

Minutes for the USDA Advisory Committee on Minority Farmers October 7, 2020

Members in Attendance: Harvey Reed, William Miller, Dr. Dewayne Goldmon, Dr. Duncan Chembezi, Dr. Claude Evans, Carolyn Jones, Kimberly Ratcliff, Arnetta Cotton, Antonio Harris, Delmer Stamps, Michelle Cruz, Lois Kim, Ivan Howard, Dr. Elsa Sanchez, Cary M. Junior

Welcome was given by the Designated Federal Office, Eston Williams. Part of the welcome included introducing all committee members stating their name and location.

I introduced Mike Beatty Director, USDA Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement and he provided greetings.

I also introduced the Committee Chair, Harvey Reed and he provided input from the Chair perspective.

After the welcome and introductions, we began to have USDA Agency Briefing.

The first speaker was Deputy Director for the USDA OPPE, Jacqueline Davis Slay with an USDA Agency Briefing. Jacky spoke on bringing the resources to the farmers and ranchers and the entire customer base of United States Department of Agriculture.

Kenya Nicholas, Program Director for the USDA OPPE 2501 Program provided input on how to increase the outreach and participation amongst our socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers.

Frank M. Wood, Director for USDA National Appeals Division spoke to how the National Appeals Division is a program service where they provide free appeals processes for all farmers and ranchers who receive what they call adverse decisions from the FSA, the NRCS, the RMA, and Rural Development.

Bill Ashton, Military Veterans Agricultural Liaison for USDA OPPE, share with committee of the various groups he works with including the youth programs, faith-based groups, MVAL special interest Asian Pacific Islanders, New and Beginning Farmers' Advisory Committee, Women in Ag, Farmers Workforce and picking up on the reviewing of the Farm Bill when it comes out.

Steve Peterson, Associate Administrator for USDA Farm Service Agency provided updates of FSA program and benefits. He shared the Farm Service Agency provides a wide array of services to our customers nationwide, whether it be farm programs that are also authorized by Congress or established by the Secretary or President or farm loan programs, where we may be supporting producers either through direct or guaranteed loans.

Jenifer Dougherty, Audit Program Coordinator Specialty Crops Inspection Division, and Audit Services branch for USDA Agricultural Marketing Service. She shared a general overview of the services that the Agricultural Marketing Services provides with a focus on USDA's Good Agricultural Practice or GAP Audit.

Stephen Vaden, General Counsel for the USDA Office of the General Counsel, Civil Rights, Labor and Employment. He spoke to providing legal services to the Secretary and officials at all levels of the department. This includes program and litigation support to the department's 19 agencies and they also work with members of Congress to help with technical support concerning the programs and activities that are carried out by the department.

Chad Parker, Deputy Administrator for USDA Rural Development. He shared they can build a rural community from the ground up. They have broad set of program and multiple agencies, the telecommunications programs, the electric programs, the community facilities programs, water and environmental programs, business and cooperative programs, our single-family housing programs, and our multifamily housing programs.

After the completion of Chad Parkers presentation, the agenda calls for a break. We had some time left before the break and Eston Williams read a comment to the group submitted from the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, October 6th, 2020.

A break was provided at 2:45 PM and asked everyone to return at 3:00 PM.

The meeting resumed at 3:00 PM.

Sean Patrick, Deputy Director for USDA Risk Management Agency. He shared USDA created the Risk Management Agency back in the '90's to oversee Federal Crop Insurance, as well as Risk Management education and outreach. RMA develops and oversees the policies, ensures the integrity of the program, and provides customer service to producers and stakeholders nationwide through our regional offices and through great conferences like the ones we're having today.

Kevin Norton, Acting Chief for USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. He informed the listeners NRCS USDA is the private lands conservation agency. Our mission is to deliver conservation solutions so agriculture producers can protect natural resources and feed a growing world. Our vision is a world of cleaner and abundant water, healthy soils, resilient landscapes, and a thriving agriculture community through voluntary conservation.

John Crockett, Associate Deputy Chief for the USDA Forest Service. John shared you need trees in order to be able to develop the country and the Forest Service served in that role as providing trees as a commodity for a growing country. He also shared the mission is just to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forest and grasslands to meet the needs of the present and future generations. They are broken into three primary deputy areas. They have a research and development deputy area that's grounded in world-class science and technology and they use that science to help inform a lot of their management actions on the ground. In addition, they have national forest systems, and this tends to be like the face of the Forest Service.

Brent Elrod, National Leader -Community and Rural Development for USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture. Brent informed everyone the National Institute of Food and Agriculture is the lead federal agency providing extra mural funding for food and agricultural sciences. That total funding is approaching 1.8 billion with a B in terms of our Fiscal Year 20 budget. That includes both competitive and capacity funds to meet our mission of providing agricultural research, education, and extension.

Eston resumed with the public comments and read a letter from Congress of United States to Mike Beatty, Director, Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

Eston read comments to the public from Sharleen O. JeanBaptiste.

Eston read comments to the public from Ximena Bustillo.

Speaker Ike Mills provided comments, "I'm executive director for the Texas Agroforestry, Small Farmers and Ranchers located in Nacogdoches, Texas. I'm also former a Minority Farmers Advisory Committee member, and also worked on the civil rights subcommittee as well".

Eston provided more comments from Sharleen O. JeanBaptiste.

Speaker Johnson provided comments about a Forest farm in Liberty, Mississippi.

Eston provide comments from Romes Antonio.

Eston read another comment from Sharleen O. JeanBatiste.

Sherry Lassie from Tulsa, Oklahoma commented on all the information she had gathered from the meeting.

David Taylor, a retired disabled veteran. He commented, "he was wondering would we have an assigned person to handle through the USDA local office, as far as the tools and the resources and the training to get acclimated with the program"?

Eston reiterate the email address for public comment. It is ACMF@usda.gov.

Chairman Harvey Reed thank the DFO and the Committee members. He spoke to the public briefly about the work of the committee and what to be expected.

Designated Federal Officer Eston Williams say his thanks to all participated and adjourned the meeting.



Designated Federal Officers
Date: December 2, 2020



Date: December 1, 2020