

# The Minority AgVocate™

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

## Resources for You

Learn about  
Events,  
Funding  
Opportunities,  
and More!

## USDA's Rollback of "Socially Disadvantaged" Status Signals a Step Backward

JULY AGRIPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

# BEATRICE KAMAU

Balancing Care and Growth with a  
Sustainable, Culturally Relevant  
Method

## Growing Stronger Together

Inaugural Team  
Retreat Recap

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GROWN IN BLACK SOIL™

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## Freedmen Heirs Highlights

# Growing Stronger Together

## A Look Back at Our Team Retreat

**A**t Freedmen Heirs Foundation, we believe that strong communities are built on strong, connected teams. That's why last month, we took a break from our busy schedules and held our inaugural team retreat in Maryland. It was a much-needed chance to reconnect, refocus, and regroup during a time of significant transition.

With recent administrative changes, evolving policies, and ongoing efforts to rethink our program initiatives, while maintaining regular operations, the retreat offered a much-needed pause. It created space for honest conversations, renewed focus, and deeper collaboration. Beyond the strategy sessions and planning meetings,

we had the chance to simply enjoy being together.

Nestled in a serene oasis, we shared delicious meals that nourished us inside and out, took walks on the beautiful grounds, took dips in the pool, and gathered for warm, laughter-filled dinners. We also took time to sharpen our strategic goals which will strengthen the programs that support the farmers in our communities. With every chat, brainstorm, and connection, our shared purpose grew stronger, reminding us of the impact we're aiming to achieve.

**To the left:** Upon our arrival, we enjoyed delightful hors d'oeuvres and spent the evening connecting through meaningful conversations.

**Pictured below:** The Freedmen Heirs Foundation team came together for its inaugural team retreat, held in Maryland.

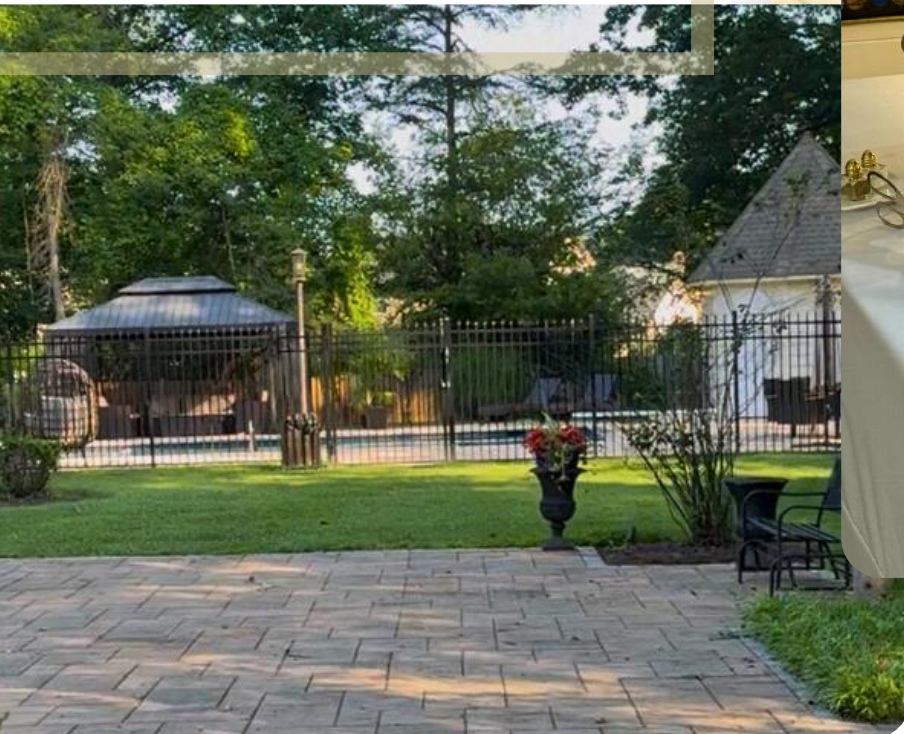


This retreat didn't just recharge us, but it reminded us why we do this work each day. We came back to our desks not only with fresh energy but also with a clear path forward, and perhaps most importantly, a much deeper understanding of each other and the communities we serve. United by our shared vision and renewed commitment, we're more ready than ever to move forward together.

