

FSA Dialogue Transcript – No corresponding presentation

Zach Ducheneaux, Administrator, Farm Service Agency and Marcus Graham Deputy Administrator Field Operations

Chair Reed: Thank you everyone for joining back up even after our break and [inaudible 01:46:01] just make any telephone radio resolve so we can hear everything and just that will do it at this time I'll like to introduce Mr Zack Ducheneaux who's the administrator for the Farm Service Agency, along with Mr. Marcus Graham, he's available and also Ms Calisia Hackett for service with the USDA Zack is with the Farm Service Agency. I think Marcus and Calisia here with the administrative side.

Calisia: With the Farm Service Agency in Arizona (present in the audience)

Ginger Sykes Co...: Is it on? Yeah, Ginger Sykes Corez here. I'm the state executive director for Arizona for the Farm Service Agency. Thank you.

Speaker 14: Thank you, thank you. Okay. Who's leading off this morning could be Mr. Graham or Mr. Ducheneaux?

Zack Ducheneaux: I'll go ahead and start and then pass it over to Marcus and we're, I think I speak for Marcus and the team when I say we're more interested in a dialogue than a presentation. Whatever we can offer in the form of replies to questions or responsive get back to questions you might have about the work you're focusing on here. That's what we would prefer to offer so that we're making the most of your time and your expertise as we solicit your advice on how to best improve what we do for the producers that we all serve together. I'm Zack Ducheneaux administrator at the Farm Service Agency. I've been here since February of 2021 and have really enjoyed the opportunity to engage meaningfully with a lot of our producers in the minority sector. As we contemplate the future of the Farm Service Agency, it's important that we continue to elevate this discourse.

We've run into significant challenges across the country as we do this. Not only resistance from those that feel as though equitably serving minorities will adversely impact them. But from our own court system when we try to do some meaningful substantive changes to our programs or to account for the historical treatment of minority folks. I'm going to try to keep my comments brief. I'll hit the high points of what we're doing in this space to get some feedback from you all and then pass it off to Marcus for some comments. I know county committees are at the forefront of your mind and it's something that we continue to think about as well. So with respect to equity, for the first time ever in the administrator's office, we've got an equity officer who's helping us guide all of our deliberations. All of our program roll-outs, all of our outreach efforts through the lens of equity in with a lot of focus on equitably serving our

minority populations because those are the most underserved in our broader category of underserved producers.

Part of that initiative is also to have equity officers within each of our deputy areas. So that becomes a regular course of doing business as we contemplate the work of the agency at the national office. What's the minority perspective on this? How do we ensure that we're meeting people where they're at and how do we continue to improve and amplify the improvement in our efforts to equitably serve our minority producers? We echo the sentiment of the secretary as he announced the findings of the equity commission, acknowledging the fact that the FSA and the USDA have been party to discriminatory practices in the past.

And we truly believe that we can't start any of these conversations without first acknowledging that because if we continue to operate as though that's not happened, we're not going to be able to have meaningful conversations about how to improve our work in the future. I think those are the highlights that I'd like to touch on now before I pass off to Marcus, but then I would like to have a visit with you all and see if there's anything that we can answer for you as you deliberate your recommendations. Marcus.

Marcus Gaham: Thanks Zack. Good morning, good afternoon everybody. I'm Marcus Graham I serve as the deputy administrator for field operations. My job is primarily to oversee the operations of the Farm Service Agency. Within each state we have state executive directors and I know, I think I heard Ginger, she's there. I can when I first logged on, so sending my acknowledgements there to Ginger the state executive director out in our Arizona. But with that we have state executive directors in every state and Puerto Rico and basically our footprint is county offices in each county in most of all counties over 2100.

And we have those state executive directors that will oversee those, that staff out there. So again like Zack mentioned, I think a big part of us here today is to kind of hear your concerns and see if we can answer some of your questions. And my understanding is most of it is evolved around some of the county committee work and its existence and where we are with that. So be glad to take any questions, so feel free to kind of be open with us. We'll answer what we can, what we can't I'm sure we can go get some answers but thanks for being here.

