OUR FOOD FUTURE

SPECIAL GEORGIA ORGANICS REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE:
What We Know and Don’t Know About Georgia’s Farming and Food Future
10 Things You Can Do to Help Curb Climate Change

PG 8
I spend a lot of time looking into the crystal ball. It’s never very affirming, but it’s a good exercise to sometimes predict what the future holds.

Minimally, I like to see Georgia Organics and its members boldly thinking and going where no one else goes. Our community should take great pride in being out front and in the fringe of organic agriculture, local food and urban agriculture over the past two decades when the concepts were unknown and often unpopular.

The fact that the media plays catch up and the health community now actively seeks our partnership in preventive health strategies is a sure sign that we are long-term thinkers and short-term tinkerers.

Even now, there are dynamic business and entrepreneurial initiatives unfolding to connect our fields to our meals. This is why we need to talk about climate change. A couple of years ago, I urged a reporter to ask then Georgia Agriculture Commissioner, Tommy Irvin, what he thought about climate change and its potential impact on agriculture. It was clear from Irvin’s answer that nobody had ever asked him about climate change nor had he given it much thought.

Certainly, climate change presents more questions than answers but that doesn’t mean it should be left off our radar. Georgia Organics believes that climate change is real and that we need to be proactive in thinking and preparing for an uncertain future.

Organic farmers inherently could have a stronger buffer to deal with variable and intensive weather patterns, an opportunity to promote sustainability, but all farmers will certainly be impacted, if they haven’t already. Consumers too will likely pay the price down the road in higher food costs. “Grow your own” may take on new meaning as individuals park their mowers and pick up the spade.

Count on Georgia Organics to cover climate change and challenge our leaders to look inquisitively and proactively into the future. We will be looking for ways our programs and initiatives can address these issues on the ground, whether its climate policy or classes for farmers to grow in a changing climate.

So here we are again, out on the fringe, vulnerable to pop shots from the doubters, talking about an unpopular and inconvenient issue. You are already helping fight climate change by examining the way you eat. But there’s more that you can do. You can change the way you live (see “10 Things You Can Do” on page 11). You can be a vocal spokesperson in your local community, and you can persuade leaders to adopt climate change strategies.

I am not an oracle . . . although that would be fun . . . but the crystal ball is clear on climate change. Current science gives us the confidence and the urgent impetus to act now.

Alice Rolls
Executive Director
Harris Continues Tradition of Trailblazing

Congratulations to Will Harris, the past president of the Georgia Organics board of directors, who was named Georgia’s 2011 Small Business Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration on March 22.

Harris is owner and president of White Oak Pastures, one of the largest producers of organic, grassfed beef in the country. He’s also an outspoken and cantankerous – in the fun kind of way – cowboy who speaks his mind about the ills of conventional agriculture.

Harris has taken his family farm in Bluffton, passed down over five generations, and coupled it with modern technology to meet the growing demand for grassfed beef. Its grassfed beef is available in Whole Foods Market stores as well as Publix Supermarkets in five states.

“The state small business winners who will be honored reflect a broad range of business products, services and innovations offered by our nation’s entrepreneurs,” said SBA Georgia District Director Terri Denison in announcing Harris’ award. “Will Harris and White Oak Pastures serve as a prime example of how innovation coupled with opportunity can transform a business or entire industry.”

New Videos and Search Options for Local Food Online

Have you been to the new Georgia Organics website lately? Online you’ll find web-only articles on the growth of the good food movement in Middle Georgia, and the video “Practical Pest Management,” a presentation by Paige Witherington and Justin Dansby of Serenbe Farms made during the 2011 Georgia Organics Annual Conference & Expo.

The video offers a convenient way to learn to keep your pest populations at bay through balanced soil, farmscaping for beneficial insects, and active control methods. Look for it in the Farmers section of the website.

Our searchable Online Local Food Guide is finally up and running, and takes a major step forward as a user-friendly way to find farms, farmers markets, restaurants, grocery shops, and other businesses. Online, you’ll find details on farm production practices, like whether they use synthetic fertilizers or not, hotlinks, maps, and the ability to search by product, category, and geographic areas, such as by zip code or county.

