



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

McDowell Farm School at Camp McDowell – Nauvoo, AL  
Friday, October 28, 2016

- 8:30-9:00am Registration, visit exhibit tables
- 9:00-10:30am Welcome, overview, and group activity
- 10:40-11:40am Tour
- 11:50am-12:50pm 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 Group wrap-up, evaluations, and additional time with exhibitors  
*If you haven't already completed your evaluation, please do so now!*
- 6:00pm *Joint cookout with Sierra Club! Pre-registration REQUIRED to guarantee there's enough food.*

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



**Thank you for supporting ASAN!**

**Be sure to visit the exhibit tables!**

Cleber LLC  
North Alabama Agriplex  
First South Farm Credit  
ACES Commercial Horticulture Program  
Sierra Club – Alabama Chapter  
Society of St. Andrew  
North Alabama Revolving Loan Fund / Neighborhood Concepts

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

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

- Table 1) **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 2) **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. Learn more about how and why to save seeds. – *Charlotte Hagood and Dove Stackhouse (Sand Mountain Seed Bank)*
- Table 3) **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 4) **Horticultural Therapy** – Gardens provide space and support for healing and therapeutic treatment. What is horticultural therapy, and how can farmers connect with healing as part of their own work? What connections do sustainable agriculture, stewardship of healthy systems, and ecological healing have to internal healing, both individually and communally? – *Martin Jahn and Lydia Atkins (McDowell Farm School)*



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Table 5) **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 and Dan Goins (NRCS)*

Table 6) **Value-Added Products** – Value-added products like jams and jellies, baked goods, pickles, wreaths, soaps, and other cosmetic products, can increase your profit margin, generate income from otherwise unusable produce, add uniqueness to your market spread, and balance out your annual cash flow. Discuss product ideas, what pays off (and what doesn't), and what you need to get started. – *Jan Hoadley (Slow Money Farm) and Andrew Shea (McDowell Farm School)*

Table 7) **Your suggestion\***

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

Table 1) **Selecting and Maintaining Tools and Equipment** – It's not always all about that big green tractor, after all. Which tools and equipment are must-have, and which are a waste of time and money? Discuss what farm equipment is right for your scale and your vision, and how to take care of basic maintenance and repairs without breaking the bank. – *Lee McBride (Crotovina Consulting)*

Table 2) **Biodynamics 101** – Biodynamics is an approach to agriculture developed in the 1920s by Rudolph Steiner. Biodynamic agriculture shares much in common with organic agriculture, but differs in ways as well, including more strongly emphasizing the use of manures and cover crops; understanding soil, plant, and animal health as fundamentally one; emphasizing a place-specific approach to farm design; and incorporating spiritual and astrological elements. Learn the basics of biodynamic farming, and how to integrate it into your farm or garden. – *Martin Jahn (McDowell Farm School)*

Table 3) **Using Social Media to Connect with Customers and Build your Brand** – Farming in the age of social media can be daunting, but it also presents tremendous opportunity. Discuss simple ways (and reasons) to create and grow a social-media presence for your farm, and how to capitalize once you have a following. – *Sheree Martin (Shine Springs Farm) and Jan Hoadley (Slow Money Farm)*

Table 4) **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. – *Sara Rose (Dragonfly Herb Pharm)*

Table 5) **Food as Medicine** – "You are what you eat" and "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," and yet we live in a society that so often fails to grasp how our diet and our health are in constant and complicated dialogue. Discuss foods and food preparations that help build a foundation of good overall health, and more specific foods that can treat or prevent certain conditions. – *Frannie Koe*

Table 6) **Your suggestion\***

Table 7) **Your suggestion\***

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

- Table 1) **Livestock Nutrition** – Food is the basis of our animals’ health just the same as it’s the basis of our own. Discuss diet-based strategies to promoting holistic animal health, and how to foster robust nutrient cycles and soil ecosystems in your pastures. – *Jimmy Parker (Hillsboro Feed)*
- Table 2) **Solar on the Farm** – Solar power is increasingly accessible and versatile, and can be used to power electric fencing, water pumps, outbuilding lighting, greenhouse ventilation fans, even tractors! Discuss ways to incorporate solar power on your farm (and your home), available resources to make it easier, and common barriers and mistakes. – *Daryl Bergquist (Earth Steward Solar Consulting)*
- Table 3) **Communicating with Consumers about Sustainable, Organic, and Local Ag** – Why should I buy local? What’s so different about organic anyway? As a farmer, it pays – literally – to be able to communicate to consumers why your product is better than what they might get from the grocery store, or from a can. There are elements to this conversation that are economic, environmental, social, even spiritual – which angle works best depends on who you are, and who you’re trying to reach. On a larger scale, convincing local and state decision-makers, investors, and others of the value of a local, sustainable food system. – *Kim Prince (Morgan County Decatur Farmers Market)*
- 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. Also discuss useful compost “by-products” like compost tea and worm castings. – *Martin Jahn and Andrew Shea (McDowell Farm School)*
- Table 5) **Native Plants and Native Pollinators** – Pollinators get a lot of press, but the spotlight generally shines only on the honeybee, and skips over the vast majority of pollinator species, many of which are native to Alabama and the Southeast. Discuss how (and why) to support native pollinator populations in your garden, farm, and landscaping, including how to use native plants to create pollinator-friendly habitat. – *Dianne Lollar*
- Table 6) **Sustainable Farming Amid Drought and Climate Change** – How has the drought this fall affected farms and farmers? How can we better prepare for future droughts (and other extreme weather and “weather weirding”)? Discuss strategies ranging from adapting farming methods, to increasing the use of irrigation, to improving local and state policy. – *Martha Hunter (Alabama Rivers Alliance)*
- Table 7) **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.



### **Help move local, sustainable agriculture forward in Alabama!**

ASAN is a grassroots nonprofit organization, and support from members goes a LONG way towards enabling us to do the work we do all across Alabama.

**Be a part of the movement: join ASAN today!**

Ask for a membership form at the registration table, or join online at  
**<http://asanonline.org/join-asan>**.