**To the right:** Co-founders Seanicaa Edwards Herron and Kellee James guide the team through strategic planning sessions.

**Pictured below:** Stunning views of the patio located just outside the pool area.

**Bottom right:** A wholesome breakfast was served to kickstart our day.





## Agricultural Insights

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# USDA's Rollback of "Socially Disadvantaged" Status Signals a Step Backward

**Written By:** Seanicaa Edwards Herron  
*FHF Founder and Executive Director*

**O**n July 10, 2025, the U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a rule with extensive implications for equity in American agriculture. Under the title "Removal of Unconstitutional Preferences Based on Race and Sex," the USDA eliminated the use of the term "socially disadvantaged" in determining eligibility for farm support and loan programs. With this decision, a key mechanism intended to repair generations of harm now has implications that are both immediate and long-term. This new

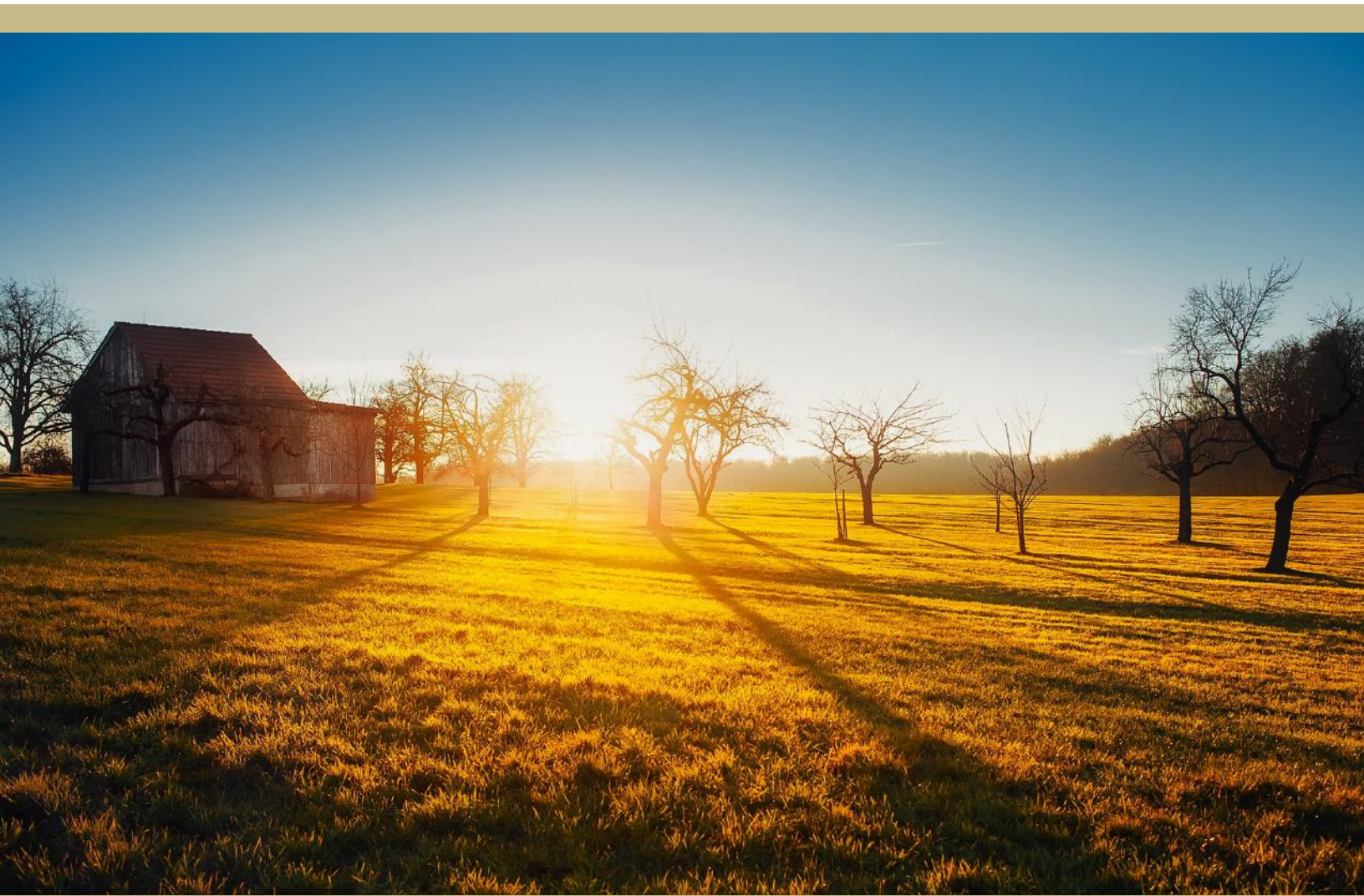
rule marks the abandonment of responsibility. Without true accountability, the playing field can never be level.

