URBAN AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING
AUGUST 1, 2023 | 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM ET
ZOOM FOR GOVERNMENT

MEETING MINUTES

The Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee (UAIPAC) is established by section 12302 of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill), Public Law 115-334, 7 U.S.C. § 6923(b)(1), to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on the development of policies and outreach relating to urban, indoor, and other emerging agriculture production practices; and other aspects of the implementation of that section of the Farm Bill. This Federal advisory committee operates in compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended.

In accordance with the provisions of Public Law 92-463, the UAIPAC was convened for its sixth public meeting on August 1, 2023, from 3:00 P.M. to 6:00 P.M. The meeting was open to the public and held fully virtually via Zoom webinar.

A *Federal Register* notice was published on July 3, 2023, providing general information and public participation details for the meeting. Secondary notices were also sent out to the public directly by the agency.

Committee web page: https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag

General inquiries: UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov

ACRONYMS

- **DFO** – Designated Federal Officer
- **FSA** – Farm Service Agency
- **NRCS** – Natural Resources Conservation Service
- **OUAIP** – Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
- **UAIPAC** – Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee
- **USDA** – United States Department of Agriculture

MEETING AGENDA

Item #	Topic
1.	Welcome & Attendance
2.	Opening Remarks
3.	Addressing Public Comments
4.	Deliberation/Voting
5.	Closing Remarks

MEETING ATTENDENCE

Committee Members			
Name	**Represented Industry**	**Present**	**Attendance Type**
Allison Papp	Financial Entity	✓	Virtual
Angie Mason (Chairperson)	Related Experience	✓	Virtual
Bobby L. Wilson	Urban Production	✓	Virtual
Carl P. Wallace	Non-Profit	✓	Virtual
Jerry Ann Hebron	Urban Production	✓	Virtual
John Erwin	Higher Education	✓	Virtual
John Lebeaux	Business/Economic Development	✓	Virtual
Kaben Smallwood	Innovative Production	✓	Virtual
Sally Brown	Higher Education	✓	Virtual
Tara Chadwick (Co-Chairperson)	Related Experience	✓	Virtual
Viraj Puri	Innovative Production	☒	
Zachari Curtis	Food Supply Chain	✓	Virtual

USDA Staff	
Name	**Position/Title**
Brian Guse	Director/Designated Federal Officer
Markus Holliday	Coordinator

The general public attendance list can be found here.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment period was open from July 3, 2023 to August 15, 2023. Written comments can be viewed here: https://www.regulations.gov/docket/NRCS-2023-0014/comments. Comments are reviewed and may be considered for further discussion at a future public meeting. Oral comments were not accepted for this meeting.

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome and Attendance

Markus Holliday (Coordinator) welcomed and thanked everyone for joining. He also took attendance of committee members to ensure the meeting had a quorum.

Opening Remarks

Brian Guse (DFO) called the meeting to order and proceeded to go over the meeting agenda and provide an overview of the purpose and priorities of the UAIPAC.

Addressing Public Comments

- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** thanked the attendees for public comments submitted and acknowledged that the comments regarding land access and technical support have been insightful.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** thanked the public for providing written comments and acknowledged the importance of having feedback to help form recommendations.

Deliberation/Voting

Note: See slides in the Zoom meeting recording for full recommendations.

Brian Guse (DFO) provided an overview of deliberation and voting ground rules.

Proposed Recommendation #6: Surplus Food Recovery

Expand the potential for fresh food recovery and donation by urban farms, community gardens and the local community through expanded gleaning, fruit tree plantings, availability of refrigeration and better communication options between local growers and food donation centers.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation. Commented that the public comments received stress the importance of food gleaning.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #7: Compostable Food Packaging Standards

Encourage the development of clear standards for compostable packaging and incentivize the use of compost to increase the potential for success of municipal food scrap composting programs.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation. Questioned if the recommendation could include technical assistance for small scale composting and consumers.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** responded that recommendation #7 and #8 should address the concerns between the two recommendations.
- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** requested more information regarding how USDA would incentivize compost donations.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** responded that USDA has used incentives with the EQIP program for example. USDA would be relied on for their expertise to determine the specific incentives for use in urban areas.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented that compostable food packaging will help increase the amount of compost available.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** Responded this also increases the quality of compost in addition to the amount of compost available.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #8: Food Scrap Composting

