

## January 2015 Conference

### 2015 CONFERENCE MENU

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## Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms conference

January 14-17, 2015 • Mobile, Alabama

We're heading to the coast again this winter for Southern SAWG's **Practical Tools and Solutions for Sustaining Family Farms conference!** This popular event draws over 1,000 farmers and local food advocates from across the nation. With our outstanding "field-tested" presenters and full slate of hot-topic conference sessions, pre-conference courses and field trips, you won't want to be left out in the cold this January! Join us in Mobile! And if you bring a friend, you can share info and get even more out of the event!



[Click here to read the stories of first-time SSAWG conference attendees.](#)

We have programming for those with years of experience and for those who are new to the field. You'll get cutting edge lessons in:

- Sustainable and organic crop production, in fields and in high tunnels
- Grazing and holistic livestock management
- Direct and cooperative marketing
- Farm and food policy
- Farm enterprise and business management
- Farm to School
- Food Hubs
- Beginning Farming
- Local food systems
- And much more



Come for the practical information and go home with so much more. While **over 90% of past attendees reported they learned something they would use immediately, even higher numbers say meeting so many folks doing so many great things around the South was a highlight.**



*"Way beyond my expectations...the amount of information I came away with was voluminous, but more importantly, I met so many great contacts with way more experience than me and that is worth more than I can even comprehend."*  
— James Chris Fields, Bunny Goat Farm (AL)



*"It is a 'must attend' for us."*  
— Alison Wiediger, Au Naturel Farm (KY)



*"... met people that would and have changed my life for the better, found information that we needed and some that I didn't know we needed."*  
— Althea Raiford, Gillard Farms (SC)



*"Honestly, it's hard to imagine our success without SAWG."*  
— Cody Hopkins, Falling Sky Farm (AR)



*"My first SSAWG was a really great way to meet amazing farmers."*  
— Amanda Edwards, EAT South (AL)



*"Had an absolute blast! As a beginning farmer and first time SSAWG conference goer the information was invaluable."*  
— Bruce Roberts (TN)



*"Thanks for all the great work organizing such an informative and exceptional gathering!"*  
— Alice Varon, Certified Naturally Grown (NY)



*"This conference was like going to the super bowl in terms of information and practices that fit small farmers."*  
— Andrew Williams, The United Christian Community Association, Retired NRCS (AL)



*"We just love the honesty and information from presenters who are putting it into practice, not just feeding us book knowledge."*

— Anonymous 2014 conference participant



*"I tell anyone that's farming or interested in farming that if they only attend one conference a year, it should be the SSAWG conference."*

— Karen Wynne, Rosita's Farm and Soil Consultant (AL)



*"So numerous are the sessions and workshops I wish to attend that I fear I may never sleep whilst in Mobile."*

— Sara McIntyre, Crabtree Farms (TN)



*"Well worth the investment!"*

— Anonymous 2014 conference participant



*"SSAWG is quickly becoming my favorite conference to attend."*

— Mary Stein, Associate-Director of National Farm to School Network



*"Much of what we do on our farm, and even what enabled our move to farming, was seen and heard through SSAWG field trips, workshops and sessions."*

— Richard Moyer, Moyer Family Farm (VA)

This conference is an absolute must-attend event for those serious about sustainable and organic farming and creating more vibrant community food systems!

So head to the coast this winter!

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## 2015 Conference Program

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## 2015 Conference Program

Our conference program is, as always, loaded with practical information tailored for those producing organic and sustainable food on a commercial scale and for those in our region working to improve local food systems.

We'll have two full days of pre-conference activities starting Wednesday morning, including an excellent variety of short courses, mini courses and field trips.

**New this year**, on Thursday evening we're having an *opening mixer with live music!* We'll also have our Seed Swap, will show *Terra Firma*, a very important farming film, and there will be a Farm 2 School networking gathering.

Then the two full days of general conference activities start Friday morning and will include educational sessions, networking sessions, posters and a trade show. It will conclude with the big Taste of Alabama banquet dinner Saturday evening, which is included in the general conference registration fee. Also new this year, the Tales From the South Radio Show will produce an evening of farmers' tales Saturday evening!

Check out the incredible pre-conference and general conference offerings below. [Click here to learn more about our great line-up of presenters.](#)

**We highly recommend you bring a partner so you can split up and get the most from this program!**



## PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES



[Click here to read the stories of first-time SSAWG conference attendees.](#)

Wednesday, January 14, 2015 and Thursday, January 15, 2015



[Click to download the conference at a glance.](#)

## Intensive Short Courses

Wednesday, January 14, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

*through*

Thursday, January 15, 2015

8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

While our general conference offers a wide variety of 90-minute sessions that allow participants to gain valuable information about many different things, these pre-conference short courses are different. These short courses are high-value learning experiences that provide you *comprehensive*, and *in-depth* information on the topic most important to you right now.

These short courses are 1½ days of intensive instruction from some of the best experts in our field. They base instruction on their own practical experience and on lessons they have learned over the years from studying and collaborating with others around the region.

In addition to excellent classroom instruction, participants will get a collection of useful take-home materials that they can use for continued learning and to share.

You must register to participate in the Short Courses. Pre-registration is strongly recommended, as space is limited.

