

Diversity and Racial Equity Working Group Report



**Agriculture
and Markets**

Letter from Commissioner Ball



I am pleased to receive the following report from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets' Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup, announced in the 2020 State of the State policy agenda. I thank all the members for their tireless work.

The Workgroup is made up of New York State farmers, advocates, and other institutional and industry stakeholders, representing a wide swath of New York's agricultural community. The Workgroup developed this report to share the perspectives of historically-unrepresented farmers and provide recommendations to the State and the agricultural industry to foster a more equitable industry and food system that empowers Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers.

I am proud of the work that has taken place and the partnerships that have been formed as a result of the Workgroup. The personal experiences and insights shared by the members have provided new perspective and understanding, and a critical opportunity to advocate for BIPOC growers. It is clear that the need for a focused strategy to increase, sustain, and diversify farming and land access across the country is more urgent now than ever.

The Workgroup has provided critical insight in the following report that will help uplift and advance BIPOC members in the agricultural industry. This report is not the conclusion of our work, it is just the beginning. The Department is committed to turning ideas into action. Further, we will continue the conversations started by the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup members and together create a stronger, more resilient, and more equitable agricultural community in New York State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard G. Ball". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Ball



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Executive Summary

On January 8, 2020, Governor Cuomo announced a proposal to increase diversity in the New York State (NYS) agricultural industry as part of his 2020 State of the State agenda. According to 2017 Census of Agriculture, Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and producers make up just 1.3% of producers in NYS, which showed that the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (the Department or AGM) and the NYS agricultural industry were not meeting the needs of BIPOC constituents.¹ As part of the initiative, the Commissioner of Agriculture was tasked with assembling a workgroup to develop recommendations for a strategic plan to move the industry forward.

AGM staff recruited a group of 25 stakeholders to tackle this initiative. The workgroup met six times from November 2020 through March 2021. Workgroup members and AGM focused on four key areas to develop recommendations:

- Access to Infrastructure and Resources
- Access to Education and Training
- Access to Capital
- Access to Land

The 21 recommendations outlined in this report were developed in collaboration with BIPOC leaders, a majority of whom are Black, who have been advocating, developing solutions, and building the groundwork for this report for decades. The Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup proposes a \$10 million initial investment to execute the recommendations listed in this report. For every recommendation, AGM encourages investment in BIPOC-led farms and organizations, including those in the Workgroup.

Recognition

This report was developed in collaboration with a Workgroup comprised of vital New York State agricultural leaders, farmers, growers, food system thinkers, educators, trainers, institutions, and advocates. The Department sends its sincere thanks to this group for their work for New York State. The members of the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup are listed below:

- Allison DeHoney, MBA, Buffalo Go Green Inc./Urban Fruits & Veggies LLC
- Anu Rangarajan, Cornell Small Farms
- Benjamin Z. Houlton, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Christine Hutchinson, Northeast Farmers of Color
- David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau
- Dennis Derryck, Corbin Hill Farms/Black Farmer Fund
- Dr. Samina Raja, SUNY Buffalo
- Julian Mangano, Della Terra Farm
- Julie Suarez, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Kama Doucoure, Big Dream Farm, LLC (Community Farm)
- Karen Washington, Rise & Root Farm
- Kiani Conley-Wilson, Soul Fire Farm
- Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, State University New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill
- Miriam Boateng, Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County
- Omar Sanders, Empire State Development
- Onika Abraham, Farm School
- Qiana Mickie, Founding Principal, QJM Multiprise
- Rebekah Williams, Food for the Spirit/Massachusetts Avenue Project
- Ribka Getachew, Community Food Advocates
- Samantha Levy, American Farmland Trust
- Sawdayah Brownlee; Board President, Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust
- Sheryll Durrant, Board President - Just Food; Resident Garden Manager - Kelly Street Garden; Food & Agriculture Coordinator - New Roots Community Farm
- Steven Perry, Retired Assistant Principal - Agriculture, NYCDOE, John Bowne High School
- Tom Cosgrove, Farm Credit East
- Wilfred Moss, Moss' Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Terminology

For the purposes of this report, the following terms are defined:

BIPOC: The acronym BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Diversity: Diversity includes all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued and represented. For purposes of this Workgroup some of the main diversity characteristics that were considered were race, occupation (i.e. urban farmer, rural farmer, BIPOC food system thinker/advocate), and New York State region (i.e. New York City, Western New York, the North Country).

