

Equity in Minnesota Farming and Farm to School Programs

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Tara Olds
Molly Schned
Matt Gill
Penny Norquist

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Signature below of Capstone Instructor certifies successful completion of oral presentation and completion of final written version:



Robin L. Phinney, Lecturer



Kevin S. Gerdes, MPA Director

July 31, 2019
Date, oral presentation

August 14, 2019
Date, paper completion

Stephanie Heim, Associate Program Director, UMN Extension
Typed Name & Title, Client

August 14, 2019
Date

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Matt Gill, Penny Norquist, Tara Olds and Molly Schned

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Executive Summary

Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) farmers are underrepresented in the farm to school (FTS) market and in all areas of farming in Minnesota. In partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension, a team of four graduate students from the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs conducted a research project on BIPOC farming in the FTS market in Minnesota. The project examined some of the reasons behind this underrepresentation, both historic and current, and brings recommendations forward from BIPOC farmers for possible improvements. Specifically, the group investigated why there are so few BIPOC farmers farming in Minnesota and around the U.S. and what can be done at the local, state, and federal level to improve representation in farming.

A number of themes emerged in our research about barriers BIPOC farmers face, which contributes to why their presence in the field is scarce. Historical inequities in land use and distribution, the forced removal and pilfering of land from Indigenous people, and the systematic denial of land and money to BIPOC farmers have all led to current conditions that make entering or continuing to farm nearly impossible for BIPOC farmers. Requirements for things like refrigeration and transportation in larger markets are expensive and make entrance into these markets difficult for all small and mid-sized farmers. Coupled with historic inequities, entrance for BIPOC farmers is considerably more challenging. Because farming is hard work and the returns are marginal, younger people are not entering the industry, drying up the pipeline of future generations going into farming. Recommendations from BIPOC farmers on how to address barriers and increase participation in FTS and farming, in general, could not only improve racial equity in the sector, but also offer solutions to broader agricultural problems faced by farmers and policymakers alike.

Project Background

“Thanks to Farm to School (FTS), students are eating more fresh local foods and learning about where their food comes from, all while supporting local farmers” (MN Dept of Ag, n.d). Minnesota’s FTS programs have expanded from fewer than 20 school districts participating in FTS in 2006, to over 268 in the 2013-14 school year. This represents a market of over \$12 million in local food purchases (MN Dept of Ag, n.d).

And, “while the primary goal of farm to school programs is to improve the health of schoolchildren through access to fresh produce, FTS is also premised on the idea that small or mid-sized family farms can be the suppliers of school food programs and will reap benefits through the market rather than through subsidies” (Allen and Guthman, 2006). However, FTS in Minnesota has traditionally focused on racial equity for students participating in FTS while there has been minimal focus on racial equity of farmers participating in the programs.

In partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension, a team of four graduate students from the University of Minnesota Humphrey School of Public Affairs co-created a research project exploring equity in FTS programs in Minnesota. Specific data on the number of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) farmers in the FTS program is limited and most often not available. This contributes to why typical racial equity discussions on farming in FTS programs quickly turn into broader discussions of BIPOC in farming in general, along with the assumption that BIPOC farmers are underrepresented in Minnesota’s farming industry.

Project Goal

To provide information to help educate FTS leaders and other decision-makers on the barriers to BIPOC farmers participating in FTS and other markets in Minnesota, as well as to elevate work being done to address racial disparities in farming in the state.

This research examined BIPOC representation and factors, both historic and current, that have contributed to the demographic makeup of farming in Minnesota. The project proposes ways for organizations, policymakers, and leaders to begin to implement and support efforts to improve equity and representation in farming in Minnesota and its broader farm to institution (FTI) markets (e.g. FTS, hospitals, colleges, cafeterias or government agencies).

Problem Statement

There is a lack of participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS programs in Minnesota compared to the demographic makeup of the state.

Farming in Minnesota is overwhelmingly white, as shown in Figure 1. BIPOC make up only 1.5% of farmers, own 0.5% farms by acre, and make up less than 0.5% of the market value in farming, yet make up 20% of the state's population, and growing (Minnesota State Demographic Center, n.d.).

Minnesota Farming Racial Disparities in 2017

BIPOC Population: 20%
BIPOC Farmers: 1.5%
(Minnesota State Demographic Center, n.d.)

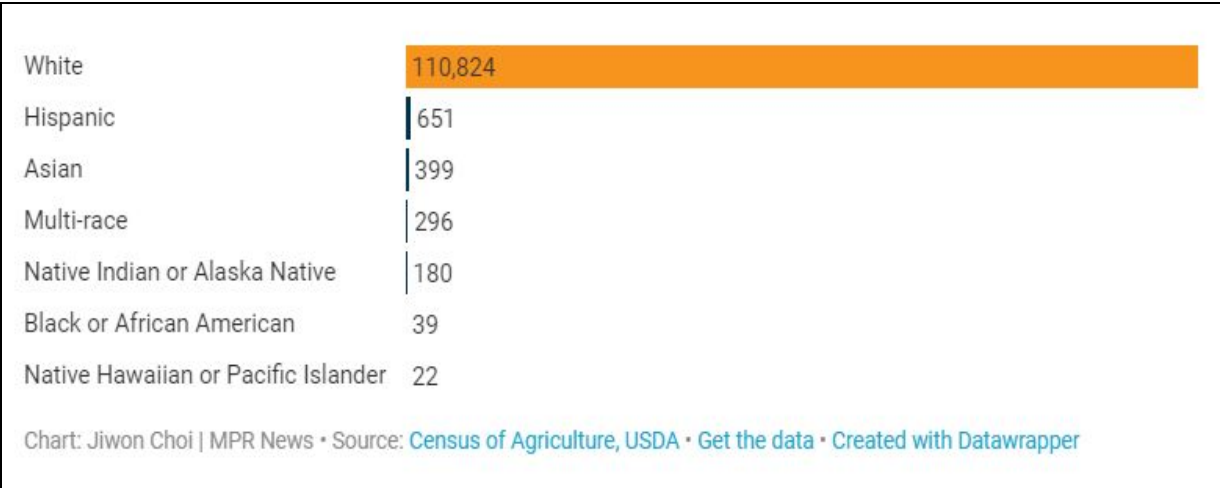


Figure 1: Number of people operating farms in Minnesota by race (Dunbar, Gunderson, & Choi, 2019).

Why is this important?

While research has studied the nutritional, social, and educational benefits of the FTS program for students of color, our research found that less work has focused on improving racial equity from the farmer's perspective. Research has been conducted on barriers to and participation rates for FTS and FTI programs but data by demographic group is limited or not available (Huff, 2015; Berkenkamp, 2011). Achieving equitable representation in our agricultural institutions and organizations, such as FTS programs, in a way that is representative of the demographics of the state, has significant economic and health

benefits for all Minnesotans (Snowden, Edwards, Foresman & Ziegler, 2017; Minnesota Department of Health, 2009).

Minnesota farming is overwhelmingly white

Agriculture in Minnesota started with the Indigenous people that inhabited what is now known as Minnesota. However, in the last two centuries, the face of farming has changed significantly. Farming in Minnesota is now over 98-99% white-dominated based on the number of farms, the amount of farmland owned, and the total market value of farming (USDA, n.d.). Current farming demographics from 2017 report that white - white alone or combination of races - overwhelmingly dominated the farming industry in Minnesota, owning 68,516 farms to the 1,314 farms owned by other races or combination of races. (USDA, n.d.). White farmers have a total market value of \$18.8B compared to only \$82M of other races or combination of races (USDA, n.d.).

The future in Minnesota is increasingly BIPOC. BIPOC populations are growing at a higher rate compared to white populations in Minnesota. Between 1990 and 2010, Minnesota saw its Black population rise 189%, its Asian population rise 177%, and the Hispanic population rise 364%. Between 2010 and 2017, Minnesota has added five times more BIPOC residents than white residents (Debilzan, 2018).

