



# Emerging Farmers

Mr. Patrice Bailey, Assistant Commissioner  
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[www.mda.state.mn.us](http://www.mda.state.mn.us)

# Scope

In 2021, we experienced another turbulent year, with climate change and fall-out from the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to affect the agricultural sector and access to food. In addition, it was a very tough year for farmers all over the country, but especially in Minnesota due to a severe drought, worker shortages, and supply chain issues, which all posed a major upset for our farmers. However, the farm economy in agriculture has been and continues to be a foundation for Minnesota's economy. Since the death of George Floyd, Minnesotans have come together to address food deserts in urban communities and mobile food hubs.



# Emerging Farmers in 2022

*“Because of the Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) farmers, women farmers, veteran farmers, and other farmers from historically underrepresented and underserved communities who are contributing their voices and ideas as part of the Emerging Farmers Work Group, we are creating an agricultural future where it is easier for all new farmers to take their first steps into the field. It is with a deep appreciation for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for their continued dedication to this important conversation and bringing people’s voices to the table.”- Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan*

Race	Percent of Minnesota Population	Percent of Minnesota Farmers
African-American/Black	6.80%	0.03%
American Indian/Alaska Native	1.40%	0.16%
Asian	5.10%	0.36%
Hispanic/Latino	5.50%	0.58%
Multiracial	2.50%	0.26%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.10%	0.02%
White	84.10%	99.16%

# EFWG Activities 2021-2022

- **Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program**
  - The EFWG is building this program with the MDA. The program will provide funding to state government and Tribal governments to cover procurement and distribution. Awardees can purchase domestic food from local and regional producers, target purchases from socially disadvantaged farmers, and distribute the food to underserved communities.
- **Team Building with EFWG Facilitator**
  - EFWG members participated in activity to lay foundational blocks on how they would like meetings to be structured- more time allocated in a formal agenda for working group to provide feedback/discussions. Recommendations on future topical discussions.
- **Speaker Engagement with EFWG**
  - Speakers from cross agencies, farming communities, heritage councils, nonprofit organizations engaged with the EFWG on resources, opportunities and partnerships of mutual interests. Building relationships and networks.



# Selected Recommendations

- Establish an emerging farmers task force that can provide guidance on the development of programs and initiatives.
- Increase the agricultural microloan program from \$10,000 to \$20,000
- Implement advance payment options for grant funding modeled after the USDA NRCS advance payment program.
- Provide funding for farm service providers, including state agencies, to translate materials and trainings.



**DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

## Emerging Farmers Office (EFO) Update

Lillian Otieno – Outreach & Engagement Coordinator

# Emerging Farmers Office Vision: Feedback from EFWG

- ALL Emerging Farmers are served in a way that meets their needs and acts as a liaison between farmers and all the MDA divisions. A one-stop shop for Emerging Farmers – responsive to questions on how to start a farm business.
- Listening, engaging, and learning from Emerging Farmers to continue to inform the structure, evolution, and development of the Emerging Farmers office, and to enable the MDA to have an impact in addressing equity and justice in agriculture for all.
- Addressing language barriers to include translation/ interpretation of materials and resources. Intentional language access at inception, development and delivery of materials and services.



# Emerging Farmer Office Vision continued...

- Assisting farmers to navigate public-private partnerships in agriculture and connecting with nonprofits - supporting and collaborating with allies who are not Emerging Farmers but interested in sharing their expertise and resources.
- Advocating for Emerging Farmers with other Minnesota state agencies and programs. Building connections externally and internally to leverage access, and address equity in policies, processes, procedures, and programs.



March, 2022

### **New! Minnesota AG License Plate.**



Minnesota's first specialized motor vehicle license plate to support agriculture for all is now available to purchase from the DMV!

[New license plate benefits 4-H and FFA Foundation | UMN Extension](#)



January, 2022

### **NEW! Emerging Farmer Office at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA)**

*By Assistant Commissioner Patrice Bailey*

**Newsletter cycle: January, March, June, and September**

EFWG meetings: February, April, August, and October

# Engagement Opportunities

- Re-routing the Emerging Farmers Conference
- Minnesota Africans United Annual Event – Metro State College Nov. 2021
- MOSES article feature
- Page Amendment/ Education & Ag
- \*Hennepin County
- \*MARL (MN Agriculture and Rural Leadership)
- \*FDLTCC Certification Program
- Indigenous Farming Conference (White Earth Nation)
- The Village, Rochester MN
- CLUES
- Cooperative Partnership for Local & Regional Markets Engagement Survey
- Local Food Purchasing Assistance Program

# Policy/Legislative and Cross Agency Collaborations

Discussions with legislators in support of Emerging Farmers and creative ways to address land access by:

- Leveraging existing resources and looking at amendments/updates and partnerships (DEED, MDA and Legislators)
- Conversation with other agencies on potential available lands for farming (MDA, DNR, DEED, Legislators)
- Conversations with county governments on existing/available lands for farming (MDA, Hennepin County, Stakeholders)

# Challenges and Opportunities

- Grant programs to address resources to purchase land.
- Financial assistance for infrastructure improvements on owned or rented land.
- Technical assistance in navigating grant applications and other federal/state and local resources – including training.
- Data to inform where Emerging Farmers are located, what they produce and how we can best support them does not exist.
- Engagement with Emerging Farmers, internal and external stakeholders and others requires capacity and intentional focus.
- MDA services are siloed by division/program area, leads to collaboration and communication challenges.

# What is ongoing/next/future



Land access and capital advocacy;  
outreach/engagement with diverse stakeholders and legislators



Focus and champion the needs of Emerging Farmers, the EFWG recommendations to internal and external stakeholders and decision makers



- Emerging Farmers Office promotional and communication materials
- Develop a draft working plan for FY22 to FY25



- Farm Business Management Instructor in the metro area
- Farm Advocate RFP

# Thank You

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