For over 30 years, the "socially disadvantaged" designation provided legal recognition of historic discrimination and allowed USDA to offer targeted support to those it had systematically excluded. From farm credit access to capacity-building grants and land transition tools, the designation opened doors for minority producers often denied entry.

Nonetheless, this rule stands in stark opposition to the very principles behind the creation of the USDA Equity Commission in 2022, established by the Biden-Harris administration's vision to advance racial equity and support for underserved communities through the federal government. The commission was created under the American Rescue Plan to confront longstanding structural racism within USDA programs and policies. The fallacy of leveling the playing field and meritocracy not only dismisses the Commission's findings and recommendations—it undermines the very reason for its existence.

Farmers aren't the only ones who will feel the loss. Nonprofit organizations serving "socially

disadvantaged" farmers will also be impacted as funding streams continue to dry up. Many of these organizations—already underfunded—relied on USDA grants and cooperative agreements to deliver technical assistance, critical programming, education, and culturally relevant outreach. As these grants and agreements are rolled back, a deeper question remains: If equity is no longer the goal, what kind of future is USDA building—and can a system that has never fully acknowledged its harm be trusted to lead the way toward fairness?



## Agripreneur Spotlight

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# Beatrice Kamau

## Fostering a Harmonious Blend of Care and Cultivation through a Sustainable and Culturally Relevant Approach

**F**arming is no easy feat, often requiring time, patience, and unyielding dedication. However, Beatrice Kamau has mastered the balance of a demanding career in the healthcare industry and her passion for running a sustainable farming operation. As a full-time nurse and dedicated farmer, Beatrice is using her resourcefulness and Kenyan heritage to cultivate sustainable and culturally relevant produce that helps fuel and nourish her local community.

As the Founder of Multiple Harvest LLC, a 6-acre sustainable farm located in Beecher, Illinois,

Beatrice has carved out a niche for herself since establishing the farm in 2017 and officially registering it in 2019. The farm specializes in growing an assortment of culturally significant vegetables, herbs, and fruits that are popular among African immigrant communities.

### A Lifelong Passion for Farming

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Although Beatrice runs a successful operation, she wasn't always a farmer. She was born in Kenya, and growing food, whether in small city plots or backyards, was part of her everyday life. Her early exposure to crops like sukuma wiki



(collard greens), amaranth, and managu during her childhood ignited a lifelong passion for agriculture and the bountiful harvests this land produces.

After moving to the United States, she leveraged the resourcefulness she experienced growing up and started growing vegetables along her garage and fence. In 2017, she joined several community

gardens in Chicago, which allowed her to expand her growing space and furthered her commitment to creating a sustainable farm. She also attended workshops and farmer conferences, which fueled her vision even further, strengthened her community ties, and led to the purchase of her six-acre farm in 2023.