We’ll be uploading more videos of conference sessions and web-only articles. Go to the nearest computer, bookmark www.georgiaorganics.org and have fun exploring the site. If you have any suggestions, recipes, tips, or questions, contact Michael Wall at michael@georgiaorganics.org or call 678-702-0400 ext. 202.

Paradise Found

Georgia Organics benefited from a stunning fundraising dinner for 100 guests at Woodland Gardens outside Athens on May 1. Many thanks to the amazing Anne Quatrano and the fabulous chefs who provided the most elegant and delicious meal. Special kudos to our hostess, Celia Barss, of Woodland Gardens. The event raised $17,500 for Georgia Organics.
For most of us, when the topic of the farm bill comes up, what do we think of? Subsidies? Ethanol? Politicians? As Georgia Organics engages more in policy advocacy, we want to not only provide our members with a better understanding of the Farm Bill, but also mobilize our community around ways to improve it.

Georgia Organics wants a Farm Bill that strives for a more democratic, sustainable food and farm economy; one that moves us from a commodity-based system to one that is more community-based.

No matter who you are, if you eat, then you need to engage in the conversation shaping the 2012 Farm Bill, which is beginning right now. So let’s start with the basics.

The Farm Bill is a major policy of the United States has roots in the 1930s, when Congress passed the very first price support legislation. This was done to keep farmers from losing their land during the Great Depression. (The Congressional Research Service however officially attributes the first Farm Bill to the Food and Agriculture Act of 1965.)

Since that time, the Farm Bill, authorized roughly every five years, has become a dynamic, all-encompassing policy guiding everything from food stamps to bioenergy to, most recently, organic farming.

The Farm Bill is divided into 15 major titles, or sections, each covering programs and subsequent funding. The Farm Bill is written by the House and Senate Agriculture Committees – with funding determined by the Appropriations Committees. Ultimately, every member of Congress votes to reauthorize the Farm Bill.

The process to draft the 2012 Farm Bill officially begins this summer, as Congress begins hosting public meetings around the country and drafting legislation. You can keep up with Farm Bill hearings and committee work at http://agriculture.house.gov/ and http://ag.senate.gov/site/
Georgia is Uniquely Situated to Influence the Debate with Four Power Players

**Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA)**
While his position as ranking member of the Senate Ag Committee was withdrawn earlier this year, he remains a powerful voice in Washington on food and farm policy.

416 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510
Phone: 202-224-3521 Fax: 202-224-0303 • www.chambliss.senate.gov

**Rep. David Scott (D-13th)**
Congressman Scott represents parts of Cobb, Clayton, Henry, DeKalb, Douglas, and Fulton counties, and sits on the House Agriculture Committee, a committee that will play a key role in drafting and negotiating Farm Bill policy.

225 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
ph: (202) 225-2939 fax: (202) 225-4628 • www.davidscott.house.gov

**Rep. Austin Scott (R-8th)**
Congressman Scott represents the 8th District, which stretches south from Macon and includes Perry, Tifton, and Moultrie. Congressman Scott, brand new to the House of Representatives, serves on the House Agriculture Committee. With roots in Tifton, he represents a new voice to the discussion.

516 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6531 Fax: (202) 225-3013

Congressman Kingston serves as the chair of the House Appropriations Committee and represents parts of Savannah, Valdosta, Baxley, and Brunswick. Essentially, he is the money man when it comes to funding, or not funding, specific programs authorized by the Farm Bill.

2372 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-5831 Fax: (202) 226-2269 • www.kingston.house.gov

Two Other Power Players Round Out the Farm Bill Who’s Who

**Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Oklahoma (Chair, House Agriculture Committee)**
A farmer in his tenth term in Congress, Lucas has made comments in support of conservation programs and is on record promoting the traditional Farm Bill model – commodity, conservation, nutrition. When asked by Ag Week in April, Lucas said he would not be proposing any cuts to subsidies.

http://agriculture.house.gov/

**Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Michigan (Chair, Senate Agriculture Committee)**
Mostly supportive of local and regional food system policy. Up for re-election in 2012; some speculating she wants to have the Farm Bill done before that re-election campaign. On record as wanting a draft by the end of 2011.

http://ag.senate.gov/site/
Drivers on a nondescript back road in the 'burbs outside Loganville can't help but notice Ricky Brown's front yard. Instead of a manicured lawn and the green grass that defines most single-family suburban houses, Brown's front yard is actually Back River Farm – four acres of planted crops.

