

GET ON THE BUS! Scholarships available for a limited time to attend the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group's Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms Conference.

Apply by December 9. See page 2 for details.



ALABAMA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NETWORK

ASAN UPDATE

**The Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network
announces its Fall (Winter?) Field Day at
Jones Valley Urban Farm
Birmingham, Alabama**

December 3, 2005 - 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

Come see what Jones Valley Urban Farm can do in December with vacant lots in downtown Birmingham!

\$10 includes lunch— please call 256-318-0537 or email info@asanonline.org to RSVP so that we can plan on feeding you.



Reconnecting people to food

For the past three years, JVUF has been transforming lots in downtown Birmingham into beautiful, edible and sustainable gardens. See how they have resurrected compacted urban soils, grown delicious food for most of the year using organic methods, and brought together communities in their city. Learn about the curriculum they have developed for their Alabama School of Fine Arts science course, the efforts of the Jefferson County Food Security Coalition, and many other exciting projects happening with JVUF.

Directions to JVUF: From I-65, take I-59/20 east to Hwy 280 south. Get off at the University/8th Avenue South exit and head west towards the University of Alabama in Birmingham. Turn left onto 24th Street and travel south for two blocks. Turn right onto 10th Avenue South and look for the Jones Valley Urban Farm Sign on the left.



Heifer International program participants from all over the southeast got the opportunity to help with harvesting at Jones Valley Urban Farm this October.

SSAWG CONFERENCE SCHOLARSHIPS

FOR LIMITED-RESOURCE AND MINORITY FARMERS

The Alabama Cooperative Extension System, Alabama A&M University, Tuskegee University and Auburn University through funding provided by the Southern SARE program (www.sare.org) will be providing scholarships for 47 limited-resource and minority farmers to attend the most popular sustainable agriculture conference in the South. The event is hosted by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (www.ssawg.org). The conference program is geared toward small and mid-sized farms with 56 sessions led largely by other farmers with practical experience. This is an excellent learning opportunity for small farmers trying to make a living farming.

What: Practical Tools and Solutions For Sustaining Family Farms Conference

When: January 20-22, 2006

Where: Louisville, Kentucky Hyatt Regency

Scholarship: General conference registration, one field trip of choice (if desired), motor coach travel (departing Jan 19/returning Jan 22), 3 nights lodging (2 per room) and Saturday night banquet dinner.

Deadline for Application: December 9, 2005

Eligibility: Limited resource and minority producers or those soon to be farming in the state of Alabama who have a serious desire to learn sustainable farming systems. This might require verification or proof of status. Only two individuals per organization/address are eligible at this point. If all scholarships are not awarded, these scholarships will become available to on a first-come, first-served basis.

How to apply: Submit the registration form on page 4 by **December 9, 2005**.

Selection Process: Applicants will be considered based on their desire to learn and apply lessons learned in their own farming operations, as well as their willingness to share information with others. Qualified applicants will be considered first-come, first-served.

Notification: Applicants will be notified by phone and/or mail no later than December 15, 2005 whether or not they have been chosen to receive a scholarship.

Logistics: Conference Registration forms for only those receiving scholarships will be submitted to conference organizers by this office. Lodging reservations for only those receiving scholarships will be made by this office. You will be contacted by January 4, 2005 regarding transportation instructions.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Joe Kemble at (334) 844-3050 or at kembljm@auburn.edu. Downloadable scholarship forms are available at www.aces.edu/dept/com_veg/ala_s_sawg.pdf.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE SSAWG CONFERENCE? Details available at www.ssawg.org

OPTIONAL FIELD TRIPS: Diversified Sustainable Farm • Louisville Community Food Systems • Sustainable Agriculture Research and Demonstration • Pastured Poultry • Meat Goats

