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**JULY
NEWSLETTER**

**VOL 1
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FREEDMEN HEIRS FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS



A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Freedmen Friends,

Last month, I had the pleasure of attending the private screening of Gaining Ground: The Fight for Black Land at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C. Produced by Al Roker Entertainment and award winning producer Eternal Polk, this compelling film brings awareness to the fight for Black land and its direct connection to closing the generational wealth gap while highlighting the grit, resilience, and triumphs of Black farmers and landowners in the U.S. This film is absolutely amazing, and I encourage you to find a viewing near you. You will not be disappointed!

In other news, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced its selection of 50 projects for potential award, totaling approximately \$300 million to improve access to land, capital, and markets for underserved farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners. The Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access (Increasing Land Access) Program, which is funded by President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act, works to increase access to farm ownership opportunities, improve results for those with heirs' property or fractionated land, increase access to markets and capital that affect the ability to access land, and improve land ownership, land succession and agricultural business planning. [See the full list of Increasing Land Access Program selected projects.](#)



Seanicaa Edwards Herron

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LAND ACCESS & ECONOMICS

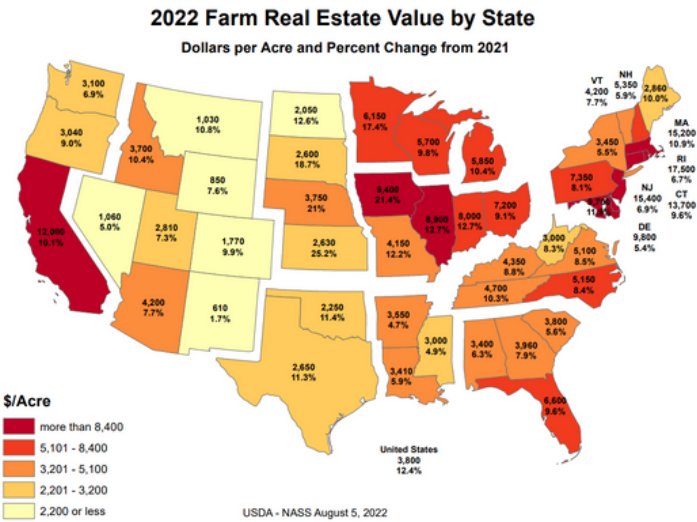
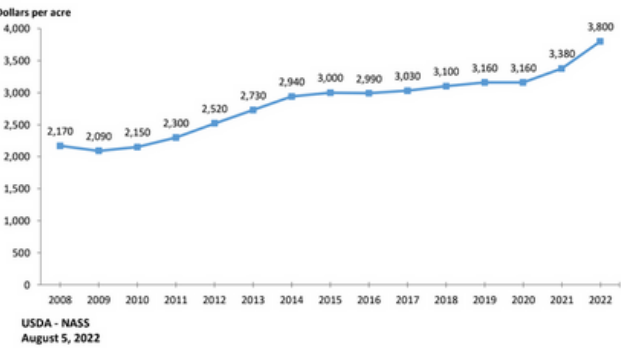
Hidden Wealth:
Resolving Problems of Black Land Loss

Written by: Seanicaa Edwards Herron, Agricultural Economist, Freedmen Heirs Foundation Executive Director

Agricultural farmland is an appreciating asset and principal source of collateral for farm loans, and it is critical to the overall financial well-being of farmers and landowners. Currently, farmland prices remain at historic levels and are forecast to increase in the long-term. According to USDA's Land Values report, the value of all land and buildings on farms, averaged \$3,800 per acre for 2022, up 12.4 percent from 2021. Cropland value averaged \$5,050 per acre, 14.3 percent higher than the previous year while pasture value averaged \$1,650 per acre, an increase of 11.5 percent from 2021. It's also worth noting that agricultural production is a major use of land, accounting for roughly 52 percent of the U.S. land base. With a value of \$2.55 trillion in 2019, the value of farm real estate (land and structures) accounted for over 80 percent of the total value of the U.S. farm sector total assets. (See data on Major Land Uses).

Moreover, there has been a significant increase in the purchase of farmland from deep pocket investors (domestic and international), private equity funds, family foundations, real estate developers, and pension funds, pricing farmers and landowner out of the market. This is particularly problematic for minority and beginning farmers and landowners. *Houston... we have a problem!*

Average Farm Real Estate Value – United States: 2008-2022



Land acquisition and retention are key components to building generational wealth and closing the equity gap for Black farmers and landowners. Over the last century, Black farmers and landowners have lost more than 12 million acres of farmland. In a study conducted by Francis, Hamilton, et al (2022), the value of the

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Black land loss and its income from 1920-1997 totals approximately \$326 billion. It is important to note that this estimate is conservative. The true impact is far greater than estimated, as rising land and commodity prices over the last 26 years were not captured along with other economic factors. Nonetheless, this historic land loss represents a massive transfer of wealth from the Black community with repercussions still being felt to this day. Another emerging trend that is reshaping the face of U.S. agriculture is the aging population of farmers, which will result in a massive transfer of farmland over the next two decades. With such a significant shift on the horizon, it's imperative that minority and socially disadvantaged farmers and landowners have succession and estate plans, wills, and trusts in place to evade "heir property" issues and further displacement from family land.