Sign up for one of these excellent Short Courses now:

Short Course #1

### **Start-Up Organic Vegetable Production and Marketing**

*Instructors: Cathy Jones, Perry-winkle Farm (NC) and Daniel Parson, Oxford College Farm (GA)*

Short Course #2

### **High Tunnel Production and Marketing**

*Instructors: Alison and Paul Wiediger, Au Naturel Farm (KY)*

Short Course #3

### **Growing Farm Profits by Managing for Profit**

*Instructor: Ellen Polishuk, Potomac Vegetable Farm (VA) and Jim Munsch, Deer Run Farm (WI).*

Short Course #4

### **Farm to School 101: Building a Strong Foundation**

*Instructors: Andrew Smiley, Sustainable Food Center (TX); Mary Stein, National Farm to School Network (MT); and Andrew Carberry, Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute (AR).*

Short Course #5

### **Food Policy Councils: Building the Southeast Region's Food Policy Capacity**

*Instructors: Anne Palmer and Mark Winne, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future; Christy Shi, North Carolina State University.*

[Click here to learn more about these Short Courses.](#)

## Mini Courses

Thursday, January 15, 2015

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

If you want to boost your knowledge in a specific topic of interest, our Mini Courses are for you. These ½ day courses give participants an opportunity to spend an afternoon learning what the experts know and how they do it. You'll go home ready to get started or to make improvements right away. This year we are offering Mini Courses on these four hot topics.

You must register to participate in the Mini Courses. Pre-registration is strongly recommended, as space is limited.

*Please note that these mini courses are being offered at the same time as the field trips.*

Mini Course #1

**Making Your Market Farm Work for You**

*Instructor: Chris Blanchard, Flying Rutabaga Works (IA).*

Mini Course #2

**Adding Fruit to Your Southern Market Farm**

*Instructors: Mark Cain, Dripping Springs Gardens (AR); Paul Davidson, EquiTerra Farm (LA); Elena Garcia, University of Arkansas (AR); Elina Coneva, Auburn University (AL); and Eric Stafne, MSU Coastal Research & Extension Center (MS).*

Mini Course #3

**Getting Started in Natural Beekeeping**

*Instructor: Warren Hoag, Hoag Family Farm (LA).*

Mini Course #4

**Disease Management for Vegetables: Making Better Use of Sustainable Management Practices and Disease Resistant Varieties**

*Instructors: Joe Kemble, Auburn University (AL); Michael Mazourek, Cornell University (NY); and Edmund Frost, Twin Oaks Seed Farm (VA).*

Mini Course #5

**Strategic Planning for Effective Community Organizing**

*Instructors: Leroy Johnson and Michael Sayer, Southern Echo (MS).*

[Click here to learn more about these mini courses.](#)

## Field Trips

Thursday, January 15, 2015

12:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

For those who learn best by seeing other farms, ranches and gardens, we offer four excellent field trips this year.

Field trip participants will travel on comfortable motor coaches equipped with restrooms (no private vehicles permitted). All field trip motor coaches will depart from outside the front entrance of the Mobile Convention Center at 12:30 p.m. sharp! No refunds will be provided to those who miss their ride. The field trip registration fee includes a light snack.

Space is limited, so register early. Pre-registration is strongly recommended.

*Please note that these Field Trips are being offered at the same time as the Mini Courses.*

The four field trips we are offering this year are:

Field Trip #1

**New Farmers Getting it Done!**

*Hosts: Justin Taylor, Bee Natural Farm*

*Will Mastin and Karl Brantley, Local Appetite Growers, LLC.*

Field Trip #2

**Vegetable, CSA, Agri-tourism Farm**

*Host: Jimmy and D'Lee Reeves, Seasons in the Sun*

Field Trip #3

**Livestock, Vegetable, Teaching Farm**

*Host: Roger Elliot and family, Green Cedars Farm*

Field Trip #4

**Community Garden and School Aquaculture Program**

*Hosts: Tarrant Lanier, Victory Teaching Farm*

*Julian Stewart, Alma Bryant High School*

[Click here to learn more about these Field Trips.](#)

## Special Activities

Opening Mixer with Live Music

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**

**5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

Come on over to the convention center Thursday for happy hour. Meet up with your buddies and make new connections. We'll have a cash bar set up so you can wet your whistle, and the famous Excelsior Band will be performing. Excelsior is a brass band that performs a variety of music styles, including Dixieland, jazz, blues and pop. Plus, they are *always* the stars in Mobile's Mardi Gras parades. Excelsior Band was a 2012 Inductee to the Gulf Coast Ethnic & Heritage Jazz Festival Hall of Fame and they received the 2013 Alabama Folk Heritage Award. Join the fun!

Seed Swap

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**

**5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

We'll provide space and envelopes for those who wish to swap seeds. This will be a good opportunity to meet seed savers and learn about varieties dear to their hearts. Don't forget to bring your seeds! Bring photos and samples too if you can.

Farming Film

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**

**6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.**

*Terra Firma: A Film about Women, War and Healing* is a very moving film that weaves together the stories of three women veterans who have found ways to heal the hidden wounds of war through farming. The film follows the women as they go about their daily lives, reflecting on their time spent in the military, the impact of war on their lives and their newfound peace of mind, finding that organic and sustainable farming gives them purpose and a new way to serve their country by growing food for their communities. Terra Firma is not another 'messed up vets' movie. It is a sensitive, intimate look at three intelligent, charismatic and strong women who have moved beyond their struggles and taken control of their lives through their own strength and determination.

Farm to School Network Meeting

**Thursday, January 15, 2015**

**7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.**

If you are working on farm to school activities, join us for an insider's discussion. This is a chance to meet your peers and learn about other farm to school projects and resources in our region. There will be representatives from the USDA Farm to School Program, the National Farm to School Network, and

state and regional leaders.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE BEGINS

Friday, January 16, 2015 and Saturday, January 17, 2015

The General Conference, with a wide variety of program offerings and over 90 expert presenters, gives you the opportunity to learn so *much*! We have sessions for those with years of experience and for those who are new to the field. The session topics include organic and sustainable vegetable, livestock and specialty crop production, unique marketing strategies, business and finance management, farm to school, community food systems work, federal farm programs, beginning farming, agriculture policy developments and more. The line-up includes a whopping 56 educational sessions, plus a state networking session for each of the 13 states in our region, along with 15 information exchange sessions where you get to exchange ideas and information with those who share your interests. Also built into the general conference schedule is a Trade Show, Research Posters, Taste of Alabama Dinner and an evening with the Tales From The South radio program!