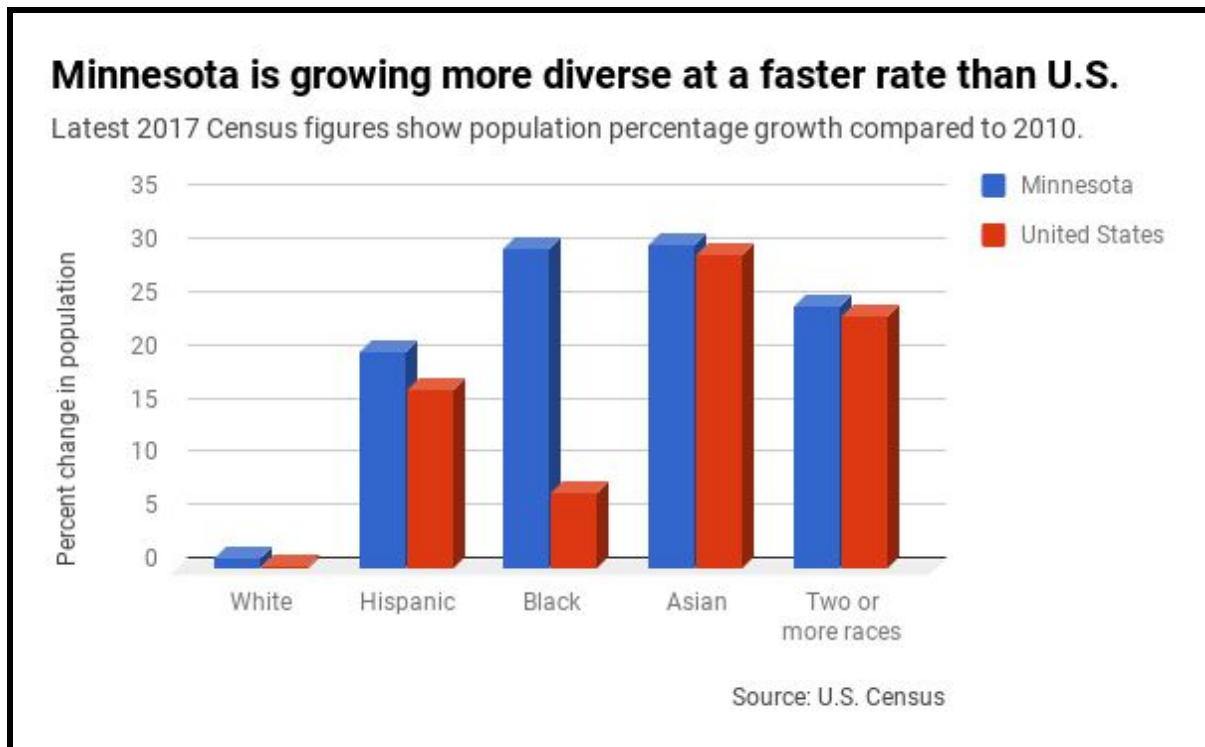


Figure 2: Minnesota is growing more diverse at a faster rate than the rest of the U.S (Debilzan, 2018)

Small and mid-sized farms are farm to school's future

BIPOC farmers are more likely to own small and mid-size farms that produce the non-commodity crops needed for FTS programs (USDA, n.d.). Tables 1 and 2 show United States Department of Agriculture 2017 data on types and size of farms in Minnesota by ethnicity (USDA, n.d.).

Table 1: Farm size by producer's race in Minnesota (USDA, n.d.)

Farm Size	Any producer reporting race as - alone or in combination with other races				
	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
1 to 9 acres	3%	54%	24%	17%	7%
10 to 49 acres	36%	24%	14%	36%	21%
50 to 179 acres	28%	19%	55%	17%	28%
180 to 499 acres	13%	2%	3%	28%	23%
500 acres or more	19%	2%	3%	3%	20%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of producers reported	357	336	55	36	68,544

**Note: Totals by race include 100% of reporting but may not total to 100% due to self-reporting and ability to select multiple options.

Table 2: Farm industry by producer's race in Minnesota (USDA, n.d.)

Farm Characteristics	Any producer reporting race as - alone or in combination with other races				
	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White
<i>INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION*</i>					
Oilseed and grain farming	22%	7%	17%	31%	39%
Vegetable and melon farming	15%	62%	31%	0%	2%
Fruit and tree nut farming	2%	5%	3%	3%	1%
Number of farms reported	357	336	55	36	68,544
*Subset of classification types reported					

**Note: Totals by race include 100% of reporting but may not total to 100% due to self-reporting and ability to select multiple options.

BIPOC communities are knowledgeable in farming practices and have an interest in continuing to farm. With generational experience and with the likelihood of owning small to mid-sized farms, BIPOC farmers are strong candidates to support the success of FTS programs. For example, the Hmong community has seen farming as a way to make a living and rely on their agricultural heritage from Laos and Thailand. When resettling in Minnesota, they saw the farming industry as a place they could fit in and grow flowers and

produce for many farmers markets (Hmong American Farmer Association, 2018).

Globally, organizations like the United Nations have raised the importance of not only growing enough food to end hunger (Sustainability Goal #2 (United Nations, n.d.)), but also to make sure that food is healthy for people and the planet. The Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Director General has stated that their "Healthy Food for All" Initiative includes an emphasis on boosting local economies and developing sustainable family farming systems (FAO, 2019).

Benefits from racial equity and diversity in farming

When talking about equity in the food system, it is clear that disparities are embedded in the entire food production process and that "[c]ommunities of color, for example, have time and time again been excluded from food production and prevented from owning and managing their own land, though they are often exploited as farm laborers" (Horst, McClintock, and Hoey, 2017). The legacies of systemic racist practices in land and wealth appropriation and distribution have resulted in very few BIPOC farmers having access to the agricultural industry in Minnesota.

The rise in BIPOC populations throughout the state makes the conversation about how to achieve equitable representation in this field more relevant and urgent. Voices from these communities have to be at tables where decisions are being made about what kids should be eating in school and how fresh foods should be sold and made accessible in their communities. An equitable society is one where the most vulnerable communities in society have access to the mechanisms that help to achieve social mobility and voice in naming their reality and developing solutions which draw upon their assets (National Public Education Support Fund, n.d.). Equitable representation in local FTI markets is not achievable until representation of BIPOC individuals in the farming industry, on the whole, improves.

Equity leads to better economic, health, and social outcomes, as the McKinsey analysis below in Figure 3 suggests. (Tulshyan, 2015). Equity within food systems can serve a dual purpose of improving physical and community health. A common theme within many communities we spoke to is that food is medicine. Eating healthy, local foods can make a person physically healthier and help address health inequities. However, an additional consideration is that food can be medicine by providing emotional healing for communities that have experienced past social and generational injustices.

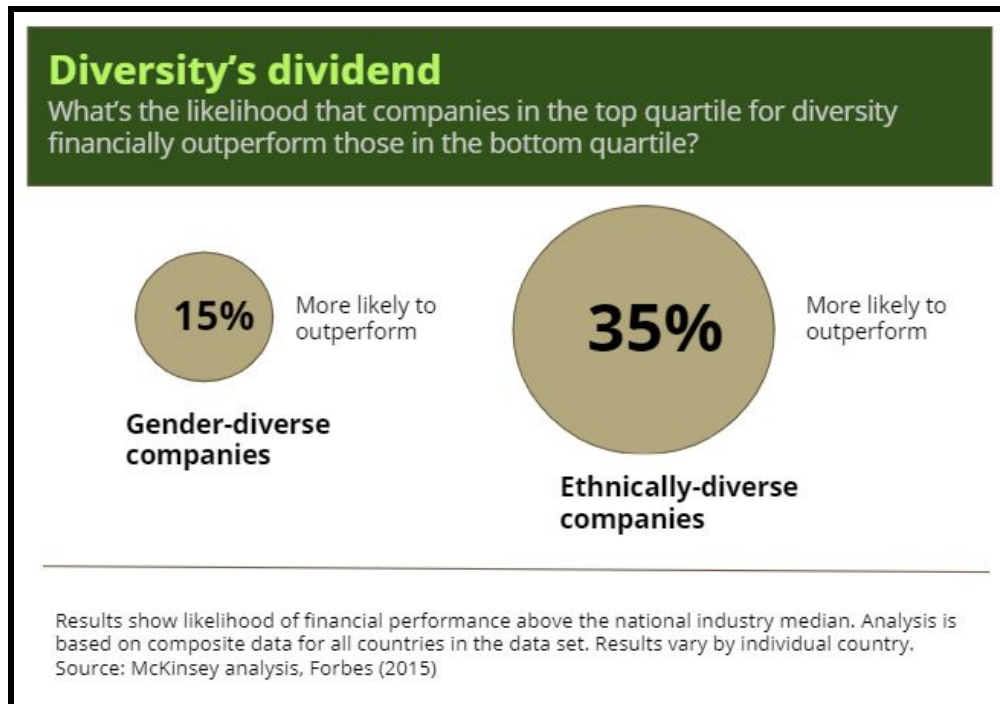


Figure 3: Diverse companies are more successful than homogenous companies (Tulshyan, 2015)

Companies with ethnically-diverse leadership teams performed economically better, as shown in Figure 3, and were more likely to come up with new products, than homogenous companies. Indeed, the research found that homogeneity discourages innovation (Rock and Grant, 2016). While these and other business studies were not conducted specifically on agricultural companies or farms, their conclusions suggest that ignoring racial equity in agriculture will cause Minnesota to miss out on significant financial gains (Gompers and Kovvali, 2018), especially as our population diversifies (see Figure 2).

Research Questions

Once the initial problem statement identified a lack of BIPOC farmers in the FTS program, a number of questions began to emerge. In collaboration with our client at University of Minnesota Extension and professors at Humphrey, these three questions became the basis of our semester long research project.

1. What do BIPOC farming leaders and other farmers think about the current participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS and other markets?
2. What are barriers that BIPOC farmers face in markets like FTS in Minnesota and entering farming in general?
3. What are existing organizations doing to address the disproportionate lack of BIPOC participation in farming in Minnesota ?

