

NEWS RELEASE
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LEGACY

Contact: Jim Stokely: stokely.jim@gmail.com or 828-458-5813

Community Debate Scheduled on Food Insecurity and Organic/Eat-local Movements

2nd debate in 2015-6 community debate series – Friday, February 26, 5:30 PM

ASHEVILLE: On Friday, February 26, 2016, four local experts on agriculture and the food industry will meet in the Asheville High School auditorium to debate the proposition **“Resolved: The organic food and eat-local movements will never substantially address food insecurity.”** The debate will run from 5:30 till 7 p.m. The event is free, and the public is invited.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, in 2014, 14% or 17.4 million U.S. households experienced food insecurity, meaning that they were “uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet the needs of all their members because they had insufficient money or other resources for food.” In North Carolina, the percentage was worse: 16.7% or 3,891,000 households suffered from food insecurity in 2014.

The formally structured debate is sponsored by the Wilma Dykeman Legacy and the Asheville High / SILSA Speech & Debate Team in cooperation with the Asheville Citizen-Times. John Boyle will serve as moderator. Student members of the SILSA Speech & Debate Team will act as time keepers and judges for the debate.

Speaking in favor of the resolution will be Chuck Francis and Bill Yarborough. Chuck Francis grew up on a farm in Haywood County. After earning a bachelor’s degree in Horticultural Science from North Carolina State University in 1978, he worked as a sales representative for several agricultural products companies. From 1982 to 1990, he farmed with his father in Haywood County. In 1988, he was named Outstanding Young Male Farmer of the Year by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Francis is currently a location manager in Hendersonville for Coastal Agrobusiness, and serves as Chairman of the Haywood County Board of Education.

Bill Yarborough also graduated from North Carolina State and received a degree in Soil Science. Yarborough serves on the North Carolina Soil and Water Conservation Commission. He has been extremely active in promoting soil and water conservation,

serving on numerous boards and commissions. In 2010 he received the President's Award from the North Carolina Association of Soil and Water Conservation, and in 2011 he was inducted into the WNC Agriculture Hall of Fame.

Speaking against the resolution will be Jamie Ager and John Swann. Ager is the fourth generation of his family to farm the land at Hickory Nut Gap. He and his wife, Amy Frey Ager, are graduates of Warren Wilson College and have worked to develop Hickory Nut Gap Farm using sustainable agricultural practices over the past 15 years. In 2011, they won the Achievement Award from Farm Bureau, and their operation received the 2011 North Carolina Company to Watch Award.

John Swann has been active in the food industry for forty years. He has held management and ownership positions in many different companies in the natural food industry, with decades of experience in manufacturing and importing, regional distribution, and retail store operations, including Earth Fare, Greenlife Grocery, Katuah Market, and Harvest Grocery. Swann has been active in local food economic development, having served on the Board of Directors of the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project for ten years.

By bringing together knowledgeable participants for civil debate, this event promotes the values for which Wilma Dykeman stood: environmental integrity, social justice, and the power of the written and spoken word. Dykeman (1920 - 2006) was a teacher, historian, environmentalist, and author of numerous books, including The French Broad (1955).

About the Wilma Dykeman Legacy

The Wilma Dykeman Legacy is a tax-exempt non-profit organization founded in 2012 to sustain and promote Wilma Dykeman's values by sponsoring workshops, events, and other programs. The core values of this extraordinary woman from Buncombe County were: environmental integrity, social justice, and the power of the written and spoken word. For more information, visit www.wilmadykemanlegacy.org.

About the Asheville High / SILSA Speech and Debate Team

The Asheville High / SILSA Speech and Debate Team competes in speech and debate tournaments throughout the state and nation. Over the last 8 years, the team is number one overall in the Harvard National Cumulative Rankings for the Congressional Debate event. The program has molded innumerable young people and helped them hone their public speaking skills.