The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network (ASAN) presents

**FOOD AND FARM FORUM 2021**

Dec 2-12, 2021
Dear friend,

As 2021 comes to a close, many of us are more exhausted than ever. Many of us have lost loved ones. It has been a long and difficult season of our shared lives together — there’s no way around that. The ASAN Forum is always a space at the end of the year to gather together, celebrate our wins (because in spite of everything there most certainly have been wins, silver linings, and bright moments), to reflect on our struggles, learn and grow together, and heal and renew ourselves for the year ahead. This year’s Forum is an invitation to turn towards one another -- to bring our individual highs and lows into a shared collective space, even if that space is a virtual one.

Our staff and our stellar Forum Planning Committee have been HARD at work since the spring, pulling this event together — we are so thrilled and honored to welcome you as you become part of it.

Please review the information on these first two pages, to help you make the most of what the Forum has to offer.

Many thanks,
The ASAN staff, board, and Forum planning committee

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND EXPECTATIONS:
The Forum this year features 13 sessions spread out over the course of 11 days. We invite you to participate in as much of the Forum as you can; that may be one session or all 13!

ACCESSING THE SESSIONS: All sessions will take place on Zoom, and all have different access information / meeting IDs. When you register online you will receive a confirmation email from Eventbrite with Zoom access information for all 13 sessions — save this email! Each morning of the Forum, you will also receive an email with access to that day’s Zoom virtual sessions. You can follow along here in your program, or at http://www.asanonline.org/2021forumschedule

ACCESSIBILITY: We want this year’s virtual Forum to be as fun and accessible as possible.

- VIRTUAL HELPDESK: Having trouble connecting to Zoom? We’re here to help! If at any point you run into technical difficulty while trying to join a session, please fill out this brief form (https://bit.ly/ASANForumHelpDesk) with your name & phone number and one of our Virtual Help Desk volunteers will call to help. Help desk volunteers are available just before and at the beginning of each session. Should you need support outside of these times, please email forum@asanonline.org.

- CLOSED CAPTIONING: Subtitles will be available for every session at the Forum. There is a button in the zoom menu to toggle closed captions on/off. Ask the helpdesk if you need help!

PRONOUNS: We will invite you to display your pronouns alongside your name, in Zoom. (We’ll show you how!) It is not required. For those who are unfamiliar, your pronouns are the words people use to refer to you when they don’t use your name. You might use she/her, or he/him, or they/them, a combination, or other pronouns entirely. Sharing pronouns is a way of allowing everyone to define for themselves, how they want to be recognized in a group. Using the pronouns that people share for themselves — especially for people who may be trans, nonbinary, or genderqueer

Be present and engaged
- Take full advantage of this opportunity to be together, even if it virtual! Be active in the chat, connect with folks after the session, etc.
- As much as possible, be present with your video on, and give the session your full attention. (That said, see below.)

Take care: of yourself and one another
- We all wear many hats and stretch ourselves in many directions. We understand if you need to multi-task, caregiving, cook a meal, wrangle the kids, etc. Do what you can, and do what you need to take care of your needs!
- Practice patience as care - the virtual Forum is a brave new world for all of us, so please extend patience to yourself, your fellow attendees, and the hardworking ASAN team who is working tirelessly behind the scenes!

Lean into discomfort
- Meet new people, try on new ideas, and do your best to attend at least one session outside your comfort zone / wheelhouse

Move up move up!
- If you are a person who tends to talk more / dominate a group, you are invited to move up your listening.
- If you are a person who tends to observe, you are invited to move up your sharing.

Be slow and spacious in your thoughts and words
- Embrace “yes, and..” rather than “yes, but.” Make room for multiple truths and multiple perspectives.
- Listen to understand … not just to respond or to challenge.

Acknowledge intention / address impact
- We hope and will assume that we all have good intentions...
- … and we invite one another to name harm when it occurs, so that it can be addressed (one on one, or in a group setting).

Have fun! Learn something! Enjoy one another!

