



Here We Grow Episode Six Transcription

Speaker 1 ([00:12](#)):

Welcome to here We Grow, a grassroots podcast by Southwest Georgia Farm Credit, focused on education and inspiring growth down on the farm at home, and in rural communities. Whether you're a farmer or farm, her advocate, land lover, or southern dweller, we have industry experts and homegrown leaders ready to share their insights with you. Thanks for listening.

Speaker 2 ([00:36](#)):

Here we grow again, episode six Seasons. Greetings, y'all. I'm your host, Billy Billings, a relationship manager with Southwest Georgia Farm Credit. Today I welcome Andrew Thorn, Megan Verner, and Fernando Jackson, aka Farmer Fredo, to the podcast. Welcome y'all. My guests join me today to share their experiences promoting the great industry of agriculture in the communities and classrooms across southwest Georgia. Andrew, Megan Redondo. Thanks for joining me. All right, y'all, I know I'm been hosting about five or six episodes now, but I'd like to tell you a little bit more about myself. I'm a graduate from the University of Georgia, from the Terry School of Business with a degree in finance. While I didn't know I was gonna be in agricultural and in agriculture when I was there, I have a family that is deeply rooted in agriculture in southwest Georgia for my now retired row cropping grandfather that worked at FSA prior to going out on his own and farming to my mother.

Speaker 2 ([01:29](#)):

The now farm citrus as well as citrus trees. My wife Catherine as well, graduated meters to Georgia with a ag business degree. And she's the driver in our family for our AG ventures. My first guess today is Andrew Thorn. Dr. Thorn is the department head for Agricultural Education and Communication Department at abac. Andrew grew up in the rural central state of Illinois and taught high school agriscience at Mount Pulaski High School. He then took on a state leadership role with the Illinois State Board of Education for Agricultural Education, where his primary responsibility was to aid agriscience teachers, administrators, and community members in developing and maintaining agricultural education programs. As a university faculty member, Dr. Thorn has previously worked at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign Campus, as well as the University of Florida, where he served as the teacher education coordinator and provided leadership for teacher professional development. His research expertise in this area in teaching and learning focuses on argumentation skills development, as well as he's the founding member of the multi-state research project that focuses on STEM emphasis in school-based agricultural programs. Andrew, welcome to the program.

Speaker 3 ([02:40](#)):

Billy, it's great to be here and you know, thank you for that introduction. So, you know, hopefully the the listeners don't don't give booze because I honestly think there's probably two, two things in there. Some folks might boo about. One, me being from Illinois and two having some degrees from University of Florida <laugh>. Right. I'm sure they'll forgive you. That's right. So we'll just have to overlook that because you know, at the end of the, at the end of the day, I'm just an old Illinois farm bu farm boy and after living in, in Georgia now here about three years there's a lot of similarities to to South Georgia as or as rural Illinois. So I'm happy to be here in Tifton at AAC in leading this fine department of agricultural education and communication.



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Speaker 3 ([03:25](#)):

I'll talk about a little bit more about that later. But I really want to say you know, I think as far as an industry and as far as you know, I'll say rural Georgia, and I think it even could be some of the urban areas that are involved in agriculture in the state of Georgia, is that agriculture is everywhere. So, you know, that's our industry and in, in our industry. We typically tend to be a little bit humble about sharing our story and in sharing the impact in which this industry has on this great state. By nature, we operate as independent contractors would rather keep our heads to the ground. You talked about that at the beginning in your intro, that that, you know, we're glad that we have people that love what they do. So a lot of our producers, a lot of our folks that are involved in this industry tend to keep their heads down and say, you know, just let us keep doing what we love to do.

Speaker 3 ([04:16](#)):

And so that's great. And what do they tend to do as you know, we use the land to produce the highest quality food and fiber in the world. And a lot of those products are come right here in our home state of, of Georgia. So I think however you know, we need to be able to share that impact and, and tell those connections that are made at the local level and within our rural communities. And I think that we could do that a little bit better. Perhaps some folks might say that we need to too, our horn a little bit but really think about holistically as that industry. When we think about Georgia agriculture in South Georgia we have a high quality forestry industry, a peanuts, cotton melons, and some of the other ones that you mentioned.