Racial Equity: Equity is the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all individuals, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of BIPOC individuals. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented racial groups and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in providing effective opportunities to all groups. The Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup prioritized and centered BIPOC voices to ensure historically underserved groups had the most opportunity to share ideas and provide recommendations.

Background

A History of Agriculture and Discrimination in Government

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) policies and practices, especially in the South, were both predatory and discriminatory as found by the US Commission on Civil Rights in 1965. The Commission additionally found over 50 years of instances of discrimination against Black farmers and other BIPOC farmers across the nation.

The Commission on Civil Rights repeatedly found that Black farmers faced discrimination when seeking farm loans and assistance. In 1990, the House Committee on Government Operations report found rampant discrimination in USDA loan programs.² Systemic discrimination was so well documented that the USDA has paid billions of dollars in class action suits to BIPOC farmers. The cases included *Pigford 1* and *Pigford 2*³ for Black farmers and ranchers; *Keepseagle*⁴ for Native American and Indigenous farmers and ranchers; and *Garcia*⁵ for Latino and Women farmers and ranchers.

Despite these payouts, the damage to BIPOC farmers and their enterprises remains staggering and BIPOC farmers have lost 90% of their land over the past century. Most recently, the Biden administration passed the American Rescue Plan, which will include \$5 billion to provide debt-relief and additional assistance to BIPOC farmers.

Although the federal government has taken some necessary steps, New York State understands that there must be further concerted effort to make change. BIPOC farmers from New York State have experienced both explicit and implicit forms of discrimination and racism, many of which were bravely shared during Workgroup meetings.

As an agricultural government agency, the Department recognizes several key facts, including the following:

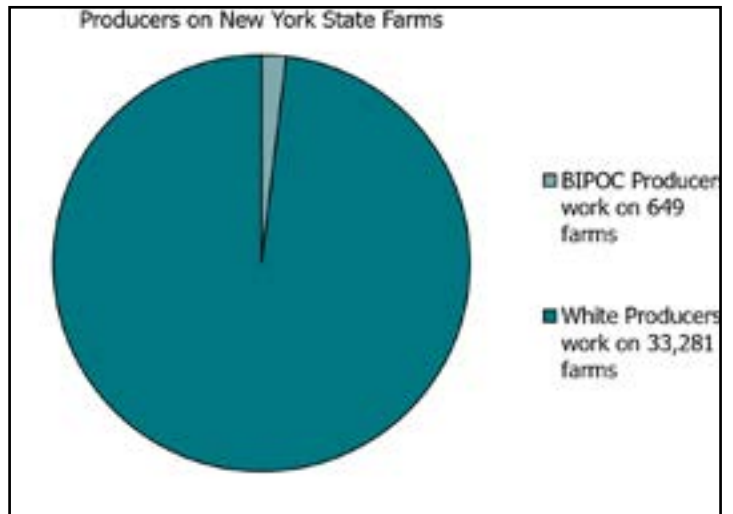
- AGM acknowledges that there is a cumulative effect of being discriminated against that exacerbates over time.
- AGM acknowledges the history of government mistrust with BIPOC groups, which is well documented and valid.
- AGM accepts the responsibility of rebuilding and establishing trust as a government agency with the BIPOC community.
- AGM is positioned to call for and lead progress in racial equity alongside the BIPOC agricultural community.
- AGM leadership is committed to training for all agency staff to serve BIPOC groups with cultural competency.
- AGM is an essential advocate for BIPOC agricultural organizations to interface with historically white-led agricultural organizations that have not adequately served them.
- AGM has more to learn in this space and is dedicated to equitably supporting BIPOC groups in the agricultural industry.
- AGM acknowledges that progress doesn't happen when things are comfortable: disruption, acknowledgement of current systems, openness, and a genuine willingness to listen and act are essential for change to occur.