Expand composting of food scraps by individuals, community composters and municipalities.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** commented to express his appreciation for the recommendation which prevents food from ending up in landfills and the added benefit of preventing climate change.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented to thank Sally for integrating all comments from the previous meeting to finalize this recommendation.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #9: Innovative Use of Residential and Commercial Food Waste

Research potential uses of dehydrated municipal and commercial food waste as animal feed.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** commented from an aquaponics perspective, this recommendation would offset inputs that are currently used for fish feeds and added benefits from recycling food nutrients. Insects used in aquaponics could consume the byproducts as well.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented that her colleagues at Miramar Community Garden highly requested USDA program for home scale food scrap composters.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Note: *A 10-minute administrative break was taken approximately one hour into the meeting. After the break the committee continued deliberations starting with recommendation #10.*

Proposed Recommendation #10: Zoning

To dismantle regulatory hurdles and provide resources to state and municipal governments, and to avoid duplicative efforts for them, we recommend that the USDA research, and publish generic but comprehensive recommendations relative to municipal zoning and building codes and how they intersect with Urban Agriculture. These recommendations may be used by local and state governments to amend their codes to allow for different applications for urban agriculture.

- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented that this recommendation has been discussed at length and shared her perspective that this recommendation helps to address concerns raised regarding zoning challenges within urban agriculture.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented that policymakers struggle with developing policy around urban agriculture because they must create policy from scratch and in many cases the policy has already been made elsewhere.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** requested an amendment be made to add the term "innovative production" to the recommendation.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** acknowledged the amendment and expressed her interest in calling the recommendation to a vote.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** moved the recommendation to a vote.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** seconded the motion.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #11: Intergovernmental Information Sharing

Create a one stop national database of all known existing Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production programs at federal, state, and local levels. USDA would create and manage a web-based platform to serve as a centralized compendium of existing national urban agriculture support programming. Platform is not to be static, but a living document.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented that this recommendation is similar to recommendation #1 which recommended USDA create a public online database with a list of programs for funding incentives and support to urban farmers and innovative

producers with verbiage that is culturally and linguistically appropriate. Requested reopening recommendation #1 and adding the description of recommendation #11 to the body of the description of recommendation #1 to eliminate confusion.

- ***Jerry Hebron (Member)*** responded she would have no objection and that combining the recommendations would be comprehensive.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** responded to ask if the committee members would like her to read through the description and the bullet points of recommendation #1 for comparison.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** responded that she did read through the recommendation and that the bullet points are distinct enough to add the entire recommendation #11 to recommendation #1.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** responded asking for Brian Guse's advice on whether it would be best to have two recommendations that are similar or one condensed recommendation.
- ***Brian Guse (DFO)*** responded that because these recommendations have not yet been reported to the secretary, the committee could still amend the recommendations.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded noting the difference in the title of each recommendation. He recommended the title could be revised to include the verbiage "public database for grant and funding programs and intergovernmental information sharing".
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** responded with recommendation it would be easier to vote on the recommendation as is, then merge both recommendations.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** proposed voting on recommendation #11 and then voting on combining the two recommendations or leaving as a standalone recommendation.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** requested tabling the recommendation for further discussion and added that recommendation #1 has already been passed.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented the committee articulated the differences in the two recommendations well and recommended calling the recommendation to a vote.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** seconded the motion.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** questioned if the intergovernmental sharing database would be available to the public.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded to confirm with a "yes" response.
- ***Tara Chadwick*** requested adding the word "public" to the recommendation.

- ***John Lebeaux*** responded adding the word public would eliminate any questions.
- ***Brian Guse (DFO)*** recommended the phrasing be "create a one stop publicly available national database".
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** concurred with recommendation.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** concurred with recommendation.
- ***Brian Guse (DFO)*** proceeded with calling the recommendation to a vote.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #12: Access to Capital

To increase producers' access to capital, we recommend that USDA model an Urban Agriculture Block Grant Program after USDA AMS' Specialty Crop Block Grant (SCBG) program.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation. Questioned how we define individual operations and does it include nonprofit organizations.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** proposed the verbiage include for profit and non-profit organizations.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** expressed her appreciation for amending the verbiage to include both types of organizations.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that producers with a FSA farm number should be eligible to participate in the grant program as well as all USDA programs.
- ***Jerry Hebron (Member)*** commented she agrees with Bobbys comment on eligibility once a farm number has been established.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** requested the verbiage be amended to include farm number.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** commented that requiring a farm number for grant program eligibility could pose a barrier.