## The Intersection of Health and Agriculture

With her background in nursing, Beatrice has a deeper understanding of the connection between nutrition and health. “I take pride in offering fresh, nutrient-rich produce that supports wellness in my community. Knowing how soil feeds plants—and in turn, how plants nourish people—is at the core of what I do,” she says. This holistic view allows her to understand how vital soil is to the growth of thriving plants and, in turn, a healthy community.

## Community Engagement and Mentorship

Beatrice is a passionate advocate for community collaboration, engaging actively with local farmers to market produce, share knowledge, and resources. Through a Farmer-to-Farmer training program, she mentors aspiring farmers, and as a co-founder of African Women in Beekeeping, she connects over 200 beekeepers from more than countries and the Diaspora. Through the AWIB network, knowledge is shared through WhatsApp and on the organization’s Facebook page to other fellow beekeepers, cultivating a sense of community support and camaraderie.

## Navigating Challenges

Running a sustainable farm comes with its challenges, especially regarding access to capital, which continues to be a barrier for several small farmers across the country. However, Beatrice's dual career as a nurse helps mitigate some financial pressures, allowing her to invest in necessary improvements and equipment for Multiple Harvest. Although grants can be competitive, Beatrice's farm has received support



“  
**Knowing how soil feeds plants—and in turn, how plants nourish people—is at the core of what I do.**  
”

from notable organizations, including the American Heart Association, James Beard Foundation®, and Climate Land Leaders.

## **Cultivating Niche Crops and Value-Added Products**

Multiple Harvest stands out not only for its commitment to sustainability but also for its unique offerings. Since its inception, the farm, whose mission is to grow fresh, culturally relevant produce using sustainable practices that promote soil health, reduce food waste, and foster community connection, sets itself apart from others in the industry through the production of niche vegetables rarely found fresh in U.S. markets. Currently, Multiple Harvest produces collard greens, Swiss chard, kale, tomatoes, tulsii, oregano, wormwood, cilantro, and practices beekeeping. The Illinois farm also offers a selection of fruit trees, including pears, plums, cherries, and apples.

Through trial and error, Beatrice has also developed an innovative approach that allows for early planting and the successful succession of niche crops that are difficult to source commercially. In addition, the farm produces value-added items including flavored honey, tinctures, and both frozen and dehydrated produce.

## **Her Message to Future Farmers**

Beatrice Kamau's journey embodies the future of agriculture, one where passion, dedication, and community engagement drive success. She encourages aspiring farmers to "start small and plan ahead". She also says to "write your vision, set goals, and grow what you love to eat." Mentorship and community support are also invaluable tools on this path. Beatrice's commitment demonstrates that while farming is hard work, it is also incredibly rewarding.



**Connect with Beatrice and Multiple Harvest, and follow her journey:**

**Website:** [www.multipleharvest.com](http://www.multipleharvest.com)  
**Facebook:** Multiple Harvest LLC  
**Instagram:** @multiple\_harvest

Upcoming Events

# Virtual and In-Person Events

24  
JULY

24  
JULY

29  
JULY



**Anderson, SC**

Join the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation for its **Sustainable Forestry Collaborative Learning Workshop** on **July 24, 2025** at **10:00 am ET**.

This event brings together landowners, enthusiasts, and industry leaders to share insights, spark dialogue, and strengthen our commitment to responsible land stewardship. Your voice matters. Come be part of the conversation shaping the future!

**Location:** Westside Community Center | 1100 W Franklin St., Anderson, SC 29624

**Virtual Event**

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation is hosting a **Free Virtual Estate Planning, Probate, Heirs' Property, and Sustainable Forestry Seminar** on **July 24, 2025** at **7:00 pm** via **Zoom**.

Discover how to protect your family's land and legacy and explore how sustainable forestry can help grow generational wealth.

Click below to register to attend!

**Virtual Event**

Freedmen Heirs Foundation is excited to announce its final Student Financial Education Workshop, titled **"The Early Bird's Advantage"**, scheduled for **July 29, 2025**, at **12:00 pm ET** via **Zoom**.