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

ASAN and the Forum aim to create community. Even though that community is coming together online this year, still, in order for it to be a reflection of our deepest values and best selves, we must adhere to some shared agreements about HOW we come together and how we engage. Below are the agreements that guide and govern the space we are all creating and holding, together.

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### Schedule at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 12/2</td>
<td>6:00-8:00pm</td>
<td>Plenary: We Are Still Here: Climate Crisis &amp; Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 12/3</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Indoor &amp; Outdoor Mushroom Production</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 12/4</td>
<td>12:00-1:30pm</td>
<td>Why Should I Keep Records &amp; Why is record Keeping Necessary?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday 12/4</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Advanced Produce Farmer Roundtable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 12/5</td>
<td>12:00-2:00pm</td>
<td>&quot;Gather&quot; Screening &amp; Discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 12/6</td>
<td>12:00-1:30pm</td>
<td>Impact of Regulation on Viability of Small Farms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 12/6</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Plenary: Why Farms Fail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 12/7</td>
<td>1:00-2:30pm</td>
<td>Shipping Meat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 12/8</td>
<td>12:00-1:30pm</td>
<td>Grant Writing Made Easy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 12/9</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 12/10</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Commercial Seed Production 101 / Ujamaa Seed Cooperative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday 12/12</td>
<td>2:00-4:00pm</td>
<td>Plenary: Farmers Getting Organized</td>
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All times in CST.

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**ASAN Core Beliefs**

- **ASAN’s vision** is of a resilient agricultural system in Alabama. We define that in the following ways, and we review and revise these statements regularly (as needed) as a network.

- A resilient agricultural system is **ecologically regenerative**. In order to flourish, our agriculture should replenish the soil, protect the air and watershed, and enhance the ecosystem. We must understand ourselves to be humble participants in an interdependent ecological community.

- A resilient agricultural system **centers around those who work the land**; for an agricultural system to thrive, farmers and farmworkers must be able to sustain themselves economically and socially.

- A resilient agricultural system is **just**. Inequity and exploitation in any form, from producer to consumer, are threats to sustainability. All laborers within the food system must be justly compensated and treated with dignity. The historic and modern racism and sexism that pervades current agricultural institutions and practices must be specifically addressed.

- A resilient agricultural system is **intergenerational**. Agricultural knowledge and wisdom inherited from our elders and ancestors should be maintained and celebrated. The system we sustain and work for should be worthy of our children and youth, who should be engaged and invited to participate in growing, harvesting, and consuming healthy foods.

- A resilient agricultural system is **rooted in community**. A network of strong, personal, place-based connections between/among members of the entire food system stabilizes and drives a thriving agricultural system.

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Privacy and Media Sharing: All sessions will be cataloged on ASAN’s Youtube channel, and several will also be livestreamed to Facebook. We will also periodically be taking screenshots of the sessions, for promotional purposes. Feel free to adjust your Zoom name display if you do not want your full name displayed, and/or to turn off your video if you are uncomfortable with your face appearing in these photos/livestreams.
THURS 12/2 6:00-8:00PM
WE ARE STILL HERE: CLIMATE CRISIS & COMMUNITY — It is clear that climate change will continue to affect our folks and our network, as farmers are on the front line of the climate crisis and as people of color and poor folks are the most affected by disaster and often become climate change refugees. In Alabama, we have all sorts of natural disasters that might be around the corner that we are preparing for. Rugged individualism tells us we need to prepare for these alone but another way is already here and possible. Many ASAN members look towards community in response to crisis, tapping into histories of well established networks of support. In this session we hear from people who have been working in disaster preparedness, mutual aid, and collective care in Alabama to discuss the question: what does disaster preparedness mean in a communal sense? — Jennifer Crosslin (Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy), Angela Comeaux (Mvskoke Hoktvike), Virginia Richardson (MOWA Choctaw), Sasha Irby (Osage, Lakota, and Mvskoke peoples) PLENARY