Speaker 14: Okay, Calisia Hackett. She's with you all or she's not? Oh okay, no problem. So we are open to questions and be sure [inaudible 01:52:50] questions and really direct it with the seal of seen. Don't get me wrong because one of the main things is because we like to find out more about the systemic racism that has been there for a long time and what is being done to try to alleviate that in

some areas, then we could go into some direct point systematic racism. We have to understand that [inaudible 01:53:07] the field operation works yeah. How are you working with systemic racism in the 2100 offices that you switched how you're treating your customers?

Marcus Gaham: And I'm going to apologize. I'm trying to get my volume where I can hear clearly. If you can repeat the question if you wouldn't mind I'm trying to work on my volume.

Speaker 14: [inaudible 01:53:55] in your 2100 service around the country outside systemic racism?

Zack Ducheneaux: Marcus, I'll jump in here and then you can tag on. I think I caught the gist of the question, how are we working to deal with systemic racism in our 2100 county offices is the question that I understood. And there's a number of ways that we're doing that specific to the county committees. Marcus and his team are going through their annual process of reviewing representation on the county committees to make recommendations to the secretary to have voting members appointed to county committees where representation doesn't align with the minority or underserved populations there. In addition to that, we're working a lot on our receipt for service tool.

That's where a producer is entitled to get a receipt for service that acknowledges they came in and made a program inquiry that way there are some tracking and some accountability to help navigate the challenges that come with deadlines when programs don't have maybe the best outreach ever along with receipt for service. I've got a terrible habit of sharing the loopholes and the tricks that I learned when I was on the outside with every producer that we run into. We're all empowered as producers out here with an accountability tool through email or cooperators and one of the things that my friend Scott Marlow, who's the former deputy administrator for farm programs says is take a friend. We share with our producers, you're able to take a collaborator, take a third party into that office with you so that you've got an unbiased witness there to the treatment that you receive. Also, we can follow up in email with those county office staff and say, based on our conversation, this is my understanding, you told me I was ineligible for my Nubian goats for your ELAP program on this date at this time.

And you send that email to our staff with a cc to yourself, you've got your own record of accountability in case that staff member isn't feeling motivated to fully participate in our receipt for service process. We want to make sure producers know that they have the opportunity to engage in some of these accountability measures themselves while we work to address some of that from the process and policy standpoint to try to eliminate those barriers. I hope that helps guide

a little bit, but I think receipt for service is going to be a critical tool that we use in the future to continue to track accountability in our programs.

Arnera Cotton: Mr Ducheneaux, Zack.

Zack Ducheneaux: Yes.

Arnera Cotton: Is that correct, this is Arnera Cotton. Why do you keep employees who have several civil rights complaints against them, why move them around rather than dismissing them from service? Because they tend to continue to prolong or it's almost like it's in perpetuity, they're just going to be there until they're not and they spread the same culture in various offices of the same kind of behavior for which the civil rights complaints have been issued.

Zack Ducheneaux: While we contemplate the outcomes of civil rights complaints, we're really not able to take any action with regard to that particular employee or their evaluation. What we do offer as an alternative pathway, civil rights complaints are valid and should be given due consideration and have outcomes, but we have the good fortune right now of having an administrator's office with the phone number and email on the website where you can reach directly out to us. The challenge is during the pendency of a civil rights case, the producer may still go unserved. So our effort is to acknowledge that and make sure that we're trying to manage program implementation and help directly administer the programs where it's needed out there in the counties when we run into those pockets of resistance. As far as the staffing and the limitations that we have on dealing properly and effectively with staff, that those are things that we are given a set of rules within which we have to operate and would that we could operate more flexibly and fully in that regard.

Arnera Cotton: I do thank you for that answer and I do appreciate it but when they were, let's go be, take a step down from the actual civil rights. If in an email or some sort of other action, it has been documented that an employee had violated the standards that have been set for a particular county office? Aren't there, I know it's kind of like a parent saying, did you, well mommy, you got me, but you didn't get them. Are they saying are the consequences severe enough to mitigate the behavior?

