



The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network presents
2015 Regional Food & Farm Forums

Petals from the Past – Jemison, AL
Wednesday, December 2, 2015

Event Schedule:

8:30-9:00am	Registration
9:00-10:50am	Welcome + tour of Petals from the Past (guided by Arlie and Jason Powell)
11:15am-12:10pm	Roundtable discussion (session I)
12:10-12:25pm	Serve lunch
12:25-1:30pm	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>
1:30-2:25pm	Roundtable discussion (session II)
2:35-3:30pm	Roundtable discussion (session III)
3:30-3:45pm	Wrap-up, reflections, and evaluations <i>If you haven't already completed your evaluation, please do so now!</i>

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Don't forget to visit the exhibit tables!

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Important Notes about Creating Inclusive Space:

Just as 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: You are asked to write your *gender pronouns* on your nametag, along with your name. Ask yourself, how do people refer to you in the third person? More than likely, they use she / her / hers, or he / him / his. For example, "He invited me to visit him on his farm."

In English, as in many languages, we are typically taught that these are they only two sets of options. Many people, however, including many who identify as gender non-conforming / non-binary, use the pronouns they/them/theirs (in the singular), ze/hir/hirs, or others. For example "Pat invited me to visit them on their farm."

You can't assume someone's gender pronouns by looking at them. To embrace and practice this, we ask you to write your pronouns on your nametags, and observe and use the pronouns people have written for themselves.

INTERPRETATION: We will have several language interpreters working the event, to help make it accessible to monolingual Spanish speakers, but they can't do this alone. Please do your part by speaking one person at a time, and speaking loudly, clearly, and slowly, when you do speak. Please cooperate if the interpreters ask for you to repeat or clarify something you said, or pause the conversation in order to catch up.

Roundtable Discussions: These informal discussions are meant to be engaging regardless of participants' prior knowledge about the topic. Facilitators have experience in their topic, and they will help keep the conversations going, but these are not lectures or presentations. **We are all experts, and we are all learning** – the roundtables are meant to recognize that, and to lift up ALL forms of expertise.

So **"take space, make space"** – that is, if you're someone who normally dominates a conversation, be sure to leave room for others to speak, and do some good, active listening. If you tend to be quiet, speak up and share something – you may know just the answer someone's been looking for, or pose a question others never even realized they had.

* **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 (11:15am-12:10pm):

Table 1) **Small Farms, Meet Bigger Markets** – *Food hubs are a platform for aggregating, processing, and distributing farm products, which help smaller farmers connect to wholesale buyers. Learn about how a food hub is born, how it runs day to day, and the impact it has on the community. – Andrew Williams (Deep South Food Alliance)*

Table 2) **Value Added Products and Cottage Foods** – *Discuss opportunities to turn your raw products into jams/jellies, cosmetics, and other "value-added products" – in order to increase your profit margin, preserve them for sale during the off-season, to gain access to a niche market, or just for the fun of it. Learn about the latest regulations governing the sale of "cottage foods" and how to operate in compliance with them. – Gay West (ACES)*

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- Table 3) **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 “farm to table” values... But somehow it’s rarely as simple as it seems like it should be. 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. – Margaret Ann Snow (Snow’s Bend Farm)*
- Table 4) **Organic Grains in Alabama: Barriers and Opportunities** – *For human consumption as well as for livestock feed, there is a demand for locally grown, organic grains. Discuss the basics of growing various grains crops, and learn more about the opportunities and the challenges for marketing those crops. – Allison Stewart and Peggy Sutton (To Your Health Sprouted Flour Co.) and Graydon Rust (Bois D’Arc Farm)*
- Table 5) **Growing (and Sustaining) Strong School/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 the one you have, alive, share your successes and your lessons hardest learned. Also, discuss opportunities to network with other gardens locally and statewide. – Clay Carmichael (Grow Selma), Jen Sellers and Ryan Hoskins (EAT South), and Holly Pless (Montevallo Community Garden)******
- Table 6) **Starting and Maintaining Perennial Fruits in the Deep South** – *Crash course in the many perennial fruit varieties that are adapted to our climate and soils, and how to find them, raise them, and keep them happy. – Dr. Arlie Powell (Petals from the Past)*

Session II (1:30-2:25pm):

