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# MINORiTYAgVOCATE™

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**AUGUST  
NEWSLETTER**

**VOL 1  
ISSUE 5**



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## FREEDMEN HEIRS FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHTS



## WE ARE HIRING

### *Join our team*

Since our inception, Freedmen Heirs' work has grown through the creation of new programs and relationship building. This growth has brought a need to expand our team to communicate our impacts while strengthening relationships with farmers and ranchers in the community. We are in search of Farmer Liaisons (2) and an Outreach Coordinator to support our operational efforts. If you are a motivated team player with a broad agricultural background, please visit [www.freedmenheirs.org/careers](http://www.freedmenheirs.org/careers) for full job descriptions and application information.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello Freedmen Friends,

As summer draws to a close and fall harvest is upon us, important deadlines are quickly approaching. First up is the highly anticipated 2023 Farm Bill. The September 30, 2023 expiration of the current Farm Bill (2018) is on the horizon, but there is much doubt and eroding confidence that Congress will pass a new Farm Bill this year. With that being said, if the September deadline is missed, Congress will likely pass a short-term extension to keep the U.S. agriculture sector afloat. Nonetheless, it is imperative that we stay the course and continue to advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the upcoming Farm Bill legislation.

The next deadline of importance for minority farmers, ranchers, and landowners is October 31, 2023, which is the final date to apply for the USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) authorized \$2.2 billion in financial assistance to farmers and ranchers who have experienced discrimination in USDA farm loan programs prior to January 21, 2021. More information is provided on how to apply in the Farmer Resources section of the newsletter along with other upcoming events, deadlines, funding opportunities, and job postings.

Please enjoy the August issue of The Minority AgVocate!

*Seanicaa Edwards Herron*



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## SUSTAINABLE PEST CONTROL

### Integrated Pest Management: Sustainable Methods of Pest Control

*Written by: Genesis McKellar, Freedmen Heirs Foundation Executive Administrative Assistant*

Farming is the backbone of both national and global food production, but there is an overarching challenge that can devastate crops and reduce yields: the presence of harmful pests. Conventional pest control systems have relied heavily on synthetic pesticides and agrochemicals, leading to environmental degradation, resistance development, and potential risks to human health. However, the increasing need for sustainable agricultural practices has sparked the adoption of environmentally friendly and economical pest management systems. This article explores the concept of sustainable pest management in farming, its key components, and the numerous benefits it offers to farmers, the environment, and society at large.

#### Make Soil Health A Priority

Healthy soil is the foundation of any viable plant, and the same holds true in crop production. A fully functioning soil will help increase yields with minimal crop loss; therefore, good soil health is essential to maximizing yields and profitability. Poor soil health can be detrimental to crops as it reduces their resilience to pest damage. Farmers may evaluate the well-being of their soil by performing various assessments such as biological diversity, soil structure and color, and soil quality. See [USDA's Cropland In-Field Soil Health Assessment Guide](#) to learn more.

#### Know Your Pests

Not all insects are harmful to plant health. It is critical to accurately identify pest damage early in the growing and harvest cycle to consider effective options for reducing and managing pest damage. Distinguishing between beneficial and damaging pests is the primary step in the pest management process and will govern subsequent actions. The [Sustainable Pest and Weed Control Database](#) is a user-friendly resource to determine which pests are harmful and provides the exact sustainable methodology to prevent crop loss and control pests. It is also recommended to keep a journal that documents when pest occurrences happen, mitigation practices used, and the effectiveness of the adopted methodology.

#### Crop Rotation

Not only is crop diversification beneficial to the health of soil, but it is a sustainable method of pest control. Crop rotation has the ability to reduce weeds, insects, and diseases that can harm crops and reduce yields. Continuously planting one crop within a specified area can increase population levels of pre-existing soil-borne pathogens. By rotating crops and introducing diverse plant species to the soil, farmers can disrupt pest life cycles and promote a healthier ecosystem.

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## SUSTAINABLE PEST CONTROL

See Figure 2.1 from Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) for an overview of rotation planning.