### Friday, January 16, 2015

Trade Show and Poster Display Open  
8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Welcome Session  
8:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.

Welcome to Alabama, y'all! While we come from different states and have differing roles in the food and farming system, we are here to share knowledge and to grow the movement. In this session, we'll gather together to greet one another and kick off our two-day general conference. Come to celebrate of our collective wealth and connections.

Concurrent General Conference Sessions  
Friday, 9:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

**Our Story: 50 Years of Market Farming and the Best Is Yet to Come** – Hiu Newcomb began farming with her husband Tony on rented property in northern Virginia in the early 1960s. As they bought property, they expanded the farm and changed from conventional methods to organic. When Tony died, Hiu had to develop new farm partnerships. She also raised four children who helped on the farm and trained many others as sustainable market farmers. Today Potomac Vegetable Farms produces a wide variety of horticultural crops "ecogonically" and sells through multiple markets, including a 550-member CSA. Hear some of the wisdom Hiu has gained, and why she is optimistic about the upcoming generation. *Hiu Newcomb, Potomac Vegetable Farms (VA)*.

**Saving Labor (Saving Money!) on the Market Farm** – Market farming is all about moving stuff around, whether you're moving vegetables from the field to the packing house, water from the well to your transplants, or seeds from packets to the soil. We'll explore efficient systems and practical tools used by successful market farms for seeding crops in the field and greenhouses, transplanting sets, pruning and greenhouse crop maintenance, weeding, harvesting, post-harvest handling, materials handling, and record-keeping. *Chris Blanchard, Flying Rutabaga Works (IA)*.

**Producing and Using Biodynamic Compost on Your Farm** – Want to make your own compost on-farm, or learn how to use compost more effectively? Long-time composter Mike Smith will share lessons on making biodynamic compost using available materials, and discuss the equipment and management needed. He'll also discuss practical tips for using compost, such as how to figure application rates while adjusting for differing soil types, crops and conditions. *Mike Smith, Longwood Plantation (GA)*.

**Diversify Your Vegetable Crops** – Attract new customers and keep your regulars coming back by diversifying your vegetable selection. Unusual vegetables can make a more interesting farmers market display and capture the attention of high end chefs. They can also freshen up a CSA box, keeping shareholders curious for more. David Pitre of Tecolote Farm will discuss organic production practices for some of his favorite specialty crops, including many Middle Eastern, Italian, and other Old World vegetables. He will share tips from 25 years of growing for his own CSA farm and for restaurants in Texas and California. *David Pitre, Tecolote Farm (TX)*.

**Heritage Pork: Producing and Marketing to a Growing Niche Market** – Chefs and retailers are increasingly looking for the unique flavors provided by heritage breeds of pork. In this session, producers Charlotte & Wes Swancy will discuss some of the breeds available along with pastured production practices. Chef and researcher Bob Perry will provide yield data to help you create a profitable enterprise. He'll also help you understand market needs for the traditional American style pork and the Euro charcuterie style. *Bob Perry, University of Kentucky (KY) and Charlotte & Wes Swancy, Riverview Farm (GA)*.

**Doing it on the Fly: Creative Usages of Electronic Devices on the Farm** – From pest identification to sales transactions, from monitoring greenhouses to engaging customers, from accessing technical information to keeping crop records; smart phones, tablets and other electronic devices are revolutionizing farming. Learn about some tools and apps that farmers are using along with strategies for taking better advantage of this technology. *Josh Hardin, Laughingstock Farm (AR)*.

**How Farm to School Programs Can Add Value to Your Farm Business** – Are you interested in selling to school food markets but not sure what it takes? This session will help you understand how farm to school (F2S) programs operate, and what it takes for farmers to find local schools, build relationships, and start selling your products. We'll include information about the benefits and challenges for farmers who participate in F2S, using examples from Mississippi and Arkansas. *Darnella B. Winston, B&B Farms (MS); Daniel Teague, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives (MS); and Andrew Carberry, Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute (AR)*.

**Inside Food & Farm Politics in DC: Keeping Track of What Really Matters** – The Farm Bill has passed, however there is still important legislation being considered that could have a significant impact on the sustainable food and agriculture community. Join our policy experts as they help us determine what upcoming legislation needs our immediate attention, and hear their strategies for important policy change. *Sarah Hackney, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (DC) and James Robinson, RAFI-USA (NC)*.

## Information Exchange

Friday, 10:45 a.m. – Noon

*These facilitated group discussions provide you the opportunity to exchange ideas and information with your peers from around the region. Come prepared to ask and answer questions, share your experiences and listen to others.*

**Organizations Working Together on Justice and Equity in Food Systems** – How can we build better collaborations among the organizations working on sustainable agriculture and community food systems in the South? How can we broaden our systems level thinking and our collective impact? What kinds of activities are needed between us? What is the role for Southern SAWG?

**Raising Goats for Meat and Dairy: Problem Solving** – What are your biggest challenges — fencing, predator controls, health management, processing, marketing, others? Compare practices with others. Share your solutions, tips and innovations.

**Beef Production in Pasture-Based Systems: Problem Solving** – What are your biggest challenges — pasture and forage management, holistic health care, fencing, processing, marketing, others? Compare

practices. Share your solutions, tips and innovations.

**Sustainable Tree Fruit Production in the South** – What kinds of tree fruits and which varieties have the best disease and pest resistance for our region? What are some of the best practices for better production? Share your solutions and innovations.

**Solutions for Common High Tunnel Problems** – Join long-time producers for a discussion of some common issues encountered in high tunnel production. Come ready to discuss challenges like fertility management and heat regulation, and share solutions.

