



**Connecticut Department of Agriculture Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group
Access to Secure Land Tenure**

Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 16, 2022
11:00AM-12:00PM

Was held virtually

Meeting Recording Here: [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Dropbox](#)

Members Present: Chelsea Gazillo, Zania Johnson, Dominick Grant, Ashley Stallworth

Members Absent: Anwar Ahmad, Shawn Sims, Richard Myers, Latha Swamy

Public Present: Maddie Dres (CT FarmLink)

DoAg Staff: Holly Lalime

1. **Welcome and Call to Order-** Meeting was called to order by Dominick Grant at 11:05AM
2. **New Business**
 - a. **Discussion Question 1:** What support would be needed for a shared ownership/cooperative model? What are the resources currently available? Are there organizations or properties that could serve as an initial pilot or hub?
 - Chelsea Gazillo: Financial support is the #1, but more research is really needed. There are groups that have already created community land trusts. We need research on what's already out there. Examples include Agrarian Trust, Northeast Farmers of Color, and Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative
 - Dominick Grant: Who should we look to as the driving force to conduct research and develop models? Should we request that a study be commissioned? DoAg could convene a working group to study this.
 - Zania Johnson: Northeast Sustainable Cooperative, New Roots Cooperative Farm, Veggie Farm Coop, and Southeast Connecticut Community Land Trust are groups we could look to as models.
 - Chelsea Gazillo: CLCC is helping a community land trust in CT. Could we look to them? Town of Lebanon received a grant to start an incubator farm.



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- Cyrena Thibodeau: How do we define an incubator? This should be part of the research – which model or models would work in the state? Do different farmers or groups of farmers require separate models?
- b. Discussion Question 2:** How do farmers "graduate" out of the incubator and what is needed in terms of a pipeline of land for expansion or longer-term tenure? Ensuring maximum access for new farmers while giving farmers enough runway in the incubator.
- Dominick Grant: Is there a way within these structures to create a foundation to build wealth and assets?
 - Ashley Stallworth: Allocating spots for BIPOC growers in these cooperatives.
 - Dominick Grant: What's the structure of this? How do we make these opportunities available to underserved populations? What would that mean in terms of outreach? How are other groups dealing with that question?
 - Chelsea Gazillo: Funding and available resources. How do we look at FPP and CFPP, Greenbank, as a way to support a community land trust model? Need to consider Public Act 490 Program – can that program offer incentives to municipalities. Will eventually need to go to the legislature to make this group an official body. How do you get buy in from a cross section of the agricultural community?
- c. Discussion Question 3:** How to ensure there is asset/wealth-building as part of the arrangement? Is this an important component? What about ground leases or cooperative/condominium/HOA model? For-profit vs. non-profit?
- Chelsea Gazillo: In conversations with Somali Bantu group in western mass, it appears that some new American farmers like the idea of operating under a non-profit umbrella. It's worth outlining all of the models and identifying farmers who fit each model.
- d. Discussion Question 4:** What are existing models that we can draw on? (See for example ALBA -www.albafarmers.org)
- Vermont just passed a land access opportunity act that creates a board at VHCB that looks at the constitutionality of setting aside grants and down payment assistance for BIPOC. The bill is awaiting signature from Governor Scott but can be found here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1sYrVe11vPlsPfr6daU6bUA626Zl86hCv9hj4iBxZr98/edit?usp=sharing>
 - How does this recommendation get framed? This is about opening up agriculture to everyone – we need new farmers of all types.



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3. Links:

- <https://newrootscooperativefarm.com/>
- <https://www.veggifarmcoop.com/recipes-2/>
- <https://centerforneweconomics.org/connecticut-clts/>
- <https://sectclt.org/>
- <https://www.rootednw.org/>
- <https://www.bflt.org/>

4. Public Comment- No public comment.

5. Adjourn- Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM by Dominick Grant.
Respectfully submitted, Holly Lalime, Env. Analyst, May 25, 2021.