



The Minority AgVocate™

DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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In Case You MISSED IT

Bastrop, LA

Last month, Freedmen Heirs Foundation Project Manager, Patrice Lazard, attended the 2024 National Black Growers Council (NBGC) model farm field day hosted by Ashley Armstrong of Armstrong Farms in Bastrop, Louisiana. Ashley is a fourth-generation farmer who currently runs the soybean and vegetable operation alongside her father, Harper Armstrong. The Field Day was initially scheduled to take place at Armstrong Farms, but due to inclement weather, changed its location to the Morehouse Activity Center. Despite the location change, NBGC successfully organized another great event.

The day began with opening remarks which included a brief history of the farm field days which started in Morehouse Parish approximately twenty-two years ago. The event featured several informative presentations which included updates on soybean irrigation and regenerative practices, vegetable production, introduction of drone technology, USDA programs, NBGC updates, and heirs' property. The day concluded with lunch providing attendees an opportunity to network and connect. This year's final Farm Field Day is August 30, 2024 in Georgia.



Photo description: Harper and Ashley Armstrong of Armstrong Farms welcoming guests.



Photo description: Stacia Davis Conger, Ph.D. with the LSU AgCenter gives a presentation on soybean irrigation.



Photo description: Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliott gives a powerful address on the importance of risk management.

Agricultural News

Rectifying Historical Injustices: USDA Awards \$2 Billion In Aid to Minority Farmers and Ranchers

Written by: Seanicaa Edwards Herron, FHF Founder and Executive Director

In late July, USDA awarded \$2 billion in aid to over 43,000 minority farmers and ranchers across the country who've long endured the sting of discrimination under USDA's farm-loan programs. This initiative, known as the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP), began accepting applications in July 2023, and concluded in January 2024. The program's roots trace back to the Inflation Reduction Act's Section 22007, crafted as a corrective measure after an earlier discrimination-relief effort for Black farmers was halted by federal court order following a lawsuit filed by White farmers. A staggering number of over 58,000 applications were submitted, reflecting the deep-seated issues within the USDA system. Additionally, more than 24,000 producers hailed from Mississippi and Alabama—states where racial disparities are still deeply felt to this day.

President Joe Biden highlighted the systemic obstacles that historically hindered many minorities from securing USDA loans. He expressed a strong commitment to

addressing these inequalities, stating, "For too long, numerous farmers and ranchers were unfairly marginalized in farm loan programs, lacking equal access to federal resources and support. Upon assuming the presidency, I pledged to address these disparities. The Inflation Reduction Act represents a major step forward in rectifying the injustices that have long plagued the agricultural sector. With these new measures, more farmers and ranchers will be able to maintain their livelihoods, stimulate economic growth, and realize their dreams."

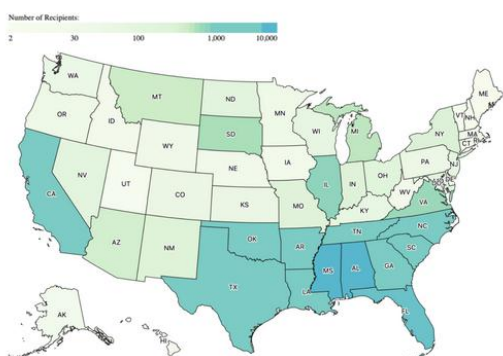
Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack reflected on the program's significance. "The completion of the Discrimination Financial Assistance Program marks a crucial milestone in USDA's evolution and in our endeavor to transform into a department that truly serves every individual aspiring to engage in agriculture. While this financial aid doesn't compensate for the losses or suffering endured, it acknowledges the injustice. My hope is that it enables many farmers to keep their farms, bolster our nation's food supply, and continue their cherished work in agriculture."

I see this action as a step in the right direction, but more can be done and more should be done.

More information about the awards, including geographic distribution, can be found on the program website, [22007apply.gov](https://www.22007apply.gov).

To learn more about USDA's equity work and resources, visit www.usda.gov/equity.

Financial Assistance Awards by State



Source: United States Department of Agriculture. Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) page. <https://www.22007apply.gov/>.

Agripreneur Spotlight

Empowering Communities Through Agriculture

Read below on how Charles Greenlea, founder of ECO-PARADIGM, LLC, is combining his love for people and nature to support healthy communities in Georgia and Alabama

Charles Greenlea's roots run deep in Georgia's red clay soils. A multigenerational resident of Atlanta, and the descendant of a long line of growers, educators, entrepreneurs, and organizers, Charles is positioned to serve his community in a unique way. In 2019, he founded ECO-PARADIGM (EP), LLC in Metro Atlanta's agricultural ecosystem in an effort to help bring balance between ecology and economics for communities of color.