The fact that it's thriving is the realization of years of hard work.

Brown grew up working on his uncle's 500-acre farm and his father's half-acre garden. “I grew up harvesting produce from a very early age,” he says.

To make sure he was on the right track for a successful organic farm, Brown sought a lot of guidance. He participated in Lynn Pugh's “Introduction to Organic Farming and Gardening Course,” which has helped close to 90 growers learn about organic production.

Brown also applied for and was accepted into the 2010 class of the Georgia Organics Farmer to Farmer Mentoring Program. He applied, he says, “to learn from experienced organic farmers that would give advice and provide a support system.”

His mentors, UGA Organic Certificate Program Coordinator Robert Tate and Sara Callaway from Roots Farm, helped Brown with crop rotation, drip irrigation, and soil amendments. He lists the personal visits to the mentor's farms as one of the most important benefits he received from the program.

“With both of these incredible mentors, you could see their love for farming and their willingness to share their knowledge,” he says. “I can’t say enough about their honesty, their approachability and their knowledge. Robert was particularly knowledgeable about crop rotation, soil amendments, and equipment. Sara’s was overall knowledgeable about organic farming and marketing.”

And Brown says the personal support of Farmer Services Coordinator Jonathan Tescher was an important way that Georgia Organics was able to support him as a mentee.

“I cannot think of any improvements to this program and cannot say enough positive things about it,” Brown says.

Now, Brown is selling Back River Farm produce at the Snellville Farmers Market, a major milestone that establishes Brown, his farm, and his passion for organic growing.

If you are interested in learning more about the mentoring program, please click on the For Farmers section of the Georgia Organics website. Applications are accepted throughout the year on a rolling basis.

Tescher, who operates the program with funding from the U.S.D.A., points out that applicants don’t have to be brand new farmers. “Even folks who’ve been farming for years can receive subsidized professional expertise from experienced farmers through structured consultations and support,” he says.
2012 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
DATES: FEB. 24 – 25

The planning process for the 15th Annual Conference and Expo in Columbus is underway. The conference will be held at the Columbus Convention and Trade Center. Georgia Organics will be partnering with ASAN (Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network) to organize program elements of the conference since Columbus is on the Georgia Alabama state line. Anne Quatrano, renowned executive chef/owner of Bacchanalia and Star Provisions, has agreed to lead the 2012 Farmers Feast.

GROWER EDUCATION & SERVICES

Georgia Organics organized trainings for NRCS employees on organics in the NE region at Whippoorwill Hollow Farm in Walton County and the SE Region at Walker Farms in Screven County. There were over 80 NRCS staff present between the two trainings.

Georgia Organics received a grant in partnership with SSAWG to hold a day-long workshop this Fall on appropriate pricing, expense tracking, and calculating profitability.

In addition, Georgia Organics sent four action alerts on the advocacy section of our website.

COMMUNITY FOOD SYSTEMS & POLICY

URBAN AGRICULTURE

Georgia Organics’ first urban agriculture strategy meeting identified four key goals:

- Defining and refining permitted use for urban gardens and agriculture through zoning laws and ordinances in and around Atlanta;
- Messaging around the value of fresh, local and organically produced food to move people beyond price point and volume;
- Developing wealth building initiatives with urban agriculture to reinvest in local communities and jobs;
- Creating social venture funding to support the start up infrastructure with urban agriculture gardens and farms.

ATLANTA LOCAL FOOD INITIATIVE

ALFI is developing a model farmers market policy for the City of Atlanta. We are also working with Dekalb County, a recent recipient of the Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant, as a key partner to initiate urban farms, farmers markets, and a farm to school program in Dekalb County schools.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATION

MEDIA

Since April 1, Georgia Organics events and programs were covered in more than 14 media articles. Media coverage was included in outlets such as Atlanta Magazine’s “Covered Dish” blog, the Atlanta Journal Constitution, the Newton Citizen, the Champion Newspaper, Online Athens, and others.

