



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

Office of the
Assistant Secretary
for Civil Rights

1400 Independence
Avenue SW

Washington, DC
20250

Dear Stakeholder:

At the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), we have recommitted ourselves to the values of equity, inclusion, and equal opportunity for each other and those we serve. I am honored to lead the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights with a bold, new vision for transformative change.

I recognize that the journey ahead begins with building back the trust of farmers of color - Black People, Indigenous People, and other people of color (BIPOC) who have endured decades of discrimination. We must create equity opportunities to address the systemic racial barriers that continue to hold many BIPOC farmers back. But first, we want to hear from you.

Please join the USDA's Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights on Thursday, April 22, 2021, 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm (EDT) for a Civil Rights Symposium & Planning Meeting. We will engage diverse representatives from community, tribal, immigrant and refugee organizations, and minority-serving institutions of higher education.

The purpose of this planning meeting is to share insights, identify gaps and opportunities for BIPOC farmers, develop external strategies for building trusted partnerships, and explore solutions to challenges faced by traditionally underserved farmers, ranchers, and rural communities.

Please plan to join us for robust conversations about civil rights issues and how you can use your voice to help us build back better. Your invitation to this meeting is non-transferable. If you can participate in this meeting, please complete the enclosed planning questionnaire and return by **April 12, 2021**. Completion of the questionnaire is required for participation in the Symposium.

I look forward to hearing and seeing you virtually on April 22, 2021.

Sincerely,

Monica Armster Rainge
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

Enclosure