

VOICE OF THE FARMER

ORGANIC FOR ALL



Organic for All has developed a participatory, in-depth educational experience for underserved, small-scale farmers and the communities they support.

Our program implementation promotes the indigenous knowledge and voices of farmers by respecting their unique culture and rich historic connections to the land. We assert that the inclusion of all farmers is critical for the growth of organic-agroecology farming practices, with wholistic benefits to our farmlands, environments and food sovereignty systems— all essential elements of the health and wellbeing of our farming communities.

Organic for All offers a range of capacity building programs dedicated to using a systems-approach centered around building community, growing healthy people, and truthfully sustaining our nation's economic equality. This newly implemented training and education project is designed to build capacity within underserved farming communities to increase opportunities for offering a path to organic farming systems and certification.

Voice of the Farmer is our report on **Organic For All** participatory learning sessions to support strengthening capacity with all farmers.



What was planned was a topic on Building Resiliency. Then just before the event, Hurricane Helene hit.

The Wheeler County, Georgia region suffered catastrophic weather that devastated the electrical grid. With No Power. No Internet. And No Water.

Lola's Organic Farm experienced such significant hurricane and tornado damage that we pivoted the Learning Session towards: "building resilience right now!" And our event drew small farmers from across our area.

They came to learn about the resiliency practices that worked for us in organic ecology— addressing the need for care, assistance, and

BUILDING RESILIENCY THROUGH ORGANIC FARMING PRACTICES

dialogues that promoted proactive actions on farmland which experienced severe damage. They learned about resource pathways forward to enable resiliency and long-term farm sustainability. And all our participants were there to talk about what had happened to them on their farm.

Our expert facilitators discussed strategies and partnerships with FEMA on how to remove the debris on our farms.

We then had discussions on how farmers can fill-out the form work for getting into the system to receive any financial assistance they were eligible for from hurricane damage.

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Facilitators included:

Benjamin Sterling, McIntosh S.E.E.D community development and assistance.

Brooks Williams, NRCS Agent. Shared FSA programs that can help during Hurricane disaster.

Jen Rose Silverman from Rodale Institute on organic and the ROC added label to help farm access and sustainability.

De'Anthony Price from the Rodale Institute, on benefits of organic agriculture for farmers and community.

Jerry Larson, Extensionist retired Ft Valley State University, on pruning to promote growth and resilience.

Dr. Mary Sutton and *Jake Price* from the University of Georgia, on growing organic citrus and increase citrus yield.

Ron Gilmore and *Jennifer Taylor* from Lola's Organic Farm, on agroecology-organic farm practices, IFOAM principles of organic agriculture and the benefits that promote wellbeing, resilience, and added value.



The learning session also brought us together to develop a capacity strengthening session that would engage farmers in dialogues, to demonstrate tools for organic regeneration, and resilience that could benefit all sustainable agriculture farmers.

The experts from the Rodale Institute described their ROSP Regenerative Organic Systems Plan, talked about organic methods, intermixing of cropping strategies, combined with various cover crops.

This was supplemented by a farmer-facilitated tour of Lola's Organic Farm to discuss nuances on the farm: What was damaged by the hurricane, what was not, and how what remained were the perennials, with roots deep in the soil.

At the conclusion, we had a meal together, during which the speakers continued their presentation.

Thank you to all who participated!

“Just before the Event, Hurricane Helene Hit!”



ORGANIC FOR ALL



We invite you and your local agricultural community to raise your voices together with us in our quest to create healthy conversations about important agroecology and organic issues that you and your family are experiencing.

For more information, visit our website: www.uacus.com