Research Methodology

A mixed-methods approach was used for data collection, including a literature review, interviews with BIPOC farmers, farming leaders, and advocates, observations of and listening to recordings from BIPOC farmers and farming groups, both in person and online.

The literature review was focused on what the FTS landscape looks like at the national level. It sought to explain the history of farming in Minnesota that led to current conditions. It also explored how FTI markets work and how they limit or provide access for small and mid-sized farmers. The literature review also provided data on racial demographics in Minnesota as a whole as well as farming demographics throughout the state.

Fourteen interviews were completed within differing BIPOC communities. The majority of interviews were conducted in person in office spaces, but some interviews were conducted over the phone or by video call. Communities represented in data collection included Indigenous, Black, Latinx, Hmong, and other groups including recent immigrants and refugees. Interviewees included farming leaders, some of which are or have been farmers themselves, and farmers. Interviewees included those who identify as BIPOC and some are white or non-BIPOC identifying. The goal of this project was to elevate the voices of BIPOC in the farming community and white voices sometimes served as conduits of that information due to limitations of connections, time, and geographical distance.

Interviews were structured with an interview guide designed to last between 30-60 minutes of discussion. They were completed by four different individuals on our team which created some variance in the questions that ultimately were discussed. To address this variance, the team collaborated on a codebook and development of themes in the data collected. Interviewees were informed that their participation was voluntary and their input would remain confidential unless they approved that their quote could be attributed to them directly or to their organization.

In addition to interviews, researchers observed farmers at a meeting, watched a recorded 2017 keynote presentation by Rodrigo Cala of Cala Farms at the Emerging Farmers Conference and listened to an interview with Eduardo Rivera, Sin Fronteras farmer, from the Farmers to Farmers podcast (MySPNN, 2017; Blanchard, 2017).

More detailed information on the research methodology, limitations, interview guide, and raw data are included as appendices. The quotes included in this document came directly from interviews and observations conducted during this research. They are attributed to BIPOC farmers and farming leaders throughout Minnesota.

Findings

There is a racial equity problem in Minnesota farming

Question #1: What do BIPOC farming leaders and other farmers think about the current participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS and other markets?

Historic and current racism has led to a lack of BIPOC farmers:

"For a long time, agriculture wasn't a friendly place for Native people to be."

The land we live on was not always "Minnesota." Land theft and broken treaties marked the origin of European settler farming here. The US government had policies of eradication, then forced assimilation, and erasing of Native culture. One Indigenous person shared that their tribe's reservation size is only 30% of that which was agreed to when the treaties were originally signed.

USDA and private banking practices perpetuated a whites-only farming system even throughout the 20th century. The *Pigford v. Glickman* lawsuit of 1999 and the 2008 *Pigford II* legislation serve as a public, Federal acknowledgment of the USDA's discriminatory lending practices against Black farmers (Feder and Cowan, 2013). Immigrants also faced challenges breaking into a system built for white farmers. Interviewees echoed this history and provided examples of how they continue to experience racism today.

"This system was built intentionally to exclude black and indigenous persons."

Systems built intentionally to exclude were also built to endure:

History was not that long ago, and interviewees described examples of how BIPOC people in the farming community experience racism today. Examples include:

- Driving back roads to deliver food because of racial profiling by police
- Arbitrary definitions of "local" that stop just short of BIPOC community: The University of Minnesota - Duluth committed to purchase food within a certain distance of campus, which excluded indigenous farms by only ten miles. The campus is located on land previously owned by indigenous people.
- A BIPOC farmer selling maple syrup was told at a farmer's market: "You can't sell this, you didn't plant these trees."
- Shared Ground, because of discrimination in markets, started with a non-Hispanic name and mostly white public-facing employees, until they had made a name for themselves as a coop that grows the best produce. Then they could start promoting themselves as Latinx owned and managed.

- Lack of representation at all levels led to a feeling of not being heard in positions of power (e.g. board meetings, coalitions, etc). This continues even in the implementation of BIPOC-friendly policies in which the program officer is white and has no experience working in racially diverse communities.

Farming may not be a welcoming environment:

Land access and ownership has excluded BIPOC farmers, but there is also tension around whether farming is a welcoming environment. All farmers face numerous challenges in the industry but many interviewees spoke of farming as an industry that is not always welcoming to new people, new ideas, or new methods.

"I don't think my kids will do this."

Agriculture can be an unfriendly environment for change. One BIPOC farmer who began farming in a rural community using some unconventional farming methods was not welcomed by others and was considered a threat to the traditional farming methods. He did not stay long in that rural community.

Making a living in farming is hard. When farmers are seen as unwanted competition by others for bringing new methods and ideas, tension increases for new entrants into the industry.

"I pushed the envelope and... literally within a few months, was isolated as a threat, rather than as a complement, to the community."

BIPOC farmers face more barriers than white farmers

Question #2: What barriers do BIPOC farmers face in markets like FTS in Minnesota and entering farming in general?

There are many barriers that all farmers face in entering or succeeding in farming. The people interviewed have experienced the same barriers as most farmers, with the added barriers of racism and a system built to exclude them. This is shown in Figure 4, highlighting the structural inequities of the system.

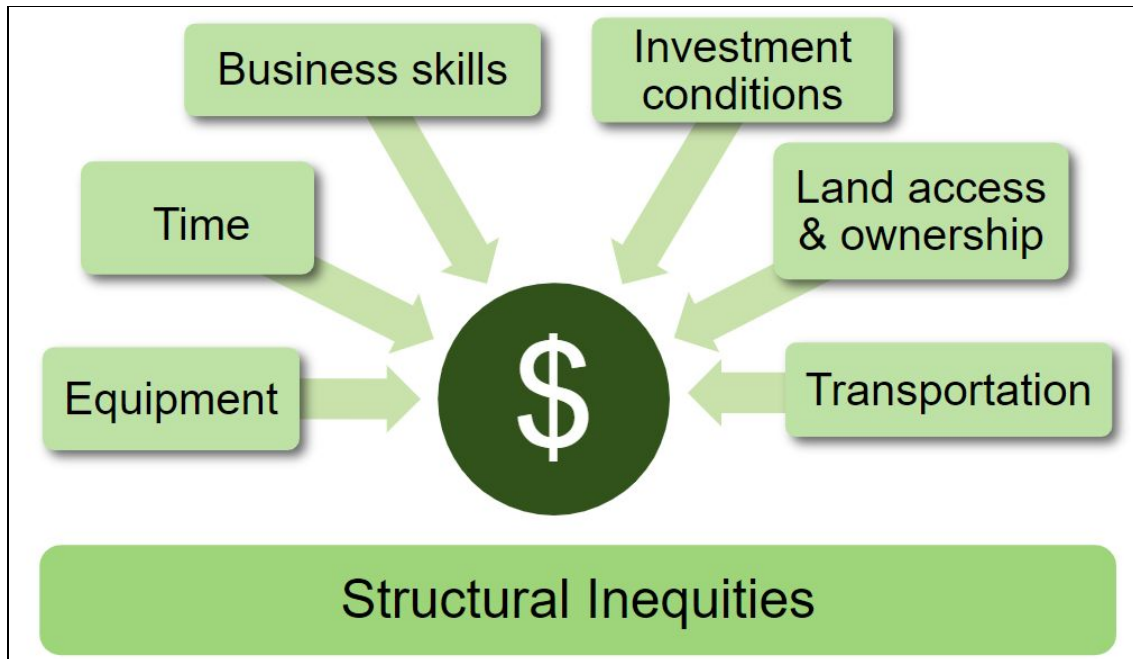


Figure 4: BIPOC farming barriers in Minnesota

Equipment: Some BIPOC farmers are just a few hoop houses and a tractor away from being able to access the FTS market, but cannot quite get there. Infrastructure such as refrigeration and storage are additional barriers that are not terribly expensive, but just out of reach for many BIPOC farmers. Equipment helps farmers extend the already short Minnesota growing season and reduce labor costs.

Time: Time barriers include farmer’s personal time to deliver produce, the time it takes to complete certification (e.g. organic) and longer loan processes which exceed 3 years. We heard in interviews that organizational time barriers involve the time it can take to break-even financially and reach solvency. One interviewee noted that it often takes 5-10 years for cooperatives and farms.

Business Skills: Farmers wear a lot of hats and need a diverse skill set including marketing, accounting, invoicing, business planning, cultural understanding, and English language proficiency. Systemic racism has led to things like unequal education for BIPOC students (Magan, 2017) which reduces the number of people in BIPOC communities with business and other skills to support BIPOC farmers.

Investment conditions: The investment sustaining many of the BIPOC farmers we spoke to was philanthropic. The market is not pouring money into BIPOC farming and investments that do come in are typically short term due to limited funding through philanthropy. Limited funding means limited progress with no guarantee of farming tomorrow. Many farmers rely on philanthropic funding to overcome the hurdles of financing when it is difficult to acquire loans for beginning farmers. Farmers who are purchasing new land which is not passed down from family are seen as a significant default risk (Sullivan and

Peterson, 2015).