New York State's Agricultural Demographics

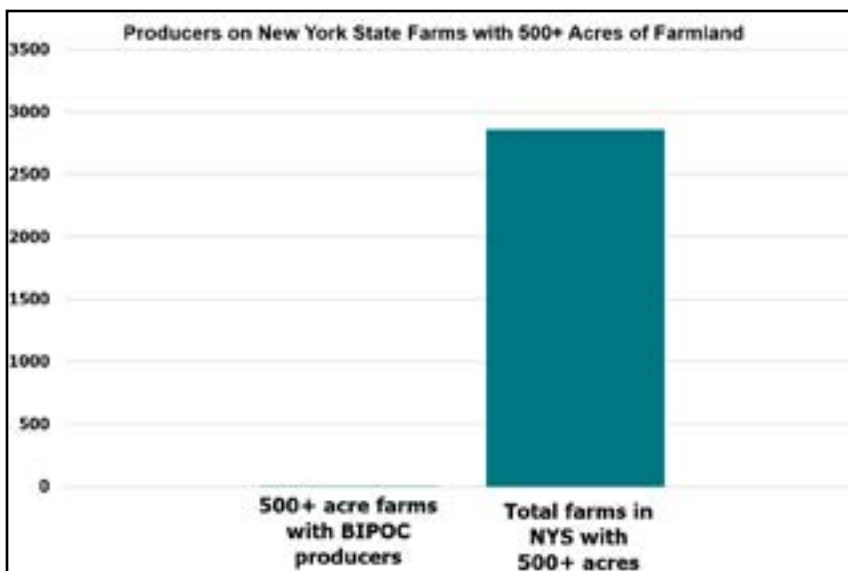
In 2019, the Department reviewed the 2017 USDA National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) Census of Agriculture data and found alarming numbers.

BIPOC producers face numerous challenges to farm viability and land ownership. The number of farms with Black or African American producers is at an extreme low in New York State with only 0.5% of farms in the state being operated or owned by Black or African American producers.⁶ Furthermore, BIPOC producers in total can be found on only 1.94% of farms in NYS.

According to the data, in New York State, there are 649 farms with BIPOC producers compared to 33,281 farms with white producers. Over one-third of Black or African American producers in New York State are farming only one to nine acres of land, compared to white farmers where the majority are farming 50 to 179 acres of land. About 25% of BIPOC farmers in the state are earning less than \$1,000 of on-farm income. There are 8,964 farms with white producers generating over \$50,000 in farm income, while only 103 farms with BIPOC farmers are generating that amount. The Census of Agriculture also found that there are



2,859 farms farming 500 or more acres of land in New York State. Out of that group, only 22 of those farms have BIPOC producers. The amount of Black or African American farms with more than 500 acres of land has reduced in half from four to two farms from the 2012 Census of Agriculture to the 2017 Census of Agriculture.



While these numbers are staggering, the reduction in BIPOC farmland ownership is a nationwide problem. Nationally, there has been a steep decline in the number of Black farmers over the last 100 years. Black farmers make up 1.3% of farmers and own only 0.52% of America's farmland. Documented discrimination from the federal government, mainly USDA and USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) has led to a lack of resources, loss of land, and an overall decrease of BIPOC farmers in the United States.

Understanding the Problems Directly from New York’s BIPOC Farmers

Department staff has engaged with numerous BIPOC food system leaders throughout the years. These initiatives have focused on improving access to local food, supporting community gardens, connecting BIPOC farmers to markets, and developing BIPOC-owned food enterprises. For example, since 2017, the Vital Brooklyn Initiative has collaborated with Brooklyn-based BIPOC community leaders to inform food programming and advocate for local food system investment that upholds equity. Another recent initiative to engage with BIPOC food systems leaders resulted in the reshaping of several AGM grant programs to better target historically under-resourced communities.

These actions were steps forward, yet there was still a need for more transformative change. In August 2019, Karen Washington approached State Agriculture Commissioner Richard Ball with a question: what was New York State doing to address the scarce numbers of Black and BIPOC farmers in New York State? Commissioner Ball recognized the urgent need to do more for farmers of color and met with his leadership team and statewide partners to discuss the issue further. He then directed Department staff to collaborate with Ms. Washington to organize a listening session for Black farmers, hosted at Rise and Root Farm in Orange County, New York.