Speaker 3 ([05:03](#)):

And I think across there the public can see that. And you know, we talked about some local farm gate receipts that that you may have shared. There's a, a vital awareness across that needs to happen across the southeast, both in rural and urban alike. I think that there's a little bit more to the story that we could be telling, and those are the connections in which I would call and where we touch what I would refer to as the input and output sector of this industry. So what I mean by input is, you know, what, what goes into a producer to be able to produce the product what's a result as the, as the product creation and where it goes from there. And that can be all the things from, you know, tire shops to trucking companies, to accounting agencies and manufacturing.

Speaker 3 ([05:54](#)):

Those are all touched by agriculture within this state and across the nation. So all across the state, they're you know, they're also middle and high school agriculture programs, which I primarily do a lot of my work with. Those would be, you know, things, what's most notable about that is, you know, within school based ed and ffa, and they work to educate students in and about agriculture. So what I mean by educate in agriculture is really the preparation for the next generation that will be the producers, the entrepreneurs, and the employees of the agriculture industry. As you previously mentioned, one in seven resident is involved in the agriculture industry. I, I would guesstimate, I might argue the fact that, that I think that that's a little bit too low is because we don't always consider a lot of the inputs and the outputs that come from this industry and the other jobs that they touch, or the other jobs that they make available because we have those employees in, in the south in across the state of Georgia.



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Speaker 3 ([06:58](#)):

We also then educate students about agriculture within school based ag, ag education. So I think what I mean by that is that we're working with students that would become the consumers of tomorrow and having them be educated on the agricultural practices and develop and appreciation for and knowledge of agriculture practices is vital to the future of the industry. So when we have things, the legislative issues that come up that impact agriculture, that at least there is an awareness for other individuals that may not be in direct connection any longer to the agriculture industry. But I think through ag education that could be helped to at least have well educated consumers. You know, and it's even just simple things like you know, I spend a lot of time in grocery stores and we see that something's gluten free and it's a meat product.

Speaker 3 ([07:52](#)):

Many of us in this industry know that well gluten comes from wheat, and last time I checked that you know, your hamburger didn't have any wheat that was in it. And so it's just those things, those education educational things about agriculture. And then as a portion of that, all of the students are FFA members and therefore then have likely have a local impact that's seen within their local community and their local community's economy through their sae, which is an acronym that's for supervised agricultural experiences. These are out of classroom experiences that where students would work within the industry, conduct research to address local agricultural questions, perhaps or they may even own their own enterprise. So students become part of the local economy, especially with lo owning their own enterprise as through buying feed, buying trailers, buying a vehicle, buying lawn mowers, et cetera.

Speaker 3 ([08:53](#)):

So we think, so then my, you know, as I sit here in Tipton and I start to think about how do we capture that student's interest to remain within that industry and expand on that because that's really the pinnacle that really agriculture thrives on. So we can have that positive impact in Georgia from, from the young folks that I work with. Also spend some time thinking about that. As many of you know, that that I'm at Abe, but many folks don't know that this department that I'm the head of is the largest program of its kind east of the Mississippi River and Ag education. And so who would know that AAC and Sifton Georgia has probably the third largest ag education at the collegiate level program across the, the nation. And we have a wonderful ag communications major as well.

Speaker 3 ([09:45](#)):

So I look at that and I think, I think about how do we tell that story across South Georgia, across the state of Georgia even into Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina as we try to connect you know, for that larger impact. And, you know, what I, what I have to do and think about in my role as a department head on Abba's campus Daily is I have to share that message and how do we fit in and, and fit with the larger mission of the college? If not, if I don't share that and tooth that horn, then sometimes we're overlooked. So I think back and apply those same things to our industry holistically is, is you know, really trying to get out there and kind of educate those folks on that message. Letting folks know the impact that has on this industry and the other segments in which we could touch.



