

## Georgia Grown & Going Green!

The Georgia Restaurant Association (GRA), and the Georgia Department of Agriculture are determined to make “Georgia Grown!” and “Going Green” rallying cries for Georgia growers and producers and Georgia’s restaurant industry in 2008 and beyond.

[The Green Foodservice Alliance](#) (GFA) is a collaboration of the GRA, the American Culinary Federation (ACF), Georgia Organics, and the Georgia Grown program of the Georgia Department of Agriculture. The GFA’s mission is to create and implement “Sustainable Best Practices” in the foodservice industry.

The GFA began life in the fall of 2007, when a small group of concerned individuals, came together to create a Local, Sustainable & Green Roundtable, under the guidance of the GRA. The group’s objective was to explore ways to make locally grown products more accessible to Georgia’s nationally recognized restaurant community. Within a couple of months, interest in the LS&G roundtable had grown so much that the organizers had to rethink their original concept. To respond to the growing interest and participation, the group’s leaders repositioned and renamed the effort, the [Green Foodservice Alliance](#).

“Initially, a small group of us went to GRA CEO, Ron Wolf, seeking the GRA’s support for this important initiative,” said GFA founder Holly Elmore. “We knew that if we were going to make any real noise, we would have to find a voice that could help us take our message statewide.”

The first big break for the GFA came when the group partnered with the GA Dept. of Agriculture to host a luncheon for members of the Georgia General Assembly featuring Georgia grown and produced products. The luncheon was attended by many members of the Georgia legislature, and attendees were surprised by a visit from Georgia Governor Sonny Purdue.

During the luncheon, members of the Georgia House honored the GFA with a formal Resolution, demonstrating their support for the group’s efforts.

The GFA found a true champion at the Dept. of Agriculture in Deputy Commissioner, and former Speaker of the House for the Georgia Legislature, Terry Coleman. Long a champion of promoting the use of Georgia grown products in Georgia’s restaurants, Mr. Coleman quickly saw the benefit of partnering with the GFA to promote Georgia grown products in Georgia.

Less than a month after hosting the high-profile luncheon, the GFA hosted ["The Green Restaurant Revolution: A Conversation with Ted Turner"](#) at The Carter Center in Atlanta. Ted Turner - environmentalist, media entrepreneur, and the founder and chairman of

Ted's Montana Grill - joined Ted's Montana Grill President and CEO George McKerrow on stage for a candid Q&A on ways to enhance environmental stewardship and local sustainability. Attended by more than 200 members of the foodservice industry, the breakfast received widespread media coverage.

After just a few short months, the GFA is well on its way to becoming “the” voice of the Local, Sustainable & Green revolution in Georgia, and the GRA is committed to helping it grow.