**Tools and Innovations for Small and Mid-Scale Farms** – Farmers have always been inventors. Share your experience with tools and innovations that you or others have created. Learn about ways (like Farm Hack) to exchange ideas with others after you leave the conference.

**Managing Laborers** – Do you struggle with finding reliable labor or getting the most for your labor dollars? Discuss challenges and solutions with others. Share your strategies and tips for solving the labor puzzle on small and mid-scale farms.

**Funding New Farms** – How can new and beginning farmers access funds for equipment, land and operating capital? Loans? Credit cards? Selling shares? Off-farm jobs? Bootstrapping it one penny at a time? Discuss the challenges of funding and share your lessons learned.

**Marketing at Farmers Markets** – How do you sell yourself and sell your products at the farmers market? What are innovative marketing ideas? Discuss your challenges and share tips for better sales.

**Using EBT, "Double Coupon" and Other Programs at Farmers Markets** – Does your market employ the EBT, FMNP, Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (FINIP) or WIC programs? Do you have a double coupon incentive program for SNAP, WIC or SFNMP? Discuss technology issues and share best practices for implementing these programs at markets.

**Building Support and Partnerships for Farm to School Programs** – How can you develop and nurture partnerships to support your program? How can you tap into services like FoodCorps and AmeriCorps? What are the challenges of working with partners and volunteers? Share tips and lessons for others.

**Building a Food Hub Support Network** – Learn who in our region is working on food hub development and food hub assistance. Share contacts and resources, and discuss how we can work collaboratively in the future.

**Military Veterans Entering Farming** – Connect with other veterans. Discuss your unique challenges, and share contacts and resources.

**Resilience On Farms and in Our Systems** – This session will be conducted as a focus group. Staff from the Resilience Project will present a model of ecological resilience and facilitate a discussion on how to make farms and other aspects of our food system more sustainable given recent discoveries in ecology, systems research and practical farming. Come ready to react to their model and discuss your experience. Information from this session will be captured for a study funded by Southern SARE.

**Lunch On Your Own**  
Noon – 1:30 p.m.

**Concurrent General Conference Sessions**  
Friday, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**Our Story: The Renaissance of the Diversified Family Farm** – The Randle family has been farming for nearly 40 years in eastern Alabama. They raise sheep, rabbits, chickens, turkeys and pigs, as well as a wide variety of fruit and vegetables, and sell through an on-farm store, CSA, and to area restaurants and markets. While not certified organic, they employ a multitude of sustainable practices, including management-intensive grazing, cover cropping, crop rotations, use of compost and straw mulch, drip

irrigation, and trap crops for pest control. Learn how two generations of family members manage such a diverse operation and hear some lessons they've learned. *Franklin & Anne Randle, Randle Farms (AL)*.

**Ten Things to Think About When Starting a Market Farm** – Getting started in market farming means more than just growing vegetables. It means taking on the responsibilities of owning a business, managing markets, grappling with philosophies, and managing a labor force. Join Chris Blanchard, who has over 20 years experience in managing and owning a market farm, for a look at ten things to think about as you prepare the ground for starting your farm, or as you seek to expand your market farm into a significant income-generator for yourself and your family. *Chris Blanchard, Flying Rutabaga Works (IA)*.

**Sustainable Production of Brambles for Southern Farms** – Learn successful strategies for growing blackberries and raspberries from experienced growers and researchers. This session will provide information on choosing varieties, planting, pruning, fertility needs, pest and disease controls, and other production issues. Growers and experienced fruit specialists will also discuss best practices for harvesting and post-harvest handling for direct markets. *Elena Garcia, University of Arkansas (AR); Donn Johnson, University of Arkansas (AR); and Butch & Beth Eggers, Wye Mountain Farm (AR)*.

**Identification and Better Management of Plant Nutrient Disorders** – Are you seeing spots on your vegetable plants and don't know why? Is it disease or insect or nutrient-related? Joe Kemble, a vegetable extension specialist with 20 years of experience working with small-scale and sustainable farmers, will help you identify plant nutrient disorders and discuss management practices to reduce your plant losses. *Joe Kemble, Auburn University (AL)*.

**Use of Plastic and Other Mulch Materials for Organic Vegetable Production** – Learn some of the best practices for using plastic mulch and ground fabric in organic production. Two growers who have extensive experience will point out the benefits and challenges of using plastic and provide tips for how to use it wisely, including ways to increase benefits for plants and soil. They will also discuss ways to cut costs and reduce waste. *Ken Dawson, Maple Spring Gardens (NC) and Clif Slade, Slade Farms (VA)*.

**Pricing and Profits for Livestock Farmers** – You may think you're getting a good price for your livestock products, but are you really making money? Learn how to determine the right price to charge for your products, which products are profitable, and which products to keep. A panel of long-time livestock producers will also discuss which species are best for your situation and which markets make sense based on the market demands of retailers, aggregators and distributors. *Will Harris, White Oak Pastures (GA); Mac Stone, Elmwood Stock Farm (KY); and Preston Correll and John-Mark Hack, Marksbury Farm (KY)*.

**Financing Food Hubs (and Other Healthy Food Enterprises)** – Need capital? Where do you turn? There are many sources of financing for food hubs — including grants, loans, investors and other creative financing options. In this session, we'll discuss some of the options available, and key considerations in choosing the right option based on the type of business and stage of development. The discussion will include financing available for start-ups vs. more mature businesses, and nonprofits vs. for profits. *Malini Ram Moraghan, Wholesome Wave (IL); Dafina Williams, Opportunity Finance Network (PA); and Jim Barham, USDA Rural Development (DC)*.