Zack Ducheneaux: And apologies, the sound is still a little bit garbled, but Mike the way I'm taking the question, and you can wave your hand in there if I get this wrong. Is when we have effective documentation that civil rights violations are occurring, do we have the tools we need to properly deal with that employee and ensure there are consequences for that action?

Arnera Cotton: [inaudible 02:00:27] the claiming?

Zack Ducheneaux: Okay, yeah, so the short answer is yes. The long roundabout answer is the nature of federal employment and the protections that have been put in place for all employees. We have to make sure that we're cognizant of that and not opening the agency up to exposure from litigation and settlement by that very employee that engaged in the action that violated the rights of the producer. Again, those things take time and often times when we're trying to access programs, we don't have the luxury of time. When our producers find themselves confronted with that challenge, we encourage them to elevate the conversation through administrative processes or emailing the national office. We're aware and we can see to it that folks are getting administrative consideration for whatever they applied for, irrespective of the crappy treatment they received along-

Arnera Cotton: So-

Zack Ducheneaux: Yes?

Arnera Cotton: Am I understanding then I'm going to make sure that I understand you correctly, is that their status as a government employee is then more important or just as important than the person that they're treating crappily? So which am I going to protect the employee or am I'm going to protect the people that we are to be servicing? Am I hearing you that like attempt-

Zack Ducheneaux: No, no you're not that's not what I'm trying to communicate. What I'm trying to communicate that is that any consequence that would happen to an employee is probably going to take place after that producer's need has already lapsed and they missed out on the program so the discrimination or the crappy treatment was successful. What I'm trying to articulate is that while you take the steps that are necessary for getting that concern in the proper forum, make sure we continue to work on the administrative participation in the programs that brought you to the office to start with. And do so by elevating the concern to the state executive director or to myself or to Marcus. So that we can make sure that you're getting timely consideration of your program participation while we work to build the evidence, to build the case for dealing with the employee properly.

Harvey Rain: Next question for Mr. Graham. Harvey Rain, could you explain to this committee, how do you conduct a thorough investigation based upon what Ms. Cotton has said with an employee at a local office since you over 2100 offices, how do you conduct a thorough investigation and also how do you support the form of the client in regards to the investigation without throwing them under the bus to save an employee?

Marcus Gaham: I think I got most of it. I can hear Zack better than I can hear the group but I think I got it that you were asking about what Ms. Cotton mentioned about the process itself and if you could repeat the last part of it, Zack and if you hear the question better than I do just repeat it to me and I can answer it.

Harvey Rain: How do you conduct a thorough investigation at your 2100 offices around the country and outside the country?

Marcus Gaham: So I think I heard it. You know I want to start by this we come in as an administration and we have priorities and goals that we want to achieve and this goes on with every administration that comes in. With that I mentioned about how the hierarchy is. The hierarchy is basically, you know, you got a headquarter staff and then you have the state executive of directors and then you have managers and everything that's in place. Federal career employees that's already in place. With that you have rules and regulations and policies that, as Zack mentioned, that's catered or aligns with the federal employee just as a federal employee that's already in statute of how things work. Within that you have multiple organizations within the department. You have FSA which we supervise but we also have employment labor relations where certain cases go there. You have civil rights where certain cases go there.

To kind of get to your question, what I try to do and ensure is that our state executive directors first are aware if it's anything going on in those offices. Basically those are kind of our eyes and ears for the state and that's why we have executive directors out there. If it's anything that's of concern or an issue that comes up, technically it comes to the state executive director and it come with us. There we'll just take the action. If it falls in one of those categories as I mentioned, employee labor relations, civil rights or whatever, however it's identified, we try to handle it from there. But it depends on the situation, depends on what happens.