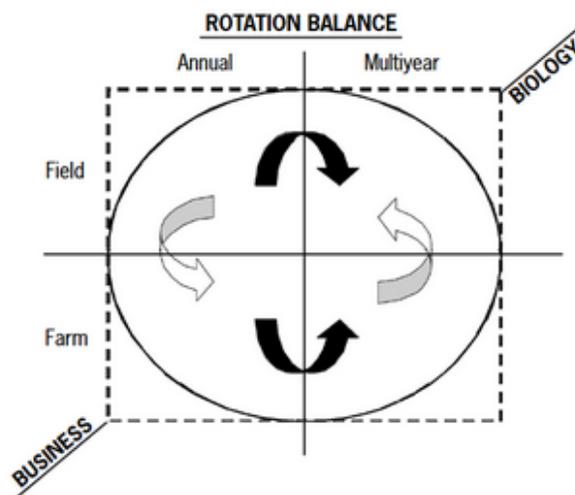


FIGURE 2.1 Rotation planning balances the management of field- and farm-level decisions on an annual and a multi-year basis. Annual farm-level decisions tend to prioritize business concerns. Multi-year decisions tend to prioritize and accommodate biological demands.

### Consider Biological Prevention Methods

Pest problems can be prevented using natural practices; however, implementation will require the ability to closely identify the cause. Introducing natural predators, parasites, or pathogens can aid in the control of pest populations with minimal to no use of synthetic pesticides. Planting cover crops (plants grown primarily to benefit the successful growth of other future crops) is also an effective method for pest and disease management, as they aid with soil erosion, improve soil health, crowd out

weeds - ultimately increasing profitability. For more information on the benefits of cover crops, see [USDA's website](#).

Sustainable practices of pest management in farming offer a promising path towards a more environmentally friendly, economically viable, and socially responsible agricultural future. By embracing the concepts listed above, farmers can effectively manage crop health while safeguarding the environment and creating a resilient and sustainable farming system.

### References:

[USDA | Cover Crops and Crop Rotation](#)

[USDA | Pest Management](#)

[ATTRA Sustainable Agriculture Tipsheet: Organic Pest Management](#)

[SARE | A Whole-Farm Approach to Managing Pests](#)

[USDA | Cover Crops Benefit Both Commercial Farmers and Urban Gardeners](#)

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## AGRIPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

### Eliminating Food Waste Within Agriculture

Founder and C.E.O. of Re-Nuble, Tinia Pina, helps farms reduce waste and change their climate profiles

Tinia Pina holds a B.S. degree in Business Information Technology from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and a Masters of Science degree from Columbia University. As a strong advocate for environmentally-conscious waste management and regenerative agriculture, Pina has more than ten years of combined experience within the sustainability and finance industries.

While working as a volunteer SAT prep teacher in New York at the time, Tinia witnessed firsthand the immediate effects of limited healthy food options and how it impacted her students' productivity. In 2015, Pina founded Re-Nuble Inc., a NYC-headquartered, MWBE-certified social enterprise that utilizes organic cycling science (OCS) technology to convert crop residue and unrecoverable vegetative byproducts into a platform of sustainable technologies for growers.

Pina's professional interests focus on using unique and distributed methodology to extract



optimal value from organic waste streams within closed-loop agricultural practices. Her vision for Re-Nuble is to mimic nature by responsibly harvesting food source materials while valuing the commitment to a minimal ("or zero") carbon footprint, sustainable agriculture, and

green operations. Tinia currently serves as Board Member of Wild Gift and is Treasurer of the New York City Agriculture Collective. She has been awarded the American Express Emerging Innovator Award, the American Entrepreneurship Award, and the 2017 Innovator of the Year Award for her contributions to innovation in the field of science and sustainability.

**For more information on Re-Nuble, visit:**  
**[www.re-nuble.com](http://www.re-nuble.com)**

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## AGRIPRENEUR SPOTLIGHT

### Developing Markets For Black Farmers

*Mr. Demetrius Hunter addresses food insecurity by offering a hub of Black-grown food products*

Fourth-generation farmer Demetrius Hunter is the founder and C.E.O. of The Black Farmer's Hub, a storefront located in Raleigh, North Carolina that primarily features Black-grown food products. The brick and mortar was purchased with its historical context in mind, as the area once known for its vulnerable past now serves as a junction between Black farmers and the local community.

The company's mission is to provide a market that shares quality foods to communities with otherwise restricted access, while supporting local Black farmers and agribusinesses in the process. Through the work of The Black Farmer's Hub, Hunter also supports the development of farmers markets within local medical, senior, and faith-based communities throughout the Raleigh area.



Mr. Hunter serves as the Program Director of Grocers on Wheels, a premiere service that delivers fresh produce to rural and urban communities in Central North Carolina. Grocers



on Wheels builds upon the legacy of Hunter's father, Zelb Hunter, who delivered fresh produce throughout formally segregated neighborhoods. Hunter continues his 100-year old family tradition by opening a second hub storefront that serves a rural county within the region.