Following that initial meeting, the need to hear from more BIPOC farmers was clear. The Department, in collaboration with members from the first listening session and other BIPOC stakeholders, organized two additional listening sessions in December 2019 and August 2020. Staff also actively engaged with organizations and leaders that had been advocating for racial equity within New York State agriculture and the food system over many decades.

Date	Location	Number of Stakeholders	NYS Economic Regions
October 6, 2019 10am-12pm	Rise & Root Farm, Orange County, NY	9	Hudson Valley, New York City, Southern Tier
December 14, 2019 4pm-6pm	Department of Agriculture and Markets Albany, NY	25	Capital Region, New York City, Hudson Valley, Western New York, Finger Lakes
August 26, 2020 10am-12pm	Virtual via ZOOM	11	Western New York, Finger Lakes, Southern Tier

During these listening sessions and in many subsequent follow up conversations, the Department heard of the institutional barriers and challenges that BIPOC farmers face when trying to succeed in New York State: white-led farming advocacy organizations, the established and longstanding partners of the Department, are neither meeting the needs of BIPOC constituents nor serving this constituency in a satisfactory manner. These concerns are exacerbated when combined with a historical mistrust of government and systemic racism throughout the history of the United States. It became clear to the Department that an authentic examination of who has access and representation in New York’s agricultural industry needed to take place.



2020 State of the State

As part of the 2020 State of the State agenda, a proposal was announced to increase diversity in New York State's agricultural industry. The Department was tasked with convening stakeholders to collaborate on creative solutions.

Building upon the 2019 listening sessions and various conversations held at both the state and national level, AGM convened the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup to focus both on diversity, to ensure BIPOC representation, and on racial equity, to ensure marginalized voices are prioritized. Furthermore, AGM brought its longstanding agricultural organization partners to the Workgroup in a listening capacity. AGM's institutional partners needed to hear firsthand the experiences of BIPOC farmers from the farmers themselves.

The Workgroup

Department staff began recruiting Workgroup members in January 2020. By February 2020, the recruitment process was wrapping up. However, in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic required that the Department pivot and focus on emergency response as it related to the food system. In June 2020, the Department re-engaged stakeholders and reconnected with various members from listening sessions.

In October 2020, the following Workgroup members confirmed their participation and willingness to dedicate their time and energy to contribute to the recommendations outlined in this report:

- Allison DeHoney, MBA, Buffalo Go Green Inc./Urban Fruits & Veggies LLC
- Anu Rangarajan, Cornell Small Farms
- Benjamin Z. Houlton, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Christine Hutchinson, Northeast Farmers of Color
- David Fisher, New York Farm Bureau
- Dennis Derryck, Corbin Hill Farms/Black Farmer Fund
- Dr. Samina Raja, SUNY Buffalo
- Julian Mangano, Della Terra Farm
- Julie Suarez, Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Kama Doucoure, Big Dream Farm, LLC (Community Farm)
- Karen Washington, Rise & Root Farm
- Kiani Conley-Wilson, Soul Fire Farm
- Dr. Marion Terenzio, President, State University New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Cobleskill
- Miriam Boateng, Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County
- Omar Sanders, Empire State Development
- Onika Abraham, Farm School
- Qiana Mickie, Founding Principal, QJM Multiprise
- Rebekah Williams, Food for the Spirit/Massachusetts Avenue Project
- Ribka Getachew, Community Food Advocates
- Samantha Levy, American Farmland Trust
- Sawdayah Brownlee; Board President, Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust
- Sheryll Durrant, Board President - Just Food; Resident Garden Manager - Kelly Street Garden; Food & Agriculture Coordinator - New Roots Community Farm
- Steven Perry, Retired Assistant Principal - Agriculture, NYCDOE, John Bowne High School
- Tom Cosgrove, Farm Credit East
- Wilfred Moss, Moss' Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Structure and Process

Following the confirmation of workgroup members, AGM sought an outside facilitator who could remain objective and encourage respect and understanding among the Workgroup and staff as discussions were held on intense subjects like race, discrimination, and privilege. The Department hired Rae Gomes, Executive Director of the Brownsville Community Culinary Center, community organizer, and importantly, a black woman with experience in racial justice and racial equity training.

