



AGM OUTREACH INFORMATION & OPPORTUNITIES [05/05/2022]

Outreach@agriculture.ny.gov is your direct link to New York's Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) for independent communication, questions, concerns, and more. If you have information of value to share with others in the diverse New York agricultural community, please feel free to send it to this email account to be considered for inclusion in future messages.

INFORMATION

- UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) EQUITY COMMISSION PUBLIC MEETING

The [USDA's Equity Commission](#) will conduct its second public meeting May 10 and May 11 – [register here for May 10](#) | [register here for May 11](#). The 15-member Commission aims to identify points of systematic issues of inequity within the USDA's programs and services, then make recommendations to address historically-driven barriers within the Agency's processes. This meeting should be informative of the federal conversation addressing systems specific to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) inequities in agriculture.



- USDA EQUITY ACTION PLAN

In support of [Executive Order 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support to Underserved Communities](#), the USDA made its [Equity Action Plan](#) publicly available. The plan outlines actions USDA will take to advance programmatic equity to improve access to programs and services for underserved stakeholders and communities. Too often in the past, USDA programs and services were designed to benefit those with land, experience, money, and education while leaving behind those without means, resources, or privilege of one kind or another. Over the course of decades, congressional reports, internal data, civil rights investigations, court actions, and stakeholder testimony have documented this long history of inequity and discrimination.

The USDA Equity Action Plan highlights a set of actions USDA will take to advance equity; these particular actions are highlighted in the plan because of their potential high impact for underserved farmers and ranchers, families and children, and rural communities.

- NATIONAL PARK RANGER BETTY REID SOSKIN RETIRES AT AGE 100

Born in Detroit in 1921, [Betty Reid Soskin, the oldest active national park ranger in America, retired](#) in April 2022 at age 100. Joining the National Park Service at 84 years old, she led public programs at the park for more than a decade and a half. Her presentation of events provided broader context of the World War II effort and the backdrop of racism and segregation through her life experiences, including firsthand stories of slavery from her great grandmother who died at age 102 when Soskin was 27. Her life story includes working in a segregated union, founding one of the first Black-owned music stores with her husband, political involvement in California, and introducing President Barack Obama during the 2016 national tree lighting ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Explaining what drove her to initially get involved with the National Park Service during a speech at the Rosie the Riveter Visitor Education Center, Soskin said, "If we don't know where we started, we have no conception of where we are or how we got here. Only if we go back and retrace our steps. And that's what the park became for me."

OPPORTUNITIES



- **NOMINATIONS FOR THE FARM, RANCH, AND RURAL COMMUNITIES FEDERAL ADVISORY**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) seeks nominations to serve on its [Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee \(FRRCC\)](#). Established in 2008, the FRRCC provides independent policy advice, information, and recommendations to EPA's Administrator on a range of environmental issues and policies that are of importance to agriculture and rural communities. Under the current charge, the committee will focus on advancing climate

change mitigation and adaptation strategies for U.S. agriculture. **Nominations are due May 16, 2022.** Any interested person or organization may submit the names of qualified persons, including themselves. Please visit <https://www.epa.gov/faca/frrcc-2022-request-nominations> for further details, including representation, candidate qualification, and instructions for submitting applications.

- **GAP WORKSHOP**

In effort to remove barriers to participation in the USDA's Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audit programs. AGM, Chester Agricultural Center (CAC), and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE)-Orange County have partnered with the NASDA Foundation to host a [free GAP workshop Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 10AM-1PM](#), to share information about GAP. The USDA's GAP Audit Program is a voluntary audit program developed to assist growers to meet buyer specifications and/or industry best practices, as well as provide them with better access to markets.

The workshop will be held at the CAC (8 Greycourt Avenue, Chester, New York); registration is required. Spanish translation services will be present and light lunch provided. **RSVP by May 10, 2022, to Maria Caicedo (maria@chesteragcenter.org; (917) 345-5653).**

- **DAIRY MARKETING & BRANDING SERVICES GRANT**

The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) invites dairy processors in the Northeast region to apply for a Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant. These funds allow processors to access professional marketing and branding services to elevate their businesses through marketing tactics, brand improvements, and overall strategy. Grant funds must be used to hire a professional marketing/branding contractor to develop strategy or content. Up to 25% of the grant funds may be used to implement the strategy or content developed by the contractor. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 with a 25% cash or in-kind match required.

Applications are due June 23. For additional details and application process, visit [Dairy Marketing & Branding Services Grant | Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets](#).

- **SNAP-ED FOOD BOX PROGRAM GRANT**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) Food Box Grant program expands access to nutritious and locally grown produce to communities at reduced rates, while working to connect farmers with new markets and drive growth in New York's agricultural industry. This statewide grant program encourages participants to make local produce available and accessible to SNAP-eligible/food insecure communities while simultaneously providing nutrition education.

Administered by AGM in partnership with the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the program is federally funded and available to not-for-profits and government entities. Proposals for projects up to \$10,000 are eligible. Qualifying project

proposals will be reviewed and approved in the order of receipt of a complete application until funds are exhausted. **Project proposals are due at 4:00 pm on May 17, 2022.** Learn more about the program and apply at <https://agriculture.ny.gov/funding-opportunities>.

- **SNAP-ED COMMUNITY GROWERS GRANT PROGRAM**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program's (SNAP) Community Growers Grant program supports urban farming and nutrition education. The program provides direct assistance to community-led gardens and not-for-profit farms that work to combat food insecurity in under-resourced areas and help food insecure communities develop an interest and skillset to grow and cook healthy, locally produced food. This initiative recently expanded to serve nutritionally underserved communities across all of New York State.

Administered by AGM in partnership with OTDA, the program is federally funded and available to not-for-profits and government entities. Proposals for projects up to \$50,000 are eligible. Awards will be made to eligible, qualifying projects, in order of receipt of complete applications, until funding is exhausted. **Project proposals are due at 4:00 pm on May 17, 2022.** Learn more about the program and apply at <https://agriculture.ny.gov/funding-opportunities>.

DIRECT SIGN-UP

(more details and future information from the source)

- **CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE**

June 30, 2022 is the last day to sign up for the 2022 Ag Census. If you have never received a census and are new to NASS surveys, [sign up to be counted](#) today. You do not need to sign up if you already receive NASS surveys.



The Census of Agriculture is a complete count of U.S. farms and ranches and the people who operate them. Even small plots of land - whether rural or urban - growing fruit, vegetables or some food animals count if \$1,000 or more of such products were raised and sold, or normally would have been sold, during the Census year. **The Census of Agriculture, taken only once every five years, looks at land use and ownership, operator characteristics, production practices, income, and expenditures.** For America's farmers and ranchers, the Census of Agriculture is their voice, their future, and their opportunity.

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