Land access and ownership: A loan to buy/lease land requires assets and an established credit history. Interviewees described how there are only 3 ways to get land: inherit, marry into, buy, and those avenues are mostly closed off to BIPOC farmers. Affordable land in Minnesota is limited and affordable urban land is further limited. In addition, lack of access to capital for BIPOC reduces BIPOC ability to participate in programs which are meant to increase land ownership. For example, an interviewee described how when an urban agriculture bill passed in Philadelphia, PA, ostensibly to help urban BIPOC farmers, it was white investors who were able to swing in and scoop up a lot of the land because they had readier access to capital.

Transportation: Transportation is a known FTS barrier, related to time and equipment, but also complicated by how some BIPOC farmers feel they have to travel on back roads to avoid racial profiling. Transporting to multiple markets is also extremely time consuming, uses fuel, and takes longer in rural Minnesota due to typically longer routes.

Cultural barriers:

"We're only there - honestly, because we can speak English"

Language: Farming hubs that connect farmers to FTS, restaurants, and co-ops are able to operate because they are able to dedicate time, energy and resources to making connections and being able to communicate those connections. Many organizations - FTS, the University of Minnesota, co-ops - do not have people who speak the languages of all farmers, which makes making market connections difficult.

Education: One individual was having trouble meeting all the academic requirements of an agriculture-related course because they were traveling to DC and advocating on behalf of BIPOC farmers as a young leader in their community. Their program was more concerned with them missing a quiz than with the real-life leadership they were exerting in their field.

"For a lot of Native students...they're being asked to choose between getting an education and their community and their cultural ties."

Lack of agricultural exposure: A study in Texas found that black and Hispanic students had less of a rural background than white students (Talbert and Larke, 1995), and this demographic holds true in Minnesota (Minnesota State Demographic Center, n.d.). Lack of exposure to a certain work sector adds challenges for young people of color to see themselves fitting into that sector. The Texas study supported this with findings that black and Hispanic students saw fewer opportunities in agricultural for them compared to white students who saw agriculture with more occupational diversity (Talbert and Larke, 1995).

Not a profitable market or profession:

Food co-ops reiterated the tension about whether the farming profession is even desirable financially. Food margins are low overall. U.S. farmers earned 14.6 cents for every food dollar spent on domestically produced food in 2017, the lowest level since being recorded (USDA Economic Research Service, 2019). Coops did express that the FTS program is appreciated for having federal funding that can be used to pay a decent price for fruits and vegetables.

Barriers exist for all farmers but there are even more barriers for small to mid-sized farms, which are most commonly the type of farms run and operated by BIPOC farmers. Despite there being a demand for fresh, locally-sourced foods and a growing number of FTS programs

“The economy is rigged against smaller growers. It’s a volume game for anyone. And even in the volume game, no one is making money.”

nationally, systemic barriers make it difficult to enter local markets in a way that is profitable and advantageous (Lee et al, 2019). Barriers of low profitability, a mismatch between growing seasons and the school year calendar, food safety and certification requirements, liability insurance, time required to deliver small orders, and marketing skills all contribute to the lack of diversity of farmers participating in FTS programs (Jo, June, and Usha, 2017; Izumi, Wright, and Hamm, 2010; Lee et al, 2019).

“We try to pay our farmers well and sell into a market that doesn’t pay well. So, it’s a difficult proposition.”

Minnesota organizations are working to disrupt inequities in farming

Question #3: What are existing organizations doing to address the disproportionate lack of BIPOC participation in farming in Minnesota?

There are, though, many organizations, leaders, and farmers throughout the state working towards a more equitable food production system. The farming leaders we talked to are focused on reducing barriers and engaging youth, and while some people are building whole systems outside of the conventional system, others are working to change it. Appendix II contains information on BIPOC farming organizations and those supporting BIPOC farmers identified from our research.

We heard of the many opportunities and benefits of having more BIPOC farmers in the field. We heard about social justice, empowerment, and ownership. We heard about the positive ecological impacts and an expansion of ideas for improvement. We heard about the

importance of ownership. While Latinx people make up about 83 percent of field laborers in the U.S., they own only about 3 percent of the farms (Danish, 2019). One farmer, Rodrigo Cala, in his keynote address at the Emerging Farmers Conference in Saint Paul, Minnesota spoke of the importance of empowerment, better education, and the possibility to be the owner of a farm (MySPNN, 2017).

"When I talk about social justice, I like to see our people empower our people, getting better education, get more money, get better jobs. If you see yourself as a farmworker all the time. No. You can be the owner of these farms."

Rodrigo Cala, a Shared Ground coop farmer who sells his produce to food co-ops and FTS programs, highlights the opportunity to build farm ownership among immigrant and refugee communities, specifically Latinx. Rodrigo is known in this community for his high quality broccoli, success growing limited, organic crops, and work with the Latino Economic Development Center as a farmer-to-farmer trainer and advocate.

Reducing barriers:

Food cooperatives such as Shared Ground, and non-profits such as The Good Acre, HAFA, and Red Lake Nation provide farmers with training, grants, infrastructure, and marketing support. While FTS has been sold, in part, with a "rhetoric of cutting out the middleman," many programs have ended up having to create their own intermediaries to make the programs work (Allen and Guthman, 2006). These types of food hubs and cooperative models are solutions used to aggregate, distribute, and market locally sourced foods from multiple farms to multiple institutions.

"Intertribal agriculture council (IAC)...voted to establish a youth board of directors parallel to their organizational board structure...which has been groundbreaking for youth leadership development"

Youth engagement: Multiple programs, such as the Native Youth Food Sovereignty Alliance (NYFSA), seek to expose BIPOC youth to farming and food systems work. Youth engagement is an element in which FTS is involved already and an opportunity to improve racial equity in farming for future generations.

Advocacy: Organizations are creating BIPOC-friendly agricultural policy and informing policy's implementation, primarily as through the FARM bill and Minnesota state funding of FTS programs. Examples of organizations working in the space include the Institute for Agricultural Trade Policy and Appetite for Change.

Food sovereignty: Communities are cultivating local markets on the reservation, and discussing creating whole networks among Native nations along ancient trade routes. Food sovereignty also included practices such as growing culturally appropriate food like wild

rice, tomatillos, or hot peppers, and growing food specifically for BIPOC communities. We heard how frustrating it was when people in an Indigenous community could not purchase the food grown locally, because it would be shipped off the reservation for processing and then sold into the market, sometimes at a price too high for the community where it was grown to buy.

Regenerative farming: The practice of regenerative farming is being explored by some organizations we spoke with as an entire system outside of the conventional farming system. For example, the Main Street project in Minneapolis uses the ancient practice of growing multiple crops such as fruit and nut trees and some grains on land shared with livestock, creating a system that needs no added fertilizers or feed, yields better tasting food, and reduces topsoil erosion into lakes and rivers. (Main Street Project, n.d.)

Recommendations

Studies show substantial benefits for communities when more diverse voices are included in the decision-making process. Historical analysis shows that generations of inequities in policies and practices have resulted in enormous disparities of power and inclusion that have negatively impacted health, wealth, and land ownership. Farmers echoed how history continues to impact them today, creating additional barriers to participation that exist for all farmers. And yet, again and again, research confirms that “hiring individuals who do not look, talk, or think like you can allow you to dodge the costly pitfalls of conformity, which discourages innovative thinking” (Rock and Grant, 2016). The business of farming has many challenges currently, but improving the diversity of those engaged in the work not only can begin to reverse centuries of intentional oppression and exclusion, but interviewees believe diversity could also springboard the industry into innovating and solving many of the ills currently plaguing farmers.

Finding ways to improve conditions for one community may not be what works for another. For example, what may need to happen to improve representation of Indigenous farmers is likely different from what needs to happen to improve conditions for Black farmers. What Indigenous communities need and how they would benefit from having more Indigenous farmers participating in FTS markets is going to be different from what Hmong, Latinx, or other immigrant communities need. There is no magic bullet solution for improving BIPOC representation in the Minnesota FTS market.

There are, however, some overarching themes that emerged in the research which can provide some guidance for larger institutions, organizations, leaders, politicians, and citizens to follow that could help create the equitable, accessible, and welcoming conditions BIPOC farmers need to participate more in Minnesota FTI markets.