Ms. Gomes and AGM staff used listening session notes and BIPOC engagement to develop a six-meeting process that would capture the recommendations needed to most impact BIPOC groups. Key themes included BIPOC groups needing targeted and strategic support in order to:

- Access Infrastructure and Resources
- Access Education and Training
- Access Capital
- Access Land

Workgroup meetings were held November 17, 2020 through March 29, 2021.

Group agreements were also important to ensure understanding and respect amongst workgroup members. For this process, Workgroup

Date	Time	Topic
November 17, 2020	10am-2pm	Introductions, grounding, early discussion
December 16, 2020	10am-2pm	Access to Arrangement and Resources
January 13, 2021	10am-2pm	Access to Education and Training
February 16, 2021	10am-2pm	Access to Capital
March 9, 2021	10am-2pm	Access to Land
March 29, 2021	11am-1pm	Review of Recommendations

members agreed to work under the following guidelines for discussion:

- **Marginalized identities prioritized:** The most important agreement is that the workgroup prioritizes BIPOC voices, concerns, and recommendations. White and institutional partners take a back seat to listen and learn.
- **One mic:** One person speaks at a time.
- **Make space, take space:** If one person regularly shares in the meeting they are encouraged to “make space” for other group members to share. If one person does not share often, they are encouraged to share more.
- **Be aware of time:** Be considerate of the agenda.
- **Intent vs. impact:** Understand that intent and impact are not the same; with everyone’s differing views, someone’s intent may not impact the group how they wished. Remain open to both understanding and receiving that feedback.
- **Embrace curiosity:** Be open and challenge your own thoughts by remaining curious.
- **Respect confidentiality:** To create a safe space, Workgroup members must protect each other by not sharing personal Workgroup member perspectives without asking. Workgroup members may also retract statements from the notes if they wish.

Recommendations

As a result of its discussions, the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup proposes 21 recommendations that will help bring inclusivity to agriculture by providing greater access to infrastructure, education, land, and capital. The workgroup proposes a \$10 million initial investment to support and execute these recommendations.

The recommendations come from BIPOC leaders, and recommendations should be led by and implemented in partnership with BIPOC leaders. BIPOC leaders need to be valued, uplifted, and prioritized throughout this recommendation plan. For every recommendation, AGM encourages investment in BIPOC-led farms and organizations, including those who participated in the Workgroup.

The recommendations are categorized into the following four issue areas:

1. Access to Infrastructure and Resources
2. Access to Education and Training
3. Access to Capital
4. Access to Land

Many of these recommendations work in tandem with each other. For example, access to land cannot be completely discussed without capital.

In addition, a fifth area was added to address additional actions the Department can implement alongside those referenced above.



Access to Infrastructure and Resources

Workgroup members expressed numerous concerns within the Access to Infrastructure and Resources issue area. First, even if BIPOC producers can access land, which was frequently described as a cumbersome and discriminatory process, and then bear the often-cited egregious procedure of purchasing the land, they often have little funds left available for acquiring infrastructure. Urban gardeners that are not considered farmers have little to no access to federal infrastructure and resources designated for farmers. BIPOC workgroup members indicated not being able to participate and experiment in innovative and technological agricultural approaches due to the lack of resources. Many workgroup members indicated that BIPOC farms and enterprises need targeted support to scale up operations and include value-added production.

Recommendation 1: Provide funding to support innovative, technological, and regenerative agriculture practices, as well as funding for infrastructure to support scale-up and value-added production.

Recommendation 2: Continue partnership with Empire State Development (ESD) to identify funds available for infrastructure and improving operations.

Recommendation 3: Encourage value chain coordination between urban and rural BIPOC growers that allows for infrastructure and resource sharing.

