suburban areas.

Top threats to surrounding ecosystems identified by farmers:

Pollution (35%): The most common threat identified by farmers was multi-contaminant pollution. The primary concern was pesticide drift and toxic chemical exposure from nearby conventional farms and urban pesticide spraying. Other threatening toxic pollutants include emissions from neighboring factories and mills, and threat of pipeline rupture.

Erosion (20%): Another common concern was that of land loss from erosion or other damage to the land from flooding caused and/or exacerbated by climate change and encroaching development.

Development and land use (16%): Eight participants named



development and related issues about land use and land regulations as threats to their land and farm future. For urban farmers, in addition to development, they also named intimidation from police. For suburban farmers and rural farmers, development was an increasing concern, with suburban sprawl (and accompanying zoning restrictions and permitting requirements) encroaching on what once was rural land. Urban, suburban and rural farmers also reported threats from rise in property cost from development.

Climate change and weather patterns (8%): A few individuals identified climate change, weather unpredictability, and increased storm intensity as threats.

Finding

The majority of participants diligently and dramatically improve the land that they farm on.

Participants spoke with pride of their consistent observation and caretaking of the land they farm. They noted improvements made to soil quality through years of microbiome

nourishment, water retention through their implementation of hardscaping systems, and issues they eradicated through trial and error.

“It is not even the same. We decided to take the girls fishing at a pond when we first moved here and we couldn’t find any worms. Now we can find worms everywhere. During our first July drought, we couldn’t put in the step-inpost pole because

the soil was so compacted. We haven’t had that problem in 15 years.”

Participants who already farm with sustainable practices often spoke to their personal standards for production exceeding those outlined in the USDA National Organic Program standard. Four percent of participants are USDA Certified Organic and 2% are Certified Naturally Grown. When participants were asked if they see value in this certification, the majority stated that they do not, either because it is cost prohibitive, not relevant to the market they sell to, or that the rigor of their personal growing standards far exceeds that of Organic standards. Some saw value in Organic certification, and among those, the primary value was monetary, citing the ability to sell their crops at a premium, and name recognition amongst consumers. However, there was frustration expressed alongside this, that the ‘household name’ does not reflect the actual sustainable and healthy growing practices of small producers who cannot afford the cost of Organic certification are obscured by the absence of that label.

“ Much better off than it was. Around here there’s a lot of cattle and chicken producers. I spend a lot of time soil testing and specializing my fertilizer blends. People don’t understand how I grow my grass as good as I do. I offset and I don’t try to keep pasture on marginal land. I have buffers around wooded areas and streams. I have an interest in bringing turkey and quail back to the area. There is no quail around here any more and I want to restore that.”



Farm Labor

Finding

Small farmers face barriers to hiring farm employees at a fair wage, and struggle with high turnover.

Most participants interviewed are the primary operator of their farm and work an average of 47 hours weekly, with some farmers reporting working up to 100 hours weekly. Half of participants have a job off the farm that supports their work on the farm financially and also, often provides health insurance and other benefits. These off-farm jobs varied, and included employment as a barber, landscaper, community college professor, hay bailer, and chef.

There was great discrepancy in how participants employ farmworkers, and their beliefs around farm employment, in general. The majority of participants turn to volunteer labor of family, before hiring employees. Many participants expressed concerns about the amount of overhead cost required to hire employees at a fair wage, and that they would instead prefer to take on more work themselves. When participants do hire farm employees, they typically hire part-time seasonal workers through word-of-mouth. A small number of farmers employ seasonal, migrant farmworkers through the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Worker Program⁵.

When participants were asked about what they would change about the structure of our labor system, answers ranged from nothing, to minor reforms to perceived flaws in the existing system, to a complete dismantling of the current system to make room for more collective, non-hierarchical models.

“[I want to] get to the point where we are able to pay a living wage and offer benefits.”

“ It is an ongoing problem, finding labor that you can trust, figuring how to pay them enough to keep them from doing something else. I was trying to pay a living wage and give 40 hours of work and you don’t always have that much work. [There’s] fluctuation in work. It is hard to make the case for what laborers will get from working 20 years with me.”