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Speaker 2 ([10:35](#)):

Right. Those are all great points, Andrew and I, I appreciate and we appreciate what you're doing for the agriculture community cuz I mean, while there are kids that are at home, their families are involved in agriculture and they're more likely to turn to agriculture than others, we gotta capture those families aren't in agriculture. And we gotta get I guess the the new entries to the agricultural world because I mean, every single day there's more people to feed and there's gonna be more challenges ahead of us. So I appreciate those points and I appreciate you what you're doing for aback in the in southwest Georgia.

Speaker 3 ([11:09](#)):

Yeah, thank you.

Speaker 2 ([11:09](#)):

Our next speaker is Megan Burner. Megan graduated from New Mexico State University with a bachelor's in agricultural business and economics and a minor in marketing. She currently teaches agricultural business at Commodor Kanye's College and Career Academy in Albany. Megan is also the office manager for her husband's farm equipment dealership Elite agco, which is also located in Albany. Along with her husband Megan owns BF Livestock, a seed stock operation for Angus and Herefords. Welcome Megan.

Speaker 4 ([11:42](#)):

Hey guys, thanks for having me on here. I'm excited. This will be the second thing I've gotten to do with you guys.

Speaker 2 ([11:49](#)):

That's right. You were in our 2021 summer issue of the wire grass, correct?

Speaker 4 ([11:54](#)):

Yes. And y'all have the best magazine. It's one I look forward to getting every few months. Well,

Speaker 2 ([12:01](#)):

We, we appreciate that. And that was a great article and you and your family and so after, after kind of giving your background and shout out to New Mexico, that's my home state Albuquerque's where I was born. Yep. Okay. Just kind of give us your points following Andrew there and just kind of tell us about what you teach a little bit, kind of where you've got your career, the challenges your family faces in your agricultural ventures, and then we'll kinda loop it back and start a little conversation.

Speaker 4 ([12:29](#)):

I took some notes while Dr was speaking because his explanation of education was perfect from start to finish. He said it better than I could have. Agriculture is everywhere we need to share it. And those are kind of where I come at and why I decided to get into teaching. Obviously cuz you rattled off my degree



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there, I don't have an educational degree, but I got this opportunity to teach at, we call it four C Academy for short in Doty County mainly because those are the consumers of tomorrow and if you know, who's gonna share and share that love of agriculture if you don't get into teaching. And so I jumped in and we do an urban ag program there at, at four C. This'll be my third year teaching. So I've got 10th graders this year.

Speaker 4 ([13:30](#)):

We start 'em in ninth grade and we keep 'em all the way to 12th and and 11th to 12th grade years, they finish their pathway in 10th and then in their 11th and 12th grade year they are on work-based learning internships, either with me with another program at four C or out in the community. We think it's really important to get them industry experience, whatever that experience might be that they're interested in. Right. We have a huge hydroponic greenhouse that should be finished I'd say in January 5,000 square feet. We are going to, it's gonna be an enterprise for four C and my kids, so they'll get paid to work in it. And we are gonna sell the produce back to the school system, so the school system will have fresh local food. And then we've got 40 raised garden bed boxes that we push that food out into the community. So Doty County and, and farmer Fredo is gonna talk way more about this and does a better job at it than me, but it's a food insecure and food desert community. And so on that side I really, instead of selling produce, I want to get it out in the community as much as possible. So just last week we harvested about 200 ish pounds of collard and donated that all into the local community through the Parks and Rights Department.

Speaker 2 ([14:54](#)):

That's awesome right there. Well, I I will say this will be my second year of having a, I guess a bigger than normal backyard garden. And it truly is unbelievable what you can grow in the dirt, in the space in your backyard and like you just touched on and like our next guest is gonna touch on even further it really is amazing to see what you can grow in your backyard. I mean, I grew enough for my family and the neighbors that lived on both sides and a couple down the street <laugh> it really enjoyable. And I mean exactly. You can quickly see how you could, if they were growing something you could quickly get back to the barter and trade system really quickly. And I mean, going through the pandemic, going into grocery stores and seeing a lot of shelves that were empty that got, that's what got me and my wife fired up to do this and we were able to do it a lot better than we thought. So so what are,

Speaker 4 ([15:40](#)):

What Dr. Thorn said, you know, you can grow everything. I mean, there really isn't anything you can't grow in South Georgia

Speaker 2 ([15:47](#)):

Exactly. At some point. Exactly. Before we move on to our next guest, I wanted to ask you one more question from exposing children to ag in the classroom and in the outdoors, kinda what is your biggest takeaway? What do you see or what's just a, a story from one of your, one of your children that you'd like to share?