Access to Education and Training

The Access to Education and Training meeting led to deep discussions on how AGM and agricultural institutions and organizations can ensure a viable agriculture workforce in New York State. More importantly, the discussion included how BIPOC experiences need to be captured in training programs, educational environments, and institutional settings. Workgroup members emphasized that there is little to no BIPOC staff and faculty at New York State colleges and universities in the agriculture field. Standard agriculture curriculum is also not informed by BIPOC experiences. Most BIPOC students and trainees cannot afford unpaid training and internships. For the BIPOC students and trainees that can access training programs, there is little opportunity for them to enter viable farming careers.

Recommendation 4: Create a BIPOC agricultural training program, where funds are used to create paid internships, training opportunities, apprenticeships, and beyond. Capacity funds will also be made available to BIPOC-led farms and organizations that train and hire interns and graduates, and host apprentices. Develop networks for NYS employment opportunities in agriculture.

Recommendation 5: Work with university agricultural departments to hire more BIPOC faculty and educators in agriculture and encourage establishing a racial equity framework in hiring. Ensure BIPOC farmers are getting paid speaking and teaching opportunities.

Recommendation 6: Review agricultural education (FFA, AITC, Cornell, SUNY) curriculum to ensure that there is BIPOC representation and a racial equity framework embedded, including language access. Partner with agricultural Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions, Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) programs, and other BIPOC-led farms and educational organizations.

Recommendation 7: Encourage pathways to recruit more BIPOC students in agriculture and support summer programs for early childhood and school age students.



Access to Capital

The Access to Capital Workgroup session proved to be one of the most vital out of the six-meeting series. While many small farmers struggle with accessing capital, BIPOC farmers face a higher level of challenges due to historic discrimination. Workgroup members emphasized issues with loans due to ongoing discrimination from both government and non-government lenders. BIPOC farmers and food leaders are also cut out from certain grants and funding opportunities due to match requirements and not having access to base capital to qualify for loans. Grant funds can be restrictive, and many don't cover operational costs, which are essential for BIPOC farms and organizations. Many workgroup members also expressed having little to no access to sell to institutions like schools, hospitals, etc.

Recommendation 8: Develop partnerships and structured conversations with lenders, including commercial banks and Farm Credit, and BIPOC producers to discuss outreach and lending practices to better serve BIPOC farmers.

Recommendation 9: Provide funding for grant programming that covers operational costs.

Recommendation 10: Partner with ESD to host technical assistance workshops in MWBE certification and additional workshops on Grants Gateway.

Recommendation 11: Broaden New York State's work in the procurement space to ensure BIPOC farmers can sell to institutions like schools, hospitals, etc. through value chain coordination.

Recommendation 12: Ensure BIPOC and marginalized voices are included in the [New York Food Supply working group](#) (Chapter 24 of the laws of 2021).



Access to Land

Accessing land is one of the biggest hurdles BIPOC farmers in the Workgroup are continuously experiencing. Due to historical and ongoing discrimination, BIPOC farmers have experienced tremendous amounts of land loss; therefore, BIPOC farmers are less likely to inherit land and have little to no access to land ownership. BIPOC Workgroup members have cited not being able to purchase land in New York State even when they have the capital due to explicit discrimination. Members have cited that landowners are willing to take their appointments or calls but may not show up when it is time to speak to a BIPOC buyer.

Recommendation 13: Encourage ESD to work with more BIPOC-led organizations to administer the [Regional Revolving Loan Trust Fund](#) to better serve BIPOC producers and business owners.

Recommendation 14: Encourage the development of and support existing urban land trusts to protect land that can be used to produce food in historically under-resourced communities. Engage community land trust stakeholders and revisit eligibility for the Land Trust grant program to ensure that urban land trusts can qualify.

Recommendation 15: Collaborate with other state agencies and legal partners to ensure the [New York State Anti-Discrimination Law](#) is being upheld across New York, particularly the sale of farmland. Explore partnerships for legal support of Community Land Trusts and BIPOC producers.

Recommendation 16: Provide funding to support the direct purchase of land.

Recommendation 17: Develop an Access to Land Toolkit that includes guidance on purchasing and protecting land.

Funding to support innovative, technological, and regenerative agricultural approaches also applies here and is included in the Access to Infrastructure and Resources recommendations.