“ Remove the enslavement model—using desperate people and paying them as little as possible”



Employee Focus Group Interview Statement

All 50 FNA participants were farm owners and/or primary operators. In structuring our FNA process this way, we unwittingly excluded the voices of sustainable farm employees. In keeping with our core belief that around centering those who work the land, not simply those who own it, ASAN convened a special farm employee focus group in late March 2021, to supplement the FNA process overall and begin to fill this unintentional gap in the FNA data.

Participants in the focus group shared that while there are a multitude of wonderful aspects of being a farm employee, they also have witnessed and/or experienced firsthand a number of labor concerns, including:

- Unsafe working conditions and high rate of injury
- Lack of healthcare and mental health support
- Little or poor access to basic needs of running water, bathrooms, and shade
- Lack of training (workplace safety, sexual harassment, etc.)
- Lack of personal protective equipment and provision of tools necessary for the job
- Racism and discrimination (especially based on gender and immigration status)
- Hiring practices that do not prioritize local community members
- Low wages and large stratification of wages within the workplace

We believe that these issues -- like those reflected in the rest of this report -- must be addressed if we are to build the just and resilient food system that Alabama workers deserve. As such, this is an area where we intend to conduct additional assessment and to invest additional organizational resources. To learn more about our planned next steps and to get involved, please see the last section of this report.



Equipment and Insurance

Finding

Purchasing, maintaining, and insuring farm equipment is a financial burden to farmers.

The majority of farmers interviewed are considered small-scale farmers, with a median acreage of 41 acres. Because so much farming equipment is geared towards industrial agriculture, many farmers spoke of difficulties finding equipment appropriate for the size of their farm and getting that equipment repaired when it breaks down. Some farmers found that they were able to borrow tractor implements from local Extension offices, but this was rare. Mostly, participants reported purchasing their own equipment, with many taking on debt to do so.

“It all comes down to capital, it is so expensive. In my day, a farmer could pay off a tractor in three years. Farmers are constantly in debt, you are a worker in a system, no longer a farmer. These practices need to be illegal”

Social inequalities add additional obstacles to farmers attempting to purchase farm equipment. A woman farmer with over 20 years of farming experience, encountered gender discrimination on numerous occasions when attempting to purchase equipment for her farm that interfered with her ability to purchase.

Collective ownership models can often relieve farmers of paying full price for expensive equipment that is not in frequent use. Sixty-five percent of participants indicated that they are open to sharing their equipment and storage space with farmers in their region, which is something ASAN plans to explore further.

“My other tractor is my neighbor’s tractor”

Fifty-seven percent of farmers interviewed do not have farm insurance and 68% are without product liability insurance. This pattern of being un- or under-insured is directly linked to access to capital and resources, as insurance policies are expensive and often farmers only purchase it when insurance is required to sell at farmers’ markets. This leaves many small farmers dangerously exposed to additional hardships from crop loss and equipment and property damage that otherwise would be protected by insurance on larger farms and in other businesses.

Access To Capital & Financial Health

Finding

Farmers face systemic obstacles to accessing capital.

Lack of access to capital is a constant, daily burden for many ASAN farmers. Out of the 50 farmers interviewed, the most commonly named barrier to future generations becoming farmers was high startup costs and the ability to acquire land. Although many of the farmers interviewed are already land owners, they noted that obtaining and retaining land is of top concern to them. Nearly half of the farmers interviewed have debt, and of those who do, the debt is widespread from mortgage, farm equipment and operations, and credit cards.

Not only does their debt load negatively affect their livelihood, but participants are also generally concerned about how this threatens the future of farming. Participants' perceptions of the primary barriers for future farmers were startup costs (mostly in the form of land access), declining interest in farming, and young people's limited exposure to farming as a livelihood.

“The biggest thing is capital investments if you are not lucky enough for someone to leave you land. If you are going to establish land, like pasture land, you have to have an infrastructure. It is costly even with government program support.”