GENERAL SESSIONS: Selling Cut Flowers: Wholesale and Direct • Profitable Pastures • Native Bee Conservation and Management • What the Heck IS Sustainable Agriculture? • Vermicomposting: What Worm Castings Can Do For Your Farm • Understanding the Farm Bill • How Farmers Are Using the Internet to Increase Income • You Can Do This in America ?!?! One Community's Model for Developing a Secure, Just and Sovereign Food System • Profitable Pork Farming • Organic Heirloom Tomato Production and Marketing • Soil Basics: The Underground Menagerie You Manage • Youth in Sustainable Agriculture • Fostering Family Farming and Community Food Systems in the Aftermath of the Gulf Coast Hurricanes • Community Foods Forum: Expanding the Southern Community Foods Network • State Networking Sessions • Marketing Networks • Organic Chicken Production • Managing the Nitrogen Cycle: Microbes, the Weather and You • Cut Flower Production • Creating a Farm Legacy: Estate Planning • Grants for Producers • Putting the "Community" in our Food System: Community Food Systems Assessment and Analysis • How to Start your Own Producer Only Farmers' Market • How To Decode Feed and Fertilizer Labels For Organic Producers • Growing Under Cover • Basic Principles and Practices of Organic Vegetable Production • Solar and Biodiesel on the Farm • Building Diversity in Community Food Work Through Collaborations and Leadership Development • Selling Food is Risky Business • Meat Goat Production & Marketing • What Materials Really Work For Organic Vegetable Pest And Disease Control • How Do You Know If A New Crop Will Make Money? • Promoting the Health Benefits of Your Farm Products • Maintaining Farm Community Diversity and the 2007 Farm Bill • Getting Community Food Projects to Pay for Themselves • Farm Stands - Making The Most Of Direct Sales • Talking Turkey • Transplant Production • Is That a Good Bug or a Bad Bug? • Putting More Organic in the Farm Bill • Introduction to Shiitake Mushroom Production • Mentoring Programs for Farmers • Farm to Cafeteria Strategies for Success • Strategies for Adding Value to Flowers • Multispecies Grazing • Organics and Biodiversity • Drip Irrigation Basics • Managing your Taxes • Fun on the Farm: Agritourism in Oklahoma • Mapping Your Community Food Project Using a Logic Model • Fine Tuning Your CSA: Let's Discuss It! • Is There A Gold Mine In Your Gully? Adding Value To Small Ruminant Animals • You Can Grow Better Seed Than You Can Buy • Meeting the Demand for Organic Livestock Feed • Grass Fed Meat and Dairy Products are HOT! • An Open Meeting of the SSAWG Policy Committee • Changing the Rules to Favor Community Based Food Systems

UPCOMING EVENTS - Winter 2005-2006

*Current event listings are online at
www.asanonline.org*

December 3- Birmingham, AL
ASAN Field Day at Jones Valley Urban Farm See page one for details.

December 4-7 -Tuskegee, AL
Tuskegee Professional Ag Workers Conference www.tuskegee.edu

December 7-9 - Mobile, AL
Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Growers Conference
Contact Bill Evans at 601-892-3731 or wbe@ra.msstate.edu for more information.

December 11-13 - Nashville, TN
Tennessee Fruit and Vegetable Convention
www.tfva.org

December 14- Clanton, AL
Alabama Greenhouse Vegetable Workshop
9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m, Clanton Conference Center, Alabama Power Company. Contact Joe Kemble (334)844-3050, or Gary Gray (334) 539-2128

December 15 - Florence, AL
ASAN Tour of the Shoals Culinary Center (ccc.shoalsec.com) and Jack-O-Lantern Farm and Market (www.jackolanternfarm.com)
See the Shoals- area kitchen incubator in action, tour a hydroponic greenhouse, and stay and shop at the Market at Jack-o-Lantern Farms. Call or write the ASAN office for more information (contact information on page 4).

December 19-21 - Auburn, AL
Continuing Education for Certified Crop Advisors
Contact Joe Touchton, 334-844-3952 or touchjt@auburn.edu.

January 5-8 - Savannah, GA
Southeast Regional Fruit & Vegetable Conference www.gfvga.org

January 17 to March 14 - Auburn, Belle Mina, Headland, Marion Junction, Crossville, and Winfield, AL
Master Cattle Producers Training Program
20 hours of training in improving production on beef cattle operations. Contact Gerry Thompson at 256-353-8702 x25 or 256-508-2020.