FRI 12/3 2:00-4:00PM
INDOOR & OUTDOOR MUSHROOM PRODUCTION — This session will demonstrate practices for the two primary methods of mushroom production in the Deep South: Indoor and Outdoor Production. Topics will include knowledge about the choosing the right species for you, log selection, where to secure necessary production tools, and the economic side of mushroom production. Learn all about mushrooms from 6th generation farmer, Mark Hainds! — Mark Hainds (Palafox Market/LBW Community College) ROUNDTABLE

SAT 12/4 2:00-4:00PM
ADVANCED PRODUCE FARMER ROUNDTABLE — Let’s get specific! Join for this round table discussion of Advanced Produce Farmers. Let’s dish about the technical pieces of CSAs, crop planning, season extension, irrigation and MORE. Bring a topic to the table and get to know other produce farmers! (If you are an advanced specialty crop farmer, this is also the session for you) — Moderated by Joseph Battistella (Pine Hill Farm) ROUNDTABLE

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SAT 12/4 12:00-1:30PM
WHY SHOULD I KEEP RECORDS? WHY IS RECORD KEEPING NECESSARY? — ”How To Keep Good Records” Learn why record keeping is important, how to measure farm business overall financial performance, how to track business profitability and how to use a simple record keeping tool to market and grow an ag-based business.—Russell Bean (Tuskegee University) SKILLSHARE

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SUN 12/5 12:00-2:00PM
“GATHER” SCREENING & DISCUSSION — Gather follows the stories of natives on the frontlines of a growing movement to reconnect with spiritual and cultural identities that were devastated by genocide. A indigenous chef embarks on an ambitious project to reclaim ancient food ways on the Apache reservation; in South Dakota a gifted Lakota high school student, raised on a buffalo ranch, is proving her tribes native wisdom through her passion for science; and a group of young men of the Yurok tribe in Northern California are struggling to keep their culture alive and rehabilitate the habitat of
Want to learn more about practices to improve profitability, stewardship and quality of life?

Sign up for Common Ground, our free monthly newsletter, to learn more and gain access to hundreds of free educational resources on our website!

southern.sare.org/join-our-mailing-list

Supporting the Family Farm and Promoting Sustainable Agriculture Through Competitive Grants and Educational Opportunities
their sacred salmon. All these stories combine to show how the reclaiming and recovery of ancient food ways is a way forward for native Americans to bring back health and vitality to their people. 


— Moderated by Angela Comeaux (Mvskoke Hoktvlke) FILM SCREENING

MON 12/6 12:00-1:30PM

IMPACT OF REGULATION ON VIABILITY OF SMALL FARMS — COVID-19 revealed an already vulnerable food in the United States, leading to greater interest in a local and decentralized system. Despite this demand, Smaller to Mid-Sized Farms in the United States operate in a regulatory system designed for larger operations and challenge their viability. In this workshop we will explore some of the regulations that impact small local farms and food business, with an emphasis on the state of Alabama. We will also discuss policy changes being made throughout the country to assist small producers. — Alexia Kulwiec (Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund) SKILLSHARE

MON 12/6 2:00-4:00PM

WHY FARMS FAIL — COVID-19 revealed an already vulnerable food in the United States, leading to greater interest in a local and decentralized system. Despite this demand, Smaller to Mid-Sized Farms in the United States operate in a regulatory system designed for larger operations and challenge their viability. In this workshop we will explore some of the regulations that impact small local farms and food business, with an emphasis on the state of Alabama. We will also discuss policy changes being made throughout the country to assist small producers. — Alexia Kulwiec (Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund) SKILLSHARE

TUES 12/7 1:00-2:30PM

SHIPING MEAT — There is a lot to consider when looking at this potentially lucrative business model. Shipping meat is not easy. This session will walk through all the pitfalls and give sound advice for those looking to move in this direction. — Matthew Lawrence (Marble Creek Farmstead) SKILLSHARE

WED 12/8 12:00-1:30PM

GRANT WRITING MADE EASY — Grant Writing Made Easy will be an interactive introduction to grant writing. Presented in a fashion that engages attendees through

Thank you for your work to keep Alabama growing.
presentation and Q&A, the session is targeted to beginners who want to understand the process for securing grant funds. Content will focus on dispelling myths, identifying funding opportunities, developing standard components of a grant application, and common mistakes and how to overcome them. — Kimberly Richardson (The Official Federal Grants Prep Guide)