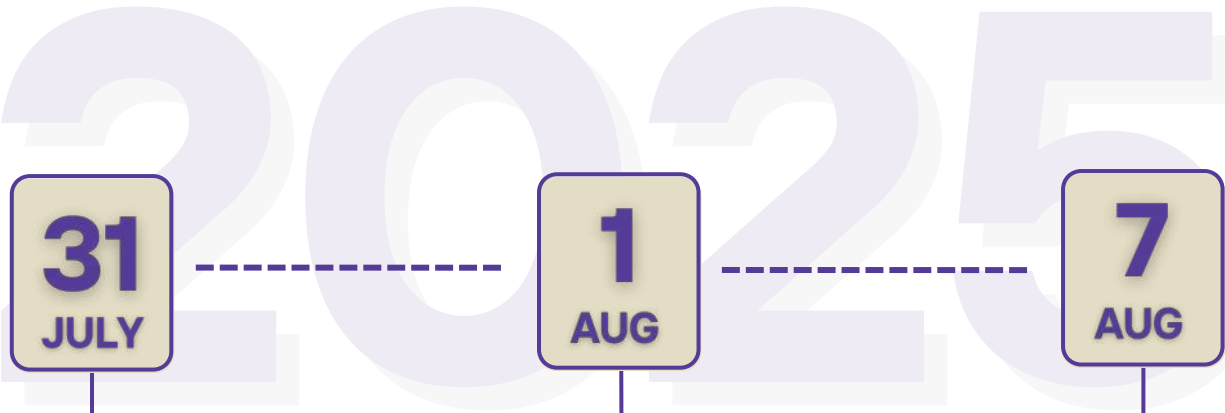
You'll learn significant benefits of starting early with saving and investing—one of the most empowering decisions anyone can make.

If you haven't registered yet, click the link below to secure your spot. Feel free to share this digital magazine with anyone who might be interested in attending!

[REGISTER](#)

[REGISTER](#)

## Upcoming Events



**FREEDMEN HEIRS**

Virtual Panel Discussion

### Voices From the Field

Highlighting the Impact of Recent Policy Changes

Join us for a timely virtual farmer panel as we explore the real-world impacts of recent shifts in agricultural policy and funding.

Thursday  
July 31, 2025

2:30 pm ET

Live Streamed via Zoom

www.freedmenheirs.org

Tentative 2025 NBGC Model Farm Series

Date	Location	Host	Focus Crops
June 5-6, 2025	Vidalia, LA	Nelson Farms	Corn, Cotton, Rice & Soybeans
June 26-27, 2025	Greenfield, MS	Smith Farms	Soybeans & Wheat
July 10-11, 2025	Orangeburg, SC	Mahogany Farms	Corn, Cotton & Soybeans
July 31-Aug. 1, 2025	Memphis, TN	KWB Farms	Corn, Soybeans & Yellow field peas
August 21-22, 2025	Alzheimer, AR	Haynie Farms	Rice & Soybeans
September 11-12, 2025	Marianna, FL	Gilbert Farms	Cotton & Peanuts

For more information go to <https://nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com/> or call (202) 641-8137



### Virtual Event

Join our virtual farmer panel **“Voices From the Field: Highlighting the Impact of Recent Policy Changes”** on **July 31, 2025**, at **2:30 PM CT** via **Zoom**.

This panel will focus on how recent agricultural policy changes and funding freezes affect farming operations and communities. Hear insights from our panelists: Dr. Cindy Ayers Elliott (Foot Print Farms), Rizpah Bellard (Nova Farming), Christi Bland-Miller (CMB Farm LLC), and Patrick Brown (Brown Family Farms). Register now to be a part of the discussion!

**REGISTER**

### Various Locations Across the Southeast

The National Black Growers Council (NBGC) invites you to participate in their 2025 Model Farm Field Day tours. This Summer series will take you to various farms throughout the Southeast U.S., providing an excellent opportunity to connect with fellow farmers. Attendees can also gain insights into diverse farming practices, techniques, and program updates. The next event will be held at KWB Farms on **August 1, 2025**, in Memphis, TN.