Hunter was collaborator for the Farm to Church Network with the Rural Advancement Foundation International, which distributes produce sourced from Black farmers throughout the state. He is also a North Carolina native and graduate of Cornell University and North Carolina State University. He has combined educational experiences in human resources, industrial labor, and non-profit organizational management.

**For more information, visit:**

**The Black Farmer's Hub** [www.thesweeterjuice.com](http://www.thesweeterjuice.com)  
**Grocers on Wheels** [www.groceronwheels.com](http://www.groceronwheels.com)

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### NBGC'S 2023 MODEL FARM SERIES

**Next Farm Tour Date:** August 11th  
**Hosted By:** CMB Farms  
 Sledge, MS

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

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**Inflation Reduction Act Assistance for Producers Who Experienced Discrimination in USDA Farm Loan Programs is now available.** Section 22007 of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides \$2.2 billion in financial assistance for farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners who experienced discrimination in USDA's farm lending programs prior to January 1, 2021. The application process is open from **July 7–October 31, 2023**. Extensions will not be accepted. Applications for this program are **free**. The program **does not require a lawyer**, and **program staff are available to provide free help**. Visit [www.22007apply.gov](http://www.22007apply.gov) to find out more information regarding this program and locate available assistance in your area.

**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.

**County Committee Elections.** Ballots for this year's election will be mailed to eligible voters **November 6, 2023**. Contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) to verify your eligibility to ensure your ballot is received on time. For more information on the election, election timeline, and frequently asked questions, click [here](#).

**USDA is accepting applications for the Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP).** The application deadline is **October 31, 2023**. OCCSP provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the [National Organic Program \(NOP\)](#). To learn more about this program and how to apply, click [here](#).

**USDA's Risk Management Agency's Risk Management Protection Insurance** has been expanded for corn and soybean producers in more than a thousand additional counties. The insurance plan provides coverage against an unexpected decrease in operating margin caused by reduced county yields, reduced commodity prices, increased prices of certain inputs, or any combination of these perils. The Sales Closing Date to purchase Margin Protection coverage for 2024 crop year corn, soybeans and wheat is **September 30, 2023**. Click [here](#) to learn more about the protection plan. A list of frequently asked questions regarding the Margin Protection can also be found [here](#).

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## FARMER RESOURCES

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

**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](#). *Please note that August's monthly report will be released on August 11, 2023.*

**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](#).

**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 (Growing Equity Partnership):** American Farmland Trust (AFT), Black Family Land Trust (BFLT), and The Carrot Project (TCP) are excited to announce the application period for the Growing Equity Partnership. This project, funded through USDA-NIFA, is intended to improve the successful participation of underserved producers across the nation in USDA programs and services by increasing the quality and quantity of business technical assistance (BTA) provided to them. Application deadline is **August 31, 2023**. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

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## FARMER RESOURCES

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### **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](#).

### **Employment Opportunities:**

#### **Soul Fire Farm Institute: Senior Managing Director**

Soul Fire Farm is searching for a dynamic leader with a passion for the environment and facilitating healthy organizational culture to serve as Senior Managing Director. Join an influential, mission-driven team to create a more just and sustainable food system for all. Click [here](#) for more information on the role and to apply.

#### **The Nature Conservancy: Regenerative Crop Systems Director**

The North America Agriculture Program of Nature Conservancy is seeking a Regenerative Crop Systems Director. The director will play a crucial role in expanding the implementation of regenerative farming programs across North America. Click [here](#) to learn more about this opportunity.

#### **The Soil Health Institute Internship Program**

The Soil Health Institute will begin accepting applications for its 2024 internship program on **October 1, 2023**. The program is designed for students interested in soil health, regenerative agriculture, agricultural economics, and technology. Click [here](#) for more information on this program and to apply.

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### WANT TO MAKE A DONATION?



Scan the above QR code or click [here](#) to make a financial contribution to our organization.

Your support is greatly appreciated!

If you would like to be featured in an issue of The Minority AgVocate™, please [complete this form](#)

**OR**

send us an email at [info@freedmenheirs.org](mailto:info@freedmenheirs.org).

We would love to connect with you!

### NOMINATE AN AGRIPRENEUR

**If you know someone deserving of recognition, nominate them to be featured by [completing this form](#).**

VISIT US ONLINE AT:

[WWW.FREEDMENHEIRS.ORG](http://WWW.FREEDMENHEIRS.ORG)

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