The Small Farms Research Center was initiated to assist small farmers usually with limited resources in Alabama’s underserved communities. The Center was first developed in 2000 to assist minority land owners and farm operators, especially women, African Americans and other underserved individuals improve their farm management practices in order to operate profitable farming businesses. The mission of the Center and the Small Farmers Outreach and Technical Assistance Program is to assist all small and limited resources farmers effectively deal with agricultural risk, food safety, and overall farm management issues and provide them with information. The Center is located at Alabama A&M University in the Dawson Building. It specializes in assisting farmers with

- Marketing and Business Plans
- Record Keeping and Loan Applications
- Identifying Alternatives Enterprises, and
- Conducting Seminars on Government Programs and Other Issues
The “Women in Agriculture” program at Alabama A&M University is motivated by a need to alleviate some of the difficulties experienced by women within the farming community in Alabama, and a need to recognize and value the contribution of those women engaged in this sector whose needs have traditionally been overlooked in development initiatives. The rationale for the program is rooted in a clear need to provide recognition for, and credence to, the significant role played, and contribution made, by women engaged in the agricultural industry and a need to empower them and address the difficulties of viability and sustainability of farms within the community and State of Alabama.

Facts on Women in Agriculture…

- Women in the south are becoming more involved with agriculture more than ever before.
- According to the Census of Agriculture, over 3,500 farms in Alabama are owned or operated by women.
- According to FAO, globally, women produce more than half of all the food grown.

The mission of the program is to empower women through education, involvement, and action. The program seeks to promote educational and training programs in order to develop the interest of women in agriculture and to promote agriculture in Alabama. Specifically, the program’s mission is to (i) promote agriculture in Alabama; (ii) speak on behalf of agriculture in an intelligent, informative, direct and truthful manner; (iii) keep program members informed on legislative activities pertaining to agriculture; (iv) join forces when the need arises to deal with agricultural problems in a specific community; and (v) improve the public image of farmers and to develop rapport within agricultural communities throughout the state. Thus, the “Women in Agriculture” program at Alabama A&M University is committed to promoting the advancement of women in agriculture by:

- uniting, empowering and raising the profile of women in agriculture;
- addressing rural and agricultural inequalities;
- working to ensure the survival of agriculture for future generations; and
- securing local, state, regional, and national recognition.

As the program title suggests, this program is developed specifically to target women directly involved and engaged in the farming community within Alabama. However, a clear remit for the program is set out in its development stages as identifying and targeting women within this community who have not, as yet, had an active role within local community and/or rural development or within women’s groups in the area. The overall goal is to empower women engaged in agriculture and to take charge of their production and marketing decisions by providing them with technical assistance and information about the benefits and federal programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.