January 19-22 - Louisville, KY
Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group 2006 Annual Conference
www.ssawg.org

January 28 - Selma, AL
Farm Business Planning Workshop
Call or write the ASAN office for more information (contact information on page 4).

January 31 - Clanton, AL
Chilton Area Peach Production Meeting
4 p.m. - 8 p.m. Alabama Power Co., Clanton Conference Center. Contact: Gary Gray (334) 539-2128

February 2-4 - Mobile, Alabama
Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Mobile Convention Center www.alna.org/expo.htm

February 10-11 - Mansfield, Georgia
Georgia Organic's 9th Annual Conference and Trade Show. www.georgiaorganics.org

Workshop Dates To Be Announced
Contact the ASAN office for more information.

January - Auburn, AL
Auburn Organic Greenhouse Field Day

March - Birmingham, AL
Know Your Enemies Pest Workshop

April - Opelika, AL
ASAN Spring Field Day at Randle Farms

ALABAMA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

ASAN is a non-profit organization working to support conservation practices, families who grow and consume natural food and fiber, and the communities where they live.

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ASAN Farmer-to-Farmer Program Starts its Second Season

Last year, beginning and transitioning farmers from nine farms worked with growers around the state to share experiences and ideas. Some of these farmers were starting CSAs and marketing cooperatives, some were growing cut flowers, herbs, and vegetables using organic methods, and some were raising and marketing pastured poultry. This year ASAN hopes to expand those numbers and help other farmers and ranchers put their ideas into action.

The Farmer-to-Farmer program works to link experienced Alabama producers with low-income farmers and ranchers that are starting out or trying a new method of production or a new marketing outlet. Our experienced producers raise organic and sustainable fruits and vegetables and pastured livestock. Often they market directly through farmers markets, farm shares or community-supported agriculture, or to restaurants and grocery stores. They help participants develop business plans, evaluate marketing options, and provide technical assistance in production methods.

By encouraging mentoring between experienced sustainable growers and producers interested in trying these methods out, and by encouraging our participants to pass on what they have learned, we hope to create better connections between farmers and ranchers and encourage more teachers within Alabama's rural communities.

The program includes the opportunity to receive on-farm visits by experienced local farmers. Participants can discuss their overall plans or specific management issues and come up with solutions that are tailored to their own farm. They also receive assistance in developing a farm business plan. Participants are also encouraged to attend the many workshops and conferences happening around the state and beyond. After receiving adequate training, some are eligible to receive a pass-on loan including some supplies and honeybees, chicks, or seeds and seedlings. Within two years, participants agree to pass on their training and gifts to another producer. In this way, the initial pass-on gift is spread throughout the community.

If you would like to become part of the Farmer-to-Farmer program, call, write or email for more information (ASAN contact info is at the top of this page). *This program is sponsored with funding from Heifer International and the USDA 2501 Program in a partnership with Alabama A&M University.*

A Note from the Virtual Office

Ahh, there's nothing I like more than long winter nights analyzing the excellent records I kept over the season and making plans for next year. I hope you can get away for a few of the interesting events happening in the next few months.

Hopefully you'll get this newsletter in time for the field day at Jones Valley Urban Farm on December 3rd (this went out a bit late, sorry). Talk about extending the season - they've got great plans for year-round production and we'll get to see it in action. And if you want some good community-building ideas or have some to share, this will be the place to do it.

We are also excited to have such a great scholarship opportunity from USDA's Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program. (Many thank-yous to everyone that made that happen!) The SSAWG conference is a great place to get new ideas, and I only hope I can squeeze onto the charter bus to Louisville with 47 farmers and ranchers from around the state. What a great chance to meet people and find out what everyone is up to!

There are a lot of other things happening around the state. Here at the virtual office we are trying to plan regional workshops in the off-season - please let us know if you would like to host or attend a workshop on a specific subject or if you already have something planned. Hope to see you at least once this winter!

Karen