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Speaker 4 ([16:05](#)):

So Albany hasn't had, I'm the first ag program in eight years. And so and before that, I'm not sure if they went to the expo or not, but we went to the Sunbelt Expo when it was in town and just being able to expose my small group of kids to that kind of an event with, you know, the different producers and all the drug companies and manufacturers and equipment I think it was just really eye opening for them to see in, you know, for their own eyes all of the different sectors of egg and all of it that it, it encompasses, you know, it's not just that row crop farmer that's, you know, doing peanuts and cotton and corn that they kind of see on a regular basis or it's not just, you know, their family that works with the chicken plants.

Speaker 4 ([16:52](#)):

You know, there are a lot of variety of jobs. There's jobs where you get dirty, there's jobs, you use computers, there's, you know, jobs that you drive, things, there's jobs you use your hands, there's all kinds. And so that was probably the most recent experience. And then I guess the other thing I'd add is we did this competition with part of it partnered with Nassau and it's with the central Florida University where we got moon soil and we're in this national competition to see what we could grow outta the moon soil. And so since we're in South Georgia, we picked peanuts and and it's been really fun to have them watch peanuts grow firsthand and explain them peanuts. And then it just so happened that it's right when we're picking peanuts. And so I got to bring some of that in to school and have them, you know, look at that. And so that's been a, we try to, to do a lot of hands on projects for

Speaker 2 ([17:51](#)):

Them. All right. Now I lied. One more question. Looking back, what, what is the biggest insight you can give to another female looking to get in the ag industry or one that's in the ag industry that wants to advance her career?

Speaker 4 ([18:04](#)):

I'd say for females, just keep asking and just keep trying. You never know what door will open when and just keep yourself out there. You'll get a lot of nos. I poke at my husband constantly. There has not been a single thing in his entire life that he has not. Well, there's been, once we we left, there's been once, but anyways, for the most part, he's not ever had somebody tell him no. Every job interview he's made, every time he asks for something, he gets a yes 99% of the time. And in my case, that's not, you know, been the same response. I get a lot of no, and that's okay. It's just, it just makes you work harder and it makes those wins taste a little bit better. Honestly, and the realization when you do get that, yes, and you do get your foot in the door and you do get started and you are successful at seeing the, I don't wanna say shock, that you're really good at your job or whatever it might be, but just the proving them wrong that you were capable of doing it and you know, proving them right, that you were correct and making them take that chance on hiring you or, you know, giving you the job.

Speaker 2 ([19:17](#)):

Right. That's great input. I'm seeing it firsthand with my mother who is a career government employee and now she's back returned to the farm and working harder than she's probably ever worked, but



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having more fun than I think she's ever had too. So really good to see the fruits of her labor and that pun was intended. So. Alright, well, Andrew and Megan, that was great points. So we're gonna sum it up perfectly with our third speaker, Mr. Fredo Jackson, aka Farmer Fredo. He has worked in agriculture outreach to low income communities and food production for more than a decade. He was named the 2019 Farmer of the Year by the Georgia Department of Education and continues to serve the Darty County School System Nutrition Program through 200 interactive teaching gardens throughout the community. As executive director of Flint River Fresh, Mr. Jackson actually manages and provides technical assistance for a combined total of four acres of urban farms, 237 garden beds, three quarters of an acre of urban orchards and coquit dardy and suer counties. And his passion for turning green spaces into food spaces motivates him to cultivating relationships around the community, gardening and urban farming, focusing on conserving natural resources. Welcome Farmer Fredo.

Speaker 5 ([20:33](#)):

How you doing, Billy?