**THURS 12/9  2:00-4:00PM**

**ADVANCED LIVESTOCK FARMER ROUNDTABLE** — How do you bring home the bacon? Join your fellow Advanced Livestock Farmers for a round table discussion about the ins and outs of being a livestock farmer. Discussion topics may include fencing, pasture grazing, breeds, processing and MORE! Bring a topic to the table that’s been on your mind or come to connect with fellow farmers in your field. (This is not just for meat farmers, dairy and egg producers are welcome too!) — *Moderated by Pumpkin Starr (“The Bottom” in Knoxville, TN)* **ROUNDTABLE**

**FRI 12/10  2:00-4:00pm**

**COMMERCIAL SEED PRODUCTION 101—UJAMAA SEED COOPERATIVE** — Founder Bonnetta Adeeb will introduce the Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance, a collective of over 80 Black and Indigenous growers across the country who steward culturally relevant heirloom seeds – to sell through contracts with heirloom seed companies, and to preserve and share the cultural significance of, through the collective’s seed sovereignty and seed preservation work. The session will then delve into how farmers can get started with commercial seed production, to both diversify their revenue streams and be part of building food and seed sovereignty. — Bonnetta Adeeb (STEAM ONWARD / Ujamaa Seed Cooperative) **SKILLSHARE**

**SAT 12/11  2:00-3:30PM**

**FRUIT TREES 201** — Provide insight to fruit growing, notes on selecting proper varieties, care, maintenance, fertilizing, spraying regimen, watering and irrigation, mulching, fencing, basic pruning and shaping of young trees. I would like a fair amount of question and answer time. — Larry Stephenson (Southern Cultured Orchards and Nursery) **SKILLSHARE**

**SUN 12/12  2:00-4:00PM**

**FARMERS GETTING ORGANIZED** — Together, as farmers and eaters, we have power beyond measure. In this plenary discussion, we are joined by Liz Moran Stelk, Executive Director of the Illinois Stewardship Alliance, and Jason Linsday, Field Organizer for SAAFON, to discuss their experience working with farmers to change policy, build community and get organized in pushing for a more just and resilient food system. During this plenary, you’ll hear about specific organizing models and other ways farmers are gathering to make these changes to the food system. You’ll also hear examples of campaigns fellow farmers and eaters are fueling in other states for state and national impact. Let’s get organized! — Liz Moran Stelk (Illinois Stewardship Alliance), Jason Lindsay (Field Organizer, SAAFON) **PLENARY**
Bonneta Adeeb is the Founder & President of STEAM ONWARD, Inc, a nonprofit in Southern Maryland which serves as Incubator for Ujamaa Cooperative Farming Alliance (UCFA). UCFA is a collective of over 80 Black and Indigenous growers across the country who cultivate culturally relevant heirloom seeds and plants. Ujamaa bridges the gap between prospective seed growers and seed companies, in order both to promote diversity in farming and the seed industry, and to provide opportunities and support for growers from historically oppressed and marginalized communities.

Joseph Battistella began farming in 2011 at Heron Hollow Farm and since has produced organic vegetables in Alabama, Michigan, Pennsylvania and Virginia. He is not currently farming full time, but is a part of a Pine Hill Farm-a garden project in Spring Lake neighborhood in Birmingham. Growing vegetables using regenerative ecological methods is a passion that he will continue to pursue through involvement with, and support of, vegetable farms and garden projects. He also serves on the ASAN CRAFT Steering Committee and the ASAN Forum Committee.

Russell Bean is a Resource Specialist for Small Farm, Agriculture and Environment with Tuskegee University. He is an award-winning farming expert. He was named 2016 Lloyd Wright Small Farmer and 2017 Small Farmers of the Year by Alabama NRCS. He has been featured in several top magazines, newspapers and televisions stations. He operates an 88 acres S & B Farm in Eufaula, AL.