Websites & Social Media

Between March 24 and June 2, the Georgia Organics website received 13,252 unique visits and 65,327 page views. Our Facebook page has about 7,200 fans and has 4,954 users.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

FUNDRAISING

In May, the USDA awarded a $600,000, three-year grant to Georgia Organics in partnership with UGA and Fort Valley State University to fund a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers program. The grant will address the dramatic change in the agricultural population - half of the current farmers will retire in the next decade. The grant will provide concrete, innovative, and impactful programs and resources in critical areas including production and management strategies, business operations, decision support strategies and marketing support to cultivate the next generation of sustainable and organic farmers and ranchers.

EVENTS

Laura Turner Seydel partnered with Georgia Organics to host a May luncheon for 50 guests for author Laurie David, producer of Inconvenient Truth. Laurie talked about her new book “The Family Dinner: Great Ways to Connect with Your Kids, One Meal at a Time.”

YEAH! BURGER donated $500 from their Valentine fundraiser and stepped forward again to donate yummy burgers for the Sweet Summer Picnic at the Glover Family Farms, a thank you to Les Dames D’Escoffier.

Volunteers

With the support of 15 volunteers (many who attended training held in April), Georgia Organics had a table presence at seven different Earth Day or Green Festivals this spring. An additional six volunteers put in close to 50 hours in the office helping to complete many data entry projects. Thank you all!
GEORGIA ORGANICS SPECIAL REPORT:
The Impact of Climate Change on Georgia Food and Farms

It's very tempting to look at the historic number of tornados and thunderstorms that came crushing through the South in April and May and declare that climate change is here.

Same goes for the days of 100 degree highs so early in the year, and the droughts and floods that have ravaged farms and everybody else across the state, causing $75 million in insured property losses.

Veteran farmers have noticed that it's not just that the climate is getting warmer, it's getting weirder.

“We had three snowfalls this past winter. I lived in Georgia most of my whole life and I don't ever recall having that many. The one we had in January stayed out here [on the fields] for three weeks,” says Jonathan Szecsey, of A&J Farms in Winston, Ga. “The weather runs in cycles but I have never seen it like this. I'm not saying it has anything to do with global warming, but it's strange that all this has occurred.”

And that's the trouble with climate change. No one can say whether or not the strange weather we've experienced can be directly linked to the effect greenhouse gas emissions have had on the atmosphere.

The science of climatology just doesn't work that way. As any climate scientists will admit, computer modeling forecasts for the earth's future climate is not an exact science. The simulations look at general trends of the effects of greenhouse gas emissions. They can forecast that we'll see more storms and droughts, but not where or when.

Nor can we predict with absolute certainty how climate change will impact Georgia and its $11 billion industry, agriculture. But few dispute that agriculture will be one of the earliest and most impacted industries.

Some of the more grim prognostications include droughts, floods, decreased crop yields due to higher temperatures, higher rates of soil evaporation, and increases in fungal and bacterial diseases and insect pests.

The good news, however, is that that several key Georgia officials now acknowledge that climate change is happening, and is caused by human activities.

“We will see change? Yes. Are we to a large extent responsible for that change? Yes,” says State Climatologist David Stooksbury.

Until recently, it was a no-no to admit that climate change was happening, let alone that it's caused by mankind, and many elected officials in the state still believe that climate change science is a hoax.

Stooksbury, a professor of engineering and atmospheric sciences in the University of Georgia College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, has the perfect background to keep the state's agriculture industry abreast of our changing climate.

He has two undergraduate degrees, one in agriculture and plant genetics, the other in physics. His Master's degree specialized in disease resistance and small grain crops, and his Ph.D. in Environmental Sciences concentrated on atmospheric sciences.

Much of his research has been on climate impacts on crop yields in the Southeastern United States.

Stooksbury says there are more questions than answers when you're talking about the long-term possibilities of climate change. Short-term forecasting isn't as vexing. For instance, last July Stooksbury correctly predicted that the state would experience a drought this year.

Stooksbury says that predicting what climate change will mean for Georgia is made even more difficult because the state is close to the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean, which exacerbate moisture and rainfall forecasting.

On a global level, however, climatologists are witnessing more and more of the type of weather events climate change is likely to cause.

“Now, the latest scientific research suggests that a previously discounted factor is helping to destabilize the food system: climate change,” says a June 4 New York Times article.

“Scientists have since acknowledged this error and are scrambling to catch up. The media, to their credit, have made this recent revelation a front-page issue. But even as the issue of climate change gets more attention and is better understood, consumers continue to pay the price with every meal.

