

Kentucky's Community Farm Alliance Comes to Alabama



THE ALABAMA SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NETWORK

ASAN UPDATE

ASAN is excited to bring members of the Community Farm Alliance (CFA) to Alabama for our first ever Community Food Leaders Forum on November 6-7. CFA is a grassroots membership organization with over 2,000 members in 75 counties in Kentucky. From creating new farmers markets in underserved urban communities, to developing Farm-to-Cafeteria programs that link local farmers with institutional buyers, to promoting family farm-friendly policies in the halls of the State Capitol, CFA provides a grassroots voice for Kentucky's citizens—farmer and non-farmer, urban and rural alike—on farm, food, and economic issues.

The Alliance got started in 1985 when it established a credit hotline to help Kentucky farmers keep their land. Over the years, the organization has supported a wide variety of legislative issues supporting small farmers, including funneling tobacco settlement funds into programs to support small farmers, easing home processing regulations for farmers selling at farmers markets, and opposing the introduction of a mandatory animal identification law.

In recent years, the organization has introduced a plan to create local integrated food economies (known as LIFE), including establishing new farmers markets, evaluating food self-sufficiency, organizing food distribution systems, and forming the West Louisville Food Working Group. Their efforts are bringing together urban and rural people, creating economic and social empowerment, and preserving and enhancing farms and communities.

CFA recently released a Community Food Assessment of West Louisville, called *Bridging the Divide: Growing Self-Sufficiency in Our Food Supply* (available online at www.communityfarmalliance.org/BridgingtheDivide.pdf). West Louisville is considered a “food desert”, an area with foods that are generally not easily accessible, high-priced, low-quality, and short on variety. The report highlights the

Find out more about the Community Farm Alliance at www.communityfarmalliance.org

Or meet their members at Camp McDowell in November!

Details on pages 4-6.

availability (and unavailability) of fresh foods in different parts of Louisville compared with fast food outlets and convenience stores. Access to food and eating habits in West Louisville were tracked through food diaries, customer surveys, maps of food access, data on prices and availability of specific foods, and community meetings. The report offers a number of solutions such as investing in a community-based food infrastructure, providing incentives for food retailers in low-income areas, and promoting public health.

A number of new projects are underway in the area. Grasshoppers Distribution, LLC, is Kentucky's first farmer-owned local food distribution business. Urban Fresh, a youth-run local food delivery business, is operating one farmers market and working toward creating mobile markets. The Rowan Street Co-op delivers fresh produce to area senior citizens. The number of farmers markets are increasing in the area, and Friends of the Market groups have been formed to organize educational events at each market. These types of educational and marketing efforts allow members to engage and improve their own communities.

Members of the Community Farm Alliance will join us in November at Camp McDowell in Nauvoo, Alabama. The group will highlight their successes, discuss their challenges, and participate in discussions with other farmers, leaders, and educators.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Online at www.asanonline.org/future_events.htm

October 14. Springville, AL. Alabama Heritage Wild & Rural Art Exhibit Opening. 10 am - 6 pm. Meet over 30 Alabama artists at the Blackwood Gallery and enjoy live music, locally grown and prepared hors d'oeuvres, craft demonstrations and a silent auction to benefit the Alabama Sierra Club Sustainable Agriculture Campaign. Directions at alabama.sierraclub.org/newchapter/events/artshow_07.html.

October 20. Huntsville, AL. Clean Food Network Open House. Noon to 4 pm at Lowe Mill. Meet the farmers dedicated to producing food that is raised using sustainable, organic and biodynamic growing methods. Contact 256-891-9856 or email cleanfoodnetwork@bellsouth.net.

October 21. Birmingham, AL. Urban Harvest Twilight Supper at Jones Valley Urban Farm. An unforgettable evening of great food and music at the Gardens of Park Place. www.jvuf.org

November 2-3. Mobile and Chunchula, AL. Alabama TREASURE Forest Association's Conference and Wildlife/Forestry Festival. Riverview Hotel. Register online at www.atfa.net or call 888-240-4694.

November 3 - Feb 23rd. Carrollton, Georgia. Sustainable Growers School. Held on Saturdays, the program is designed to teach novice growers the fundamentals of organic and sustainable agriculture. Sessions include soils and composting, vegetable production, pasture management, sustainable orchards, animal selection and care, management and marketing your farm and pest management. Call 770-258-4048 or visit TheGrowersSchool.Org.