**School Gardens: Providing Effective Student Education** – School gardens are powerful places for teaching students about healthy foods. They can also help schools achieve goals like increasing academic performance and improving social behavior. Hear how the Shelby County Schools have implemented gardens in over 50 schools across the city of Memphis. They will discuss their funding, staffing, partnerships, curricula, and other aspects of their program. You'll also hear how the Sustainable Food Center in Austin equips school staff, parents and community members with leadership skills to plan, start and sustain garden projects. *Lauren Bangasser, Ben Townsend and Stephan Leonard, Shelby County Schools (TN); and Andrew Smiley, Sustainable Food Center (TX)*.

## Concurrent General Conference Sessions Friday, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Essential Tools and Machinery for Small Farms and Market Growers** – Having the appropriate tools when you need them can often be a game-changer on the farm. Join veteran farmers as they walk through the process of piecing together the tools and machinery needed for a viable small farm operation

that produces a variety of horticultural crops. Hear tips on whether to purchase equipment new or used. Equipment highlighted will range from tillage, planting, and weed control to harvest and post-harvest handling. *David Pitre, Tecolote Farm (TX) and Daniel Parson, Oxford College Farm (GA).*

**Organic Soil Management for High Tunnels** – Growing in a controlled environment reduces some production problems while adding new ones. In this session, we will review the unique challenges of building soil organically in high tunnels in contrast to working in open fields. Management techniques for increasing microbial activity in fixed tunnels and moveable tunnels will be discussed. Topics will include year-round crop rotations, cover cropping, conservation tillage, and use of soil amendments. *Krista Jacobsen, University of Kentucky (KY).*

**Add Cut Flowers to Increase Your Farm's Diversity... and Your Income!** – Are you already producing vegetables for local markets? Do what many market farmers have done — add cut flowers to the mix. Learn about "must grow" varieties, seed sources, succession planting, harvest and post-harvest handling, crop rotation, and fertility needs from an experienced organic grower. She'll also help you decide if cut flowers are right for you by discussing the ways they fit with vegetable production and the complexities they create. *Cathy Jones, Perry-winkle Farm (NC).*

**Choosing Your Markets Wisely** – Trying to decide which markets are right for you, and reluctant to try them all by trial and error? Then this workshop is for you. It will give you key factors to consider in marketing direct to consumers through farmers markets, CSAs, on-farm markets and internet marketing, as well as sales to local restaurants and grocers. It will also provide questions for you to consider about your farm and yourself as you try to find marketing channels that are right for you. *Lynn Pugh, Cane Creek Farm (GA).*

**Sustainable Poultry Breeding and Production** – Want to join the producers who are breeding, incubating and raising heritage birds for eggs or meat? This session will give you a primer on raising heirloom Standard-bred poultry, including a discussion on breeds, pastured production, feed, disease control, profitability, and more. With over 30 years of experience in the poultry world, Jim Adkins will also get you thinking about ways for increasing sustainability in the overall production of poultry and eggs. *Jim Adkins, Sustainable Poultry Network (NC).*

**Farmers Cooperatives: Getting Good Work Done** – Despite the failings of some farmers' cooperatives across the country, cooperation is still needed in our movement and grassroots cooperatives can still be powerful structures for getting good work done. Hear about some of the successes and challenges of cooperatives in the South, and lessons for engaging cooperatively with other farmers. Learn tips for keeping farmers engaged and for operating a cooperative sustainably. *Frank Taylor, Winston County Self Help Cooperative (MS) and Myra Bryant, Mississippi Association of Cooperatives (MS).*

**Funding for Farm to School Projects** – With the explosion of the Farm to School movement, there are more funding sources than ever, but also more competition for those funds. Get thinking about strategies for funding your project. A USDA Farm to School Program representative will discuss new sources of funding from the USDA and eligibility requirements. Others will discuss innovative ideas to fund projects from non-federal sources and how to "sell" your work to people with purse strings. *Samantha Benjamin-Kirk, USDA Farm to School (GA); Pam Kingfisher, Southern SAWG (OK); and Sunny Young, Mississippi Farm to School Network (MS).*

**Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA): What Now?** – Many people still have concerns about how the new FSMA regulations will be implemented. Will they be fair for small-scale and sustainable farms or only tilt the balance further in favor of corporate food and ag? Join our panelists as they review where we are now in the regulatory and implementation process, how we got here, and what action needs to happen next for the good of sustainable farming. *Sarah Hackney, National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition (DC); Roland McReynolds, Carolina Farm Stewardship (NC); and Marty Mesh, Florida Organic Growers (FL).*

## State Networking Sessions Friday, 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Gather with those working for sustainable agriculture and community food systems in your state to learn what's happening, how you can benefit, how you can be involved and how you can make a difference. We'll provide a room and a facilitator for each of the 13 Southern states. You make the discussion useful.

## SATURDAY, JANUARY 17, 2015

### Trade Show and Poster Display Open

8:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

### Concurrent General Conference Sessions

Saturday, 8:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

#### **Our Story: A Return to Sustainable, Humane and Local Turns Out to be Good for Business –**

White Oak Pastures produces artisan products — beef, lamb, poultry, eggs and vegetables — that are healthy, safe, nutritious and delicious. Will Harris, the fourth generation owner/producer has reinstated multispecies rotational grazing over the last 20 years, and built abattoirs to process animals on site. The farm is certified organic, and their products are Certified Humane and Animal Welfare Approved. Hear how Will has created a farm business that now employs 100 people based on his family commitment to animal welfare, environmental sustainability, revitalization of the rural economy, and locally produced food. *Will Harris, White Oak Pastures (GA).*

**Basic Soil Improvement Techniques for Sustainable Farmers –** Healthy soil is the foundation for healthy food, healthy life, and successful farms. Join Ellen Polishuk as she presents an overview of the basic principles of soil health. Drawing on over 30 years of experience farming with organic production methods, she will give you practical suggestions for improving organic matter and nutrients, including a discussion of the role of tillage and compost. Learn to manage your soil with care and proper inputs.

