

We are a group of 5 BIPOC farmers who recently started a diversified farm in Schoharie County. We are writing in support of the 9 Solutions proposed by the Black Farmers United NYS.

Black Farmers United NYS 9 Solutions for Racial Inequity in New York Agriculture In 2019, Black Farmers United NYS, a group of over 40 Black farmers and food systems actors, developed these 9 solutions for racial inequity in New York agriculture. These initial solutions build on the collective successes and challenges of Black-centered initiatives. Moreover, they are informed by our collective knowledge of the missteps of white-led organizations “serving” Black farmers. We must shift the decision-making power and resources needed to design and implement these solutions to Black people and organizations, and ensure they are not co-opted by white-led institutions. The initial solutions include:

SOLUTION #1: Pathways for Black guestworkers, migrant workers, and undocumented farmworkers to become business-owning “producers.”

SOLUTION #2: \$10 million for Black farmers through the Black Farmer Fund, a nonprofit investment vehicle collectively led by Black farmers for Black farms and food businesses in New York State including food, forage, hemp, fiber, livestock and related enterprises.

SOLUTION #3: 400 acres to the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust, which provides affordable land access to Indigenous and Black farmers and earthkeepers.

SOLUTION #4: Create a certificate program at Cornell with experienced Black farmers teaching new Black farmers on their farms with salaries and scholarships provided by the University.

SOLUTION #5: Funds for Black-led urban farms. Create easier pathways and priorities for urban farmers to access empty lots. Permanently protect urban farms with conservation easements. Support Black farmers in building an urban-to-rural pipeline for growers.

SOLUTION #6: Ensure Black people are included as “Farmland for a New Generation New York” navigators.

SOLUTION #7: Provide full scholarships to all Black students pursuing SUNY agricultural degrees.

SOLUTION #8: Improve data collection to identify who and where our state’s Black farmers are.

SOLUTION #9: Combine and refine these solutions to create a comprehensive plan to increase the number of Black farmers in New York State who are thriving.