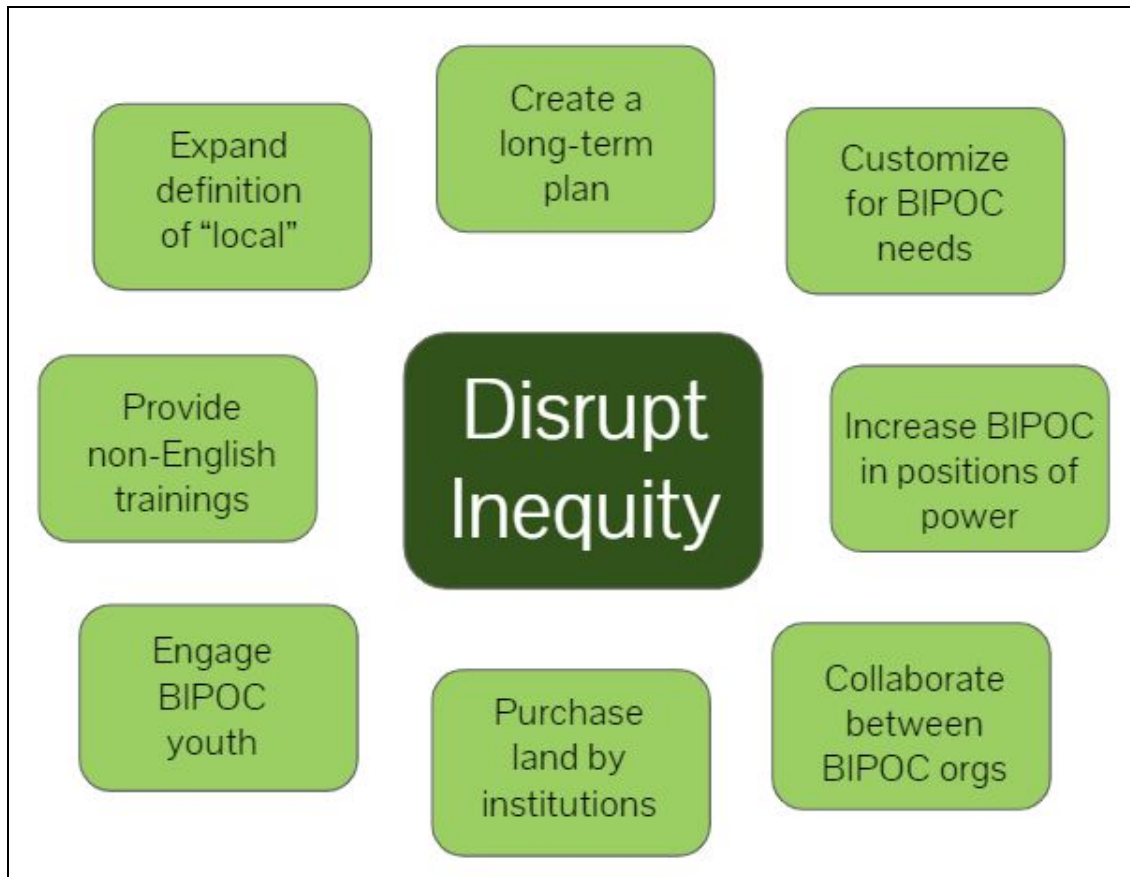


Figure 5: Recommendations to address racial inequities in farming in Minnesota

Recommendations we heard focused on specific actions that had an undertone of disrupting inequities within the current system. The actions may address one area of inequity on an individual basis, but they share the same goal of creating progress toward achieving an equitable farming environment. At the core of disrupting inequity within the current system is to create long-term, flexible, and customizable plans that truly benefit BIPOC farmers.

“If we want high quality, we need it to be slow, intentional.”

Some recommendations were focused on long-term actions that farmers and farming leaders acknowledged would take time. Interviewees expressed the need to be intentional in specific efforts to ensure quality results that truly benefit BIPOC. Additionally, there were other recommendations that could be focused on in the short-term. Many organizations are already doing work to address racial inequities within the farming industry and some of the recommendations stem from continuing their work and/or making modifications to existing policies to better include BIPOC farmers.

There is power in leadership committing to a goal. We heard people express disappointment that the University of Minnesota has not committed to a specific goal when they could be a leader in the area of local food sourcing. The Good Acre, for example, prioritizes purchasing first from refugee and immigrant farmers and offers them a sliding scale fee for storage and use of their building spaces. Some states, and regions like New England, have not just a FTS network, but a broader, more robust FTI network that looks at addressing local foods in universities and healthcare systems as well as schools. Central, unified support from state-level institutions for these organizations and voices could help amplify, elevate, and promote work that is already being done to achieve BIPOC representation in Minnesota farming, and, thereby, improving equitable representation in our FTI markets, such as FTS.

"[Large distributors want to work with us] It's such a slog. Jumping through so many hoops. Two years is just a short period of time...something we learned since starting this: It's going to take a hell of a lot longer than we thought it would."

Specific Recommendations

- Expand “local” to include native areas and BIPOC farmers from neighboring states: Latinx farmers are exploring the option of sourcing fruit from neighboring states such as Michigan, in which there are Latinx farmers with much larger farms as compared to Minnesota.
- Look at other sectors to see how they are addressing racial inequities: Agriculture is not the only sector grappling with racial inequities--can anything be learned from the health, education, or commerce sectors as they grapple with similar challenges in their systems?
- Foster collaboration among organizations serving BIPOC farmers: Key organizations that interviewees described in this area included the Latino Economic Development Center (LECD), Shared Ground, HAFA, Appetite for Change, and the Minnesota Food Association. Groups are often focused on a specific community of color. There is an opportunity to build information and resource sharing between these organizations (e.g. raise awareness and access to USDA grants for communities of color).
- Support local food hubs and coop models: Successful FTS programs need to have accessibility to local farmers, community support to remove internal and regulatory barriers such as produce size guidelines, and partnerships with distributors in order to help smaller, marginalized farmers break into the growing and important market. Local distributors could provide value as an intermediary--offering on-farm food safety training, evaluating farms, and administering group GAP certifications (Jo, June and Usha, 2017).
- Encourage institutions to purchase land for BIPOC farmers to grow local food for FTS or FTI programs (or a land trust): In the city of Long Prairie, Minnesota, the chamber of commerce owns and leases out land for the Latinx Agua Gorda farm

cooperative (Danish, 2019).

- Investigate youth development opportunities: Are BIPOC youth in FTS programs engaged in visiting farms, growing food, and seeing BIPOC farmers?
- Develop and support non-English based training materials and programs: Trainings in non-English languages will invite broader participation and create a more welcoming environment for non-English speaking farmer (e.g. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) food safety and organic certification).

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the underrepresentation of BIPOC farmers in FTS programs and farming in general in Minnesota. Our findings confirmed that years of the intentional, systemic oppression and marginalization of people of color in Minnesota has created a farming system that is unfriendly, unwelcoming, and hostile to BIPOC farmers, making it difficult for any FTI or FTS program to achieve racial equity among its participants, as they are lacking in the field in general. More than 98% of all farmers in Minnesota are white, but the remaining small percentage, the BIPOC-identifying farmers, represent groups who have often been repeatedly oppressed, robbed, and excluded from mainstream systems.

However, the situation is far from hopeless. As we learned, a number of organizations, cooperatives, food hubs, and other farm coalitions are doing exciting work and generating engagement among a new generation of farmers to improve representation and promote inclusive, sustainable, and profitable farming. BIPOC farmers tend to farm on smaller farms and work with sustainable farming practices. Many research studies on diversity find that "homogeneity imposes financial costs and diversity produces financial gains" (Gompers and Kovvali, 2018). Not only does pursuing racial equity improve financial performance for companies, but also "businesses run by culturally diverse leadership teams were more likely to develop new products than those with homogenous leadership" (Rock and Grant, 2016). With the demographics of Minnesota growing increasingly BIPOC (Debilzan, 2018), the demands of the future are likely to change as well. Research suggests that in order to meet these demands, more BIPOC leaders will have to be involved in farming and agriculture.

This work outlines opportunities to address racial equity in farming in Minnesota with an emphasis on the need to include racially diverse voices in decision-making circles and other positions of power so efforts to include BIPOC communities in farming and markets like FTS are informed by those communities directly. The recommendations outlined originated from our interviewees, but further study is necessary to assess the feasibility and potential impact of these recommendations. When researching, crafting, advocating for, or implementing any policy or program aimed at improving racial equity in farming, leaders are encouraged to intentionally and humbly seek out the voices and leadership of BIPOC farmers and farming leaders, such as the individuals we interviewed for this study.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to the farming community who were willing to share their time and thoughts with us during their busiest time of the year. Also, thank you to our Humphrey professors, Kevin Gerdes and Robin Phinney, as well as, Stephanie Heim at the University of Minnesota Extension for their guidance and support through the project.

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Appendices

Appendix I - Research Methodology and Limitations

Methodology

Data collection included a literature review, as well as 14 interviews and 3 observations of BIPOC farmers, farming leaders and advocates.