AGM Departmental Reforms

Throughout the Workgroup discussions, there were numerous additional recommendations mentioned for the Department to consider for its internal processes, alongside those mentioned above. These include:

Recommendation 18: Build out a communication list of BIPOC farmers and BIPOC-led organizations.

Recommendation 19: Establish an ongoing BIPOC advisory council to the Department and share opportunities.

Recommendation 20: Establish dedicated staff and communication channels to address BIPOC specific issues and needs to ensure BIPOC farmers and leaders feel safe, comfortable, and welcomed in New York's agricultural spaces.

Recommendation 21: Evaluate AGM's grant programs, social media, and media presence through a racial equity lens and evaluate how the Department can better ensure fair treatment, access, and opportunity in its program offerings and grants.

Moving Forward

Perspective, personal experiences, and knowledge from the Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup were key in developing these recommendations. Through this process, important conversations were had and new relationships within the state's agricultural community have been built. This is a first step in an ongoing project. Moving forward, the Department will take action on ideas developed in this process and will continue to engage with and learn from the Workgroup. Next steps include:

Expanding outreach

While there was great and rich perspective shared during meetings, the majority of the BIPOC leaders that made up the workgroup identified as Black and African American. The Department is looking forward to building more relationships with people from other BIPOC groups to ensure more representation and perspective.

Communication checkpoints

Following the submission of this report, AGM staff will not only establish dedicated staff to address BIPOC needs but it will also commit to monthly (at a minimum) check-ins via phone and email to provide status updates and information to Workgroup members.

Internal training

AGM is committed to training Department staff on diversity and racial equity to ensure staff is prepared to implement the recommendations cited here with a racial equity lens.



Conclusion

The 21 recommendations within this report were developed in collaboration with BIPOC leaders, a majority of whom are Black and African American, who have been advocating, developing solutions, and building the groundwork for this report for decades. Their perspectives and knowledge were critical in both understanding and determining where and how the state can invest to move the industry forward. The Diversity and Racial Equity Workgroup proposes a \$10 million initial investment to execute the recommendations listed in this report. For every recommendation, AGM encourages investment in BIPOC-led farms and organizations, including those in the Workgroup.

AGM acknowledges that there is still more work to be done through relationship building, power shifting, intentional implementation, and accountability. Both national and state data points emphasize the need to prioritize these recommendations. With only 1.3% of producers in NYS identifying as BIPOC, the implementation of these recommendations will be vital to developing a diverse, safe, and sustainable New York State agricultural industry for everyone.



Acknowledgments

A special thank you to:

Rae Gomes, Facilitator

AGM would like to acknowledge the BIPOC leaders and organizations within the Workgroup, and New York State agencies and organizations, that shared information on existing initiatives and solutions during the Workgroup sessions. These are:

Black Farmer Fund

Black Farmers United of New York State

Just Food

Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust

QJM Multiprise

Empire State Development



We recognize and thank all of the BIPOC-led organizations that participated in the Workgroup. These organizations and their leaders have been on the frontlines of diversity and racial equity in agriculture. These are:

Allison DeHoney
Buffalo Go Green Inc./Urban Fruits & Veggies LLC
<https://www.urbanfv.com>



Christine Hutchinson
Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust
<https://nefoclandtrust.org>

Dennis Derryck
Corbin Hill Farms/Black Farmer Fund
<http://corbinhill-foodproject.org>

Dr. Samina Raja
The Food Systems Planning and Healthy
Community Laboratory, SUNY Buffalo
<http://foodsystmsplanning.ap.buffalo.edu>

Julian Mangano
Della Terra Farm
<https://www.dellaterratreesforlife.com>



Urban Fruits & Veggies (UFV) provides the Western NY community with urban locally grown high quality fresh produce.

Our desire is to connect POC farmers to land to grow healthy foods and medicines for our communities and plan to accomplish this by acquiring and returning land to Indigenous nations and respectfully connecting Black, Asian, and Latinx and other POC farmers and land stewards to land while centering and respecting Indigenous sovereignty.

The Corbin Hill Farm Share is a year-round weekly subscription program of fresh, high quality, locally grown vegetables and fruits delivered to our community partner sites across New York City. The Corbin Hill Farm Share program was designed to meet the needs of low-income communities through our affordable prices and flexibility with sign up and payment options.

