



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Ag Development & Resource Conservation**



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

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**Connecticut Department of Agriculture Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Working Group
Market Access and Diversification**

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, October 21, 2021
11:00-12:00 PM

Held virtually
Recording is available here:

https://zoom.us/rec/share/7U72uNJWx0H_0o6iV5W9bjLWo1LkNAXp8w_Q8GtTRYM_Kae_whC3TqzXB7S4lYxZ.YRSjKDe5DCvI0Ua5

- Members Present:** Shana Smith, Vicheth Im, Brandon Blank, Tida Infahsaeng, Mary Claire Whelan, John Filchak
- Members Absent:** Frankie Douglass, Debbie Thomas-Sims, Yvonne Renee Davis
- DoAg Staff:** Erin Windham, Allison Hughes

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Vicheth Im at 11:20. (NOTE: Meeting was changed to Zoom platform)
2. **Old Business**
 - a. **Review Main Conservation topics from last meeting-** Notes from the last meeting were reviewed and big ideas discussed briefly. Ideas reviewed included a toolkit, resources for people of color, an entry system to farming, restrictions to certified farmer status, and a food hub for BIPOC farmers.
3. **New Business**
 - a. **Continue conversation and further identify topics of focus-**
 - Meat at farmers’ markets was discussed, as well as processing opportunities and customer base, and was identified that a diverse customer base is present. Poultry for meat was brought up and an interest in continuing the discussion was expressed.
 - The conversation on WIC continued, and it was shared that the redemption is low, but Shana noted that they have an advantage since we are at the senior center. I am willing to bridge the gap between WIC and our market. We are not WIC card compatible but use of the checks could be better.
 - The question of interest in value added products was raised and conversation followed regarding Cottage Food, Farmer exemptions for processing, and commercial kitchen space.
 - The group discussed the quality of products due to weather and season and how that affects customer perception.

- Meat was discussed referring to how meat would sell at farmers' markets and discussion regarding price and cultural relevance came up. Shana shared that it would not do well at her market due to the reasons discussed.
- 4. It was suggested that in future meetings there be a discussion about other markets for producers including wholesale markets and farm to school. Information was shared about the Keney Park Sustainability Project and their relationship with Hartford Schools and a question was raised about the CT Farm to School Collaborative.
- 5. **Public Comment- NONE**
- 6. **Next Steps-** Agenda will be sent for next meeting
- 7. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 12:14 PM by Vicheth Im

Respectfully submitted by Erin Windham, AMIR I, October 25, 2021