Interviews Information Table

Interview ID	Organization Type	Ethnicity	Role	Experience Farming?	Method
I-1	non-profit	white	farming leader	yes	in-person
I-2	for-profit	Latinx	farming leader	no	in-person
I-3	for-profit	white	farming leader	yes	in-person
I-4	non-profit	white	farming leader	no	in-person
I-5	for-profit	Native	farmer	yes	phone
I-6	non-profit	unknown	farming leader	no	phone
I-7	for and non-profit	white	farmer and farming leader	yes	phone
I-8	non-profit	black	farming leader	no	in-person
I-9	non-profit	Hmong	farming leader	yes	in-person
I-10	non-profit	Native	farming leader	yes	in-person
I-11	for-profit	Latinx	farming leader	yes	phone
I-12	non-profit	Native	farming leader	yes	phone
I-13	non-profit	Native	farming leader	yes	phone
I-14	non-profit	black	farming leader	yes	in-person

Observation Information Table

Observation ID	Ethnicity	Role	Method
0-1	varied	farmers and farming leader	in-person
0-2	Latinx	farming leader	video recording
0-3	white	farming leader	audio recording

All four student consultants conducted interviews. Each interviewer reviewed their own interview notes, transcriptions, and/or recordings. The team created a preliminary analysis grid to organize the following themes and question aligned by each of the three research questions:

Preliminary Analysis Grid

Research Question	Emerging themes - <i>expected & unexpected + evidence</i>	What are we learning about the question? - <i>surprises? consistencies?</i>	Dig deeper/refine approach?
What do BIPOC farming leaders and other farmers think about the current participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS and other markets?			
What are barriers that BIPOC farmers face in markets like FTS in Minnesota and entering farming in general?			
What are existing organizations doing to address the disproportionate lack of BIPOC participation in farming in Minnesota?			

Further analysis focused on creating a narrative of themes identified and reviewing interview data based on those themes for frequency and context.

Limitations

Research questions and data collection were designed to fit within the project constraints of time, availability, and resources. Fourteen interviews did not approach saturation point among the communities interviewed. Therefore, data cannot be applied broadly across BIPOC farmers. Certain themes did emerge across the literature, observations, and interviews including systemic racism. Interviews were completed by four different individuals on our team which created variance in the questions that ultimately were discussed. To address this issue, a common interview protocol and guide was used for interviews.

While the goal was to serve as conduits for the voices of BIPOC farmers to this group and future groups of leaders, we also had to rely on white leaders who themselves represented a community of BIPOC farmers. As student researchers, it may be beneficial that we are not affiliated with a specific agency and have a neutral outside perspective on the system and FTS programs. However, we do not have ongoing relationships with the interviewees. While those interviewed seemed open to the discussion, the researchers all identify as white and are not farmers. Interviewees may have filtered their input because of our positionality.

Additional Limitations:

- **Time:** The timeline for research occurred over the course of the spring and summer semesters of 2019 which limited the number of interviews we could execute. In addition to the overall timeline, we are part-time students with full-time jobs.
- **Technology/Distance:** Our team is based in the Twin Cities metro area in Minnesota, but many interviewees were located outside of the metro area. To address this limitation, some interviews were conducted by phone or video. However, this limited potential interviewee to those who responded to our email and phone requests.
- **Access:** Our initial list of potential interviewees was identified by our client. Research was conducted during the summer when farmers are busy planting and harvesting. Their time is limited, many farmers are located outside of the metro area and it takes time to build relationships required to connect with farmers willing to participate in an interview.

Interview Guide

Introduction:

[NOTE THE CONSENT FORM for specific introductory language that describes the project, who we are, risks, and provides Humphrey contact info along with the human subjects advocate line, etc.]

Thank you for agreeing to have your voice included in this project. Your insights as a **[farming leader in Minnesota]** with experience in **[INSERT INDUSTRY/ORG SPECIFIC LANGUAGE HERE]** will help us get a better understanding of the experiences of BIPOC farmers and how to improve racial equity in Farm To School and in farming in general in Minnesota.

Before we begin, I just have a few questions and comments:

- First, would you be willing to let me record this conversation?
- Confidentiality: I'd like to **reiterate** that nothing you say will be directly attributed to you, unless you would like it to be. However, would you be open to having your name included if we decide later that it would be important?
- Do you have any questions or concerns to share before we begin?

Interview Guiding Questions:

Getting to know you and your farm/organization: *[Prompts/Listen for: Individually vs. as part of the organization. Is it primarily through one type of outreach or multiple formats? How are BIPOC farmers identified? Does engagement specifically target BIPOC population? Which populations?]*

- Tell me a bit about your experiences with farming at [organization]. Why did you get into farming? How long have you been farming? What do you produce?
- Which markets are you currently in? Who are your current buyers?
- Who would you like to sell to in the future? Are there any markets you hope to break into in the future?
- In what ways do you interact with others in the farming industry? How do you keep in touch, know the issues affecting MN farmers/farming and markets, communicate with and support each other about farming issues, etc? Who are your networks and how do they work?
- What else should we know about you, your farm, or your organization?

Supports to you and your farm:

- What programs, people and/or policies have been the most beneficial to you and your farm?
- What are additional programs/policies that might be helpful?
- What would it take to enact these new programs/policies?

Barriers to you and your farm:

- What programs, people and/or policies have been the most harmful to you and your farm?
- What other things have created the most hardship?
- What would/does help alleviate these hardships?
- What exacerbates these barriers and hardships?

What should be and what will be:

- What successful programs, policies, organizations, plans, etc must Minnesota consider to support more BIPOC farmers?
- What specific changes can be made now and by whom? (Provide example if needed: e.g. Farm Service agencies and other organizations can hire staff that reflect our Minnesota communities across diverse cultures and who are non-native English speakers;)
- What specific changes should be made in the next 2-3 years and by whom?

Wrap up:

- What else would you like to tell us about the barriers you and possibly other BIPOC farmers face in participating in the farm to school and other markets in MN?
- Would you like to review the summary of this work before it's made public?
- Who would you like to be sure receives this final product?
- We are also interested in connecting with any other people you know who might be willing to provide their perspective. Is there anyone else you know that I should connect with?

Appendix II - Resources for Future Use

Minnesota BIPOC Farming Communities

Agua Gorda Cooperative, Long Prairie, MN-
<https://sharedgroundcoop.com/farms/agua-gorda>

Farming coop in the rural community of Long Prairie. Articles below describes how the city's chamber of commerce owns the farming land, but leases to the Latinx community. The growth in the success of the farm- best know for the tomatillos they grow for the La Loma Tamales company- means positive growth for the town and their school system.

Articles:

- <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2015/10/14/agua-gorda-co-op-provides-latin-o-farmers-means-acquire-land>
- <http://www.startribune.com/latinos-learning-to-farm-minn-style/262197411/http://www.mprnews.org/story/2012/12/13/ground-level-latino-connections-longprairie>

Cala Farm, Turtle Lake, WI- <https://calafarm.wordpress.com/about/>

Rodrigo Cala and his brother created Cala Farms which grows organic vegetables- primarily broccoli, peppers and garlic. Cala Farms is part of Shared Ground coop. They sell as well in FTS markets and to The Good Acre. Rodrigo also works with LEDC to provide farmer-to-farmer training and speaking engagements within the farming community.

- Shared Grounds Website <https://sharedgroundcoop.com/farms/cala>
- MPR News Story:
<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2008/09/12/farmerentrepreneurs>
- Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE) Video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HwYW2IjU>
- Farm to school video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_ApjIusqFc
- 12th Annual Immigrant & Minority Farmers Conference (January 28, 2017 in St. Paul, MN):
- Title: From the Ground Up <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EPQYYEmNMrs>

The Hmong American Farmers Association (HAFA), Saint Paul, MN-
<https://www.hmongfarmers.com/>

Founded in 2011, HAFA manages 155 acres in Dakota County where Hmong farmers can lease land. The farmers in HAFA sell through community-supported agriculture shares, schools, retailers, and institutions making smaller farming more economically prosperous by combining individual farming efforts into larger community efforts

Articles:

- <https://www.hmongfarmers.com/story/>
- Veggie Rx Program https://youtu.be/stn_09vz2v4

Sin Fronteras Farm, Stillwater, MN- <https://sinfronterasfarm.com/>

Eduardo Rivera is the farm owner of this small farm focused on sustainably growing culturally appropriate foods for communities, such as tomatillos, hot peppers, and cilantro. Customers include farmers markets, Seward coop and The Good Acre. They also coordinate CSA shares.

- Farmer to Farmer Podcast with Rivera
<http://www.farmertofarmerpodcast.com/episodes/rivera>
- Rivera received a Castanea Fellowship. “The Castanea Fellowship is a new, two-year fellowship for diverse leaders working for a racially just food system in any of the areas of: health, environment, agriculture, regional economies, or community development.” (<https://www.castaneafellowship.org/about/>)

The Good Acre <https://thegoodacre.org/>

The non-profit began with the support of the Pohlada family. From a GiveMN campaign site, “The Good Acre takes the role of a food hub and adds the spokes, the wheels, and the help to keep them turning. We explore and develop cutting-edge programs and productive partnerships, each helping us more effectively support and drive positive change in the Twin Cities food system. The facility supports farmers through on-site cold storage, washing and prepping equipment, access packaging and farming materials such as organic soil and cardboard boxes at lower cost. They have a support specialist on staff that visits farmers and provides on-site support such as building hoop houses and taking soil samples.

