



Chapter 1: Agriculture & Food Security



Why this matters

The food system includes everyone involved in growing, transporting, and consuming food. For this system to work well and withstand shocks over time, it depends on a careful balance of three factors: food must be affordable, farmers must earn enough to stay in business, and the weather must be predictable. Extreme events, like freezes that destroy crops, heatwaves that endanger outdoor workers, and hurricanes that halt food deliveries, disrupt this balance.

What's happening here?

Periods of drought, extreme heat, and flooding are expected to intensify and occur more often in our region, all of which can disrupt food production and supply chains. Addressing these problems can be costly to farmers, not only in terms of money but also in time, labor, and limited farm resources. Alachua County's CAP aims to support local farmers with resiliency strategies that also promote broad community access to affordable, healthy food.

The CAP prioritizes three approaches for a stronger future of agriculture:

Protect farmland

Strengthen local food markets

Support climate-smart farming practices

What does the CAP include?

The main strategies to improve the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of the local food system include:

- **Protecting farmland using conservation easements and targeted land strategies**
- **Growing the agricultural workforce and supporting entrepreneurship programs**
- **Strengthening connections between local farmers and consumers**
- **Supporting climate-smart farming that improves soil health, conserves water, and protects water quality**
- **Expanding on-farm use of organic waste compost as fertilizer**

Program Highlight

Alachua County participates in the American Farm Trust Land Transfer Navigator Program, which trains staff to assist farmers and ranchers in transferring their lands to the next generation and keeping the land in agriculture through conservation easements.

How can residents contribute?

Support the local food economy

- Buy from local farmers and markets
- Dine at businesses that source locally

Reduce food waste

- Compost food waste at home and reduce excess waste

Give time and resources to help improve food security

- Volunteer at a local food bank or community kitchen to help neighbors access foods