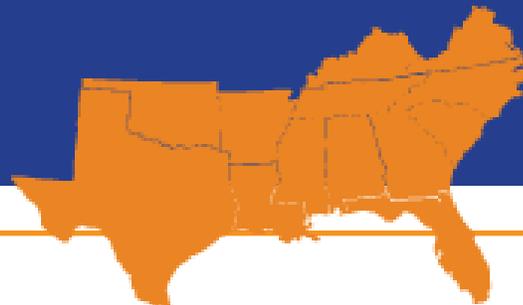


# STRENGTHENING THE SOUTHERN REGION EXTENSION AND RESEARCH SYSTEM TO SUPPORT LOCAL & REGIONAL FOODS NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

OCTOBER 1, 2016 TO SEPTEMBER 30, 2021



## WHY IS THIS WORK IMPORTANT?

Significant interest in local and regional food system strategies has risen over the past decade in response to efforts to grow and/or stabilize local economies, address gaps in food access, enhance farm sustainability, and increase viability in rural and urban communities. For many, these efforts constitute new, innovative, and interdisciplinary approaches and collaborations to create more resilient, vibrant, and just food systems and economies. Yet, as these rapidly developing interests emerge, strategic efforts to address food system concerns, issues, and opportunities across the Southern Region are fragmented. While some intra-disciplinary work has begun and some efforts to coordinate within state lines exist, a robust effort to link these existing efforts is needed. The current fragmentation leads to duplication of work, gaps in efforts, and missed opportunities to jointly build capacity to respond to the South's local and regional foods needs. This project seeks to help resolve these issues through five related sets of activities.



To learn more, contact the Southern Rural Development Center.  
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<http://srdc.msstate.edu/foods/index.html>

THIS PROJECT IS ENDORSED BY:



SOUTHERN  
EXTENSION  
RISK MANAGEMENT  
EDUCATION



# WORKING GROUPS



**Objective:**

Identify the top 10 pressing issues in food systems work within the region to direct future Extension and Research activities.

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**Expected Outcome:**

Prioritized needs for the South related to local/regional foods.

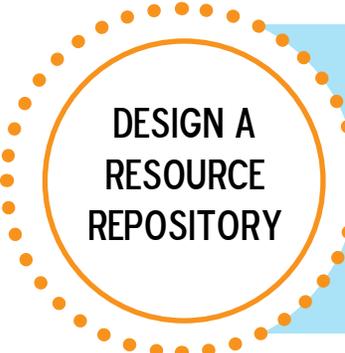
**Objective:**

Create learning communities of land grant professionals from at least 15 land grant universities in the South and local, state, and federal partners around high-priority needs in the food system in the next three to five years.

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**Expected Outcome:**

One to five multi-state, multi-discipline working groups formed to address prioritized needs.



**Objective:**

Design a user-friendly and robust repository of local foods system resources that meet the needs of Extension and Research professionals by 2020, with measurable increases in use and quantity of resources by 20 percent per year.

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**Expected Outcome:**

A system for sharing identified resources in order to reduce duplication.

**Objective:**

Strengthen the capacity of Research and Extension professionals in the Southern Region for gathering, communicating, and promoting impact data and analyzing secondary data through identification and sharing of common measures, resources, and tools by reporting on an annual basis.

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**Expected Outcome:**

Consistent impact measures with tools aligned to assist in gathering data.



**Objective:**

Identify successful processes, collaborative leadership, networking frameworks, creative staffing, and organizational structures of participating universities in the development of local and regional food systems.

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**Expected Outcome:**

Identification of best practices and models for addressing complex food issues.