*Ellen Polishuk, Potomac Vegetable Farms (VA).*

**Better Water/Drought Management –** Strategies for capturing and managing water more efficiently on the farm have become critical, especially in times of drought. Steve Upson, an OK horticulture consultant, will address sources of water available for efficient irrigation and how to develop them to meet production requirements. These sources include ground water, ponds and streams, and rainwater harvesting. Organic farmer Tim Miller will provide examples of strategies he has used in 25 years of dryland farming, including rainwater collection systems and farmscaping methods such as terracing, furrow/dikes and trench composting. *Tim Miller, Millberg Farm (TX) and Steve Upson, Noble Foundation (OK).*

**Greenhouse Herb & Transplant Production for Profit –** Boost your income at the beginning of your growing season. Learn how to attract customers to your farmers' market booth and pay for the fuel you used in your greenhouse by producing early season transplants and herbs. Paul & Alison Wiediger, with a combined 75 years of experience in organic farming, will cover the selection of top selling herbs and vegetables, scheduling for market, production techniques from seed, cuttings and plugs as well as marketing tips. *Paul & Alison Wiediger, Au Naturel Farm (KY).*

**Second Generation CSAs: How to Keep Your CSA Alive and Thriving –** Is your CSA struggling to complete with all the other options that consumers have for buying local food? David and Katie of Tecolote Farm near Austin, Texas will share strategies they've used for retaining customers and keeping their CSA model alive for 20 years. They will discuss everything from product mix to pricing to marketing, and give you ideas for keeping your CSA fresh. *David & Katie Kraemer Pitre, Tecolote Farm (TX).*

**The Farmers' Guide to Financing Your Farm –** Learn how crop diversity, crop insurance, and credit work separately and together in managing risk on your farm. RAFI-USA staff members will offer analysis and examples, with an emphasis on farm financing. Participants will come away with the knowledge necessary to improve their credit readiness, an understanding of the different types of agricultural lenders and their products, and be better informed about using borrowed money. Workshop participants will receive free publications from RAFI including *The Farmers' Guide to Agricultural Credit* and free access to RAFI's online platform for risk management tools. *Joe Schroeder, Scott*

*Marlow, and Jean Willoughby, RAFI-USA (NC).*

**Food Hub Lessons: Early Decisions** – Are you starting a regional food hub or assisting others in getting one off the ground? Hear examples of key decisions that some food hubs in our region made as they started out. We'll cover topics such as business structure, financing, management, distribution and markets, and farmer recruitment. This will be a facilitated conversation to help you learn about some of the differing approaches and an opportunity to share lessons with others. *Sara Clow, GrowFood Carolina (SC); Leslie Hossfeld, Feast Down East/Southeastern NC Food Systems (NC); and Jim Barham, USDA Rural Development (DC).*

**Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act 2015: Keep the Farm to School Movement Moving** – Past federal Child Nutrition legislation has been a huge boost to the farm to school movement by establishing the USDA Farm to School Program and providing grant funding for community programs. This is a critical time to make our voices heard as this legislation is up for renewal in 2015. Hear about activities that are engaging constituents in Louisiana and get ideas for how to get you and your community involved. *Mary Stein, National Farm to School Network (DC) and Katie Mularz, Louisiana Farm to School Alliance (LA).*

## Concurrent General Conference Sessions Saturday, 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 noon

**Grow More, Sell More, Make More** – Learn how small farms (rural or urban) can produce crops more intensively and market smarter to maximize profits. Clif Slade will share practical lessons from his "43,560 Initiative," taking the concepts of square foot gardening to a commercial scale. Besides production tips, he will also discuss a four-tier marketing approach that will help you sell all that you grow. *Clif Slade, Slade Farms (VA).*

**Get the Most From Your Cover Crops** – Learn how to use and increase the benefits of cover crops on your farm. An experienced organic farmer will share lessons from his cover crop management — including how he chooses crops for certain rotations and conditions and for the amount of nutrients they provide. He'll also discuss techniques that increase benefits, and how to decide when a cover crop isn't worth the effort. A scientist will discuss nitrogen management — including ways to estimate the amount of nitrogen a crop provides — and provide tips on best cover crops for the Southeast. *Daniel Parson, Oxford College Farm (GA) and Julia Gaskin, University of Georgia (GA).*

**Growing and Marketing Mushrooms** – Understand the best ways to cultivate mushrooms on your farm. You'll learn about inexpensive start-up options for beginners, and many commercial ideas to expand on. Topics will include: life cycle of fungi; mushroom behavior and intuitive growing; choosing, buying, and storing spawn; woodland mushroom farming (logs, wood chips, and composts); indoor production (small and large scale); converting existing structures into grow rooms (barns, chicken houses, storage containers); marketing your mushrooms (trends, demand, strategies); organic pest management; and alternative product development (powders, extracts, composts). *Tradd Cotter, Mushroom Mountain (SC).*

**Basic Livestock Options for Small Producers** – Learn practical, foundational knowledge about raising livestock on a small farm and how to choose a livestock enterprise appropriate for you. This session will cover the basic principles of forage production and healthy soil management that you will need for a grass-based system. Management of health, nutrition, reproduction, and marketing for various livestock will also be discussed. *Clay Wright, Noble Foundation (OK).*

**Why Farmers Markets? Learn to Communicate Their Value to Your Community** – Making the case for farmers markets to farmers, shoppers and community leaders is crucial for continued community support, yet most markets struggle with this task. Learn how to capture and communicate meaningful measures of your market's success. Using exercises and worksheets from the Farmers Market Metrics project, this session will give you practical examples of simple and effective data collection techniques that you can use for your market. *Darlene Wolnik, Helping Public Markets Grow (LA) and Sarah Blacklin, NC Choices (NC).*