Demand for the staples – like wheat, rice, corn and soybeans – that supply most humans with their daily calories is surpassing supply, due mostly to population increases. This has lead to unstable prices. Until recently, conventional wisdom held that fluctuations were solely market-based. Not anymore.

“A rising unease about the future of the world's food supply came through during interviews this year with more than 50 agricultural experts working in nine countries,” the New York Times article says.

Agriculture is highly sensitive to climate variability and weather extremes, such as droughts, floods and severe storms. The forces that shape our climate are also critical to farm productivity. Human activity has already changed atmospheric characteristics such as temperature, rainfall, levels of carbon dioxide (CO2) and ground level ozone. The scientific community expects such trends to continue. While food production may benefit from a warmer climate, the increased potential for droughts, floods and heat waves will pose challenges for farmers. Additionally, the enduring changes in climate, water supply and soil moisture could make it less feasible to continue crop production in certain regions.

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
Citing the violent storms of April and May, and the heatwave of June, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture reduced its June estimate of planted corn acres by 1.5 million acres, which has contributed to a rise in the cash price of a bushel from $3.20 this time last year to $7.75.

Food companies such as Kraft, Kellogg, Sara Lee and Smuckers, as well as restaurants such as McDonald’s, have also raised prices, according to National Public Radio.

Most U.S. food prices in 2011 are already between 8 percent and 15 percent higher than last year. The average price of meat (beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb, and veal) in the U.S. is 7 percent higher this year.

If this trend continues, and scientists and agriculture researchers expect it to, the price of food on our plates will rise much faster than global temperatures.

“There’s hardly any discussion in Georgia ag circles on climate change,” says Georgia Organics Executive Director Alice Rolls. “With substantial changes squarely in our future, will consumers have to spend more of their daily budget on food because of rising prices? And if so, how much more? Should farmers seek new training for the northern migration of crops?”

117 degrees. That was the record-high temperature of the soil two inches deep at Dr. Carroll Johnson’s experiment station in Tifton on a recent May Saturday.

“It is abysmally dry and hot,” says Johnson, an agronomist researcher with the U.S.D.A. “The situation is the soil is way hotter than what it ought to be this time of year and it’s way drier than what it ought to be this time of year.”

Legumes such as peanuts and soybeans can’t germinate when the soil is as hot as it has been. “When it gets this hot, there’s not much organic or conventional growers alike can do,” he says. “And it’s not going to get better anytime soon.”

In June, Gov. Nathan Deal began seeking a federal disaster designations for 22 counties for farmers whose crops were charred by the heat.

Johnson doesn’t think that global climate change is to blame for the baking of his experimental plot experiences.

“It’s hard to prove,” he says. “There’s some clear observations that we could make and they are obvious, but at the same time, is it just normal randomness, fluctuation of weather patterns or some sort of long-term trend? I don’t know.”

Another skeptic is Phil Worley, the Superintendent of UGA’s Northwest Georgia Research and Education Center in Gordon County, who has studied beef cattle production for decades.

Worley is a witness to what a Cambridge University report considers to be a beneficial outcome of climate change.

Pastures are predicted to see an increase in productivity, giving a boost to grassfed beef operations, according to the Cambridge University report, “Agriculture: The Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change for the United States.”

Although it’s a few decades ahead of schedule, Worley has seen his pasture shift from one kind of grass to another with a tolerance for heat.

For most of his career, Worley has used fescue for his pasture grasses, as have most cattlemen from Atlanta to Virginia. A cool season grass, some fescue stands can last years. That is, until recently.

“To me, the closest thing I can say to seeing anything different weather wise is that fescue is not as reliable,” Worley says. “We’ve having more Bermuda grass come into fescue pastures than we did before, and it’s a warm season grass. From that aspect, we’re seeing that the last decade or so has been a bit hotter or drier than the previous decade or two ... But I’m still in the ‘I don’t know’ camp about climate change.”