Click the link below to discover more and register for the farm field day nearest you.

**LEARN MORE**

### Andrews, SC

Join the Center for Heirs' Property Preservation for an informative seminar on **Estate Planning, Probate, Heirs' Property, and Sustainable Forestry Seminar** on **August 7, 2025**, at **6:00 PM ET**.

Learn how to safeguard your family's land and legacy and explore ways sustainable forestry can contribute to building generational wealth.

**Location:** Andrews Recreation Center | 220 S Cedar Ave, Andrews, SC 29510

## Upcoming Events

9  
AUG

7  
10  
SEPT

9  
12  
DEC



 **Ridgeville, SC**

The Center for Heirs' Property Preservation invites you to attend their upcoming **FREE** will clinic in Dorchester County on **August 9, 2025, at 10:00 AM ET**. Their team of legal professionals will help you create a will at no cost so your legacy lives on, the right way. Make sure the land and home your family worked hard for stays in the family.

Appointments are **REQUIRED** for this event. Call and schedule your appointment at (843) 745-7055.

**Location:** New Hope Methodist Church | 1568 Carter Road, Ridgeville, SC 29472.



 **Lexington, KY**

Mark Your Calendars for the 2nd **Annual State of Soil Conference!**

Hosted by Black Soil KY, the conference will take place from **September 7-10, 2025**, in Lexington, Kentucky. Registration is still open and will be available until August 25, 2025.

Don't miss out—register today to be part of this significant event!

[REGISTER](#)



 **New Orleans, LA**

NBGC will host its **2025 Annual Meeting** at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans, LA, from **December 9 to 12, 2025**. This is a fantastic opportunity to connect with agricultural professionals, industry leaders, and row crop farmers as they collaborate to enhance our food system.

Accommodations for this event are available and should be reserved by **November 6, 2025**, to enjoy the discounted rate. For further details about this event, please click the link below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

## Upcoming Events

# Additional Information



## Our June Webinar is Now Available for Viewing on YouTube

Last month, Freedmen Heirs Foundation (FHF) held a webinar titled "**Cultivating Resilience: Building a Financial Plan that Works Before, During, and After the Emergency**".

During this session, Lori Hylton, FHF Director of Strategic Programming and certified financial health coach, discussed insights into having a **comprehensive emergency plan, including tips on organizing and accessing vital documents** that can be crucial during critical moments.

Click below to watch the webinar recording. Be sure to subscribe to our YouTube channel to catch up on other webinars you may have missed!

[WATCH NOW](#)

## Hosting an Upcoming Event?

Are you hosting an agricultural event that promises to inspire and engage?

Share your upcoming event with us for an opportunity to be featured in our digital magazine! Whether it's a groundbreaking conference, a field day, a thought-provoking webinar, or an innovative workshop, we want to spotlight your efforts to bring the agricultural community together.

Join us in cultivating knowledge and connections by submitting your event details today.

[SUBMIT EVENT](#)

## FSA County Committee Elections

Elections for USDA's Farm Service Agency County Committee are crucial for representing farmers' voices in the local agricultural community, aiding the USDA in developing tailored federal programs. Nominations for this year are due by **August 1, 2025**. Click the link below for more details on the committee and election timeline.

[LEARN MORE](#)

**Farmer Resources**

# Reports



Welcome to our Farmer Resources section, designed to provide essential tools and information, including reports, programs, and funding opportunities for farming initiatives. Additionally, explore employment opportunities in various roles within the agriculture sector.

## July Lending Rates

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) provides loans to agricultural producers to help start or expand their farming operations, purchase equipment and storage structures, or meet cash flow needs. Click below to view this month's interest rates for loans offered through FSA.

[EXPLORE](#)

## USDA World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) Report

The World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) report is prepared and released by the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB). This report is released monthly and provides annual forecasts for supply and use of U.S. and world wheat, rice,

coarse grains, oilseeds, and cotton. The report also covers U.S. supply and use of sugar, livestock & meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and dairy products; as well as Mexico's supply and use of sugar. Read July's report by clicking the link below.

