



Bridging the Gap
FROM Farm TO School



SOUTH CAROLINA
FARM to SCHOOL
SUMMIT



February 21, 2025 | 8:30 AM – 3:00 PM
USC Alumni Center | Columbia, SC

Agenda

Key:



Nutrition Services Track



Schools & Education Track

8:30 – 9:00

Registration, Breakfast, and Farmers Market

9:00 – 9:30

Welcome & Farm to School Q&A Session

› Ellen Weaver, *South Carolina State Superintendent of Education*

9:30 – 10:30

NS Implementing a Harvest of the Month Program in South Carolina Schools

This presentation will guide school districts in creating and implementing a sustainable Harvest of the Month (HOM) Program featuring SC-grown produce. Four organizational partners with extensive HOM experience will share step-by-step strategies for procuring local produce, developing recipes, securing buy-in, marketing, and fostering community partnerships to ensure successful program implementation.

- › Kerrie Hollifield, MS, RDN, SNS, *Diabetes Project Coordinator for MUSC Boeing Center for Children's Wellness*
- › Angela McLaughlin, *Executive Director for Charleston Co. School District Nutrition Services*
- › Zach Senn, *Manager, Senn Brothers Produce*
- › John Ellis, *Manager, Senn Brothers Produce*
- › Jesse Blom, *Executive Director of The Green Heart Project*

SE Building a Strong Foundation: How to Grow a High School Agriculture Program

Join us as we share how the high school agriculture programs in Dorchester County were established and continue to thrive. This session will explore the role of collaborating with local community organizations and obtaining grants to launch and sustain these programs. Learn from the experiences of educators, community leaders, and supporters who worked together to create a high school-led agricultural education model.

- › Bobby Behr, *Dorchester County Career and Technology Center (DCCTC)*
- › Ben Gibson, *Ashley Ridge High School and DCCTC teacher*
- › Casey Anne Attaway, *Ashley Ridge High School and DCCTC teacher*

SE Building the Farm at Florence 1—Cultivating Generational Change

This presentation will walk attendees through the steps to establish The Farm at Florence 1, a project designed to inspire change and growth by integrating agriculture, nutrition, sustainability, and well-being into the classrooms and community. Attendees will leave with actionable steps on creating and sustaining collaborative relationships with diverse stakeholders—educators, farmers, local businesses, and community members—to build a model of generational change. Participants will also receive practical, hands-on ideas for introducing Farm-to-School lessons in elementary classrooms.

- › Jeffery Murrie, *Farm to School Coordinator, Florence 1 Schools*
- › Kyle Jones, *Deputy Superintendent, Florence 1 Schools*
- › Jessica Crowson, *Briggs Elementary Teacher, Florence 1 Schools*





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Schools & Education Track

10:30 – 11:30

NS Connecting SC Beef with School Nutrition Programs

Join School Food Rocks and the South Carolina Beef Marketing Cooperative to discover how to bridge the gap between local beef producers and school nutrition programs. Our collaboration aims to create sustainable, farm-to-school partnerships to increase the availability of locally sourced beef in schools, support South Carolina Farmers, and enhance students' access to fresh, high-quality, local beef. Join us for an engaging discussion to learn how, together, we can positively impact local agriculture and school nutrition programs!

- › Joe Urban, CEO of School Food Rocks
- › Lauren Couchois, Lead Dietitian at School Food Rocks
- › Gwen McPhail, SC Beef Marketing Cooperative

SE Taking Root: Cultivating Wellness, Connections, and Growth through School Gardens and Community Partnership

This presentation will guide participants through real-life examples of how building connections to local and statewide partnerships can help sustain and strengthen school garden implementation that impacts school climate incorporates expertise and deepens learning opportunities for all.

- › Seth Shelby, MPH, BSPE, Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program
- › Emily Sweatt, CHES, Rural Health and Nutrition Agent, Clemson Extension
- › Angela Kruger, Beechwood Middle Teacher, Lexington School District One

11:30 – 12:30

Lunch

- › Hugh Weathers, South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture

12:30

After Lunch Wake Up

- › Patricia Whitener, Clemson University, Wellness Ambassador for College of Agriculture Forestry and Life Sciences, 4H Natural Resources Program Leader

12:30 – 1:30

NS We Go Together Like Peas and Carrots: Food Safety and Food Waste

In this hands-on session, participants will explore safe and effective ways to utilize fruits and vegetables, focusing on methods that are accessible, realistic, and effective in preventing foodborne illness and minimizing food waste. Through live demonstrations, we will showcase practical techniques for proper food storage and creative ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into meals. Participants will leave with useful recipes, innovative ideas like sharing tables to reduce food waste, and additional resources to implement in their schools.

- › Chase McIntosh Baillie, Food Systems and Safety Area Agent, Clemson Extension
- › Grace Anne Martin, Recycle Right SC Coordinator, Department of Environmental Services





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SE Developing Future Farmers

Interested in starting or growing an agriculture club at your school to develop future farmers? Join Allison, an elementary teacher and ag club leader, and Jill, SC's Ag in the Classroom director, for this session. Learn from Allison's experience in starting a Future Farmers club, and receive Agriculture in the Classroom resources, grant opportunities, and ideas to incorporate into your own lesson plans. You'll also have time to collaborate and develop a plan for your own program.

› **Jill Jeffords**, Program Director, SC Ag in the Classroom

› **Allison Whiten**, Westminster Elementary Special Education and Ag Club Leader, School District of Oconee County

SE Aquaponics: A Transformative Learning Experience for Educators

This presentation delves into the creation, execution, and assessment of an innovative aquaponics train-the-trainer curriculum specifically designed to familiarize educators with the principles and operation of aquaponics systems. The second part highlights the successful implementation and evaluation of a student-focused curriculum at two high schools. Through engaging, hands-on activities—such as growing, harvesting, and cooking spinach cultivated within the aquaponics system—students gained practical experience and a deeper understanding of sustainable food production.

› **Lance Beecher, Ph.D.**, Food Systems and Safety Associate, Clemson Extension

› **Kimberly Baker, Ph.D., RD, LD**, Food Systems & Safety Program Director, Clemson Extension

› **Blake Berry**, Pendleton High Agriculture Teacher, Anderson School District 4

1:30 – 2:30

NS Connecting South Carolina Food Service and Farmers

This presentation will explore how South Carolina Food Service staff and local farmers can connect and collaborate through the Farm to School Program. The session will highlight how this initiative fosters partnerships between schools and local farmers and producers. Attendees will gain insights into how effective procurement strategies can enhance access to local fresh produce, support sustainable agriculture, and ultimately benefit students' health and nutrition.

› **Daniel Ashley**, Education Associate, SC Department of Education

› **Todd Bedenbaugh**, Executive Director, School Nutrition Association of South Carolina

SE Dig Deep into School Gardens

Looking for inspiration for your school garden program? This session will showcase real-world examples of how to grow a garden-based learning environment that will thrive! Join experienced school garden educators for this engaging, information-packed session focused on fostering social and emotional growth and academic achievement while improving student access to healthy foods by growing a school garden program!

› **Tais Farinha**, Duncan Elementary School of the Arts ESOL Teacher, Spartanburg School District 5

› **Marie Valentine, MS**, Lakewood Elementary Outdoor Inquiry Teacher, Horry County School District

› **Giany Guedjo**, Executive Director, Carolina Human Reinvestment, Georgetown County

› **Suzanne Allen**, Master Gardener, Georgetown County

2:30 – 3:00

Closing Session

› **Amy Dabbs**, Clemson Extension Statewide School and Community Gardening Coordinator