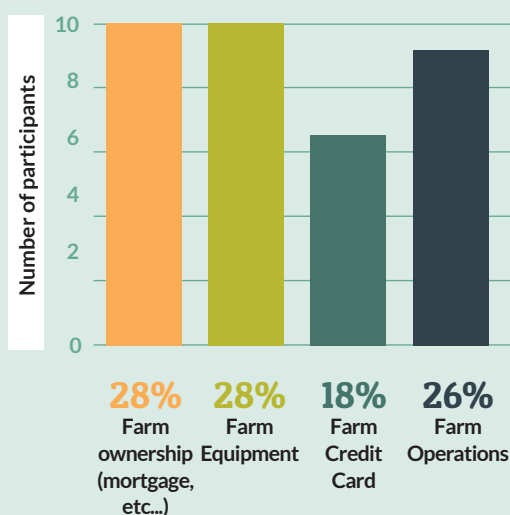
When BIPOC, immigrant, refugee, LGBTQ+ and disabled farmers were asked to describe specific challenges they experience and support they need, access to capital and funding accounted for a third of responses.

“[We need] regular access to funds. Farming has a longer return cycle. We need funding to support us until we get a return from our crop”

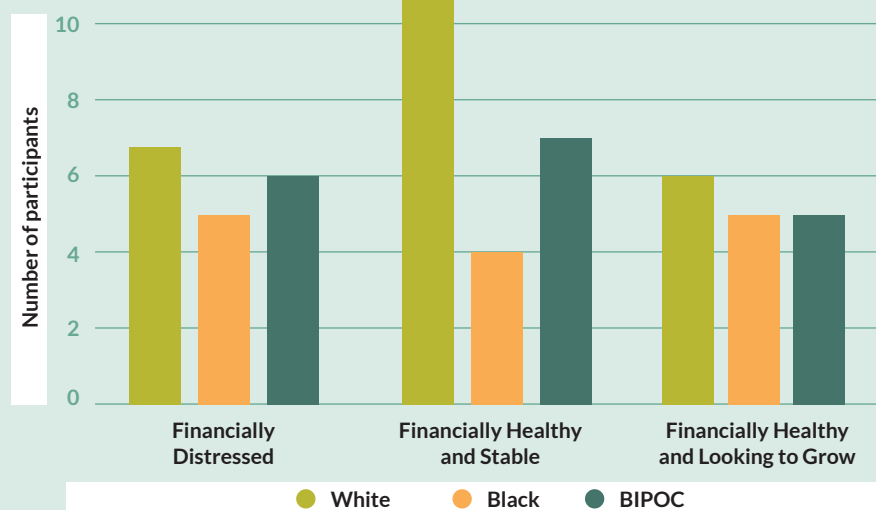
In reviewing profit and income margins across participants, it became apparent that most farmers, regardless of how high their gross income was, have a very thin margin for unpredicted financial hardships. Even when there is profit, most participants indicated that those resources are, for the most part, returned to the farm for maintenance or growth. There was also financial disparity when looking at income across race, with white farmers' median gross

6. Farm Service Agency Loans, Young Farmers Coalition https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdafiles/Outreach/pdfs/Publications/NYFC_FSA_Loans_Guidebook.pdf

Types of Debt for FNA Participants



Self-Reported Financial Health & Stability of Farms

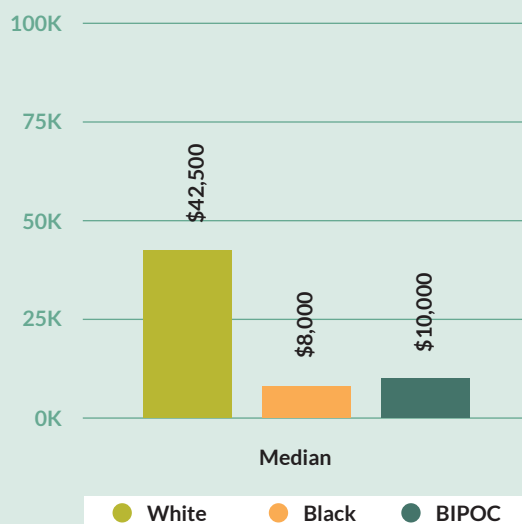


income being \$34,500 above Black farmers, and Black farmers as the group with the smallest yearly income.