But as far as the ultimate overlooking and overseeing of ensuring that those counties are getting fair treatment when producers come in, when borrowers come in, whatever the case may be. That's overseeing at the state level and just pushed up if the concern can be handled there but it's a series of policies and processes in place to kind of handle those things. We do try to make a conscious effort to ensure what the administration wants to do and that is inclusion, diversity and some of the measures we have put in place and even when we made selections for state executive directors, we ensured that they were aligned with the administration. That's pretty much how the White House picks the state executive directors as well. I don't know if that helped answer you but hopefully it did. And if it didn't just let me know.

Arnera Cotton: No, Marcus, can I quickly, can I chime in Mr. Rain, I went into the office, and at the service center and when I walked in and asked for a copy of a particular form, the clerk or the person inside asked me who sent you in here? And I looked at them and I said and you want [inaudible 02:07:25] they said, who sent you in here? And I said, why are you making an assumption that I was sent?

I attend community meetings so when I find out that there's something I need to be doing, I follow through with it and she immediately apologized and then gave me the documentation that was needed but did not abdicate the fact that that encounter, she actually said that, you actually asked me that. And I've been there since the '80s, so if a person is doing that to me, who's been coming since the '80s and they haven't been there since the '80s when, and I can only assume and it could be wrong that they're doing it to other people [inaudible 02:08:20], what is the process to handle such confrontations or such language or such disrespect in an office? What is the process?

Marcus Gaham: Ms. Cotton so I heard most of it. Is totally unacceptable what I heard from of it. So let's start there we know it's unacceptable those cases are very, very unfortunate. Of course we don't accept, allow or anything from any employees with that kind of behavior so first apologies there. You know in any organization you have bad apples and that's one of the things that we have to, we try to identify and like I said that's one of the reasons why we bring in state executive directors in those states to kind of try to identify where those trends are, where those offices, where they've had some kind of repeated action like that. And in an individual case like that, if it's a concern to that level, raise it to the state executive director. I mean I think we have to act on those as we get them. We have a series of trainings and things that we do to individuals but sometimes and one time is too many employees step out of bounds with their actions and so all I can say is that's totally unacceptable.

I wouldn't want to be treated like that if I walked into the county office. I'm very familiar with the county offices by working with the agency for years. But as far as how that's handled it's just a chain of command. I would say if you had an immediate action reaction like that when you went to a county office or anybody does send it up to the state executive director. All state executive directors' information should be online where you can get a contact to the main office and they should be able to handle it from there. Zack, I don't know if you have anything else to say but-

Zack Ducheneaux: Yeah, couple things Marcus. Again we need a trail of accountability. When that happens, if you follow up with an email to that person and say, after you asked me who sent me in there, you provided me this form or you told me I was ineligible or whatever it is. Is that what you intended for me to take from this conversation? Email it to that person, copy yourself and then you've got an

administrative record of that interaction. They either have to walk it back on their official email or it's the record that we can go on. So we have to make sure that we're taking all of the opportunity we can to engage in our role to help hold those folks accountable. Because imagine you're a producer who maybe has been turned away three or four times or stiff armed in one way and this employee goes beyond that and you walk out and you never come back in our office.

We don't have a record of that unless we've got some form of accountability trail or you took your local cooperator or a neighbor in there with you just to ensure. And I understand that's a hell of a burden on all of us to do it. It's why we're making sure that we are putting additional resources out there in the countryside, in the form of cooperative agreements so that those cooperators can at no cost to you and at a schedule that's suitable to you go into that county office with you to help us ensure fair treatment from the first interaction.

Marcus Gaham: I want to add to what Zack said. Zack mentioned the receipt for service when he opened. And that's a critical piece for a lot of reasons. It's a receipt to show that service was done or not done. So if you come into that office, it should be some kind of trail, some kind of receipt showing that this is what I asked for and this is what happened. Now I know if it's just a general I walk in the office and I get bad behavior initially, it's hard to trace that. But I think that receipt for service that's kind of the purpose of having a receipt for service to show that service was supposed to be rendered and this was a result of it.

And it sets a trail for us to know that you know, you actually came in, you actually asked for something and you actually didn't get it or you got this kind of treatment. So I just wanted to kind of put that out there, the importance of receipt for service, not just because you actually had service, but even if it's not so. If you came in that office, it's service, it's service rendered. So just want to put that out there.