Speaker 2 ([20:34](#)):

Doing great. Good to see you. Good

Speaker 5 ([20:36](#)):

To, good to see you again. You know, it's always good to, to share our story and get an opportunity to talk about the, the great work that we're doing and in our part of the state. And so I'm just really just thankful for this platform, platform to share our successes and as well as our partnerships and our opportunities to grow.

Speaker 2 ([20:52](#)):

Right. Well I, I've had the fortune opportunity to come up and see some of your workspaces or food spaces. I like that. So kind of tell us a little bit more about what you got going on up in these counties. Yeah,

Speaker 5 ([21:04](#)):

So Flint River Fresh, we are a five year old nonprofit. Again, our hub is Doherty County. And as we got into the work, we realized that Doherty County itself is the, is the hub or southwest Georgia. But we also realized that there were individuals that were dealing with food insecurities. And we know we've seen like the platform where we gave out like fresh produce boxes or people stand line and go to like the food bank, but we kind of took like a different approach about like, well, let's teach a person how to fish so they can feed themselves for like a lifetime. So we looked at how we can develop partnerships that could meet that goal, but also help us sustain the four pillars that make up our organization. So Flint River, fresh, we stand upon four things in particular.

Speaker 5 ([21:48](#)):

Number one, we believe in young people. So we try to partner with organizations, groups to empower young people through agriculture to be the future leaders that they are and to give them a platform and



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a space for them to voice themselves to create the change that they wanna see in their own family and their own communities. And so that's number one. Number two, we also know that we're surrounded by, by farmers. Some of 'em are like one acre land. Some of 'em as we talked about might be on like a thousand acres of land, but we also know that within our community that some of what they grow in the field rarely makes it back to those individuals that have a need for it. And so we try to develop a bridge or be a fresh food connector to bring what they grow in the field directly to the individuals that need it.

Speaker 5 ([22:30](#)):

But in also looking at institutions and other partnerships that can also benefit from having fresh produce more accessible in whatever they might do. And then thirdly, what we looked at is that we are Flint River Fresh, well the urban agriculture arm for the Flint River Soil Water Conservation District. So we also look at how can we teach people how to protect and love on and care for Mother Earth. So looking at programs that fit that, that help with soil health, look at programs that might deal with like our water, our air our trees, our livestock, you name it. And, and bringing that back out into the community. And then also like the last thing that we look at is like, how can we develop what we just, we call like a community base, a community focus, and all the work and stuff that we do. Like, we like to be the behind the scenes organization to allow for others to get the platform to be able to shine and implement whatever programs that they want to do. So those are like the four things that we stand upon. And through that we've been known for some of the stuff that you talked about out in the community

Speaker 2 ([23:29](#)):

Mm-Hmm. <Affirmative>. So for our listeners and for me personally, how can we further support Flint River Fresh?

Speaker 5 ([23:34](#)):

Well, well first and foremost, like we, we believe that we have developed a model that can be replicated. So from our approach to community partnership gardens. And what that means is that we know that there are individuals throughout our region that will want to either educate people how to grow food or maybe they want to create a space where people in the community can come in and harvest for themselves or maybe create a space where they can donate a portion of their land for someone who doesn't have access to land to be able to grow for themselves as well. And then secondly, what we looked at is that some communities we might can't do a vegetable garden or we might can't do raised garden boxes, but maybe there's an opportunity to do community orchards. So something that kind of like stemmed from like interacting with your mom was like, Hey, we can grow citrus trees and grows and you can produce so much off of that one tree and how many people that you can feed off of it.

Speaker 5 ([24:27](#)):

So looking at a sustainability model. And then the third thing that we've also looked at is like, how can we replicate our fresh produce box program? But we're literally going to the farmers collecting what



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they have in season, paying them outright up front and bringing it back into the community as a form of social enterprise. So again, we're paying the farmers, we're getting out to the community for people to support. And so we're looking at how those partnerships can engage. And then fourthly, something new that's happened with us a lot with Flint Refresh is how we can work in advocate advocacy. So learning how to work with your local government, your local city municipality your, your congressman, your senator, your state representative in all those organizations on how they can bring resources directly back in our community that could benefit us for like the long run.