Charles loves people and nature and sees the work he does as an opportunity to support others in sustaining themselves and their communities through land stewardship. He currently sits on the board of Black Sustainability, Inc., and is an appointed supervisor for the Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District. When he's not busy



serving his community, Charles enjoys working on his own family farm in Crawfordville, Georgia (known as G4) alongside his wife, Raina, and their two daughters, Tsehai and Mizan.

ECO-PARADIGM is a social enterprise that supports healthy communities by providing regenerative and reparative agricultural services to aspiring and seasoned growers. Services include consultation, training and education, farm infrastructure, site management, and seasonal labor support.



The enterprise's consulting is centered around finding cost-effective, and environmentally-friendly, system-oriented solutions for their clients. ECO-PARADIGM works in partnership with other social enterprises and non-profit organizations



Photo description: EP Crew at Phoenix Gardens, Lawrenceville, GA.

Photo by: Tabia-Lisenbee-Parker

within the local landscape to facilitate agribusiness and workforce development training programs for adults and youth.

ECO-PARADIGM installs infrastructure such as greenhouses, high tunnels, rainwater catchment systems, irrigation, fencing, trellises, raised beds, and provides

Agripreneur Spotlight

agroforestry management and site maintenance services. Providing skilled labor in the agricultural sector in ways that are both ethical and equitable is paramount to the enterprise's operations. To date, ECO-PARADIGM has served over 40 farms throughout Georgia and Alabama and hopes to expand their regional impact in the years to come.

To learn more about ECO-PARADIGM, please visit www.ecoparadigm.net.



Photo description: EP Crew building Greenhouse.
Photo by: Charles Greenlea

Photo description: EP Crew builds 30x96 High Tunnel at Love is Love Cooperative Farm, Mansfield, GA.
Photo by: Demetrius Milling



Upcoming Events

Webinars and Live Events

Freedmen Heirs Foundation (FHF), Foundation for Food & Agriculture Research (FFAR), and Resources for the Future (RFF) are collaborating to conduct a webinar series — **Assessing Opportunities and Barriers for Minority Producers Transitioning to Climate-Smart and Regenerative Agriculture Programs** — and an in-person convening event in early 2025.

This webinar series and in-person convening will be guided by community insights and will be used to shape a research framework as well as the creation of resources that enhance the impact of climate-smart agriculture investments for minority farmers.

The next webinar will be on **Friday, October 11, 2024, at 1:00 pm EST**. This session will discuss mapping information networks and understanding barriers to accessing resources and funding.

Click the link below to join the discussion.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Join us for FHF's next webinar session — **Wholesale Opportunities with Procurement Companies** — on **September 20, 2024, via Zoom at 1:30 pm CST/2:30 pm EST**.

Our guest speaker, Lynn Gorsuch, Category Development Manager for Supplier Diversity & Sustainability at Foodbuy, will educate farmers on wholesale food opportunities with procurement companies and Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs). The discussion will also include actionable steps that farmers can take to access this market.

Discover ways to master wholesale markets and unlock new opportunities for your farm.

Click below to register for this informative event!

[REGISTER HERE](#)


LIVE WEBINAR

Wholesale Opportunities at Procurement Companies

Held Virtually via Zoom



LYNN GORSUCH
Category Development Manager
Supplier Diversity & Sustainability
Foodbuy

Upcoming Events

In-person Events

The State of the Soil Conference

There's still time to register to attend the inaugural State of the Soil conference hosted at the beautiful Origin Hotel in Lexington, KY from **September 8-11, 2024**. This event, presented by Black Soil KY, features Freedmen Heirs Foundation, The Farmers' Truck, and Farm Credit Mid-America! Let's cultivate change together! The deadline to register to attend is **August 25, 2024**.

Click the link below to learn more and to register. Freedmen Heirs Foundation friends and allies will receive **\$50 off** the Full 3-day registration by using promo code **FHFSOS24**!

[MORE DETAILS](#)[REGISTER HERE](#)

In-person Events

2024 Regenerative Food Systems Investment Forum

The 2024 Regenerative Food Systems Investment (RFSI) Forum will take place **October 9-10, 2024** in Denver, Colorado. With 450+ attendees, 45+ speakers and 9+ hours of networking, the RFSI Forum is the **ONLY** event that exclusively brings together investors, food and agriculture entrepreneurs, and critical stakeholders working to build resilient food systems.

Click below to learn more and to register.

MORE DETAILS



INVESTMENT *Forum*

October 9-10, 2024 | Denver, CO



**Catalyzing Connection
and Capital for
Resilient Food Systems**



Visit Our Website
www.RFSI-FORUM.com



In-person Events

Esther Manor Farm-to-Table Experience

Join Esther Manor Farm on **October 19, 2024**, at **2:00 pm EST**, for an exhilarating afternoon, celebrating African culture through food, fashion, music, and games! Savor a mouthwatering barbecue feast featuring authentic African dishes while enjoying vibrant Afro-beats music. Feel the pulse of traditional African drums and witness a captivating fashion show. Gather around the bonfire for storytelling sessions, all in support of Esther Manor Farm programs.