Articles:

- <https://finance-commerce.com/2016/09/top-projects-of-2015-series-the-good-acre/>
- <http://www.startribune.com/the-good-acre-food-hub-provides-marketplace-opportunities-for-farmers/338015571/>
- <http://www.citypages.com/restaurants/the-good-acre-food-hub-brings-farm-food-to-your-table/392165651>
- <https://www.twincities.com/2016/06/16/new-nonprofit-good-acre-helps-small-farmers-boost-bottom-line/>

Red Lake Reservation

Articles:

- <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2019/06/18/red-lake-indian-reservation-minnesota-food-sovereignty-tractor>

Shared Ground, Saint Paul, MN - <https://sharedgroundcoop.com/>

Shared Ground Farmers' Co-op is a marketing and distribution cooperative owned by seven farms in the Twin Cities region. Shared Ground markets sustainably grown produce direct to consumers through a Community Supported Agriculture program (CSA, restaurant, wholesale and Farm to School programs including the St Paul, Columbia Heights and Minneapolis programs. A requirement of serving on their board is to be a Latinx farmers or descendent of a Latinx farmer.

Big River Farms and MN Food Association, St. Croix, MN - <http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/>

Minnesota Food Association works to build a more sustainable food system by operation and education farm and the Big River Farms food hub to support beginning farmers from diverse backgrounds in starting organic farm businesses.

Dream of Wild Health, Minneapolis, MN - <https://dreamofwildhealth.org/>

Dream of Wild Health is an intertribal, independent 501(c)3 non-profit that serves the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Native American community. They provide education programs that aim at reconnecting the urban Native American community with the traditional Native plants and their culinary, medicinal, and spiritual use.

Minnesota Organizations Supporting BIPOC Farmers

Appetite for Change, Minneapolis, MN- <https://appetiteforchangemn.org/>

Land Stewardship Project, Minneapolis, MN- <https://landstewardshipproject.org/>

The Land Stewardship Project (LSP) is a private, nonprofit organization founded in 1982 to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture and to develop healthy communities.

- Podcast series on LSP projects called “Ear to the Ground”
<https://landstewardshipproject.org/posts/podcast>

Latin Economic Development Center- <https://ledc-mn.org/index.php/en/home/>

LEDC has trained Latino farmers in cooperative organization and management, including farm incubation equipment sharing, which enables them to move from migrant work to

year-round positions, creating pathways for low-wage farm workers to become farm owners.

Main Street Project - <https://mainstreetproject.org/>

Main Street Project creates pathways out of poverty for the growing numbers of rural Latino immigrants by creating a new system of agriculture based on poultry-based regenerative farming.

MN Food Association - <http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/>

A program of The Food Group, MN Food Association (MFA) operates Big River Farms food hub, provides resources and training to new farmers, and coordinates an annual Emerging Farmers Conference.

The Food Group, New Hope, MN - <https://thefoodgroupmn.org>

The non-profit organization supports Big River Farms, a program that offers organic and sustainable agriculture education to historically underrepresented farmers.

Institute for Agriculture & Trade Policy, Minneapolis, MN-<https://www.iatp.org>

IATP promotes a trade agenda that works for small and mid-sized farmers and has advocated in the MN legislature for FTS state funding. IAFP has conducted several market questionnaires related to farmer's participation and interest in FTS/FTI markets.

Big River Farms and MN Food Association, St. Croix, MN - <http://www.mnfoodassociation.org/>

Minnesota Food Association works to build a more sustainable food system by operation and education farm and the Big River Farms food hub to support beginning farmers from diverse backgrounds in starting organic farm businesses.

Organizations Outside of MN

Farm to Institution New England (FINE)- <https://www.farmtoinstitution.org/>

The New England Farm and Food Security Initiative (NEFFSI) led to the creation of Farm to Institution New England (FINE). FINE is a regional network that seeks to strengthen regional food systems by increasing the use of New England food by New England institutions such as schools. A policy scan of the regions shows several levers used to

promote local food- Aid, Incentives, Celebration (Farm to School month), Thresholds (enabling small dollar \$\$ contracts), and Preference (e.g. 20% of school food must be local, +points on applications for local suppliers).

Articles:

Policy Scan:

<https://www.farmtoinstitution.org/sites/default/files/imce/uploads/New%20England%20Farm%20to%20Institution%20Policy%20Scan.pdf>

United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Articles on the Healthy Food for All Initiative:

- <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/1195529/icode/>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

USDA FSA Grants/Loan Programs

<https://www.fsa.usda.gov/state-offices/Minnesota/index>

Appendix III - Presentation Slides



Equity in MN Farming and Farm-to-School Programs

Matt Gill
Penny Norquist
Tara Olds
Molly Schned



HUMPHREY SCHOOL
OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Our Team

- Matt, Molly, Penny, Tara:
 - 4 student consultants finishing Masters program at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs
- Client:
 - Stephanie, UMN Extension & MN Farm to School



2

“Thanks to Farm to School, students are eating more fresh local foods and learning about where their food comes from, all while supporting local farmers.”

MN Dept of Agriculture Farm to School website



Problem Statement

There is a **lack of participation** of Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) farmers in farm-to-school programs in Minnesota compared to the demographic makeup of the state.

4

MN Farmers are overwhelmingly white



Chart: Jiwon Choi | MPR News • Source: [Census of Agriculture, USDA](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

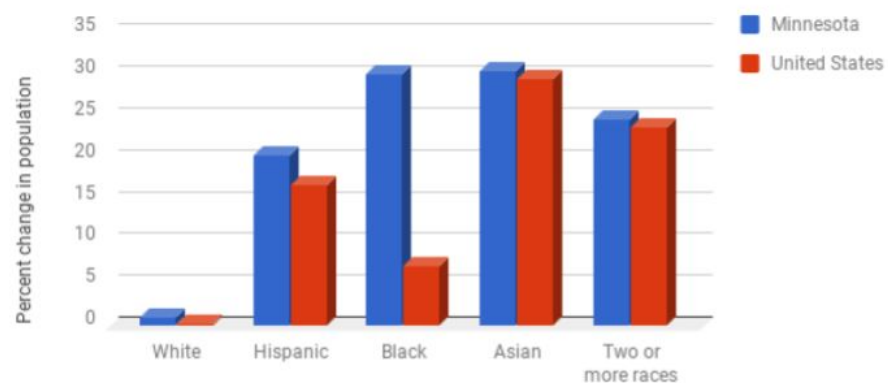
MN BIPOC Population (2017): 20%
MN BIPOC Farmers (2017): 1.5%

5

Why is this important?

Minnesota is growing more diverse at a faster rate than U.S.

Latest 2017 Census figures show population percentage growth compared to 2010.



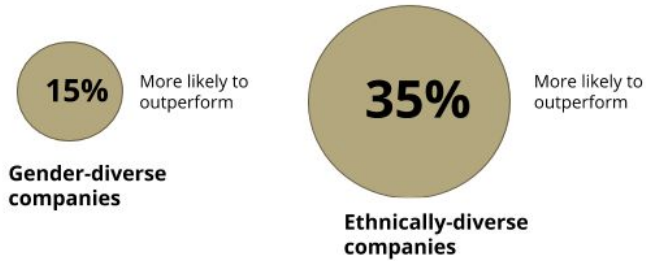
Source: U.S. Census

6

Why is this important?

Diversity's dividend

What's the likelihood that companies in the top quartile for diversity financially outperform those in the bottom quartile?



Results show likelihood of financial performance above the national industry median. Analysis is based on composite data for all countries in the data set. Results vary by individual country. Source: McKinsey analysis, Forbes (2015)

7

Research Questions

1. **What do BIPOC farming leaders and other farmers think** about the current participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS and other markets?
2. What are **barriers** that BIPOC farmers face in markets like FTS in Minnesota and entering farming in general?
3. **What are existing organizations doing** to address the disproportionate lack of BIPOC participation in farming in MN?

8

Methodology

4 grad students
Literature review
14 interviews
13 organizations
3 observations
1 goal



9

Who we heard from:

Indigenous Refugees
Black White
FARMERS & FARMING LEADERS
Immigrants LatinX Hmong



10



Findings



Question #1

What do **BIPOC** farming leaders and other farmers **think** about the current participation of BIPOC farmers in FTS and other markets?



Historic and current racism has led to a lack of BIPOC farmers

“For a long time agriculture wasn’t a friendly place for Native people to be.”

“This system was built intentionally to exclude black and indigenous persons.”

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Systems built to **exclude** were also built to **endure**

Driving back roads to avoid racial profiling

Shared Ground: Latinx org with non-hispanic name

Exclusionary definitions of “local”

Lack of representation at all levels

Maple Syrup

14



Is farming a desirable profession?

“I don’t think my kids will do this.”

“I pushed the envelope and... literally within a few months, was *isolated as a threat*, rather than as a **complement**, to the community.”

