



CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

450 Columbus Blvd, Suite 703 | Hartford, Connecticut 06103 | 860.713.2500

Bureau of Agricultural Development & Resource Conservation

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

Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, March 17, 2022
11:00 AM- 12:00 PM

Meeting Recording

https://zoom.us/rec/share/aKIXBLi_xXd_WshWscqGqufqrmejlOWOfB88IsFGPZE59p6XGwt9ogezKXvXr68P.sznWsMWIoXGw2cFp

Access Passcode: ec?nEd7e

to

Members Present: Vicheth Im, John Filchak, Shana Smith, Brandon Blank, Frankie Douglass, Yvonne Renee Davis

Members Absent: Mary Claire Whelan, Debbie Thomas- Sims

DoAg Staff: Cyrena Thibodeau, Erin Windham

1. **Welcome and Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order by Cyrena Thibodeau at 11:10AM
2. **New Business**
 - a. **Review of discussion topic**
 - i. WIC/FMNP coupons outreach recommendations - contract with partners, others for face to face information sharing.
 - ii. Create process Resources (steps to take) to get to markets, to get insurance. Include home gardeners who may be looking to get into larger scale farming (many BIPOC individuals)
 - iii. DEI Trainings and non-discrimination clause to be able to use the CT Grown logo. Multiple instances of price discrimination

Discussion was had over outreach to WIC participants and again, outreach to participants was discussed.

John- We need more outreach to town officials. He asked who was talking to the Mayor and doing direct outreach, noting that this needs to be systemic change. He suggested that Erin speak with the COG's to share information and shared his experience with CT bus promotions.

A question was asked about the ability and breadth of recommendations. i.e. additional capacity of DoAg to address the program needs. Erin suggested that if the group thought that the recommendations were worth while they should be presented as options.

Tida requested more focused meetings rather than jumping around on multiple topics. Ie BIPOC/ New and beginning farmers to enter new markets. Cyrena discussed having a pre-determined topic for conversation and the group agreed that it would be helpful. The suggested topic for this meeting was BIPOC farmers and she asked if the group would like to discuss that topic.



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Vicheth likes the idea of discussing BIPOC farmers. Need to improve the discussion and discuss possible resources. i.e growing in the backyard

Tida recommended staying on the nutrition incentive/ benefits program discussion and save market entry for next time. Suggested drafting potential recommendations and having people in the group with more experience flush out the ideas to be more concise.

Thought from MC was sent in advance.

MC: Interested in my fellow group members' thoughts on the [Local Food Purchase Assistance Program](#) (LFPA). Could any of the organizations represented in this group utilize some of this funding to build bridges between SNAP, WIC, and farmers? In what other ways could the Department of Ag prioritize community led outreach efforts?

3. **Public Comment - NONE**
4. **Next Steps:** Topic for discussion will be pre-determined and included in the agenda
5. **Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:48 AM