November 6-7. Nauvoo, AL. Community Food Leaders Forum: Good, Clean and Fair Food for Everyone. Featuring panel and breakout discussions and speakers on food systems, alternative production and marketing, and plenty of time to talk with other leaders in food and farming from Alabama and

beyond. Held in conjunction with the 5th Annual Organic Vegetable Production Conference. Visit www.asanonline.org/forum or call 256-632-2465 or gentlemom@farmerstel.com. More information and registration on pages 4-6. Scholarships are available.

November 7. Nauvoo, AL. 5th Annual Organic Vegetable Production Conference. Meet organic and sustainable growers, eaters, and agricultural workers from around the state to talk about the latest in organic vegetable production that works in Alabama. Held in conjunction with the Community Food Leaders Forum and Jones Valley Urban Farm's Open House. See pages 4-6 for registration and more information.

November 7. Birmingham, AL. Open House at Jones Valley Urban Farm's Gardens of Park Place. 2-5 pm. Jones Valley Urban Farm is a non-profit organization dedicated to reclaiming vacant urban lots and converting them to productive use. In addition to growing fruits, vegetables and cut flowers, the urban farm is an important community resource providing educational and economic opportunities in an urban setting. See food systems work and organic vegetable production in action! Located at the corner of 7th Avenue North and 25th Street in downtown Birmingham. www.jvuf.org

November 7-8. Auburn, AL. 4th Annual Alabama Agriculture Energy Conference. Information on agriculture-related energy efficiency and renewable energy topics including heat and power production from biomass, biofuel feedstock logistics, farm energy efficiency, water issues and tips for launching a bio-energy business. Agriculture producers are invited to attend. Visit www.adeca.alabama.gov or call 800-392-8098.

November 15-16. Huntsville, AL. Small Farms Research Center's Fifth Annual Risk Management Education and Community Outreach Conference: Healthy Land, Profitable Family Farms and Sustainable Future. Covering a wide range of topics including financial planning, alternative enterprises, estate planning, value-added agriculture, community outreach, USDA programs available for small farmers, FSA loan application and procedures, and many more. A limited number of scholarships are still available. Call 256-372-4970 for more information.

November 17. Albertville, AL. Sand Mountain Regional Seed Bank's Second Annual Harvest Dinner. Albertville Country Club. Featuring local farm products and regional recipes. Contact Dove Stackhouse for more information at 256-891-9856.

December 2-4. Tuskegee, AL. 65th Professional Agricultural Workers Conference. Energy, Food, and Fiber Alternatives: Opportunities for Underserved Communities. www.pawc.info

December 5-6. Mobile, AL. Deep South Fruit and Vegetable Conference. Featuring tracks on organic production, agritourism, farmers markets and community food projects, insurance, taxes, grafting tomatoes, beginning farming, and fruit, cut flower and vegetable production. www.deepsouthfruitveg.org

January 16-19, 2008. Louisville, KY. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference. One of the top southeastern conferences on sustainable agriculture and food systems! More information on the conference at www.ssawg.org/conference-.html. See below for information on scholarship applications.

February, 2008. Tuskegee's Annual Farmers Conference. Stay tuned for more information. www.tuskegee.edu

February 29- March 1, 2008. Dalton, GA. Georgia Organics 11th Annual Conference. Get ready and set to go to Dalton! Keynote presenter George Siemon, CEO of Organic Valley, promises to inspire with the wit and wisdom gleaned from his career weaving family farms together into cooperative marketing strongholds. Visit www.georgiaorganics.org or contact 678-702-0400 or info@georgiaorganics.org for more information.

Society of St. Andrew Gleaning Network

Distributes Salvaged Produce

We all know how choosy consumers are today. They want the highest quality for the least amount of money. This often means that marketers of fresh produce are not able to sell all of their stock—everything doesn't grow perfectly. With perishable produce items, customers frequently only want the best looking, freshest items. At other times, the bottom falls out of the market and items cannot be sold at a profit. Too often, growers, packers, and shippers are left with perfectly edible food that will not be sold.

The Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) works with growers, packers, and shippers to donate that "left over" produce to non-profit agencies like shelters, children's homes, soup kitchens as well as to low income families. The goal is not to let any food go to waste, as long as there are people who are hungry.

SoSA works to salvage any amount from 50 pounds to 50,000 pounds. In September 2001, SoSA established a Gleaning Network in North Alabama. This network salvages produce from fields, warehouses and packing sheds throughout North Alabama. The Gleaning Network continues to expand into new areas. In 2006, nationally, they distributed over 25 million pounds of donated produce. In spite of the drought of 2006, they distributed 740,455 pounds of produce in Alabama.

