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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF
FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

CDFA Farm Equity Office Quarterly Newsletter - March, 2024

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Message from Thea Rittenhouse, Farmer Equity Advisor

Dear Partners and Stakeholders,

It has now been nearly 6 years since the passage of AB 1348, the Farmer Equity Act, legislation passed by Asm. Cecilia Aguiar-Curry and championed through the work of stakeholders and advocacy groups such as the California Farmer Justice Collaborative.

A recent farm visit and video with the Ujamaa Farmer Collective in Yolo County was an opportunity for me to reflect on the successes that have occurred since the passage of AB 1348, and the positive impacts this has had for the livelihoods of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) farmers and ranchers across the State. But we have a lot of work left to do, and we will continue to work in collaboration to find solutions to best implement AB 1348.

We hope this quarterly newsletter will help to better understand the impacts of AB 1348 and how it is building and shaping more opportunities and access for BIPOC producers across the State. But we also want to encourage dialogue, engagement, and accountability on the path forward. Each quarterly newsletter will feature updates on CDFA equity initiatives, data, and metrics on CDFA grant programs as well as information on available grant programs and resources from all State agencies.

The work at CDFA continues to grow to ensure the most historically underserved producers have access and a voice in all of CDFA programs and policies. But we can't do it alone, and will continue to work to build opportunities for engagement to continue to build and learn with guidance from farmers, ranchers and advocates across the State.

CDFA Farmer Equity Act Impact: Interview with the Ujamaa Farmer Collective

CDFA Secretary Karen Ross recently visited the [Ujamaa Farmer Collective](#) and toured their farm in Woodland, CA. The collective recently acquired 22 acres of land and talked with Secretary Ross about opportunities, challenges, and the impact of the Farmer Equity Act of 2017.



CDFA BIPOC Producer & Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committees

In 2023, CDFA formalized the Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Producer and the Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committees. The BIPOC Advisory Committee's mission is to ensure producers have a voice and platform to advise the Secretary on implementation of AB 1348 and programs and policies related to the legislation. The Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee members shall advise the Secretary and State Board on matters pertaining to small-scale and medium scale producers in California and programs, research, technology, workforce development practices and equity issues that will ensure a platform for small-scale producers to advise on CDFA programs, resources, technical assistance, and communication.



Both committees hold quarterly meetings that are open to the public. The meetings are an opportunity to listen to and discuss priorities facing BIPOC and small-scale producers in California.

Meeting schedules and materials, and committee members' information can be found here:

[BIPOC Producer Advisory Committee](#)

[Small-Scale Producer Advisory Committee](#)

CDFA Racial Equity Action Plan

In late 2023, CDFA published its first racial equity action plan (REAP) to further embed equity and equity related initiatives within CDFA programs and policies and also create practices within our organization. Internal initiatives include: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, language access plan, employee training and external initiatives include grant access, language access, The full plan can be found here: [CDFA Racial Equity Action Plan](#)

CDFA is planning outreach and listening sessions in 2024 to coincide with the release of the next CDFA Strategic Plan.

CDFA Grant Awardee Spotlight

CDFA's Beginning Farmer and Farmworker Training and Workforce Development Grant Program (BFFTP) recipient organizations continue their important work on the ground to provide support and training opportunities for beginning

farmers, and agricultural workforce development pathways for farm workers. Last month, CDFA's Office of Public Affairs Staff had an opportunity to converse with the Allensworth Progressive Association and the African American Farmers of California about their work and vision. If you missed the blog posts about these inspiring stories, you can access them below.

[The Allensworth Progressive Association](#)

[African American Farmers of CA](#)



CDFA Grants Schedule

[CDFA - Grants Page](#)

Regional Partnerships

CDFA's New Regional Collaborative- [Southwest Regional Food Business Center \(SWRFBC\)](#)

CA State Government Equity Initiatives

Land Equity Task Force [California Agricultural Land Equity Task Force Meetings - Strategic Growth Council](#)

Racial Equity Commission [Racial Equity Commission | \(ca.gov\)](#)

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Find out more about the Farm Equity Office at CDFA, including links to all resources, reports, and initiatives [CDFA - Farm Equity Homepage \(ca.gov\)](#)

[CDFA Farmer Resource Portal](#)

Email us: Farm_Equity@cdfa.ca.gov ¡Sí, hablamos español!

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