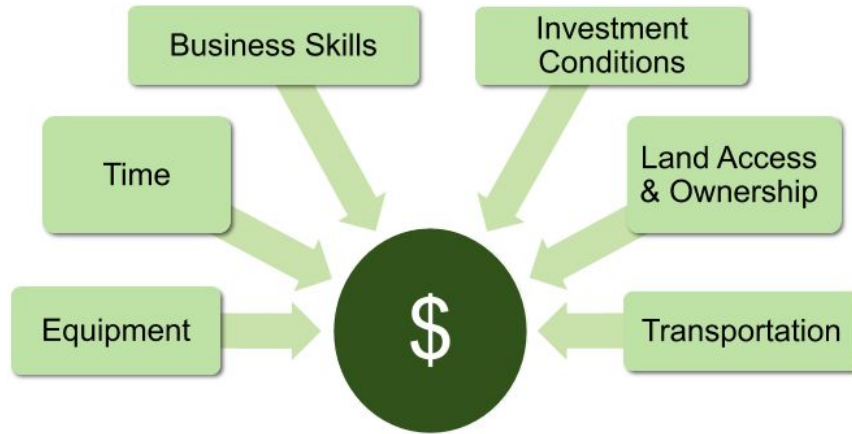
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Question #2

What are **barriers** that BIPOC farmers face in markets like FTS in Minnesota and entering farming in general?

Barriers



Structural Inequities

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Cultural Barriers

Language:

"We're only there - honestly, because we can speak English"

Education:

"For a lot of Native students...they're being asked to choose between getting an education and their community and their cultural ties."

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The market/profession is not profitable



“We try to pay our farmers well and sell into a *market that doesn't pay well*. So, it's a difficult proposition.”

“The economy is rigged against smaller growers. It's a volume game for anyone. And even in the volume game, *no one is making money.*”

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Question #3

What are existing organizations **doing** to address the disproportionate lack of BIPOC participation in farming in MN?



*“We don't only grow plants,
we grow people here.”*

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“When I talk about *social justice*, I like to see *our people empower our people*, getting better education, get more money, get better jobs. If you see yourself as a *farm worker* all the time. *No*. You can be the *owner* of these farms.”
(Rodrigo Cala, Cala Farms)

Photo Credit: Shared Grounds Coop

Existing work

Reduce Barriers

Food Co-ops such as Shared Ground, nonprofits such as The Good Acre and Red Lake Nation provide farmers with training, grants, infrastructure, and marketing support.

Youth Engagement

Multiple programs expose BIPOC youth to farming and food systems work

“Intertribal agriculture council (IAC)...voted to establish a **youth board of directors** parallel to their organizational board structure...which has been groundbreaking for youth leadership development”

-Native Youth Food Sovereignty Alliance (NYFSA)

Advocacy

BIPOC-friendly agricultural policy & implementation

(e.g. Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy, FARM Bill, FTS state funding, Appetite for Change)



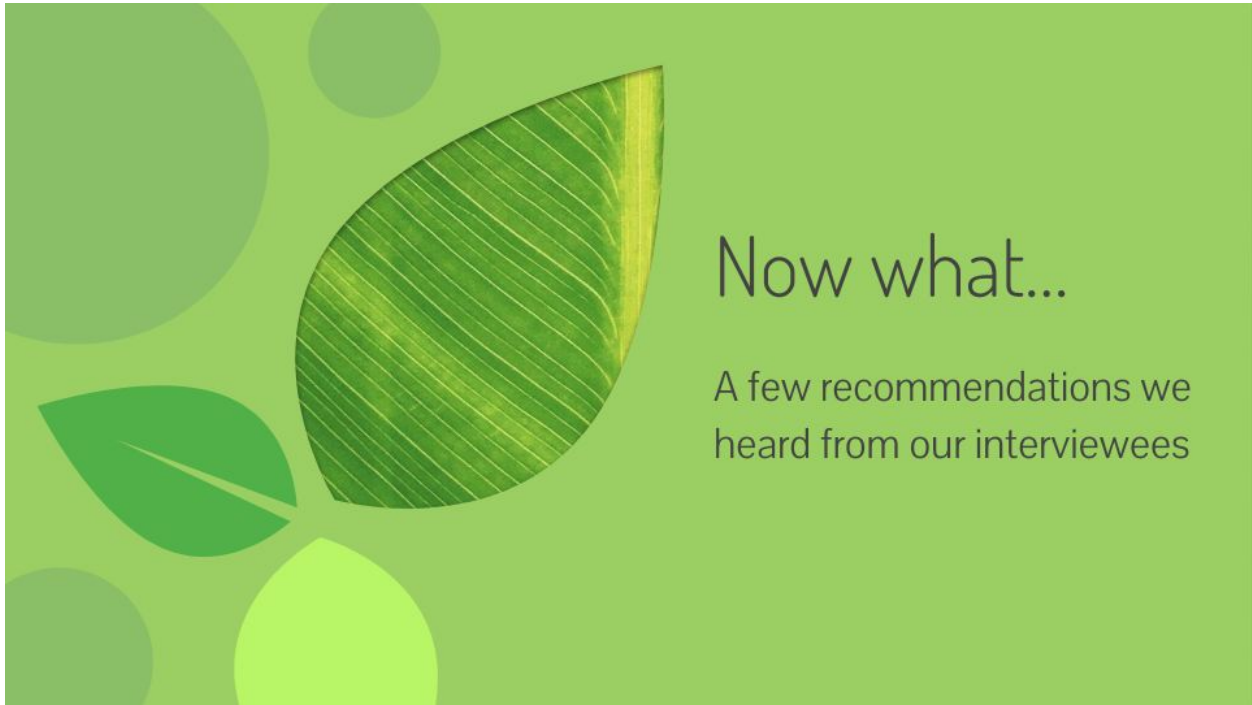
Existing work

Food Sovereignty

Cultivate local markets on the reservation, or among Native nations along ancient trade routes

Regenerative Farming

Use ancient practice of multiple crops growing on land shared with livestock--free range and fertilizer all packaged together



Now what...

A few recommendations we heard from our interviewees



Recommendations



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Discussion

- What did you hear that **surprised** you?
- What are you still **wondering** or **thinking about**?
- How does this **apply to/inform your work** as a leadership team?



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Appendix IV - Project Information Sheet

Equity in Minnesota Farming and Farm-to-School Programs

What is the Issue?

BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) farmers are underrepresented in the farm-to-school (FTS) market and in farming in general in Minnesota.

In Minnesota, BIPOC make up only 1.5% of farmers, own 0.5% of farms by acre, and make up less than 0.5% of the market value in farming, yet BIPOC make up 20% of the state's population, and continues to grow. Minnesota has added 5X more BIPOC residents than whites residents from 2010-2017.



PROJECT GOAL:
To **ELEVATE** the voices of **BIPOC farmers** and the work already being done to address farming **disparities** in **Minnesota**.

While research has studied the nutritional, social, and educational benefits of the FTS program for students of color, less work has been done looking at improving racial equity on the farming side.

*"The economy is rigged against smaller growers. It's a volume game for anyone. And even in the volume game, no one is making money."
– BIPOC farming advocate*

"If you control the food, you control the people." – Indigenous farmer

What we did:

14	3
Interviews	Observations

Who we heard from:



Research conducted by: Matt Gill, Penny Norquist, Tara Olds, and Molly Schned in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension and Humphrey School of Public Affairs



What do BIPOC farmers and farming leaders think about the issue?

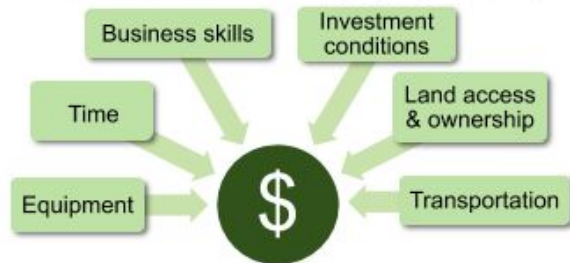
Systemic racism has contributed to many of the barriers that exist for BIPOC farmers today.

“The system was built to intentionally exclude black and indigenous persons.”
 – Black farming leader

“I don’t think my kids will do this.”
 - Indigenous farming leader

“When I talk about social justice, I like to see our people empower our people, getting better education get more money, get better jobs. If you see yourself as a farm worker all the time. No. You can be the owner of these farms.”
 – LatinX farmer

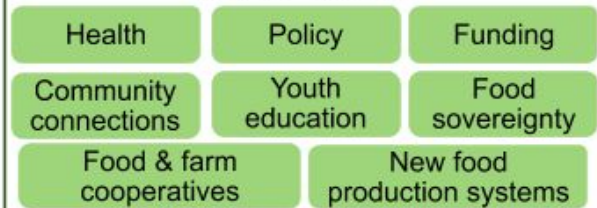
Barriers for BIPOC farmers



Structural Inequities

Barriers all come back to money and inequity colors everything. Without resources, it is difficult to be profitable in larger markets such as FTS programs.

Existing organizations’ focus areas:



RECOMMENDATIONS

Improving conditions for one community may not be what works for all, but common themes for recommendations are present across groups. Disrupting inequity is at the core of these recommendations. In the long-term, a customizable and flexible plan that truly benefits BIPOC farmers could include elements such as fostering better collaboration between organizations to create efficiencies, institutions purchasing land specific for FTS farming, and engaging youth. In the short-term, expanding the definitions of “local” and providing non-English trainings are some obtainable actions.



“If we want high quality, we need to be slow, intentional.” – Hmong farming leader

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