



## WOMEN FOR THE LAND

# A State-Level Needs Assessment for Georgia

### Overview

American Farmland Trust's Women for the Land Initiative has been active in the Southeast region since 2020, where learning circles are used within farming communities to reach women who have been underserved and/or marginalized by existing agricultural networks. Researchers have found that these circles are powerful forms of information exchange that not only connect women to one another and service providers but also spur them to take action on their land (Carter & Roesch-McNally, 2024; Fairchild et al., 2022). As part of the project "Reducing Risks: Reaching Historically Underserved Women" funded by Southern Extension Risk Management Education (Subaward # GR019293), American Farmland Trust's Women for the Land Initiative and Southeast Program worked to build partnerships and conduct a needs assessment that will inform programming aimed to even the playing field related to owning and operating successful farming operations, focusing on Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color farmers and agrarians in Georgia.

This assessment intends to bridge a knowledge gap related to the needs, interests, and unique barriers of women producers and agricultural landowners in Georgia. This needs assessment provides a synthesis of feedback from women in agriculture from across Georgia to highlight existing barriers, training opportunities, and community interests regarding future programming.

### Methods

To assess the needs of Georgia women in agriculture, we engaged in 1:1 via in-depth interviews by phone and in person, and hosted a listening session via Zoom with women producers, agricultural landowners, and technical service providers.

