

## 2009 Farmers Feast Keynote Address

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<http://www.georgiaorganics.org/conference/index.php?PHPSESSID=063e7df7a8e7275c51ccba17890bfe1c>

Please enjoy [this video](#) of the 2009 Farmers Feast Keynote Address, by Michael Pollan, with the introduction by Georgia Organics Board President, Will Harris of White Oak Pastures.

[View photographs of the conference here.](#)

[NEW PHOTOS ADDED, thanks to Tom Brodnax. Click here.](#)

**With more than 1,100 attendees, the Georgia Organics 12th Annual Conference and Trade Show was the largest in Georgia Organics history, demonstrating the growth of the good food movement in the South.**

Held March 20-21 at Agnes Scott College, the conference saw two days of sustainable local farm tours, panel discussions, and in-depth workshops on subjects ranging from the science of composting with worms to food security, and culminated with the keynote speech of best-selling author Michael Pollan, who charged attendees to take advantage of the openness of the Obama Administration and push for meaningful, lasting agriculture reform.

“Obama did not run on a platform of reforming food and agriculture, yet, I would argue he will have to tackle this issue sooner or later,” Pollan said. “Why? Unless he does, it will be impossible to make any progress on three of the issues he did run on: Energy independence. Climate change. The healthcare crisis. Why? Because the way we’re feeding ourselves is at the heart of all three problems.”

Pollan, author of *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and *In Defense of Food*, called for a new approach for the country’s agriculture industry, one that would link health, local economies, and food production for the first time.

“Here’s the core idea: we need to wean the American food system off its heavy 20th century diet of fossil fuels and put it back on a diet of contemporary sunshine. To the extent that we do that – at the level of policy and at the level of shopping for dinner – it diminishes the fossil fuel in our diet,” Pollan said. “This is easier said than done and will require changes at every link in the food chain: in the field, in the marketplace, and in the culture.”

In addition, Georgia Organics awarded its annual Land Stewardship Award, which was created by the Georgia Land Stewardship Association, now Georgia Organics, to honor an individual or individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to the tenets of organic agriculture – soil fertility, biodiversity, on-farm recycling, and water quality – and also the larger community through leadership, education, and outreach.

The 2009 Land Stewardship Award was presented to Daniel Parson for his influential leadership and work with emerging farmers, 12 years of organic growing, and an incredibly popular mushroom workshop. Parson is a former Georgia Organics board member, and has worked with dozens of groups, promoting the health and environmental advantages of organic farming, including Team Agriculture Georgia, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, North Georgia Technical College, and the African American Family Farmers Foundation.

The conference also saw the presentation of a new Georgia Organics award. The Barbara Petit Pollinator Award honors an individual or organization for outstanding community leadership in Georgia’s sustainable farming and food movement. The award acknowledges exceptional success in advancing Georgia Organics’ mission by preading—pollinating—the movement throughout community life, such as the food industry, faith communities, public agencies, schools, and institutions.

The award is named after Barbara Petit, a committed leader, culinary professional, and organizer who served as President of Georgia Organics from 2003-2009. She continues to serve the good food movement through her involvement in the Atlanta Local Food Initiative and Georgia Organics' Farm to School program. During her term as president, the organization evolved from a non-staffed, member, and program-driven nonprofit to a professional group with expanded outreach, programs, and communications, 1,300 members and five full-time staff. Petit's strategic drive, organizational tenacity and team-oriented approach shaped the organization in profound and lasting ways.

More Georgians than ever are choosing to eat local produce. The number of farmer's markets across the state increased 588 percent between 2003 and 2008. There's also been an explosion of interest in Community Supported Agriculture, which are grass-roots groups that directly link consumers to local farmers. There are 35 such groups in Georgia now, a 600 percent increase since 2003.