Speaker 5 ([25:12](#)):

Like I was really amazed at like this past year how we're able to go up to the Georgia State capital and sit down and have a discussion about our platform for eradicating food and securities and bring to the table our partners and our successes. And so the, the collaboration, like what we're doing with you guys today, just telling our story also asks to show like the need because like the stats say like one out of one out of eight people in Georgia is dealing with food insecurities, but if you come down to more of a rural community, which we're in, is almost like one out of four people are making that hard choice related to where the next meal is gonna come from. And then if you look at, if it wasn't for our school system, how many of our children wouldn't have like breakfast or lunch provided for 'em.

Speaker 5 ([25:55](#)):

And so what we're looking at is using the number one industry in our state, which is ag, that \$7 billion industry, that it is how we can partner and make sure that no neighbor goes without like a, a healthy meal on the table. That's well provided. And so the other partnerships that we're expanding upon in the years to come is looking at nutritional education, cooking demonstrations, and partner with agencies that can like bring that in. So that's why we do a lot of work with our health department our local hospitals, our local like boys and girls clubs and things like that because we understand it's just not so much about let me show you how to grow, but it's also about once you got the food, how do you bring it back home and prepare it like in a healthier more sustainable sort of way.

Speaker 2 ([26:40](#)):

Right. I will say, I mean your, your body is a machine and you get what you put in it. The better you eat, the better your body will respond, the healthy you'll be. So going into the winter months what would you tell your backyard gardener or someone looking to grow their first garden ever, what are some of the winter crops that they can grow in their elevated garden boxes? I know it's limited compared to the summer, but

Speaker 5 ([27:02](#)):

Yeah, it is. But but like how we always talk about that. So you have your, your, of course you have your greens, so that's your collar greens, your broccolis, your cabbages, your kale, your Swiss charge, your spinach, your lettuce you know, also like Flint River Fresh. We do these demonstration sites like at the Sunbelt Ag Expo. So one of the things that it's called is the, is the Backyard Garden experience. So in addition to what crops you can grow, we also try to introduce like new technologies. So how you can utilize like your smartphone and automatic timing sort of system to regulate your water things like that



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as well. And then we also look at the ways that we can minimize weeds. So, you know, one thing that deters a lot of people from coming to the garden is like, I hate weeding.

Speaker 5 ([27:45](#)):

I have like this horrible story like my grandmother grandfather waking me up early in the morning to pick pig weeds out the garden. It was an endless process. So we look at the use of cover crops, landscape, fabric, things like that to minimize the amount of weeding that somebody has during the garden. Cause I always feel that if a young person's experiencing garden that focus should be like plant something and harvesting something and eating something, if those become their memories, then they're more likely to go back and repeat that back to someone versus oh my gosh, we, it is nas everywhere, it's mosquitoes everywhere. I'm getting bit and I can't take this, I can't take the heat. But it's something about in the mid of summer, walking into a field, opening up a fresh watermelon or walking to a tree and picking a plum or a peach right off the tree.

Speaker 5 ([28:32](#)):

That's a whole different like memory and a vibe, but it's also hidden those benefits to nutrients that you would need because that watermelon is hydrating you in the midst of like the summer heat. That cucumber also can hydrate you. And so I know you asked me about the winter months, but I'm like, we, we, like we say we grow food year round here in Georgia. Like I tell people the only time we take time off is because it, we can only produce okra and purple hole peas. So we kind of stop, but we still are growing, but we just kind of stop because who wants to be out there picking okra with, with sweaty arms, you know, I mean it's just cutting you up. You don't want that feeling

Speaker 2 ([29:07](#)):

Right. I've done that once or twice and it is not fun. Megan touched on that they got a new 5,000 square foot greenhouse that will be going to feed the local schools. Tell us about your partnership with Phoe, Phoebe Putney and the the local high schools.

