10 ATLANTA FOOD EXPERTS SHARE 2015 FARM-TO-TABLE TRENDS/PREDICTIONS

January 14, 2015
The farm-to-table movement is one that is constantly changing year after year. From its early beginnings, we’ve seen the restaurant industry evolve and embrace sustainability in their menu offerings, as well as break ground on bringing more flavor to vegetables – elevating them to menu standouts. New services offering the freshest produce and meats delivered directly to your door, price drops in protein and restaurants growing their own veggies on site are just a few of the new trends we’ve begun seeing in the space, and are what will lead the way throughout the year. To that end, we’ve asked ten notable chefs, farmers and thought leaders in the industry to give us their predictions on where they see farm-to-table going in 2015.

**Thaddeus Barton - Chef, The Farmhouse at Serenbe**

[http://serenbefarmhouse.com](http://serenbefarmhouse.com)

“What I would love to happen is that we no longer have to use the label “farm-to-table.” It would be amazing if there was an understanding in the chef/restaurant community, that in order to sustain what we do and provide the public with good food, sourcing local from farms and producers is a necessity.

As you might know, we are in the growth stages of a more diversified farm culture in our very
own Chattahoochee Hills community. With the demand and support of the people in our area I would predict that we will see a growth in agriculture business and jobs in our city of 40,000 acres of agricultural opportunity. Having better access to these farms will translate to the final product on the plate, our menus will be able to change more often with the inspired bounty of the seasons.

My further prediction for the future is the decline in organic certification. There are many farms practicing natural and responsible methods of farming, and with the public becoming more educated about their food source, it will take some pressure off the farmer to become certified.”

Judith Winfrey - President, PeachDish

https://www.peachdish.com

“I think meal kit delivery is going to be a huge trend in 2015. We’re already seeing it grow in other parts of the country and I predict it’s going to explode in the Southeast this year. Our business PeachDish works directly with organic farmers throughout Georgia to source the finest quality produce and proteins and puts them together with interesting, delicious, easy-to-follow recipes and pre-measured ingredients. Then we ship it straight to your door for you to cook at home. It’s an amazingly fun, healthy and innovative way to enjoy dinner every night. As this technology catches on, I think you’ll see more and more customers who want the farm to just ship it to their house. I would love to pilot a CSA that delivers this way.”
"Kale is dead, long live cauliflower. The return of classic cocktails. I think many folks are a bit
tired of the "over-thought, multiple ingredient, gotta have Fernet in it" cocktail. Look for classics
like Manhattans, Old Fashioneds, Sazeracs and Sidecars to take center stage on the bar rail. Flip
the script. Vegetables will become the main event: meat & seafood will take a supporting role as
vegetables begin to star in many dishes. No end for the fermenting craze that started in 2014.
Open fire cooking will become the next big style."

Shean Suter - Executive Chef, TRACE
“See farm-to-table to become culture for all chefs not a trend (locally grown foods not indigenous to the south be used). Soft serve ice cream getting big. Family style comfort food. Tequila and mezcal as well as chartreuse finding its way into drinks.”

**Matt Weinstein - Executive Chef, Woodfire Grill**

[http://www.woodfiregrill.com](http://www.woodfiregrill.com)
"I think that the farm-to-table trend is becoming more pronounced around the country not only in fine dining but across the board. Also it is something that the general public has become more aware of and is also more readily available to chefs and the general public. The relationships between farmers and chefs/restaurants is stronger than ever."

*Will Harris - Owner/Operator, White Oak Pastures*

http://www.whiteoakpastures.com

“Farm to table dining is a backlash against the industrialization, commoditization, and centralization of our food production system, that began in the late 1940’s. The farm-to-table movement first began in the 1970’s with the public recognition of the benefits of organic vegetables.

The initiative slowly picked up steam, and moved to meats by the end of the 1990’s. First, grass-fed beef. Then, free-range chicken. Later, pastured pork. The production and consumption of less known livestock species will begin to gain momentum in 2015, and beyond. More obscure species (that are wonderful) like pastured guineas, goats, and rabbits are proteins whose time is now coming.
Beef, chicken, and pork took the plate... not because they taste better or are more sustainable meats. These proteins were foisted upon us by industrial food companies because cows and chickens, and hogs were industrialized more easily than guineas, goats, and rabbits.

Rock on, lesser-appreciated (and better) meat species.”

**Kevin Gillespie - Chef/Owner, Gunshow**

http://www.gunshowatl.com

“People are going to become more aware that the American-style of meat-centric meals is not sustainable. Chefs will push more vegetable-centric meals (not necessarily vegetarian) and guests will see more of that on the menu.”

**Whit Whitmire - Co-Founder, Locurean**

http://www.locurean.com
“My prediction is that with rising protein prices, particularly beef, and the increased demand for more sustainable and humanely raised meat, there will be a significant shift towards a trend characterized by the use of "offal" (like organ meats) and more economic cuts. Things that people (especially poor people) used to eat 'back in the day' will become more commonplace in the home and menus. Think hearts, livers, and "economy" cuts of meat. This will let both chefs and consumers support local, 'sustainable' farms producing protein in a more economic manner.

Additionally, I think there will be a lot more local farmers growing some of the ingredients we commonly see in more "exotic" or ethnic foods. As they continue to see a marked trend in increased demand for these kinds of things, farmers (especially those in Georgia) will be growing more turmeric, ginger, etc."

**Nick Quinones - Owner, Woodfire Grill**

[http://www.woodfiregrill.com](http://www.woodfiregrill.com)
"Pastured chicken is taking a hold. Just two years ago it was quite difficult to get a steady supply of pasture-raised chicken for our restaurant, but now, we have two sources for Georgia pastured chicken. Foraging. It seems that more and more chefs are going out and picking up wild ingredients themselves. There are the obvious ingredients like mushrooms and ramps, but now I see chefs picking up wild lettuces, grapes, figs and citrus from local parks."

Mary Blackmon - Founder, Farm Star Living

http://www.farmstarliving.com
"I see farm-to-table not only being a restaurant philosophy, but a lifestyle choice.

We see trends for 2015 including Farm to Airport, such as JFK putting an emphasis on carrying local and healthy options for travelers. Another huge trend for this year will be the Farm to Cocktail movement, which we’re showcasing on our website. Across the country, we’ve been identifying the trend-setting bartenders and mixologists who are turning to fresh ingredients to perfect their craft cocktails. Not only are they using farm fresh ingredients as garnish, but also in making their own mixers, bitters, vermouth, etc! The cocktails are worth trying and savoring.

Lastly, I’m hopeful for this, the Farm to Hospital seems to be slowly gaining momentum. I know of a hospital in Vermont that has a rooftop of fresh vegetables and fruits to give their patients. Nothing better than organic, healthy food for people seeking wellness and needing healing.

Cheers to 2015 and the farm to table movement!"

Comments (1)

Wendie Sakakeeny  A month ago

How exciting and encouraging! Without exception, you all believe that Farm to Table will become the norm. fabulous!
As a vegetarian, seeing veggies take center stage gets my taste buds tingling, and begins to give me hope for the planet.
Its all good. Thank you! PS.. Time for this Bostonian to get down to GA!
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