So what can be done to fix this problem of limited access to farmland, particularly for Black and historically underserved farmers? USDA's current Increasing Land, Capital, and Market Access (Increasing Land Access) Program is a start but won't solve the problem in its entirety. There must be explicit legislation passed in the 2023 Farm Bill that provides more protections for current farmland owners and adequate funding for beginning farmers, especially socially disadvantaged producers to access land. However, non-traditional mechanisms need to be developed to alleviate the financial pressures of obtaining farmland. Farmland Investment Funds and REITs are common ways of owning and investing in farmland. While there have been funds created with the express purpose of converting farmland to organic production, there has never been an investment fund with the

explicit purpose of acquiring farmland to enable sustainably managed Black-owned farms at scale. A fund of this type, scope, and magnitude would be an integral component in reversing the trend of Black land loss.

While there could be a component of philanthropy that supports this work, a better strategy for mobilizing capital would be to understand the components of financial returns from agricultural land—equity growth of the land, tax benefits of farmland, and income generated from farming activities/land stewardship—and then to assign those financial gains to farm operators and community stakeholders (including farmworkers).

A special purpose vehicle (SPV) to accomplish this endeavor could unlock capital investment and enable Black farmers to access land that would otherwise be unaffordable. It would also enable younger people or those from nontraditional farming backgrounds, such as Black veterans to consider farming as a viable profession. Once created, the structure could be used to support farmland investments for other historically marginalized groups, young farmers, and others who have largely been unable to participate fully in the agricultural sector.

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AGRIPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

Blazing Trails From Farm To Freezer

How entrepreneur Ms. Kimberly Ratcliff is making direct impact in the cattle and beef industry

Kimberly Ratcliff is the manager of Caney Creek Ranch, a diversified ranching operation located in East Central Texas, established by her parents Wesley and Marie Ratcliff. Kimberly joined the ranch in 2007 after leaving her job as a Branding Specialist at Bloomberg, a New York City financial firm. Ms. Ratcliff manages and helps operate the family business producing registered Charbray Cattle, from which bulls, replacement heifers, semen, and embryos are sold in national and international markets. The ranch also produces commercial cattle and livestock feed resources.

In 2016, Kimberly Ratcliff launched Farm to Freezer Meat Company, LLC which purchases finished cattle from Caney Creek Ranch with the mission to provide the highest quality of ranch-direct beef possible in a simple, convenient, and responsible manner. In addition to managing her ranch and meat business, Ms. Ratcliff is the Executive Director of 100 Ranchers, Inc., a community-based organization founded in 2008 with the goal of serving agricultural producers. The organization is dedicated to increasing their bottom line and improving their livelihood through



collaboration and collectively producing safe, clean, efficient, and marketable products. Kimberly Ratcliff also serves as Board member of the following organizations: Independent Cattlemen's Association, Capital Farm Credit Advisory Committee, USDA Advisory Committee for Minority Farmers and Ranchers, USDA Trade Advisory Board, Prairie View A&M University Department of Agriculture Advisory Committee and Alcorn State University Socially Disadvantage Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center.

Ms. Ratcliff has a Bachelor's degree from Long Island University, a Ranch Management Diploma from Texas Christian University, and is a graduate of Texas A&M University's Texas Agriculture Lifetime Leadership Program. She has received numerous awards for her accomplishments from peers within the agriculture community, including Rancher of the Year by the following organizations: Texas Landowners Association, Minority Landowners Magazine and Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo.

For more information on the Farm to Freezer Meat Company, visit www.farmtofreezermeat.com.

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AGRIPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

EM Farms: Where Legacy and Innovation Collide

How Ms. Kaneisha Miller is positioning EM Farms to effect change within her community

EM Farms is an on-farm market proudly growing fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables with the convenience and quality of the community in mind. Using nature's beautiful creations along with innovative farming techniques, EM Farms produces highly flavorful produce and value added goods such as peach, strawberry, & scuppernong jelly; pepper sauce, and pickled peaches amongst other fresh products.

Surrounded by farming for most of her childhood, Ms. Miller's agricultural upbringing inspired her to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Economics from Fort Valley State University. Five years into her career in the field, Ms. Miller noticed the scarcity of farm fresh produce within



her local community. Her decision to fulfill that need was the catalyst for establishing EM Farms in 2018.