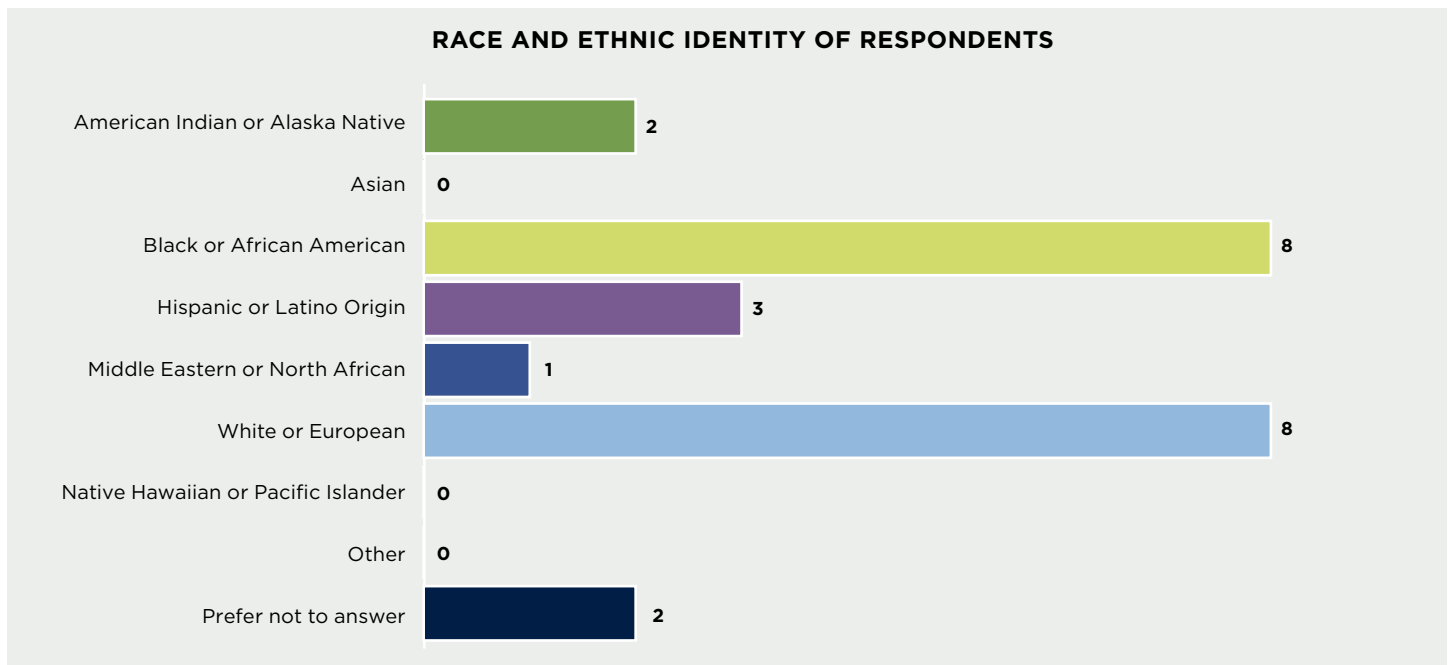
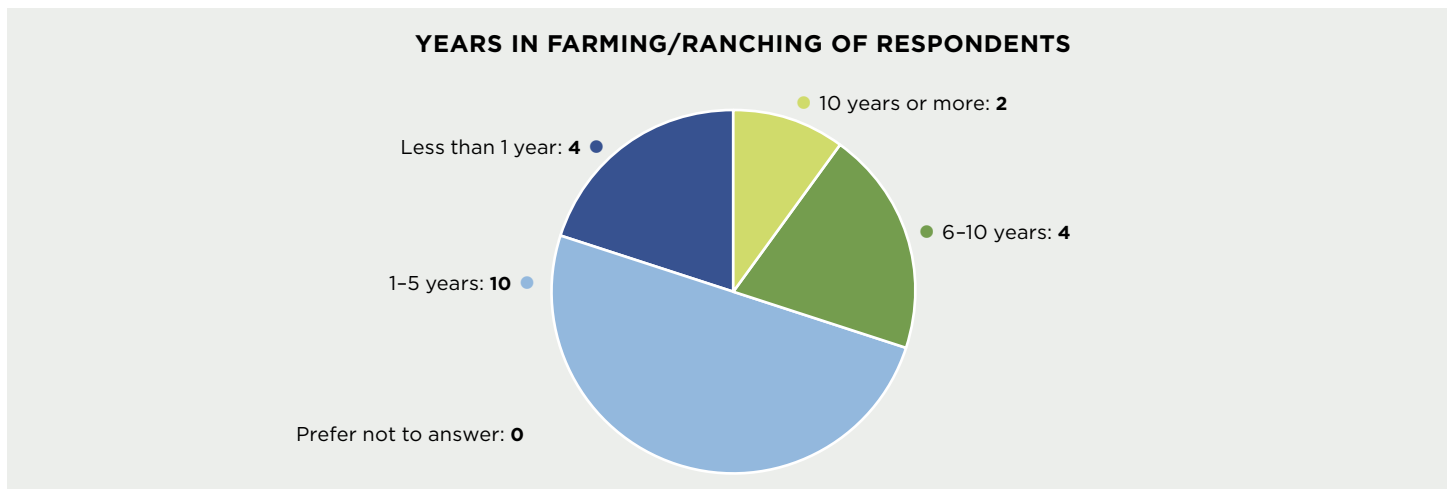
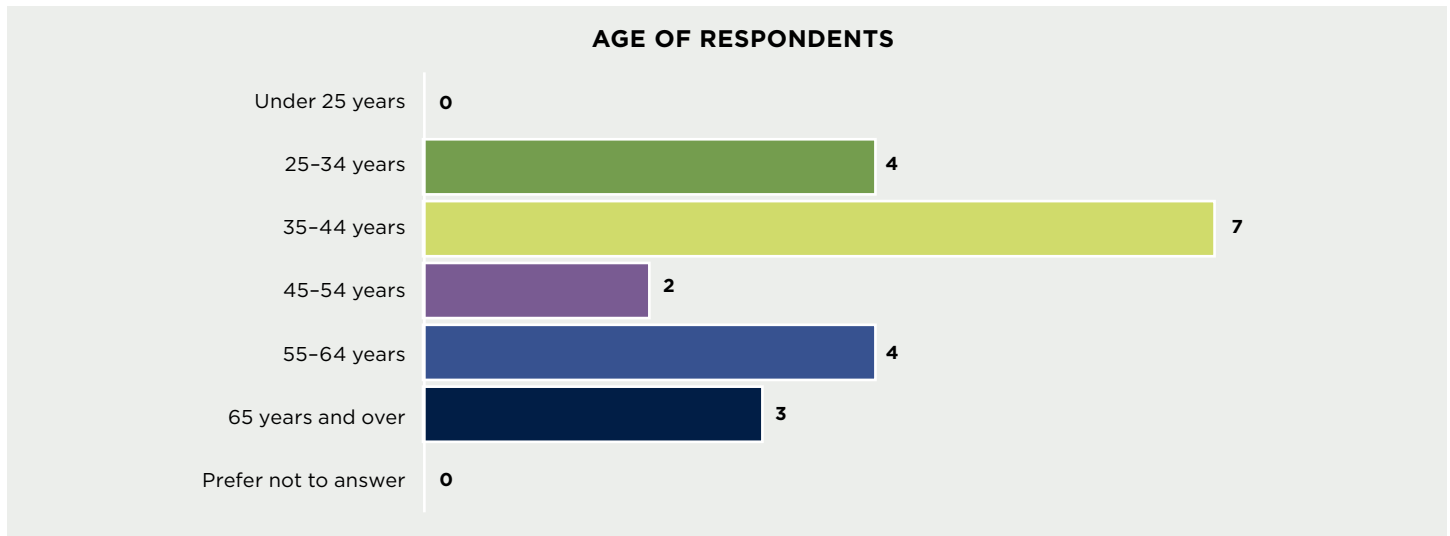
### Who We Engaged