[VIEW REPORT](#)

## USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Crop Production Report

This monthly report contains crop production data for the U.S., including acreage, area harvested, and yield. The report also contains a monthly weather summary, a monthly agricultural summary, and an analysis of precipitation and the degree of departure from the normal precipitation map for the month.

[VIEW REPORT](#)

## Secretary of Agriculture Briefings on the WASDE and Crop Production Reports

The WASDE and Crop Production briefings can be watched every month beginning at 12:05 pm ET on NASS' YouTube Channel. The briefings are streamed live just moments after the reports are made public.

[WATCH NOW](#)

## Farmer Resources

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# Employment Opportunities

[Contracts Manager](#)

[Development Officer](#)

[Director of Government Affairs,  
Regulatory Policy](#)

[Director, Sr. Relationship Manager -  
Central](#)

[Head of Impact](#)

[National Campaigner](#)

[Operations and HR Team Member](#)

[Program Manager](#)

[Program Officer, Restorative  
Economies Fund](#)

[Project Director, Regenerative  
School Meals](#)

[Senior Director, Environmental  
Sustainability](#)

[Senior Manager, Government Affairs](#)

[Vice President of Development](#)



## Funding Opportunities

### Native Americans in Philanthropy - Indigenous Tomorrows Fund

Applications are open for the Indigenous Tomorrows Fund, a grant-making initiative led by the Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP). Funding focuses on building capacity to address projects that promote the following: food justice and access to nourishing foods for children; advancing community health and wellness; and strengthening connections between food, culture, and healing across generations.

The deadline to apply is quickly approaching. Applications are due on **July 22, 2025, at 8:00 pm ET**. Click the link below to learn more and to apply.

[EXPLORE](#)

## Farmer Resources

### BFF Rapid Response Fund

The Rapid Response Fund from the Black Farmer Fund (BFF) aims to assist Black farmers and food system professionals with established businesses or projects in the Northeast during emergencies. This support covers various situations, including equipment failures, weather-related damages, crop and livestock losses, as well as stolen or damaged supplies.

Apply now through **July 31, 2025**, for the next cycle of the Response Fund. Click the link below to find out more and submit your application.

LEARN MORE

### 2025 RFSI Farmer Scholarship Application

Active farmers and ranchers can now apply for scholarships to attend the Regenerative Food Systems Investment (RFSI) Forum. This event unites investors, food and agriculture entrepreneurs, and essential stakeholders to explore capital investment opportunities aimed at transforming food systems. Don't miss your chance to participate in this impactful Forum.

Scholarship recipients will be revealed on **August 13, 2025**. Click the link below to learn more.

LEARN MORE

### Emergency Commodity Assistance Program

The USDA is still accepting applications for its Emergency Commodity Assistance Program (ECAP) for the 2024 crop year. This funding will be awarded through the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Applications are due **August 15, 2025**. Click below to learn more about this opportunity.

EXPLORE

# We Need Your Support

If you would like to **make a financial contribution** to Freedmen Heirs Foundation, please click the link below. Your generous donation will be instrumental in advancing our mission while positively impacting the Black and underserved agricultural community.

DONATE

# Do You Have Resources or Information You Would Like to Share?

We are constantly seeking collaboration with other organizations in the agriculture sector to share events, opportunities, and valuable resources with our readers. If you would like to contribute an article, event, program, funding, or employment opportunity, please reach out to us by clicking the link below. Thank you!

[CONTACT US](#)



# Nominate an Agripreneur

Help us recognize Agripreneurs who are making an impact!

If you know someone worthy of recognition, please nominate them to be showcased in our digital magazine by filling out the nomination form below or reaching out via email at [fhfcomms@freedmenheirs.org](mailto:fhfcomms@freedmenheirs.org). Self nominations are welcome!

[SUBMIT A NOMINATION](#)





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