Speaker 5 ([29:23](#)):

Yeah, so, so actually we're in partnership as well with like four C. So four C with our agri business program. We, we, we play a support role and then we're also looking at some new partnerships creating like enterprise with the young kids. And so with Phoebe Phoebe is the, I would call them like our foundational partner because they've also provided in Doherty County of AC and a half of land that we have at the Fifth Avenue Community Garden where we have raised garden boxes, inground, garden plots, as well as a community orchard. But then we also partner with Phoebe, especially during their, their mobile units that are going out into the different areas that don't have regular access to healthcare or a clinic. And so we're providing fresh produce for people that come through and get a, a vaccination or get their blood pressure checked and things like that as well.

Speaker 5 ([30:12](#)):

And then in return also we're looking at other opportunities that we can work within like the Phoebe system whether it be a I like to call it like a, a, a farm to pharmacy sort of concept. So as somebody



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with like prediabetic condition can maybe look at a prescription of a box of fresh produce and seeing how that can, how that can benefit them and on managing their blood levels and things like that as well. And then also with the school system, what we try to do is in partnership with the Georgia school nutrition where again, I was nominated for Farmer of the Year for the work, the stuff that we were doing. But the idea, the concept was every month in Georgia we have some local farmers that could probably grow enough for entire school system. How can we take what that farmer has on the field breaking into the school system the way that it's prepared and used for the kids themselves to have a, a farm fresh meal to lease two or three times a month in the school system.

Speaker 5 ([31:09](#)):

So we work in partnership with a local distributor that kind of helps us with the transportation and the refrigeration and we bring in a local farmer as well to kind of help with the produce. And then the third thing that we do at the schools is that Flint will fresh, we have a farm to school coordinator. And so what she does is that she works directly with the schools with the planting, with the management, with the, the fertilizing and with the seeds. And what we try to do is take the harvest to serve the school in two different capacities. One to be able to take the harvest and work with the cafeteria or the school nutritional staff to see if there's an innovative way that we can serve it in the cafeterias with the school. And then the second thing that we look at is that schools themselves, as we talked about that one in four, one and six individuals dealing with food insecurities, they're individuals that might either work at the school or families that children attend the school.

Speaker 5 ([32:03](#)):

That can also benefit from having a box of fresh produce as, as just to help 'em out. So rather than what we grow in the garden, just kind of like go the ways we always look at once we have a harvest, what's the mechanism, what's the, the pathway or the bridge that we can connect this to somebody in need. And then the kids themselves, they really like, like I love, I love win it's carrot season because they all remember the size of that carrot seed and when we planted it and then all of a sudden we show up in February and tell 'em to pull that carrot out and everybody just like loses their mind because not only did we plant a carrot that was orange, but we also planted a carrot that was yellow, another carrot that was red to show the diversity of the food that you can grow. And so those sort of interactions and, and story times and, and so we're even looking at in the coming months of like being with the kids, not only growing in the garden with them, but doing taste testing, doing cooking demonstrations, but even just sitting down with them and reading books about like c Jane grow out, grow a tomato, and just interacting with kids on all grade levels. Cause like we say, we work with kids from pre-K up until high school day students and show the joy and the benefit of what agriculture can do.

Speaker 2 ([33:15](#)):

That's awesome. Well, I will say I'm gonna come next year during the carrot planning session because I was only able to grow a one inch carrot this year. And I mean, we had about 50 of those and I think we ate 'em in one dish. So I'll be coming up for that. And and we just gotta change the narrative. I mean, as Americans we've gotten so used or slash or lazy you could say of just it's easy to convenient to go to the grocery store, but after growing my produce in the backyard, a I think it's a lot better. I might be biased, but b it's just, it's humbling and it's just nice. I mean, in times of need or I mean a pandemic when the,



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when the shelves are empty, you, you know, you got in the back backyard. My takeaway from this episode and several of the episodes prior to this is the next time you see a farmer, make sure to thank them.

Speaker 2 ([33:57](#)):

While our veterans are fighting for our freedom the farmers are fighting for our food day in and day out. And without them we wouldn't have the the world we live in. So that time, this concludes our podcast today, Andrew Megan, arm Frito, we appreciate y'all joining us. To read a transcript of today's podcast, visit our website at S w G A farm credit.com and make sure you subscribe to our podcast on your favorite app to get notified of new episodes as well as follow us on Facebook and Instagram for great industry resources. Thanks for listening and happy holidays.