Through SoSA, growers, packers, and shippers can donate unmarketable produce for distribution to agencies that feed hungry people. They take any produce that is still edible but would normally be thrown on a compost pile, in a landfill or dumped back in a field and get it to hungry people. For those who pack for retail sale, there are often "culls" that cannot be sold because of surface blemishes and/or size considerations.

SoSA salvages produce from a variety of settings in two ways. One is by finding volunteers from churches

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Scholarship applications available for the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group Conference this January in Louisville, Kentucky!

With Wendell Berry, Joel Salatin, and over 1000 other farmers, ranchers, researchers and advocates.

Please contact the ASAN office to request information on scholarships at 256-751-3925 or info@asanonline.org. Or check the ASAN website to download a scholarship application.

Thank you to the USDA's SARE program for sponsoring these scholarships!

**COMMUNITY FOOD LEADERS FORUM:
GOOD, CLEAN, AND FAIR FOOD FOR EVERYONE
NOVEMBER 6-7, 2007
CAMP McDOWELL, NAUVOO, ALABAMA**

Join us for two days of sharing ideas, meeting new people, setting goals, and learning about successful projects and effective ways to improve the way our food is produced, distributed, and eaten.

**Featuring guest speakers from Kentucky's Community Farm Alliance
and great people from around Alabama and the Southeast**

Breakout sessions and speakers on:

CSAs, farmers markets, marketing networks, cooperatives • encouraging new farmers • organic vegetable production • farm energy • farmland preservation • heritage foods & seed saving • programs for small farmers • value-added products • food systems • youth education • community gardens • more!

Join us after the Forum at Jones Valley Urban Farm for a look at organic production and season extension in action. Learn about their educational programs and plans for the future.

2-5 pm. Birmingham, Alabama.

Some scholarships are available. For more information, check online at www.asanonline.org/forum, call 256-632-2465 or email gentlemom@farmerstel.com.

Held in conjunction with the 5th Annual Organic Vegetable Production Conference. Funding for this project was provided by the Southern Region Risk Management Education Center, the USDA Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service (CSREES), Auburn University, ASAN and Heifer International.

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Registration Form
Community Food Leaders Forum
November 6-7, 2007
Camp McDowell, Nauvoo, Alabama

Preregistration is required! Please register by October 26 to guarantee a spot.
Please fill out one form for each registrant. We will send you a registration confirmation, directions, and additional information upon receipt of this form.

Name: _____

Farm/Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

E-mail: _____

Please briefly describe the work you are doing and what you hope to get out of this conference. Can we include this and your contact information in the forum materials? *Please circle one.* Yes No

November 6 is Election Day. Don't forget to vote early on Tuesday morning or request an absentee ballot. Absentee ballot request forms for Alabama are available at www.sos.state.al.us/election/absentee/ or contact your county's Circuit Clerk.

Please don't forget to fill out the back of this page!

Questions? Call 256-632-2465 or 256-520-2400.

Community Food Leaders Forum Registration Form (continued from previous page)

_____ Check here if you are requesting a scholarship. Scholarship request forms are available at www.asanonline.org/forum or call 256-632-2465. Please send it in to be received **by October 20**.

Lodging (choose one).....Lodging total _____

- ___ Single Occupancy **\$52** per night
- ___ Double Occupancy **\$30** per person per night
- ___ None

Do you have a roommate in mind? Please let us know who it is, otherwise your roommate will be assigned randomly if you have chosen double occupancy.

Roomie request _____

What night(s) do you need lodging? _____

Meals (choose one)Meal total _____

- ___ Tuesday (lunch & dinner) AND Wednesday (breakfast & lunch) **\$26**
- ___ Tuesday only (lunch & dinner) **\$13**
- ___ Wednesday only (breakfast & lunch) **\$13**
- ___ None

Please let us know about any dietary restrictions _____

Conference registration feeRegistration total _____

- ___ Tuesday **\$15**
- ___ Wednesday **\$15**
- ___ Both days **\$25**

ASAN membership (optional but appreciated).....Membership _____

- ___ **\$10** basic
- ___ **\$25** supporting
- ___ \$ _____ other

___ I can't send any money right now, but please put me on your mailing list.

TOTAL PAYMENT \$ _____

Please send this form to the address below with a check or money order, made payable to ASAN, or your scholarship application.

ASAN- CFLF
367 County Rd. 327
Flat Rock, AL 35966

The scholarship request deadline is October 20, all other registrations must be received by October 26. Thank you for helping us prepare by getting your registration in as early as possible!

