# WORKSHOP AGENDA

## FROM FIELD TO SUITE: BUILDING LOCAL SUPPLY CHAINS FOR HOSPITALITY

**Date:** November 5, 2026
**Location:** Accelerate Augusta | Augusta, Georgia
**Hosted by:** Georgia Center of Innovation

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**8:30 – 9:30 A.M.**
**Check-in and Networking**
Join us for coffee, light refreshments, and networking with peers before the event begins.

**9:30 – 9:40 A.M.**
**Welcome and Opening Remarks**
Brief welcome from the Georgia Center of Innovation and overview of today's workshop. Sessions will focus on creating stronger connections between Georgia producers and hospitality buyers.

**Speaker:**
Madison Jarvis – AgTech Industry Engagement Manager, Georgia Center of Innovation, Georgia Department of Economic Development

**9:40 – 10:15 A.M.**
**Industry Snapshot: What Hospitality Needs Right Now**
Get a better understanding of what hotel and restaurants need from their suppliers, from consistency and competitive pricing to reliable logistics and food safety. Take a look at the common challenges local producers are facing.

**Speakers:**
Scott Bierman – Vice President of Government Affairs, Georgia Restaurant Association

Hav Usry – Partner, Fat Man's Hospitality

**10:15 – 10:50 A.M.**
**Session 1: Getting "Hospitality Ready"**
Thoughtful packaging and labeling can help local products meet hospitality buyer expectations while maintaining a strong brand identity. Examine shelf-life considerations and common packaging and branding pitfalls to avoid.

**Speaker:**
Scott Bunson – Packaging Sales Advisor, DFI Solutions in Print

**"The Role of Packaging in the Agricultural Supply Chain"**
Packaging choices can impact product quality, transportation efficiency, and the journey from farm to buyer. Learn how pallet configuration, transportation efficiency, product protection, and the specific needs of hospitality buyers can influence how successfully agricultural products move through the supply chain.

**Speaker:**
Mary Anna Bentley – Technical Sales Representative, Pratt Agriculture

**10:50 – 11 A.M**
**Break**

**11 A.M. – 12 P.M.**
**Session 2: Connecting to Buyers**
Dive deeper into how hotels and institutions source products and what it takes to become a supplier. Explore the differences between working with distributors and building direct relationships with chefs, along with key considerations that can make a product "list ready."

**Speakers:**
John Strealy – Purchaser, What Chefs Want

Sarah Cro - Owner/Chef, Finch & Fifth

**Moderated by:**
Erin Arneson Purvis - Seafood Specialist, UGA Marine Extension and Georgia Sea Grant

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**12 – 1 P.M.**
**Networking Lunch**

**1 – 1:45 P.M.**
**Session 3: Scaling and Infrastructure**
Is your business ready to take on larger buyers? Delve into the operational considerations behind sustainable growth, including capacity, infrastructure, and identifying gaps before scaling. Learn how to expand your business while maintaining the quality and consistency that buyers expect.

**Speaker:**
Aubrey Lenyard – Co-Founder and Director, Georgia Tech Food and Beverage Accelerator

**1:45 – 2:15 P.M.**
**Session 4: Tourism Trends and Opportunities**
Discover how local products and flavors can become a meaningful part of the visitor experience. Explore emerging travel trends and visitor behaviors to uncover opportunities for agriculture and hospitality to work together to attract visitors, drive spending, and create more authentic Georgia experiences.

**Speaker:**
Sarah Anne Rhodes – Regional Tourism Marketing Manager, Georgia Department of Economic Development

**2:15 – 2:45 P.M.**
**Session 5: People First: Mental Health in Agriculture & Hospitality**
Building a successful business takes more than a strong product – it takes healthy people behind it. Have an honest conversation about the stress, burnout, and long hours that can come with agriculture and hospitality, and find practical ways to build healthier, more sustainable practices while growing your business.

**Speaker:**
Jennifer Dunn – Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Field Operations South, Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Development Disabilities

**2:45 – 3 P.M.**
**Closing Discussion: Pathways Forward**
Wrap up the day by connecting key takeaways to practical next steps. Revisit the resources and opportunities shared throughout the workshop and leave with a clearer path forward for strengthening your business and connecting with Georgia's hospitality market.

**Speaker:**
Madison Jarvis – AgTech Industry Engagement Manager, Georgia Center of Innovation, Georgia Department of Economic Development

**3:15 P.M.**
**Facilitated Networking and Adjourn**
Connect with fellow attendees, exchange ideas, and continue the conversation.

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