Half of participants reported that they are currently participating in USDA grant and loan programs, or have participated in the past. The almost-half that have not participated in USDA programs, shared that this approach is not appealing to them, does not align with their values, or that they need more information to make an informed decision regarding the programs. Though not directly reflected in answers to this question, these negative responses can also be understood through a history of systemic racism through federal programs and interpersonal racism in loan offices experienced by Black farmers⁶. Very few participants are current or former recipients of Farm Service Agency (FSA) Loan programs. This indicated an area for educational and navigation support for ASAN members.



Median Gross Income by Race



Participation in USDA Programs

Yes: 25 responses

Which ones?

- EQUIP: 16
- NRCS: 14
- CSP: 5
- Agriculture Risk Coverage: 3
- Organic Certification Cost Share Program: 3
- Price Loss Coverage programs
- Organic Transition Grant: 1
- Other (11 responses)

No: 21 responses

Why not?

- "Not attractive to us"/ "I don't know them"
- Lack of information
 - "I don't know that many are offered for what I need."
- "Still learning"
- "Not familiarized"



Healthcare

Finding

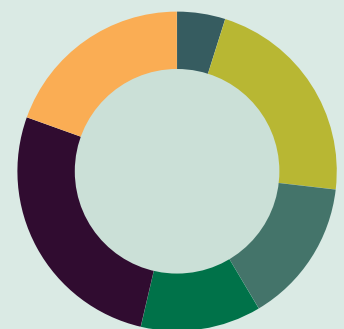
Farmers face systemic obstacles to accessing health insurance.

Participants reported significant barriers to accessing and affording healthcare, which leads many to work off-farm jobs, in addition to full-time farming. Twenty percent of participants reported being completely uninsured. For those who are insured, the majority have coverage through Medicare, Medicaid, or through an off-farm employer, either through a second job or through their spouse's employment. The biggest reported barrier to insurance was that it is too expensive. Many farmers fall into the Medicaid insurance gap, along with over 220,000⁷ of Alabama residents in the gap. The Medicaid insurance gap describes a group of uninsured people who make too much to be eligible for Medicaid and too little to be eligible for Affordable Care Act (ACA) plans in the states that have opted out of Medicaid expansion under the ACA. Thirty-two percent of participants reported being insured through private companies or lending networks, neither of which are required to meet the essential health benefits of the Affordable Care Act. Forty percent of participants are uninsured or underinsured, and bearing this weight through out-of-pocket medical bills or high premiums.

When participants with employees were asked about whether or not they provide health insurance to their employees, the majority expressed that they do not, because of cost barriers. The majority of participants who do not provide insurance to employees also stated that they either do not know whether their employees are insured, or that their employees have insurance through a parent or spouse.

Exclusion from healthcare, especially given the risk and physical toll that farming takes on farmers' bodies, has great implications for the well-being of farmers, their families, and the long-term sustainability of their farms.

Types of Health Insurance



4.88%

Medicaid
(Note: ALL Kids, SSI, E&D, ABCCEDP are programs included in Alabama Medicaid)

12.20%

Private insurance
(not through an employer, ie. Alfa or other non-ACA plans)

21.95%

Medicare

26.83%

Employer Insurance

14.63%

Affordable Care Act Plan

19.51%

Other
(lending networks, etc.)

Where do farmers turn for support?

In addition to the findings above, many respondents spoke to the profound negative effects that isolation, be it from living in a rural environment or from a demanding work schedule, has on their mental health and wellbeing. Additionally, they spoke to the negative effects it has on their farm when they are forced to solve problems independently that they would prefer to solve collectively. The first place the majority of respondents turn when they have a farm question or need outside support, is to other farmers. After that, farmers turn to myriad resources to find solutions, from Youtube to Extension agents.