The Food Systems Planning and Healthy Community Lab at SUNY Buffalo is dedicated to research that critically examines the role of local government policy in facilitating equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities. The lab is focused on creating positive changes for Buffalo's food system.

Della Terra is a sustainable, small-scale, bio-intensive farm in Castorland, NY. We are dedicated to providing food with integrity, engaging in organic, non-chemical, non-GMO practices to benefit consumers and the environment.

Kama Doucoure
Big Dream Farm, LLC

Big Dream Farm provides African vegetables to African communities in the greater NYC area. With 55 employees, we are committed to uplift our community by providing access to fresh produce and meat, that they otherwise would not have access to.

Karen Washington
Rise & Root Farm
<https://www.riseandrootfarm.com>

Rise & Root Farm is a five-acre farm, run cooperatively by four owners who are women, intergenerational, multi-racial, and LGBTQ.

Kiani Conley-Wilson
Soul Fire Farm
<https://www.soulfirefarm.org>

Soul Fire Farm is an Afro-Indigenous centered community farm committed to uprooting racism and seeding sovereignty in the food system. We raise and distribute life-giving food as a means to end food apartheid.

Onika Abraham
Farm School NYC
<http://www.farmschoolnyc.org>

Farm School NYC trains local residents in urban agriculture with place-based education in order to build self-reliant communities and inspire positive local action around food access and social, economic, and racial justice issues.



Qiana Mickie
QJM Multiprise
<https://qianajmickie.com>

A Black woman-led consulting firm that uses food as a driver of enterprise, innovation, and equity. Our focus is to foster racial, economic, and environmental equity within food systems, community, and sustainable food/farm policy. We provide proven leadership experience to businesses to effectively integrate equity within operations, food supply chains, and partnerships- and still meet mission and budget.



Rebekah Williams
Food for the Spirit/Massachusetts Avenue Project
<https://www.mass-ave.org>

Started by a small group of community residents, the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP) is a food justice organization in Buffalo, NY working to build youth leaders, ensure healthy, affordable food access for all, and greater equity in our food system.



Our mission is to ensure all New Yorkers have access to healthy, affordable, culturally-appropriate foods through equity-centered, high-impact public policy.

Ribka Getachew
Community Food Advocates
<https://www.communityfoodadvocatesnyc.org>

Sawdayah Brownlee
Brooklyn-Queens Land Trust
<https://bqlt.org>



Sheryll Durrant
Just Food
<https://www.justfood.org>

Wilfred Moss
Moss' Fresh Fruit and Vegetables

Community gardens are an important physical, ecological, and economic resource to the City of New York. Community gardening strengthens our communities, enhances our lives, and provides recreational opportunities and beauty to city neighborhoods.

The mission of the Brooklyn Queens Land Trust (BQLT) is to:

Ensure the conservation and preservation of open space in perpetuity, for the benefit of the general public.

Act as a steward of the open space properties that BQLT owns

Establish a community of gardeners in Brooklyn and Queens to: (1) Educate and inspire people of all ages to become successful and environmentally responsible gardeners. (2) Support community involvement in community gardening, neighborhood beautification, and open space enhancement through activities and programs. (3) Promote the interests of community gardens.”

We make it our mission to uplift the people of New York City who have been victimized by food systems. We attack the issue at its core by working together with regional farmers and producers to create direct routes of access to fresh, sustainable produce for the city’s residents, regardless of socioeconomic status. Furthermore, we ensure that people get the most out of their food by teaching them how to prepare it in the form of culturally appreciated dishes, and we teach others how to grow the food justice movement in their own communities. The effects of our work are amplified in our communities as well as those of our partners and trainees.

Endnotes

1 https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/New_York/st36_1_0061_0061.pdf

2 <https://www.ewg.org/research/black-farmer-usda-timeline/>

3 <http://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/RS20430.pdf>

4 <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40988.pdf>

5 <https://nationalaglawcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/assets/crs/R40988.pdf>

6 https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_State_Level/New_York/st36_1_0061_0061.pdf