Angela Comeaux is a Mvskoke Hoktvile, Of mixed Mvskoke, Chahta, Cherokee, and Creole descent. Angela was born and raised in Bvlbancha (the original Chahta name for New Orleans, Louisiana) and South Louisiana, but with family all along the gulf south, including many family members in Central and North Alabama. In 2020, Angela acquired a farm in Florala, Alabama, on ancestral Mvskoke Land, which she and her partner are converting into an Indigenous food forest. Angela is a clinical research nurse by trade, is currently enrolled in the Appalachian Center For Natural Health’s herbal practitioner program, is a founding member of Bvlbancha Collective and Okla Hina Ikhish Holo, an ASAN Forum Committee member, and an Environmental and Indigenous rights activist.

Jennifer Crosslin is Regional Climate Justice Organizer with Gulf Coast Center for Law & Policy working. She is native of the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where she has been organizing for the last nine years on issues related to economic justice, environmental and climate justice, and reproductive health and rights. Jennifer has recently completed her second master’s from Prescott University in Social Justice and Organizing. She received a master’s degree in Political Science from the University of Southern Mississippi and bachelor’s degree from the University of South Alabama in both Political Science and Philosophy. Jennifer is also actively involved in local and statewide organizing for a more just and equitable Mississippi. She is a member of the Mississippi Rising Coalition and a board member for the East Biloxi Food Market, an organizing project to open a grocery cooperative that strengthens community health and wealth and local, sustainable food systems.

Troy Groff

Mark Hainds is a 6th generation farmer with BS & MS forestry degrees. His family are nine-year vendors at the Palafox Market in Pensacola, Florida where they sell mushrooms they’ve grown and foraged. He’s authored two books (Year of the Pig & Border Walk), and currently works as the Forest Technology Instructor with LBW Community College in Andalusia, AL. He also serves on the ASAN Board of Directors.

Demetrius Hooks

Sasha Irby (they/them) is a
neurodivergent envrkopv weretv/two-spirit person of the Osage, Lakota, and Mvskoke peoples, with ancestral connections to other Indigenous Nations of the Southeast of Turtle Island. Born of and nurtured by the Gulf South, Sasha spent their childhood on a barrier island off the Northern coast of Florida, and has spent their adult life in Bvlbancha (so-called New Orleans, Louisiana) organizing around Indigenous futurism, land and water defense, mutual aid, radical hope, and community care through the lens of Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ (the fundamental knowledge that all beings are related and interconnected). They believe that the teachings of the interdependence of humans with all living beings are deeply transformative and that to build the world of our dreams we must bring people together, celebrating and making space for their full selves. A founding member of Bvlbancha Collective and Okla Hina Ikhish Holo, you’ll find them tending their community’s medicinal urban farms, learning their ancestral languages, screenprinting and zine making, making plant medicine and educational resources available to their community, batch cooking as an expression of their love language, and rebuilding ancestral trade routes.

Alexia Kulwiec is Executive Director of the Farm-to-Consumer Legal Defense Fund, a national organization that protects the rights of farmers and consumers to engage in direct commerce. The organization provides legal representation to small independent farmers and food producers and works to change policy to support small producers. Alexia has practiced law for 25 years and hold an advanced law degree in Food and Agriculture law.

Matthew Lawrence is the co-owner with his wife Jesie of Marble Creek Farmstead and Marble City Meats in Sylacauga. They raise beef, pork, goat, lamb, duck, chicken, and turkey on pasture. They also process under USDA inspection in their on-farm abattoir.

Jason Linsday is the Farm Practices & Resource Coordinator, SAAFON. Jason is the first generation in his family born off the farm. He registered the first urban farm in his town, selling organic vegetables to local CSA’s, juicing companies, and a mobile food market. Jason developed a youth agricultural training program – Cultivating Youth Entrepreneurs (CYE) and an urban farm school curriculum. CYE graduates have gone on to establish their own production farms and enroll in university seeking agriculture-related degrees. Jason continues to be an educator, taking the practical and theoretical knowledge he has gained through his journey to reclaiming his agrarian identity and serves as a consultant to local farms and organization on best practices, certification, and operation management.