The following are a few resources that have proved instrumental for respondents in building their farm:

- Elder farmers in the community
- Sow App by Auburn University
- Curtis Stone, Youtube Channel
- Extension Office (Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, and Tuskegee University Extension Programs)
- *The Organic Garden Handbook of the Natural Insect and Disease Control, Seed to Seed* by Susan Ashworth
- University of FL Research Station in Live Oak
- *Farming While Black* by Leah Penniman
- *Farming in the Southeast* by Ira Wallace
- “Goat Emergencies” page on Facebook
- Tuskegee, University of Georgia resources on cover crops

Participants reported wishing they knew a number of things when just starting out farming, ranging from specific, technical farming techniques to broader wisdoms and business skills. They wish they had known:

- The intense level of commitment it takes to successfully farm
- “ I didn’t expect it would be easy, and it wasn’t.”
- Business and financial management
- “ Following a structured business plan. Do not over work, do one thing at a time.”
- “ Financial management. It is so easy to spend all your money by going to town. Those trips to town are what will get you.”
- Training and educational resources
- “ I wish I had known more about government programs. They tell you nothing.”

- Specific farming techniques

“ Landscape fabric is your friend in the South. How important it is to have an irrigation system set up. Amazing world of microbes and their importance of fighting diseases and health of the farm. Importance of a soil consultant”

- Integrity in work and relationships

“ Be faithful with the least amount you can, invest in relationships.”

“ Grow one thing and do it well.”

“ That you can’t do it by yourself and you can’t want to do it by yourself. There is so much in the journey to be shared, instead of the destination.”

“ Need community over money.”

FNA Farm Tips

(as recommended by respondents)

Good Beginner Tractors:

- John Deere 4044M Compact Utility, 43 Horsepower
- Kubota L3240 from Kubota Grand L40 range of compact tractors

Types of equipment that support farmers’ success

- Grain drill
- Skidsteer
- Small Tractor, around 80 HP
- Raised bed plastic mulch layer
- Tiller
- Bed refresher
- Egg washing station and equipment

Insurance Providers⁸:

- ALFA
- Nationwide
- American National Property
- Liberty Mutual
- Flip Insurance

Next Steps:

Building the food system of our dreams

When respondents were asked what they envision five generations from now, when we have the agricultural system of our dreams, this future vision is in right relationship with the earth and more life-affirming with a focus on justice, equity. Responses included a vision for:

- Greater value and appreciation for local food systems and the people
- More support of small-scale farming
- Wealth redistribution through reparations
- Farming as financially viable
- Farming as abundant and visible in the community
- Young people having a more secure place in farming

Current ASAN Programming:

- Central Alabama CRAFT Network -farmer-led skill share network through monthly workshops
- Food and Farm Forum- Annual statewide gathering for farmer-to-farmer learning and socializing
- Justice Committee- space to envision, deepen, and evaluate ASAN's work to build a just agricultural system
- Youth Council - space for youth (14-24) to learn about issues relevant to food and farming, find and build community,



and deepen leadership skills through youth input to better empower young folks' leadership, organizing, and agricultural skills

- Farmers Market Leadership Committee - peer-to-peer skillshare network for farmers market managers
- General Farmer Support- If you'd like to be connected to farmers in your community, reach out to Charlotte at charlotte@asanonline.org or info@asanonline.org

The data gathered and the relationships strengthened by the FNA will inform ASAN programming for years to come. Some changes we are making in the immediate term include:

- Shaping the 2021 CRAFT season (and later this year, the 2021 Food & Farm Forum) to respond to the needs and priorities expressed in the FNA
- In response to the needs expressed in the FNA, we've already begun expanding CRAFT programming to 2021 season to address common themes and dive deeper into certain topics like capital and labor, with the hope to expand CRAFT beyond Central Alabama in the years to come.
- Holding huddles with BIPOC and

LGBTQ+ ASAN members to build community, take some collective breaths, and help to guide ASAN's future work.

- Shifting our organizational focus towards community organizing (policy work, grassroots direct action, and other collective strategies) as an engine for addressing the systemic obstacles that farmers in our network face.

This report and the findings will serve as a guidepost for ASAN programming as we shift and grow to address systemic obstacles for Alabama's small and sustainable farmers.

One of ASAN's core values is that a resilient agricultural system must be centered around those who work the land. We believe in the power of farmers and land stewards, and as an organization, we seek to invest in, hone, and organize that power, so farmers can lead us to the food system of our dreams.

We invite you to learn more about ASAN at asanonline.org, become a member, and get involved in our programs and our network.



ASAN

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