**Accessing Federal Farm Programs for Sustainable Farms** – Learn how to select and access new and under-utilized federal farm programs, especially for beginning and transitioning farmers. Experts in USDA programs will be on hand to discuss how to best utilize federal resources. RAFI-USA staff members will also briefly cover alternative enterprise examples from innovative NC farms and provide

access to further resources. Workshop participants will receive free publications from RAFI including *The Farmers' Guide to the Development of New Farm Enterprises* and free access to RAFI's online platform for risk management tools. *Joe Schroeder, Scott Marlow, and Jean Willoughby, RAFI-USA (NC).*

**Youth Mentoring, Youth Leadership** – Learn how you can get young people involved in Farm to School programs and other healthy food and farming initiatives. Leaders and youth from programs in our region will discuss ways to engage young people in our movement and develop leadership skills among the next generation. *Felicia Bell, RD & S Farm (MS) and Emily English, Arkansas Children's Hospital Research Institute (AR).*

**Planting Seeds: Engaging Farmers in Grassroots Advocacy** – Are you a concerned farmer who would like to engage in policy but simply do not have the time? Or a food advocate who wants to engage farmers but just doesn't know how to fit into their busy schedules? This session will help you create, plan and execute a grassroots strategy that successfully engages farmers. Learn tips from those who have managed successful campaigns as well as from farmers who have been involved. *Judith McGeary, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (TX); Frank Taylor, Winston County Self Help Cooperative (MS); Sophie Ackoff, National Young Farmers Coalition (NY); and Gabriela Lane, Southern SAWG Policy Working Group (AR).*

**Lunch On Your Own**  
Noon – 1:30 p.m.

**Concurrent General Conference Sessions**  
Saturday, 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

**High Tunnel Cropping and Management for Profitability** – Want to get the maximum value from your high tunnels? Join long-time organic farmer Mark Cain for a discussion of how he uses two high tunnels and two smaller hoopouses on his farm to extend his growing season, diversify his production, and increase income. He will share information on which vegetable and flower crops he grows under cover, and why. He'll also discuss production issues such as timing of crops, disease and weed management, and maintaining fertility. *Mark Cain, Dripping Springs Garden (AR).*

**Integrated Soil Nutrient Management from an Agroecology Perspective** – Learn how to plan for more effective soil management in an organic system. This presentation will cover integrated nutrient management from a systems perspective, discussing the role of several management techniques such as rotations, diversification, cover cropping, conservation tillage, and use of soil amendments. We will examine how they affect soil quality, nutrient cycling, plant productivity and the economic viability of small and mid-scale market farms. *Krista Jacobsen, University of Kentucky (KY).*

**Is Your Gut Instinct Costing You Money?** – The most successful farmers don't rely on gut alone to make farm decisions. They keep records that provide the sometimes shocking, hard facts. Hear how one farmer improved her farm profits after she began tracking key data. Learn the changes she made – big and little. Find out what records she keeps and how she uses them. Hear the stories behind the decisions she made about particular horticultural crops and direct markets (farmers markets, farm stands, CSA). This will be an open dialogue where other experienced growers will ask questions and discuss the dirty details of managing a farm with profits in mind. *Ellen Polishuk, Potomac Vegetable Farms (VA).*

**Chefs and Farmers Working Together** – Chefs and farmers are both key drivers in the local food movement, yet they don't always see themselves as partners. In this session, we'll discuss how they can work together more effectively to create and promote top-quality local cuisine, benefitting their own businesses in the process. Hear from chefs who work closely with local farmers as they discuss critical issues and tips for more successful relationships. *Bob Perry, University of Kentucky (KY); Stephen Juliusburger, Syntuitive (FL); and another chef TBD.*

**Improving Livestock Productivity and Pastures with Controlled Grazing Management, Part 1** – A long-time livestock grazer and veterinarian will present a systems approach to improving both pastures and livestock productivity, emphasizing the connections between them. In part 1 she will discuss the assessment of natural resources (including soil fertility, pasture composition and condition) and how

management of those resources impact livestock health and productivity. She will focus on the science plus practical approaches to grazing management using experience from her own farm. *Ann Wells, Ozark Pasture Beef (AR)*.

**Beginning Farming: Gaining the Expertise and Support for Success** – If you're going to make it in market farming, you need a hundred different skills and a community of people to call on. So how can you gain the expertise you need to get started and develop a support system for continued success? In this session farmers and staff from farm support organizations will discuss mentoring programs, apprenticeships, USDA programs and other ways to gain expertise. They will also provide tips on how to build relationships with support organizations and fellow farmers, and point you to helpful resources. *Brennan Washington, Phoenix Gardens (GA); Andrea Ness, Little Leaf Farm (GA); and Sophie Ackoff, National Young Farmers Coalition (NY)*.

**Food Hub Lessons: Processing and Marketing Meat** – Marksbury Farm Market is a small-scale, privately owned slaughterhouse and packaging facility, as well as a retail market. They sell grass-fed beef, pastured pork, poultry and lamb sourced from over 40 local farmers. Currently, Marksbury distributes their products (with their own small fleet) to restaurants, grocery stores, and institutional markets. In this session, they will discuss the unique issues facing food processing firms that market livestock products, and provide lessons for others. There will be plenty of time for questions and group discussion. *John-Mark Hack and Preston Correll, Marksbury Farm Market (KY)*.