- ***Jerry Hebron (Member)*** responded obtaining a farm number should be part of the solution and not prevent farmers from accessing the grant programs. She commented her community is advocating for producers to obtain a farm number.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented to stress the importance of obtaining a farm number.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** proposed amending the verbiage to be more inclusive of for profit and nonprofit organizations, individuals and established farms.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** commented to reiterate his concerns for requiring a farm number and the potential access barriers to the proposed grant program.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** questioned if the verbiage allowed for the term Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production and if SCBG should be excluded.
- ***Carl Wallace (Member)*** commented in support of John's amendment.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** commented in support of John's amendment.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that systematic change will be required to include non-profit organizations in funding programs and block grant funds have typically been controlled by one political party.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented in response to Bobby Wilson to add that his point is valid and that the goal of the recommendation is not to limit but expand access.
- ***Carl Wallace (Member)*** commented that nationwide access to block grant money has been nearly unobtainable for underserved communities.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that most urban producers do no have a farm and tract number but having a farm number is the most effective way to measure the impact we are having in urban areas.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** thanked Bobby for his comment.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** responded to Bobby Wilson's comment to propose a separate recommendation in the future specifically for establishing farm and tract numbers.
- ***Jerry Hebron (Member)*** responded to Tara's request in support of a separate recommendation.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** thanked everyone for their comments and expressed her interest in calling the recommendation to a vote.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** moved the recommendation to a vote.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** seconded the motion.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Note: *A 10-minute administrative break was taken approximately one hour into the meeting. After the break the committee continued deliberations starting with recommendation #10.*

Proposed Recommendation #13: Access to Land-Easement

To increase access to urban agriculture farmland, we recommend USDA model and Urban Agriculture Land Easement program after the NRCA Land Easements (ALE) program. USDA will establish a program by which non-agricultural development rights are purchased by it, allowing the property to be marketed at its agricultural value, making it affordable to urban farmers.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** questioned if the recommendation allowed for city governments or park systems to be able to purchase property if it is explicitly dedicated to farming.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded that the purpose of recommendation is to make urban agriculture properties more affordable and that this method could be modeled easily.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented to express his support for this recommendation and to create a separate recommendation that includes support for city governments to purchase the properties where urban farmers may not have the resources.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** questioned if the recommendation supports valuing land for community gardens similar to New York City.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded to Sally Brown's comment and stated that the recommendation was created to support production agriculture but including language for

community gardens is a good idea. This recommendation would make land more affordable to urban and innovative producers.

- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** responded that the recommendation is related to privately owned land and that the landowner would have an incentive to allocate the land for agricultural use.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** recommended adding Allisons response to the recommendation.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** raised concerns that the recommendation may inadvertently exclude municipalities from purchasing the land and maintaining community gardens.
- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** responded that community gardens would be allowed and that the recommendation is limiting the amount of development and subdivision allowed on the property which would be impact the market value of the land. She added this creates lower cost and more accessibility to producers.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** commented that this recommendation is similar to the working farm fund that conservation fund administers.
- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** responded to confirm with a "yes" response. She added this would be mirrored closely to the conservation easements.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** questioned if the recommendation suggests that USDA would be the purchaser of the development rights.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded to confirm with a "yes" response.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that the city of Atlanta has a low-cost lease program for vacant lots used for urban agricultural purposes. He added that California previously had a tax incentive program for landowners to allow other individuals to use the land for agricultural purposes. He suggested those policies may have verbiage that could be added to this recommendation.
- ***John Erwin (member)*** recommended having a separate proposal to include the city due to the complexities that Bobby Wilson mentioned. He stressed the importance of keeping the land in agricultural use once the land has been transferred to a park board or similar government entity to ensure the land is not redeveloped. He commented his support for keeping this recommendation as a standalone for private ownership easements.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** questioned if the recommendation suggests the government should purchase the land.