- Table 1) **Startup Farm Business Planning** – *Starting a small farm and keeping it alive for the long run requires more than just farming knowledge. Farmers must understand the business side of their farms, including budgeting, cash flow, fixed and variable costs, and more. Where are you making money, and where are you losing it? Discuss ways to make business management approachable and practicable in your day-to-day farm decisions. – Matthew Lawrence (Marble Creek Farmstead)*
- Table 2) **Cut Flowers** – *What are the benefits and challenges of breaking into the niche market of cut flowers? Share successful plant varieties and discuss planting schedules, harvesting methods, and using native flowers and grasses in bouquets. Discuss and share different designing techniques and strategies for marketing cut flowers as a value-added product. – Frannie and Charlie Griffin (Hepzibah Farms)*
- Table 3) **Organic 101** – *Learn more about the on-farm practices, recordkeeping, and application/inspection required for organic certification, why you should (or shouldn’t) pursue certification, and cost-share programs available to help lower the financial barriers to certification. – Jennifer Taylor (Florida A&M Univ Small Farm Center)*
- Table 4) **Industrial Hemp: Barriers and Opportunities** – *Hemp production in the U.S. dates back to before the U.S. was the U.S. The plant’s seeds, stalk, and leaves can be used to produce everything from oil to meal to paper to boards. Hemp was effectively banned in the 1950s, but is now seeing new interest and legal barriers are (selectively) easing. Discuss the potential this crop has in Alabama – horticulturally, economically, ecologically, and more – as well as the barriers standing in the way. – Michael LaBelle (MightyGrow Organics)*
- Table 5) **A Grassroots Approach to Food Policy** – *Food policy is important, but sometimes can seem inaccessible, impossibly complex and removed from our day-to-day experiences. Through what’s called a community food assessment (CFA), the River Region Food Policy Council is in the process of collecting data and facilitating communication and connections between the various actors in our local food system – in order to understand and influence food policy from the ground up. Learn about the CFA approach, how to get involved with the RRFPC’s work, and possibly how to pilot your own CFA. – Natilee McGruder (River Region Food Policy Council)*
- Table 6) **Horticultural Therapy** – *Gardens and plants provide space and support for healing and therapeutic treatment. What options of horticultural therapy are available for farmers? How can farmers connect with healing as part of their own work? How can we build community through gathering with this focus? What are the connections do sustainable agriculture, stewardship of healthy systems, and ecological healing have to internal healing? – Catherine Doe (EAT South)*

Session III (2:35-3:30pm):

- Table 1) **High Tunnel Production** – *Learn about the challenges and benefits specific to growing crops in enclosed, passively heated hoop houses, or high tunnels. Talk about which crops do well (and which don't), and which pests and diseases do well (and how to beat them). Also learn how to acquire, select and build the right tunnel for your situation. – Joe Kemble (ACES)*
- Table 2) **Worker-Owned Cooperatives** – *Worker-owned cooperatives, as an alternative to sole proprietorships or other business structures, are built on democratic ideals and collective decisionmaking. They grant a group of people greater access collectively to what they could not access individually (like land or major equipment), and share risk collectively to minimize it individually. But starting and running a co-op effectively, is an art -- learn here about the basics, the opportunities, and the pitfalls. – Majadi Baruti (Magic City Agriculture Project)*
- Table 3) **Water Policy and Water Protection** – *Water can make all the difference in a farm's success, how abundant or scarce it is, who "owns" it, and what creatures and contaminants might hitch a ride in it, to get onto or off of the farm. Learn about threats to Alabama's waterways and efforts to protect them – both "on the ground" and in the statehouse. – Adam Johnston (Alabama Rivers Alliance)*
- Table 4) **Meat Processing in Central Alabama: Barriers and Opportunities** – *Small-scale livestock producers in Alabama know all too well that processing is a major barrier to growing the market for locally, sustainably raised meat. Discuss in detail what specific processing needs exist, as well as potential collaborative opportunities to meet those needs. – Clay Carmichael (Grow Selma / Fiddlehead Farms), Mac Russell (Shindigs Catering), Noopie Cosby (Office of the AL Commissioner of Agriculture), Chip Spencer (Spencer Farm), and Jason Smith (Cog Hill Farm)*
- Table 5) **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. – Cameron Strouss (Deep Roots Apotheke)*



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