Delmar Stamps: I have a question.

Speaker 14: Go ahead.

Delmar Stamps: Hello, this is Delmar Stamps. I have a question for this subject being such a, I guess a hot subject. How many cases have you had rise to your level and if so, what part of country are you seeing these cases more frequently reported up?

Marcus Gaham: I don't have the data with me. I think to be frank I think we have, what we've seen in the past can probably be broken out into regional and regions. It might be regional issues and some of it, as we all know is systemic. Some of it has just been there for years or whatever the case is. So I don't have the data as far as how many can come up to me. A lot of them, to be honest, if you go through



that path with the state executive director, they can definitely handle it and reprimand at that level if it was some kind of bad behavior or treatment given. But I don't have the numbers as far as you know what and then as far as the concentration of where they happen, it's random but usually it's regional. I mean I would probably go out on a limb and say Southeast is typical for historically have had a lot of issues there. But unfortunately, like I said you have bad apples everywhere. So it happens across the countryside.

Speaker 14: Mr. Grant, go ahead.

Mr Grant: If we know that the southeast region has had a number of instances, what action have been taken to try to address that?

Marcus Gaham: Yeah, well I said Southeast historically. I mean I hadn't gotten those in but that was just my knowledge base of just knowing the department, knowing the agency. The measures we take in place is what we take in place. The general measures we take in place for trainings for county committees, whatever case is that this administration have taken in place. Increasing trainings, increasing awareness that these county committees and these programs are available. SEDs talking to their DDs, ensuring that all this information is available and then when things happen, reporting up through the DD, back to the SED on those cases, so various measures have been taken on generally of how we have to look at this from the whole nation, but those pretty much measures. And then like I said, if it's an incident where it's totally out of line, we move those to the appropriate areas, ELR, Employee and Labor Relations, or civil rights.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 02:16:32] executive director have corporate case that make hit their desks a complaint. Executive director, state director, the LCB, what authority do they have to cure a problem to handle a complaint before it gets to you?

Marcus Gaham: They have the authority to...

Again, it's policies in place already with the...

So, the different departments we have in place, ELR, whatever the case is, they have an authority to take certain actions with employees. Again, it's a process, so sometimes, that have to be ran through the Employment and Labor Relations or civil rights, but their immediate actions would be closely supervising that area, ensuring that there's no trend or if that was an isolated incident or whatever the case is. But the thing is, as a career employee, you have certain protections as an employee, and everything is basically appealable. And so, we just have to run that process. I will say the STDs that I got in place, most of them are just real on top of any of those issues and raise them, so we can make sure we handle them, so...

Authorities wouldn't be outside of what...

They couldn't just say, oh let me fire you for a month. Those processes are not in place, but they can definitely recommend, and they can definitely bring it to our attention.

Speaker 16: But one other aspect of that, the SED does have considerable authority in the delivery of programs, so while that complaint takes its time to be acted on to the question offered in the chat by Ms. Divinity, we don't want program eligibility to lapse. In the event that does happen, we do have equitable relief processes where if a person has been wrongfully treated or given bad information, and their program eligibility is adversely impacted, they can seek equitable relief from the national office, which would be equivalent to program participation. So, there are pathways, and that might be something for the advisory committee to take a look at. How do we fine tune that tool of equitable relief for our producers, so that they ensure they are able to participate in the programs despite the bad behavior that they may experience from employees?

Speaker 17: [inaudible 02:19:32] Earlier, you mentioned voting capability, our capacity, with the COC appointment. Is that really going to be a reality?

Speaker 16: I'll let Marcus weigh in on that, but I'll lead him into it. That's a reality every year since Secretary Vilsack's been here. But go ahead, Marcus. If you want to share a little bit about the process, how we establish that, and how it's different than the minority advisor?

Marcus Gaham: Oh, okay. I didn't catch all the question. Yeah, so basically, what we do with the county committee, and this has been placed in place for some years, we're assuring that it continues to happen. You have two different ways we look at the county committee to ensure that it's diverse and have representation for all pharma groups.