EM Farms is located in Culloden, GA on land that has been in the Miller family for over 40 years. In addition to the product shop, EM Farms offers enriching experiences such as agritourism and private "EM-to-Table" dinner experiences on the farm. Ms. Miller pays homage to her grandparents by offering homestyle cakes infused with family recipes available for purchase. She named EM Farms after her grandmother, Emma Miller.

To learn more about Kaneisha Miller and EM Farms, visit www.emfarmsllc.com.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

NBGC'S 2023 MODEL FARM SERIES

Next Farm Tour Dates: July 20th & 21st

Hosted By: Haynie Farms

Altheimer, AR

&

J&A Farm Partnership LLP

Bastrop, LA

For more information, visit

<https://www.nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com>

2023 NBGC Model Farm Series



Date	Location	Host	Focus Group
May 19, 2023	Tanner, AL	Darden Bridgeforth & Sons	Crop protection in variety trials on Cotton, Corn & Soybeans
June 2, 2023	Byromville, GA	Jibb's Vineyard	Variety trials for Cotton, Corn & Wheat Harvest
July 20, 2023	Altheimer, AR	Haynie Farms	Rice, Corn, Soybean production, crop protection & irrigation practices
July 21, 2023	Bastrop, LA	J & A Farm Partnership LLP	Corn & Soybean production
August 11, 2023	Sledge, MS	CMB Farms LLC	Rice and Soybean production & irrigation practices
September 8, 2023	Rowesville, S.C.	Mahogany Farms LLC	Corn, Cotton, Soybean production & conservation practices

For more information go to:

<https://nationalblackgrowerscouncil.com/> or call (202) 641-4197

Annual Meeting December 2023 – Information coming soon



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FARMER RESOURCES

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): NAP provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occur due to natural disasters. Visit this [link](#) for more details.

USDA Invites Input on Crop Insurance Coverage for Prevented Planting: USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) is looking at possible changes to prevented planting crop insurance coverage and wants to hear what producers think and have to say about it. So, it is hosting in-person listening sessions in 11 states and additional ones virtually from June through August and looking for written feedback by Sept. 1. RMA has posted the full details and the schedule of listening sessions on its [website](#).

USDA NASS Crop Production Report: This monthly report contains crop production data for the U.S., including acreage, area harvested, and yield. The report also contains a monthly weather summary, a monthly agricultural summary, and an analysis of precipitation and the degree of departure from the normal precipitation map for the month. Link to current and archived reports can be found [here](#).

USDA Supply and Demand Report: The *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* (WASDE) report is prepared and released by the World Agricultural Outlook Board (WAOB). This report is released monthly and provides annual forecasts for supply and use of U.S. and world wheat, rice, coarse grains, oilseeds, and cotton. The report also covers U.S. supply and use of sugar, meat, poultry, eggs, milk, and dairy products; as well as Mexico's supply and use of sugar. The WAOB chairs the Interagency Commodity Estimates Committees (ICECs), which include analysts from key USDA agencies who compile and interpret information from USDA and other domestic and foreign sources to produce the report. Link to current and archived reports can be found [here](#).

Secretary of Agriculture Briefings on the *World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates* (WASDE) report and the *Crop Production* report can be viewed live each month starting 12:05pm ET, following the release of the WASDE report, on [NASS's YouTube channel](#).

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FARMER RESOURCES

USDA Previews Emergency Relief Assistance for Agricultural Producers Who Incurred Losses Due to 2022 Natural Disaster Events: Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced plans to roll out \$3.7 billion in [Emergency Relief Program \(ERP\)](#) and Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) assistance to crop and livestock producers who sustained losses due to a qualifying natural disaster events in calendar year 2022. USDA is sharing early information to allow producers time to gather documents in advance of program delivery. Click [here](#) for more information.

Funding Opportunity: USDA is making \$45 million available to community-based and nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education and tribal entities that help underserved and veteran farmers and ranchers own and operate successful farms through the 2501 grant program. Based in local communities and rural areas, 2501 Program partners increase equitable participation in USDA's programs and services. Application Deadline: **July 25th, 2023**. For more information on how to apply, visit this [link](#).

Crop Acreage Reports Due. Although the deadline to file varies by state and county, most major crops are due *July 17*. Producers who still need to file are urged to make appointments at their local Farm Service Agency office located within the county [USDA Service Center](#). To make the reporting process fluid, producers with login access to [Farmers.gov](#) can use the website to label and print maps of their land and bring those maps to their appointment.

County Committee Elections. Nominations for December's election are due **August 1, 2023**. For more information on the election and the election timeline, click [here](#).

USDA's Food Safety Certification for Specialty Crops Program (FSCSC) is accepting applications. This program assists specialty crop operations that incur eligible on-farm food safety program expenses related to obtaining or renewing a food safety certification in calendar years 2022 and 2023. The deadline to apply for FSCSC assistance for calendar year 2023 is **January 31, 2024**. If you think you qualify for this program and want to learn more, click [here](#) to learn about eligibility.

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