

NAME: Fred Swann
PARTY: Democratic
SEEKING: Agricultural Commissioner

1. Why are you seeking your office?

Growing up in a HUD housing development in Macon, we didn't have much. My mom was a waitress; we were poor, but because my grandfather grew food, we were never hungry. The healthy, fresh foods he grew gave us a sense of security and dignity - something many in our state do not have.

Agriculture is inextricably linked with all the things we Georgians care about - strong local economies, community health, workers' rights, environmental protection, and much more. But right now, agriculture isn't working for everyday people; I'm running to make Agriculture for All a reality in Georgia.

2. What do you expect to accomplish if elected?

My top priorities will be eradicating food insecurity, reversing the decline of small family farms (especially black-owned farms), expanding Georgia's hemp industry & legalizing marijuana, safeguarding agriculture worker's rights, protecting our environment, and enhancing animal welfare.

Agriculture is Georgia's #1 industry, but it certainly hasn't been #1 for the people of Georgia. I see a future for Georgia where agriculture works for everyone. A future where all kids eat Georgia Grown in schools. A future where small farmers are the backbones of their communities. A future with healthy water, soil, and air. A future where Georgia is united and thriving.

3. What distinguishes your candidacy?

I am the only person in the race who has both a bold vision for how to move Georgia forward, and the necessary experience and relationships to make it happen. As the 2018 Democratic nominee, we were the first campaign to talk about agriculture from a progressive lens. For years, I have worked with activists, business leaders and legislators under the Gold Dome, making real change on agricultural policy. Because of this work, I have a statewide network that includes traditional Democratic advocates, as well as leaders from outside that space whose support will be crucial for winning in November.

4. Pick any one issue. Expand on how you will address it.

One of every eight Georgians is food insecure, and this problem is running rampant everywhere from metro Atlanta to rural South Georgia. I have a plan to create more small family farms, which will feed into more new grocery stores. I will work with the legislature to pass laws incentivizing these grocers to open in food insecure areas, provided they sell a certain amount of local foods. We will also create more farmers markets and mobile markets (where you can double SNAP/EBT dollars), get more local food into school lunches, build sustainable food forests, and implement food waste redistribution measures.

5. What are your ideas on curbing all the many area-wide shooting?

The current epidemic of violence is horrific. I'm no expert on gun violence, but I do know that crime is always highest when people lack access to basic needs – and that includes food. One of the best ways to deter crime is to invest into quality of life. That's why as Agriculture Commissioner, I'll fight to eradicate food insecurity, which is quite prevalent even in a county like Gwinnett. I will also work with our schools to ensure healthier school lunches and to integrate agricultural and nature-based educational programs, which have been shown to improve academic and mental health outcomes.

6. Please give a 100 word summary on your background

I was born in Macon and lived most of my life in Middle Georgia, spending much of my childhood on my grandfather's land. I have been active in Democratic politics for over a decade, eventually becoming the Eighth Congressional District Chair for the Democratic Party of Georgia. I have also served as the Vice Chair for Greening Georgia, the environmental caucus for DPG. I have an MBA from Wesleyan College and am a graduate of Leadership Macon. Currently, I am a mushroom farmer and small business owner. My wife and I live with our son in Gainesville.