#### 100 People Identifying as Women on 4,303 Acres

Of participants who responded to our exit surveys, the majority identified as farmers/ranchers or farm employees engaged in a range of agricultural production systems from beef and poultry to diversified vegetables and

fruit orchards. Most were in the 35–44 age range and have farmed for 1–5 years. Those engaged represented a diversity of women in agriculture with half of exit survey respondents identifying as Black or African American,

three as Hispanic or Latino, two as Native American or Alaska Native, one as Middle Eastern or North African, and the rest as White/ Caucasian or “other.”



## Findings

### Women Are Interested in Learning Together

The women we engaged expressed that they do not currently have many (or any) women-centered environments to learn skills or engage in leadership development, but most all expressed interest. When asked if they had attended women-centered events in the past and if so, what they enjoyed about them, some participants shared the following:

“I have become partial to joining those types of events because sometimes when I talk to male counterparts, I feel like I am the only one going through certain challenges. I also like to see women in numbers.”

“When I was in another state, we had a women-only conference, and the energy in this type of conference, rather than an open event is very different. It’s nice to have a safe space to share your experiences and I hope to see something like that coming to Georgia.”

“It’s great to have a space for women only. It’s very empowering and I always feel great when I leave those events. I can’t think of anything more beneficial than being in the same space, walking the land, and hearing peers share their stories and experiences.”

### The Goals and Needs of Women in Agriculture Are Diverse But Show Interest in Business Development, Innovation, and Community Investment

When we asked women farmers about their goals for their farms and what they need to be successful, common themes emerged around staying up to date on existing programs and resources and receiving business support.

Key topics of interest include:

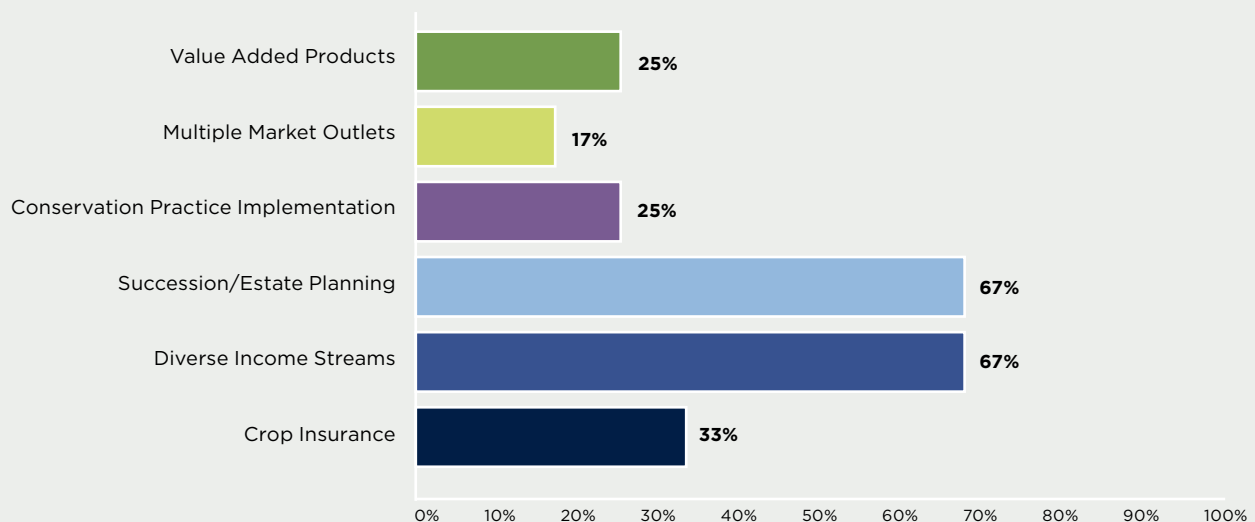
- Information on programs, policies, and requirements at the county, state, and federal level
- Updated information on innovative agricultural conservation practices
- Business planning for profitability
- Guidance on crop insurance
- Farm business planning (including how to set up an entity and obtain the necessary licenses)

### Women Use a Range of Risk Management Strategies on Farm, But There Is Room for Improvement

When asked which of the following risk management strategies participants currently implement on their farms, they listed the following with diverse income streams and estate planning being the most common.



#### RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES RESPONDENTS CURRENTLY IMPLEMENT





## More Spaces Are Needed to Nurture Leadership Development Among Women Producers

A common theme brought up by women technical service providers that we interviewed was that women often see themselves as secondary to their male counterparts and can be hesitant to engage or take leadership even when they are the co-owner or lead farmer. When asked if they currently engage in leadership roles, many respondents initially said no, but through deeper conversation realized they take on more leadership than they realized. Additionally, when asked about goals for their farm, many respondents expressed not just business or technical goals, but community-centered goals such as providing food for the community, education for students, wellness spaces, and generally wanting to give back and share resources. This shows that there is depth and breadth of untapped community leadership among Georgia's women farmers and more thoughtful spaces and training opportunities are needed to empower women farmers to learn and make decisions for their farms and in the agricultural sector.

## Next Steps: Intentions for the Years Ahead

American Farmland Trust's Southeast Program and Women for the Land Initiative will continue to engage in programming and resource development to serve Georgia's women in agriculture based on the needs identified in this assessment. Some activities we intend to conduct include:

- Foster Online Community for women in Georgia through the Women for the Land



National Network: [women-for-the-land.mn.co/share/Ot0GShvuCz9Z-SQ4?utm\\_source=manual](https://women-for-the-land.mn.co/share/Ot0GShvuCz9Z-SQ4?utm_source=manual)

- Host Learning Circles on key areas of importance such as farm transfer planning and technical skill building. To stay connected and learn about upcoming opportunities in your area: [farmland.org/sign-up](https://farmland.org/sign-up)
- Seek opportunities to build a cohort training similar to the successful model in North Carolina: North Carolina Cohort Training on Climate Resiliency Strategies and Local Food Systems—American Farmland Trust
- Continued collaboration with partner organizations across Georgia

To learn more about the Women for the Land Initiative and other programs in Georgia, visit [farmland.org/about/how-we-work/southeast](https://farmland.org/about/how-we-work/southeast) contact Mallory O'Steen at [mosteen@farmland.org](mailto:mosteen@farmland.org), or Nicole Gwishiri at [ngwishiri@farmland.org](mailto:ngwishiri@farmland.org).