



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

University of West Alabama – Livingston, AL  
Thursday, December 1, 2016

- 8:30-9:00am Registration
- 9:00-10:15am Welcome, overview, and community resource mapping
- 10:20-11:30am Tour
- 11:30-11:45am Break
- 11:45am-12:45pm Lunch + Lightning Talks  
*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!*  
*This is also the time to suggest a roundtable discussion topic, if there's one you want to add to the mix! (See bottom of page 2 "Your Suggestion")*
- 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 Wrap-up, evaluations  
*If you haven't already completed your evaluation, please do so now!*

**This Forum made possible by the generous support of:**



## **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 seem 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.

### **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**. Your experience is not everyone's experience. 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. Convenient shorthand for this is "**take space, make space.**"

### **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 they 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 hirs), 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**. Don't jokingly tell people to use the wrong pronouns, or say it doesn't matter what pronouns people use for you. Your identity (and your right to define it for yourself) may not ever be challenged in your day-to-day life, but not everyone can say the same.

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

## **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:** Want to discuss a topic you don't see here? Suggest it during the lightning talks!

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

Table 1) **Promoting and Maintaining Good Soil Health** – A healthy soil retains and uses available water and nutrients better than a poor soil does, and is the first line of defense against crop nutrient deficiencies, pests, and diseases. This can mean keeping crops alive in times of drought, or raising crops with fewer/without expensive inputs (fertility, pest/disease control). Learn how to understand and invest in improve your soil's health. – *Tibor Horvath (NRCS)*

Table 2) **Cooperatives 101** – Learn the differences between producer co-ops, consumer co-ops, and worker-owned co-ops, and how each differs from other business structures. Discuss advantages, disadvantages, which circumstances are best suited to which model, and how to go about forming one. – *Pamela Madzima and John Zippert (Federation of Southern Cooperatives)*

Table 3) **Small-scale and Sustainable Forestry** – When people talk about "diversified farming," "intercropping," and "stacked functions," they're not usually thinking of trees. But if you do it right, incorporating trees into your farm can add extra income, provide valuable wildlife habitat and even grazing lands for livestock. Discuss how to identify whether forestry is a good fit for you, how to select tree varieties, and how and when to harvest, in order to maximize your profit and your ecological benefit. – *Luis Cruz-Arroyo (NRCS)*



Table 4) **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)*

Table 5) **Food Safety Regulations** – The FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has been released, and at the same time more wholesale buyers are requiring food safety certifications like GAP (Good Agricultural Practices). Discuss what the rules are, how they apply to your farm, and how to get in compliance. – *Kristin Woods (Produce Safety Alliance)*

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

Table 1) **Small Livestock Production** – Discuss the ins and outs of raising and marketing small livestock including rabbits, goats and sheep. – *Robert Spencer (ACES)*

Table 2) **Cooperatives 201** – A "part two" for those who are serious about starting a cooperative in the immediate future, and those who are already part of one and want to troubleshoot challenges, plot next steps, and share success stories. – *Pam Madzima and John Zippert (Federation of Southern Cooperatives)*

Table 3) **Niche Market Opportunity: Herbs** – Fresh cut herbs are hard to sell, especially without a high-traffic high-dollar direct-market outlet nearby. However making them into tinctures, elixirs, teas, and other value-added products can be a way to increase the profit margin and possibly even reduce labor costs. Discuss what herbs/crops work well for this arrangement, the basics of how to make and market these value-added products successfully. – *Cameron Strouss (Deep Roots Apotheke)*

Table 4) **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 alive the one you have, share your successes and your lessons hardest learned. – *Caylor Roling and Bethanne Dunagan (EAT South)*

Table 5) **Your suggestion\***



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

- Table 1) **Starting and Maintaining Fruit Trees 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. – *Jason and Arlie Powell (Petals from the Past)*
- Table 2) **Intensive/Rotational Grazing** - Grazing livestock on small pasture plots for short periods of time helps improve the quality of your soil, pasture, and livestock, but it requires attention, knowledge, labor, and infrastructure. Discuss how to get started on this method, and for those already farming this way, discuss problems/challenges and solutions. Also discuss resources (like grants and cost-share programs) to help you start, expand, or improve your operation. – *Luis Cruz-Arroyo (NRCS)*
- Table 3) **Growing and Selling to School Cafeterias** -- Many farmers are interested in the idea of selling their products to local schools to feed growing local kids. The reality is that it can be complicated to do so, and not always a good fit for everyone. Discuss how to know whether a farm-to-cafeteria relationship is right for you, and if so: how to select, harvest, and process crops; how to navigate regulatory and logistical hurdles; and what resources and support exist to help make it smoother and easier.
- Table 4) **Fermented Foods and Gut Health** – The microbes in our stomach and intestines are responsible for converting our food into our bodies. They are often also responsible for a wide range of diet-related health problems, some we don't recognize as diet-related at all. Learn what foods foster (or undermine) healthy populations of good gut microbes, including fermented foods like kimchi and kombucha. Discuss how to make or find these products, and swap ideas for recipes! – *Thyme Randle (The Underground Cooking Academy)*
- Table 5) **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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