By The Numbers: Varying Impacts

| 30 percent | Global food output decreased in 2003 due to a heatwave in Europe researchers linked to human-induced warming. |
| 30 percent | Decrease in crop output predicted in America by the end of the century due to climate change impacts. |
| 11 percent | Increase predicted for pine forest productivity by the year 2040 due to climate change impacts. |
| 15 percent | Increase in Georgia’s corn yield forecasted for the year 2020, due to climate change impacts. |
| 20 percent | Decrease in Georgia’s winter wheat yields forecasted for the year 2020, due to climate change impacts. |
| 25 percent | Increase in soybean yield forecasted for the northern area of Georgia, due to climate change impacts. |
| 5 percent | Decrease in peanut yields forecasted for south Georgia, due to climate change impacts. |
| 25 percent | Increase in peanut yields forecasted for north Georgia by the year 2020, due to climate change impacts. |

Sources: New York Times, the University of Maryland Center for Integrative Environmental Research study “Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Georgia.”

Almost all of them acknowledge that sea level rises will drastically, perhaps catastrophically, impact Georgia’s coast and the transportation and energy industries there.

Taken as a whole, academic research and interviews with Georgia’s top experts on climate change paint an unsettling image of the state’s agriculture future.

“Food production is projected to benefit from a warmer climate, but there probably will be strong regional effects, with some areas in North America suffering significant loss of comparative advantage to other regions.”

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
“It may be a situation where we have fewer rain events, but each rain event will be heavier, which will have a tendency to increase flash flooding,” says Stooksbury.

“[C]limate change has the potential to decrease the availability of water resources due to probable changes in rainfall distribution,” says the Georgia Tech report, “Climate Change Impacts on Georgia Agriculture and Irrigation Demand.”

Most climate models and studies consistently forecast more storms, or, as the scientists prefer, “heavy precipitation events.”

Already, “there has been a 2 to 4 percent increase in the frequency of heavy precipitation events ... influencing among other things erosion, water quality and agricultural productivity,” according to the University of Maryland study, “Economic Impacts of Climate Change on Georgia.”

Another study, by the American Security Project, estimates that temperatures in Georgia could rise by 4.5 degrees F in winter and 5.4 degrees in summer, accompanied by a 5 percent increase in annual precipitation.

Farmers are used to uncertainty and worrying about the weather. It comes with the job. Longterm predictions aren’t precise, but there’s a consensus among climatologists regarding a few things. Call them informed guestimations.

“The thing we can be pretty confident about is that there will be more extremes in weather,” says Marc Boudreau, UGA, Dept. of Biological and Agricultural Engineering. “It’s safe to say we’ll see large fluctuations outside what we typically see: record hot days, record cold days, more hurricanes, more rain coming rather than in sort of nice showers that occur over long periods of time, we might get much more concentrated heavy downpours, which in general is a bad thing in agriculture.”

Boudreau’s statement syncs exactly with what the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change have predicted for the agriculture industry in America.

He also points out that growers who’ve embraced organic farming practices are more prepared for the types of changes Georgia is likely to see, especially when it comes to efficient water use and erosion control.

In addition to being more buffered from climate change’s impact, it turns out that organic farms also mitigate the severity of change. Natural agriculture systems, rich and alive with microbes, bacteria, fungus, nematodes, hummus, and roots, soak up carbon dioxide and keep it from wreaking havoc in the planet’s upper atmosphere.

“Failure to mitigate the effects of climate change could cost Georgians $102.9 billions in GDP and more than 752,000 jobs.”

- The American Security Project

“Each year, agriculture contributes about 14% of all human-induced greenhouse gases—about as much as running every car, boat and plane on the planet.”

– Tim Groser in the Wall Street Journal
“The biggest role that [organic] farmers have is in sequestration of carbon. They are taking carbon dioxide out of the air by growing their crops and the healthier the crops, the more that is happening,” says Boudreau. “If a crop is overrun by disease or insects, it is not taking CO₂ out of the air.”

If the nation’s cropland were converted to organic agriculture, there would be enough carbon sequestration to offset 25 percent of America’s total fossil fuel emission, according to The Rodale Institute.

But in Georgia, the challenge, or opportunity (depending on how you look at it) is that less than one percent of the state’s farmable land is Certified Organic. This doesn’t include the farmers who are growing organically but haven’t jumped through the hoops to become certified, however, it does demonstrate the enormity of Georgia’s agriculture problem.

Moreover, climate change is still a controversial concept to millions of Georgians.