Scott Marlow is the CEO of Long Rows Consulting, providing education and policy analysis on credit, risk management, and disaster assistance, and their role in building global and community resilience. Scott previously worked with RAFI-USA, providing financial counseling to farmers in crisis, education on disaster assistance and credit programs, and policy initiatives addressing farm financial and environmental resilience.
Jesse Murphy

Virginia Richard (she/her) is a MOWA Choctaw woman who grew up on the Atakapa-Ishak prairie of South-Central Louisiana. After traveling to Europe, West Africa, and Central America, she moved back home to the city her people named Bvlbancha where she is active in mutual aid and climate activism. Virginia believes you can’t have one without the other as our world faces the growing crises of climate change, driven by the commodification of our Mother Earth and even our selves, by those who prioritize money and power over care.

Kimberly Richardson is a trainer, consultant and author of The Official Federal Grants Prep Guide, Kim Richardson is a grant writing and grants management expert serving a diverse clientele of non-profits, public institutions, and government agencies. As President of Kimberly Richardson Consulting, she leverages over 25 years of experience to benefit her clients and has secured and managed over $120 million in grant funding.

Pumpkin Starr (they/she) is a popular educator, trainer, and creative from North Alabama. Pumpkin is currently a cattle farm apprentice in Georgia with a femme-led family ranch. Previously, Pumpkin educated with and for young people on food justice and gardening in schools and youth organizations, as well as designed youth programming on food justice in Knoxville, TN. Pumpkin has also trained and facilitated workshops about land justice, economic justice, community organizing tactics, strategy making, and Black land loss nationally & internationally. Their current work is focused on Black land and place based projects in Central Appalachia and the South. As a crew member and staff, Pumpkin is proudly a cultivator of "The Bottom" in Knoxville, TN, a beloved community center that focuses on Black place justice and creative community.

Liz Moran Stelk has served as executive director of Illinois Stewardship Alliance for five years. She is a veteran organizer bringing experience in sustainable agriculture policy and building powerful organizations to the Alliance. Liz previously served as a Regional Organizer with the Western Organization of Resource Councils in Montana where she worked with farmers and ranchers in seven states on local, state and federal food and agricultural policy. She formerly organized union health care workers and led field work for a variety of grassroots and electoral campaigns.

Larry Stephenson lives in Independence, MS. His business, Southern Cultured Orchards and Nursery, specializes in locally-adapted, heirloom fruit trees, ones that originate in the heat and humidity of the Southeast, with a
focus on sustainable growing methods and low maintenance. His current passion is Deep South apples, and he also experiments with Asian persimmons, mulberries, pawpaws, and citrus.

Warren Tidwell is the Community Resilience and Outreach Coordinator for Hometown Organizing Project. He has 25 years experience in disaster recovery at the grassroots level. Warren has worked with hundreds of volunteers on large scale rebuilding projects in the aftermath of every large scale disaster affecting the southern US in the 21st Century. In 2021 Warren was selected alongside people such as actor/musician Common and noted activist and author Valerie Kaur as a Visionary Leader in the Amplifier.org Reframe Project.

Dr. Robin Tutor Marcom is Director of the NC Agromedicine Institute where she focuses on the health and safety of farmers, fishermen, foresters, their workers and their families. She grew up on a multicommodity NC farm and continues to be part of an active farming family.
The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network is a grassroots network of farmers, consumers, and agriculture-related organizations, all committed to promoting sustainable agriculture in Alabama.

Together, we are building a better food system for Alabamians, by Alabamians.

Support our efforts to train farmers, educate consumers and policymakers, and strengthen the bonds that hold together our local food system — please join ASAN as a member today!

http://asanonline.org/join-asan

Thank You to Our Sponsors!

Forum Planning Committee
The Forum would not have happened at all, were it not for the dedication and hard work of this AMAZING group of volunteers:

Angela Comeaux
Barja Wilson
Caylor Roling
Frewin Osteen
Joseph Battistella
Rachel Hawkins
Ruby Krasnow
Sandee House
Joanna Mann

Thank