



**Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network**  
**[www.asanonline.org](http://www.asanonline.org)**

Thank you for your interest in the Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network's Farmer-to-Farmer program. Please read this letter before filling out the attached application.

ASAN's Farmer-to-Farmer program was created to provide more on-farm educational opportunities for beginning farmers and for farmers and ranchers that are considering an alternative method of production or marketing. We will provide participants with access to farmers and ranchers experienced in sustainable production techniques, alternative marketing methods, and whole farm planning. We hope to provide you with specific ideas on getting started and access to the tools you will need to get started. For selected participants, we can contribute some supplies to help get your new project underway. We will also keep you informed and encourage you to attend the many educational events happening around the state.

This project is in collaboration with Heifer International, a non-profit organization that works to help small farmers create successful enterprises. One of Heifer's signature program features is the pass-on loan, which provides you as a program participant with some form of assistance, including training or equipment and supplies. In turn, you agree to pass this gift on to others. This pass-on could be to host or assist with a training event, mentor a beginning farmer, or give another farmer a gift of the supplies that you received. For example, if you receive a loan of 300 chicks to start raising chickens, you will be expected to give another farmer 300 chicks within two years. By encouraging you to become part of the process of sharing knowledge and capital, we hope that we can extend the benefits of the program to other farmers and communities.

If you have any further questions, or if you would be interested in finding out about our other ASAN events and opportunities, please visit our website at [www.asanonline.org](http://www.asanonline.org), or contact me at 256-751-3925 or [info@asanonline.org](mailto:info@asanonline.org). We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Karen Wynne  
Farmer-to-Farmer Program Coordinator

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256-751-3925

## **WHAT IS THE FARMER-TO-FARMER PROGRAM?**

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 and develop value-added products. Often they market directly through farmers markets, farm shares or community-supported agriculture, and to restaurants and grocery stores. They help participants develop business plans, evaluate marketing options, and provide technical assistance in production methods.

### **Our Goal**

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 more teachers within Alabama's rural communities.

## **HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?**

### **One-on-One Training**

Participants will have the opportunity to receive on-farm visits by experienced local farmers. We try to link participants with nearby farmers and ranchers that have similar production and marketing methods. Participants can discuss their overall plans or specific management issues and come up with solutions that are tailored to their own farm.

### **Business Planning**

Participants will also receive assistance in developing a farm business plan, which can be used within the business to identify goals and evaluate progress or for purposes such as loan applications.

### **The Pass-On**

After receiving sufficient training, some participants will also be eligible to receive a pass-on loan including some supplies and honeybees, chicks, or seeds and seedlings, plus continued mentor support. Within two years, participants agree to pass on their training and gifts to another producer. In this way, the initial pass-on is spread throughout the community.

### **Workshops and Conferences**

Participants will also be kept up to date on the many workshops and conferences happening around the state. Some of our workshops are designed specifically for the Farmer-to-Farmer program, but there are many other educational opportunities. The program can also cover some travel costs.

*This program is sponsored with funding from Heifer International and the USDA 2501 Program in a partnership with Alabama A&M University.*

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