**Growing Farm to School in Louisiana** – Learn how three projects are creating a new culture of healthy food for youth in Louisiana. This session will highlight farm to school programs from the Edible Schoolyard New Orleans, Greauxing Healthy Baton Rouge, and The Food Initiative Taskforce (FIT) for Kids in Shreveport. Each will discuss successes and challenges, key activities, funding sources, and lessons learned along the way. An overview of the state of F2S in Louisiana will also be presented. *Zach O'Donnell, Edible Schoolyard New Orleans (LA); Carl Motsenbocker, Slow Food Baton Rouge (LA); and Grace Peterson, LSU AgCenter (LA)*.

**Southern SAWG Policy Working Group meeting** – Interested in working for fair food and agriculture policies? Then join this meeting to make recommendations about Southern SAWG policy activities for 2015. The purpose of the policy working group is to increase policy awareness and participation in the southern region by organizing regional grassroots campaigns; advocating for selected legislative issues; providing educational support by connecting policy to programs; and serving as an advocate and liaison for the southern food policy community in national organizations. All are welcome. *Facilitated by Gabriela Lane, Southern SAWG (AR)*.

## Concurrent General Conference Sessions Saturday, 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

**Why Farms Fail: What You Can Learn From Failing Farms** – As farmers make decisions, especially when things get difficult, some choices have a greater impact on staying in business than others (like farming on credit cards or canceling your health insurance). These can turn out to be fatal decisions for your farm. Hear from someone whose organization works with 100 farms per year that are facing bankruptcy. He will provide a score card of farm economic sustainability with a list of warning signs that indicate when things are not headed in a good direction and need attention. *Scott Marlow, RAFI-USA (NC)*.

**Using Mushrooms for Recycling, Composting and Remediation of Farm Waste** – Got waste? Worried about contaminated soil or water? Rechannel your waste stream to grow edible mushrooms and create organic worm compost as the end product. Many species of mushrooms are well adapted to destroy pathogenic bacteria that accompany failing septic systems or manure holding ponds. Learn how to develop a living barrier or filtration system that is customized to fit your needs. This talk will provide specific steps for easy mycoremediation projects that anyone can do. *Tradd Cotter, Mushroom Mountain (SC)*.

**Insect Pest Identification and Management for High Tunnels** – Learn how to identify some of the major insect pests found in high tunnel vegetable production and develop a strategy for organic pest management. This workshop will help you understand the use of three-tiered integrated pest management (IPM) tactics suitable for high tunnel crop production in high pest pressure situations. The focus will be on the use of physical exclusion methods and proper use of bio-insecticides along with a discussion of insect pest and spider mite identification techniques. *Ayanava Majumdar, Mike McQueen,*

and James Miles, Auburn University (AL).

**Organic Production of Common and Uncommon Summer Greens** – Do you have a hard time producing greens through the summer? Need to add variety to your summer selection for market? An experienced organic grower will share her tips for producing crops like Malabar spinach, New Zealand spinach, Jericho lettuce, arugula, sweet potato leaves, sunflower shoots and other unusual greens in the heat of the season. Learn sustainable production practices, as well as tips on post-harvest handling and profitability. *Lynn Pugh, Cane Creek Farm (GA)*.

**Improving Livestock Productivity and Pastures with Controlled Grazing Management, Part 2** – A long-time livestock grazer and veterinarian will present a systems approach to improving both pastures and livestock productivity, emphasizing the connections between them. In part two she will discuss her approach to the production and marketing of grass-fed beef and lamb. Learn how to evaluate the quality of products and how grazing systems impact that quality. Her presentation will focus on managing all your resources for essentially selling "grass." *Ann Wells, Ozark Pasture Beef (AR)*.

**Farmers Markets as Business Incubators: How Market Managers Can Help Improve Their Vendors' Businesses** – Increasingly competitive market outlets for local food means that the top farmers often jump from market to market. This session will offer practical strategies for market managers and board members on identifying and understanding their anchor vendors and their needs, as well as addressing the challenges of retaining new vendors. *Darlene Wolnik, Helping Public Markets Grow (LA) and Sarah Blacklin, NC Choices (NC)*.

**Become an Advocate for Farm to School Purchasing** – Want to become a more effective advocate for getting schools to buy local food? Then learn to navigate the regulations and language of local procurement. This session will help you understand the processes for local sourcing and regulations that guide local procurement in schools, so you can help school food service personnel overcome perceived barriers to buying local. The presentation will be supplemented with resources from the USDA Farm to School program. *Sunny Young, Mississippi Farm to School Network (MS); Katie Mularz, Louisiana Farm to School Alliance (LA); and Alyssa Herold, Texas Department of Agriculture (TX)*.

**Spreading the Word: Creating a State/Local Policy Campaign** – Creating policy campaigns is not limited to federal legislation. State and local issue-based campaigns are equally as important. So how do you get started? What are the key components in a strong state/local issued based campaign? These experienced policy advocates will discuss their successes and challenges in developing and executing state/local policy campaigns. *Judith McGeary, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance (TX); Rochelle Sparko, Carolina Farm Stewardship (NC); and Gabriela Lane, Southern SAWG Policy Working Group (AR)*.

## **Taste of Alabama Dinner** **Saturday, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

Always a highlight of the weekend, food produced by sustainable and organic farmers in Alabama will be featured at this plated dinner Saturday evening at the close of the conference. Come enjoy the fellowship and good food with your peers. No better way to start off the new season! Each general conference registration includes a ticket for the Taste of Alabama Dinner. (ticket required)

## **Tales From The South** **Saturday, 7:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

During dinner this year we've got something new for you!

Join us Saturday evening for "Tales from the South". This is a public radio program that will be taping talented farmers at our conference reading their own true stories. We'll have tales ranging from hilarious to touching, from everyday occurrences to life-altering experiences. In addition to fascinating farm stories, we'll have live music to entertain you too!

Got an amazing tale to tell? We'd love to hear it! Submit your story for consideration for the show! Those selected for the show will receive a free conference registration. [Click here for submission](#)

[details.](#)

## Conference Concludes

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