“When you get outside the scientific community, there’s a lot of growers that really aren’t too concerned with [climate change],” Boudreau says. “I hope that in the near future that the non-scientists will accept a lot of the findings and the the very, very strong evidence that shows we are really going to save ourselves a lot of trouble if we act now to both adapt and mitigate.”

“The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be,” Boudreau says.

To read the reports, studies, and news articles consulted for this article, and to find many other resources on climate change and agriculture, please visit www.georgiaorganics.org/newscenter/climatechange.aspx

Georgia Organics would like to know what you think the organization should be doing for its members and the rest of state about climate change. Email thedirt@georgiaorganics.org with your suggestions.

10 Things You Can Do to Help Curb Climate Change

These ten steps will help curb global warming, save you money, and create a safer environment for the future.

 Courtesy of the Sierra Club

Drive smart!
A well-tuned car with properly inflated tires burns less gasoline—cutting pollution and saving you money at the pump. If you have two cars, drive the one with better gas mileage whenever possible. Better yet, skip the drive and take public transit, walk, or bicycle when you can.

Buy local and organic
Did you know the average American meal travels more than 1,500 miles from the farm to your plate? Think of all the energy wasted and pollution added to the atmosphere—not to mention all the pesticides and chemicals used to grow most produce! So go to your local organic farmer to get your fruits and veggies.

Support clean, renewable energy.
Renewable energy solutions, such as wind and solar power, can reduce our reliance on coal-burning power plants, the largest source of global warming pollution in the United States. Call your local utility and sign up for renewable energy. If they don’t offer it, ask them why not?

Replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs.
Especially those that burn the longest each day. Compact fluorescents produce the same amount of light as normal bulbs, but use about a quarter of the electricity and last ten times as long. Each switch you make helps clean the air today, curb global warming, and save you money on your electricity bill.

Saving energy at home is good for the environment and for your wallet.
Start with caulking and weather-stripping on doorways and windows. Then adjust your thermostat and start saving. For each degree you lower your thermostat in the winter, you can cut your energy bills by three percent. Finally, ask your utility company to do a free energy audit of your home to show you how to save even more money.

Become a smart water consumer.
Install low-flow showerheads and faucets and you’ll use half the water without decreasing performance. Then turn your hot water heater down to 120°F and see hot-water costs go down by as much as 50 percent.

Buy energy-efficient electronics and appliances.
Replacing an old refrigerator or an air conditioner with an energy-efficient model will save you money on your electricity bill and cut global warming pollution. Look for the Energy Star label on new appliances or visit their website at www.energystar.gov to find the most energy-efficient products.

Plant a tree, protect a forest.
Protecting forests is a big step on the road to curbing global warming. Trees “breathe in” carbon dioxide, but slash-and-burn farming practices, intensive livestock production, and logging have destroyed 90 percent of the native forests in the United States. And you can take action in your own backyard—planting shade trees around your house will absorb CO₂, and slash your summer air-conditioning bills.

Reduce! reuse! recycle!
Producing new paper, glass, and metal products from recycled materials saves 70 to 90 percent of the energy and pollution, including CO₂, that would result if the product came from virgin materials. Recycling a stack of newspapers only seven feet high will save a good-sized tree. Please... buy recycled products!

Mount a local campaign against global warming.
Educate your community about how it can cut global warming pollution. Support measures at the national, state, and local level that:
• Make automobiles go further on a gallon of gas;
• Accelerate the use of clean, renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind;
• Increase energy efficiency and conservation; and
• Preserve forests around the world.
5-STEP ANIMAL WELFARE RATING™
YOUR WAY OF KNOWING EXACTLY HOW THE ANIMALS ARE RAISED
WHEN YOU CHOOSE OUR BEEF, PORK OR CHICKEN

THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE BETTER™
Find more information in our stores or visit wholefoodsmarket.com/meat
BRIARCLIFF  BUCKHEAD  JOHNS CREEK  MIDTOWN  SANDY SPRINGS
ALPHARETTA  COBB

WHITE OAK PASTURES
Why Eat White Oak Pastures Beef:
❖ It’s Safer
❖ It’s Healthier
❖ It Tastes Better
❖ It’s Certified Humane
❖ It’s Environmentally Sustainable
❖ It’s THE DEEP SOUTH’S LOCAL BEEF

Our new on farm processing plant
Built in 2008

White Oak Pastures Beef
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