Don't miss this unforgettable event celebrating Africa's rich heritage and a worthy cause! Click the link below to register.

REGISTER HERE



Farm - To - Table

DINING
EXPERIENCE

SAVE THE DATE

SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 19, 2024

BEAVERDAM, VIRGINIA

RSVP: INFO@ESTHERMANORFARM.COM



FARM-TO-TABLE PROGRAM

2:00
DOORS OPEN
FOOD + DRINKS BAR

2:45
TRADITIONAL OPENING CEREMONY

3:00
FARM TOUR + PRESENTATION
PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

4:00
FASHION SHOW

4:30
TRADITIONAL GAMES
DANCING
MUSIC

5:00
CLOSING

MORE INFO: INFO@ESTHERMANORFARM.COM

Farmer Resources

Programs and Reports

Welcome to our Farmer Resources section, a dedicated space to provide you with valuable tools and information. Explore comprehensive reports and programs as well as funding opportunities designed to provide support for a variety of farming projects and initiatives. Additionally, for those seeking to grow their team or find new career paths within the agriculture industry, we've included a section on employment opportunities that span a range of roles and expertise.



USDA Program Deadlines

Learn more about important dates and deadlines for USDA programs and events.

LEARN MORE

Farmers.gov | Local DashBoard

Click below to find your state and view local data and USDA resources.

EXPLORE

August 2024 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 Explore to view this month’s interest rates for loans offered through FSA.

EXPLORE

Southern University AgCenter Certification Programs Available

Southern University AgCenter is offering free certification programs to farmers and small business owners. Certification programs available are Food & Farm Safety, Small Business Development, Master Small Ruminant, and Sustainable Urban Agriculture. Click below to learn more.

LEARN MORE

Programs and Reports

USDA 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. Click below to view current and archived reports.

[VIEW REPORT](#)[ARCHIVED REPORTS](#)

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 August's report by clicking the link below.

[VIEW REPORT](#)

Secretary of Agriculture Briefings on 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. Click below to watch the most recent briefing.

[EXPLORE](#)

Farmer Resources

Additional Information

Our Latest Webinar Is Now Available on YouTube

Last month's webinar — **Getting to Know Your Partners in Conservation, The Best Kept Secret** — is now available on our YouTube Channel.

During this session, our guest speakers, Dr. Loutrina Staley, Equity and Outreach Program Analyst with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) and Michael Watson from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) introduced their organizations and shared valuable insights, programs, and resources available to producers looking to implement conservation practices on the ground.

Click the link below to view the discussion.

[WATCH NOW](#)

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Watch Now | Assessing Opportunities and Barriers for Minority Producers - Session 2

Session 2 of the **Assessing Opportunities & Barriers for Minority Producers Transitioning to Climate-Smart & Regenerative Agriculture Programs** webinar series is available for viewing. This webinar aimed to provide an overview of the science of soil health and economics as well as the opportunities and barriers to increase adoption of regenerative soil health practices.

Watch the webinar by clicking the link below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Additional Information

USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs to Increase Financial Freedom, Resilience and Profitability for Agricultural Producers

Earlier this month, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced changes to its Farm Service Agency (FSA) Farm Loan Programs that are intended to better assist farmers and ranchers in making strategic investments for their agricultural operations.

Policy changes include 1) Establishing a new low-interest installment set-aside program for financially distressed borrowers; 2) Providing all eligible loan applicants access to flexible repayment terms that can increase profitability and help build working capital reserves and savings; and 3) Reducing additional loan security requirements to enable borrowers to leverage equity.

Click the link to read the full announcement.

[LEARN MORE](#)

We Want to Hear From You!

American Farmland Trust, Black Family Land Trust, Freedmen Heirs Foundation, and Farmer Veteran Coalition are partnering to better understand the needs of historically underserved producers, including veterans, women, and farmers of color, in adopting climate resilient practices in their operations. This short survey will help us develop resources to better serve your needs. Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. You will be entered in a drawing for a \$250 visa gift card.

Click the link below to take the survey.