- ***John Erwin (Member)*** responded to Bobby Wilsons comment and clarified that the a subsidy is provided to land owners by USDA for selling property intended for agricultural use.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded to clarify the government is not purchasing the land. The title would remain with the landowner. The owner would voluntarily agree to sell the non-agricultural development rights. The purchaser of the property would be unable to develop the land.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** questioned who compensates the landowner for the difference in commercial value and agricultural value.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** responded that USDA would provide a subsidy for the difference in value.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member***) commented to express his support for voting on this recommendation as is and proposing a separate recommendation for government entities.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** questioned if language should be added to include the intent of private ownership.
- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** responded in support of adding private ownership verbiage.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** commented in South Florida landowners have been leasing their land to farmers historically, but now land owners are stopping the leasing process for development. She questioned if this agreement could be amended and help prevent changing the use of property from agricultural to commercial, residential etc.
- ***Allison Paap (Member)*** responded that the easement would have a binding effect to keep the land available for agricultural purposes. USDA would then compensate the landowner for the value difference. The designer of the easement program would have the discretion to determine the length of the agreement. She suggested tabling the recommendation if the committee wanted to recommend the specific terms of the easement.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (member)*** questioned whether or not the easement will run away with the property and remain in agricultural use.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented the Conservation Stewardship Program allows for producers to back out of the contract after ten years, but the funds received through the program must be paid back by the purchaser of the land or the producer. He added it

would be difficult to make the easement indefinite with no room for amendments. He also expressed concerns for the individual producer if they needed to sell the property.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** clarified that this easement would go into the deed of the land. He added the secretary could adjust the recommendation and suggested the committee provide strategic concepts instead of details.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** thanked everyone for their comments and expressed her interest in calling the recommendation to a vote.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** moved the recommendation to a vote.
- ***Jerry Hebron (Member)*** seconded the motion.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** clarified that the verbiage would be changed to clarify USDA would be the purchaser of the agricultural rights.
- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** agreed with the verbiage change.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #14: Access to Land-Federal Land Leasing

In order to increase access to urban agriculture farmland, we recommend USDA identify and make available appropriate federally held lands in urban locations for long term lease opportunities for urban farmers.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** requested an amendment to add innovative producers to the recommendation.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented to express his support for the addition of innovative producers. He added that Minneapolis had federally held land that was appropriate for agricultural use but was never used or made available.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** commented in response to John Erwins comment to express similar sentiment.

- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented in addition to the land being available, the government needs to provide the infrastructure for the farm to be successful such as well and irrigation installation.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** commented to agree with Bobby Wilsons comment and expressed her interest adding the term innovative producers and in calling the recommendation to a vote.
- ***Kaben Smallwood (Member)*** seconded the motion.

FINAL RESULT: With no additional comments from other members, the recommendation was moved to a vote and passed by simple majority.

Proposed Recommendation #15: Access to Technical Assistance

To increase producers' access to technical assistance, we recommend that USDA fund urban ag positions in each state either in the USDA Urban Service Center, USDA state office, or in an Extension Program at a state land grant university.

- ***John Lebeaux (Member)*** presented the recommendation and provided background information.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** opened the floor for deliberation.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** requested an amendment to add innovative producers to the recommendation.
- ***Angie Mason (Chair)*** concurred with Tara's requested amendment.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** requested an amendment for distinguishing growing in soil and innovative production. She questioned where expertise should come from whether that is land grant universities, by region, or USDA offices in each city.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that NRCS and FSA employees do not typically have the skillset that farmers have. He suggested the USDA employees receive training from producers at their farms.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** requested that the recommendation include verbiage for urban ag extension specialists in response to Sally Browns previous comment.

- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** thanked John Erwin for the requested amendment. She also expressed concerns that USDA does not have adequate expertise to staff the positions. She added that hands on training as Bobby Wilson suggested would be beneficial to the staff.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented he agreed with the Sally Browns suggestions but expressed concerns that the recommendation may cause micromanagement.
- ***Bobby Wilson (Member)*** commented that the cooperative extension service has historically failed the black community.
- ***Sally Brown (Member)*** suggested the recommendation be tabled for further discussion.
- ***John Erwin (Member)*** commented agreeing with Bobby Wilsons concerns an recommended a separate recommendation be made to address the failing of the extension system. He also expressed interest in tabling the recommendation for further discussion.
- ***Tara Chadwick (Co-Chair)*** seconded the motion to table for further discussion.

FINAL RESULT: tabled for further discussion.

Closing Remarks

Brian Guse (DFO) thanked the committee members and the public for their participation. He also acknowledged the comments submitted via Zoom chat during the meeting and followed-up by reiterating the instructions for the public to provide written comments/statements. He also announced the planned nomination period for future member vacancies and provided instructions on how to obtain additional information through www.usda.gov/urban.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 6:00 P.M ET.

I herby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the foregoing minutes are accurate and complete.

/s/
Brian Guse
Designated Federal Officer
Urban Agriculture and Innovative
Production Advisory Committee

/s/
Angie Mason
Chairperson
Urban Agriculture and Innovative
Production Advisory Committee