



Bryan P. Hurlburt  
Commissioner

**STATE OF CONNECTICUT  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Office of the Commissioner**



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

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Monday, October 18, 2021  
11:00AM-12:00PM

*Was held virtually, meeting recorded*

**Members Present:** Richard Myers, Anwar Ahmad, Chelsea Gazillo, Latha Swamy, Zania Johnson, Dominick Grant

**Members Absent:** Shawn Sims, Ashley Stallworth

**Public Present:** None

**DoAg Staff:** Cyrena Thibodeau, Holly Lalime

1. **Welcome and Call to Order-** Meeting was called to order by Latha Swamy at 11:10AM
2. **Old Business-** The group reviewed access to the Google Drive and discussed which documents are on there and documents that could or should be added.
3. **New Business**
  - a. **Review/discuss AFT's Farmland Access Report**  
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DOAG/publications/Farmland-Needed---How-Connecticut-Can-Help-Farmers-Access-the-Land-They-Need-to-Succeed.pdf>
    - Chelsea Gazillo acknowledged that the Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) is a complicated subject. She offered to give a presentation on OPAV to the group in a subsequent meeting.
    - The group discussed zoning issues/restrictions and their impact on BIPOC farmers.
  - b. **Review/discuss New York's DEI Report**  
[https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/diversityracialequityreport\\_1.pdf](https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/08/diversityracialequityreport_1.pdf)
    - The group discussed ways to make grant program more accessible for BIPOC farmers.
    - Chelsea Gazillo suggested set aside funding in grant programs for BIPOC producers.
    - Chelsea Gazillo suggested looking into funding to support the direct access of land.
4. **Public Comment-** No public comment.

5. **Next Steps-** The group discussed agenda items for next month's meeting including:
  - A presentation from Kayleigh Royston on DoAg legislative priorities/processes
  - Discussion about topics of interest for the group to consider
  - Discussion about other DEI groups. Where can ASLT recommendations fit and how can they avoid overlap?
  
6. **Adjourn-** Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM by Dominick Grant.  
Respectfully submitted, Holly Lalime, Env. Analyst, October 26, 2021.