[SURVEY](#)

Project funded by United States Department of Agriculture Partnerships for Climate-Smart Commodities. Award Identifying number: NR243A750004G002. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



Additional Information





**SOUTHERN
EXTENSION
RISK
MANAGEMENT
EDUCATION**

**“EMPOWERING PRODUCERS
TO MANAGE RISKS”**



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University of Arkansas System

WHO WE SERVE

Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Puerto Rico and The Virgin Islands

WHAT WE DO

- Build awareness and/or understanding of the network of AIPs
- Enhance the level of crop insurance to historically underserved farmers & ranchers
- Analyze crop insurance metrics to improve sector performance measures
- Create relationships and outreach on crop insurance outreach products and services



www.srmec.uada.edu/navigator

ENHANCING THE UNDERSTANDING AND USE
OF FEDERAL CROP INSURANCE BY PRODUCERS

Farmer Resources

Funding Opportunities

Southern SARE Professional Development Program Grant

Proposals are being accepted for the Southern SARE Professional Development Program Grant. This grant provides professionals who work directly with farmers and ranchers the opportunity to enhance their education and outreach strategies.

The deadline to apply for this grant opportunity is **August 30, 2024**.

Click the link below to learn more and to apply.

[LEARN MORE](#)

National Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer Programs Phase I

This program supports small businesses in the creation of innovative, disruptive technologies and enables the application of research advancements from conception into the market. The deadline to apply for this opportunity is **September 17, 2024**.

Click the link below for more information.

[LEARN MORE](#)

West Michigan Farmers of Color Land Fund

Applications are still being accepted for the West Michigan Farmers of Color Land Fund. The goal of this fund is to address past generational injustices by empowering the creation and expansion of BIPOC-owned green growing spaces in urban and rural settings of West Michigan.

The deadline to apply is **October 31, 2024**. Click Explore for more information about this funding opportunity.

[EXPLORE](#)

Funding Opportunities

Farm and Food Workers Relief Program

The Farm and Food Workers Relief Program (FFWR) aims to cover expenses for essential personal, family, or living costs linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes but is not limited to, expenses accrued for the purchase of personal protective equipment (PPE), dependent care, as well as costs related to quarantines and testing.

Additional information can be found by clicking on the link below.

[EXPLORE](#)

USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) plays a crucial role in enhancing both domestic and international opportunities for U.S. growers and producers. By collaborating with a diverse range of organizations, AMS extends its support to rural America and the broader agricultural sector, through the creation of programs designed to meet specific needs within the agricultural sector.

Please note that grant opportunities are available throughout the year with varying deadlines. Click explore to see the full list of opportunities and program(s). Select the program you wish to learn more about to view details that include the grant opportunity deadline.

[EXPLORE](#)

Farmer Resources

Employment Opportunities

Castanea Fellowship

Applications are now open for the Castanea Fellowship, offering individuals the chance to amplify their vision in creating a more sustainable, equitable, and healthier food system through power and movement building.

Learn more about the fellowship by clicking the link below.

[LEARN MORE](#)[APPLY](#)

The Soil Health Institute

The Soil Health Institute is seeking a skilled Inclusive Partnership Lead to further their mission and expand their ability to offer greater on-farm and environmental advantages to historically underserved communities. To excel in this position, candidates must possess a profound comprehension of the connections between racial equity, agriculture, and environmental justice.

Click below, to learn more about this position.

[LEARN MORE](#)

National Young Farmers Coalition

The National Young Farmers Coalition is looking for a full-time Farmer Mental Health Director to join their team. The Director will work to coordinate a wide network of members, participants, and stakeholders in support of this regional initiative. They will also lead a diverse group of partners and focus on addressing the mental health needs of farming communities.

Click below to learn more and to apply.

[APPLY](#)

Center for Heirs Property Preservation

The Center for Heirs Property Preservation is seeking to fill several positions within their organization.

Click below to explore job opportunities available.

[EXPLORE](#)

Employment Opportunities

American Farmland Trust

American Farmland Trust is seeking a part-time Southeast Grazing Network Coordinator to strengthen their team. This position will serve as the liaison between American Farmland Trust and Grazing Mentors in various states. Duties involve managing technical assistance programs, overseeing Mentor and Mentee applications and onboarding, collecting and reporting data, and ensuring administrative compliance within the Climate-Smart Beef Project.

For additional details on this opportunity, click the link below.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Nature for Justice

Nature for Justice is seeking applications from outreach consultants to extend their US Farmer Inclusion Program across North Carolina and Virginia, with a focus on engaging Latino/a and Indigenous farmers.

Click below to learn more about this role and to apply.

[LEARN MORE](#)

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

If you wish to contribute an event, program, funding, or employment opportunity, please send an email with your resources to info@freedmenheirs.org.



Support Freedmen Heirs Foundation!



Scan the QR code above or click [here](#) to make a financial contribution to our organization. Your generous donation will help support our mission and make a positive impact on the agricultural community.

Thank you for your continued support!

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Help us recognize Agripreneurs who are making a difference!

If you know someone deserving of recognition, nominate them to be featured in our magazine by [completing this form](#) or sending us an email at info@freedmenheirs.org. Self nominations are also welcome.

To learn more about Freedmen Heirs Foundation, visit our [website](#).