



SOUTHEAST

TRANSITION TO ORGANIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

GROWING CONFIDENCE AND CONNECTIONS: A SOUTHEAST TOPP MENTORSHIP JOURNEY

The Southeast TOPP (Transition to Organic Partnership Program) mentorship program has proven transformative for one mentee, Trish Foster, whose experience with their mentor, Reggie Ramos, exemplifies the lasting impact of hands-on guidance, community connections, and educational support.

From the very beginning, working with Reggie opened doors for Trish to a wider network of organic farmers and local initiatives. Reggie's deep roots in the community and his willingness to share contacts made it possible for Trish to seek advice from experienced farmers nearby—people familiar with their unique situation and farm environment. This camaraderie fostered an environment where no question felt too small or too dumb to ask, encouraging Trish to embrace challenges and try new methods on her farm. While geographical distance occasionally made face-to-face meetings with Reggie difficult to arrange, both mentor and mentee remained committed to the process, adapting as needed to continue their dialogue and support.



Trish and Reggie's mentorship through the SE TOPP program flourished at the Lean Farming Workshop in Asheville, NC, where they explored new tools like the paper pot system and discussed adapting innovations to Georgia soils. Their shared curiosity and openness created a dynamic learning environment—Trish gained confidence, and Reggie became a more approachable mentor. Their collaboration was mutually enriching. When Trish introduced vacuuming as a pest control method, Reggie adopted it on his own farm, showing how both mentor and mentee benefited from the exchange.

For Trish, SE TOPP was a turning point in building Grow2B Farm. The program provided expert guidance, community support, and an education stipend that helped her fast-track her organic certification. By the end of the mentorship, she had submitted her Organic Systems Plan. SE TOPP empowers new organic farmers like Trish by fostering shared learning, offering financial support, and connecting them with experienced mentors—laying the foundation for a thriving, sustainable future in agriculture.

Learn More:



www.organictransition.org/region/southeast



United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
National Organic Program
Transition to Organic Partnership Program