Society of St. Andrew

(Continued from page 3)

and other civic organizations who will go to the fields, warehouses, farmers' markets, and produce stands to glean what is left and would otherwise be thrown away or plowed under. The other way is by the tractor trailer load through the national Potato Project. Normally, volunteers with pick up trucks are used to pick up small amounts of produce (less than 30,000 pounds). When packers have something that they would donate, they contact SoSA. Then arrangements are made for volunteers to pick up the produce. When large quantities are donated, SoSA may make arrangements for a tractor trailer to pick up the produce for delivery to an agency that can distribute such a large amount of produce.

Who does the gleaning? Gleaners are people of all ages, rich and poor, givers and receivers, individuals and families, who have a chance to give of themselves. Organizations such as churches, clubs, schools, and senior citizen groups glean. Anyone can sign up to glean with a group or as an individual.

Where does the food go? Food gets to the people who need it. SoSA donates produce to scores of agencies that have a proven record of working with the hungry. Gleaning groups may select the organizations to receive the produce they pick, if feasible. If members of the group have vehicles such as SUVs, pick up trucks or vans, they are welcome, but not obligated, to help with the distribution of the gleaning as well. Within 24-48 hours of picking, hungry people are usually eating the produce.

Growers, packers, and shippers work hard to provide beautiful, fresh produce to customers and it is heartbreaking to see any of it go to waste. Rather than let that happen, gleaning is a way to provide for those who are most vulnerable in our society, the elderly and the children. One in six of the children in Alabama lives in poverty and is at risk of being hungry.

For more information about donating to SoSA or becoming a gleaner, please visit www.endhunger.org/alabama.htm, call 205-838-1927 or email gleanal@endhunger.org.

EQIP and WHIP Sign-Up for 2008 Underway

The Alabama USDA– Natural Resources Conservation Service is accepting applications for the 2008 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (a.k.a. EQIP) and Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP). **The deadline for the first round of ranking is October 26, 2007.**

The EQIP program provides technical and financial assistance to help eligible agricultural producers address soil, water, air and related natural resource concerns on their property. A variety of practices are supported, including erosion control, grazing protection, the establishment of permanent covers, and soil quality improvement.

The WHIP program provides cost-share assistance for installation of wildlife habitat enhancement on private lands, including tree planting, prescribed burning, native grass planting, and creating wildlife openings.

Getting started: Register at your local NRCS office. You will need a Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm number; their office is usually located in the same place as the NRCS office. Most farms already have an assigned number, but you may need to have one assigned. You will need to bring a check to sign up for direct deposit and either a lease or a deed for the property.

For more information, you can visit www.al.nrcs.usda.gov or call 334-887-4500 to find your county NRCS office. Or call the ASAN office at 256-751-3925.

EQIP Programs for Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers

Special programs are available for limited resource farmers and ranchers include plastic and organic mulch and drip irrigation (including the installation of a water well if needed), pastured poultry, and woodland grazing for small ruminants. The program can cover 90% of the cost of implementing these practices.

What is a limited resource farm or ranch?

The farm must have gross farm sales of less than \$113,600 in each of the previous two years. The total annual household income must meet specific income criteria based on your county's median household income. Call your county office to find out if you meet the income criteria. (Levels range from around \$19,000 to over \$32,000.)

Contact your local NRCS office for details or to sign up. Having problems signing up for the NRCS' limited resource programs? Please call the ASAN office at 256-751-3925 or the NRCS at 800-342-9893 ext. 4550.



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256-751-3925**

The ASAN Update is published at least twice a year. Please contact us to be added to our mailing list or if you would like to receive the newsletter via email.

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New Marketing Opportunity for Goat, Sheep, and Rabbit Producers in Alabama

A partnership involving the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industry, the Tri-State Rabbit Growers Cooperative, the NRCS RC&D Councils, Auburn, Tuskegee, and Alabama A&M Universities, and a number of other groups is working to develop a new market for goat, sheep and rabbit producers. The Alabama Agricultural A+ Marketing Cooperative, currently being formed, will work with a private company that is opening a new multi-species processing plant in Eva, Alabama. The cooperative will act as a broker for the producers, purchasing animals at market price and marketing the finished product to new outlets around the country. Members can also receive dividends from the cooperative's sales.

The cooperative's first step will be to organize three associations for sheep, rabbit, and goat producers in the state. Each association will elect three representatives to serve on the cooperative's board of directors. Producers will also organize within four geographic regions to coordinate transportation and group purchases. Organizers are excited to open up new market opportunities to producers in Alabama with this project.

If you are interested in selling through the cooperative, please contact J.C. Holt for more information at 256-446-5210.