One is the minority advisor, and basically, how that's looking at the data of the particular county, the county committee, ensuring that the county committee has some representation of all groups in that county during the...

So basically, what you'll do, you'll have an election. Election process is in December. Once that election happens, data is taken to see if it's well-balanced, if you will, on the committee representation of producers in that county. And then, a minority advisor is put on board.

Further, with the other lane is the SDA appointed member, and that comes from the secretary, so the state committee basically reports and serves as a advisory board to the state for the SED. That committee, overall, can recommend minority advisors on county committees to ensure that it's a actual voting

member is on that county committee if that representation is not there. So, it's more fine details to how that's structured but that's put in place to ensure that it is diversity and representation in all the counties.

Speaker 17: So, it [inaudible 02:21:58] anyone who looks like me on our county committee for which I had done twice, and there's no way that I would ever plan [inaudible 02:22:07] appeal to the state director to see if we can appeal so that we can get someone who looks like us or represents us as a bully, a protein on the state committee, on the own accounting committee?

Marcus Gaham: Yes, I think I heard most of it. Yeah, so if you know go to accounting committee, you say, "You know what? I don't see any rep representation here." You can go to the state executive director, the state committee can look into that and recommend to the secretary when the cycle goes, when we're putting on state county committee members, they can go to that state committee and recommend a member to be on there for representation for that county committee. Again, that's in the cycle process, it's an annual process, and the secretary actually...

We formulate a list on their recommendations from the state committee, and the SED, and then we submit that up to the secretary for approval.

Speaker 17: And that's voting, not advisory. Correct?

Marcus Gaham: Yes, that's a voting member. So, these are secretary appointees. They're basically SDA appointments by the secretary, but that's they are voting members. The advisory is just, once you look at the data, it's nobody there. We need a minority advisor. What I just mentioned is actual voting members.

Delmer Stampson: This is Delmar. I'd like to follow up on that if the other route where the committee itself gets together and determine who that minority advisor would be. Is that my understanding?

Speaker 16: Yes, sir.

Marcus Gaham: Yeah.

Delmer Stampson: So, in that route there, we all know that's going to be a passive person that's going to pretty much go along with the go along, so that avenue there is a none go to start with.

Speaker 17: Yes.

Delmer Stampson: Okay. So, it seems to me, the state that saved the state committee should have the authority to look at the data and get recommendations from minority groups, not recommendation from majority group. So, that to myself think...

'Cause I know where I am. We just finally got a minority person on there, I think he's a voting person. But I do know the characteristics, and I know the characteristics of the majority group. They're not going to bring someone on that's going to seek equity, in my opinion, 'cause it historically hadn't happened. Thank you very much.

Speaker 16: So, what I'm hearing is that we need to work on how we select both voting and minority advisor positions...

Delmer Stampson: Exactly.

Speaker 16: ... And see if there's anything we can do to improve those processes. Thanks, Mr. Stampson. Thank you, ma'am. We'll definitely take a look at that. One of the tools that we have offered folks, either at their own home computer or with their cooperate, who will pay to bring a computer out there, is you can actually see where your local administrative area is now online.

For a long time, that map only existed in the office, and producers didn't have the ability to see where they reside and where they should target their efforts if they did want to try to muster some support to get themselves elected onto that county committee, so we're working on that. That's step one of understanding where those local administrative areas are.

The next step is overlaying where that representation is to see if there's a more granular approach that we can take to that, so I would encourage y'all to take a look at the local administrative area tool, and see if you have any suggestions that come after you see what your own respective local administrative area is based on racial representation in your counties.

Speaker 2: I did saw a question pop up on the screen about, how many paper of color are in your state directors? How many people of color are state directors?

Marcus Gaham: Yeah, I heard that one. I'm sorry, it really is off, but I heard it. How many state directors of color is it as state have been appointed?

Speaker 2: Yes. [inaudible 02:27:04].

Marcus Gaham: I would say it's historic number, way more...

And I would go off the record and let me give you the exact numbers. I would say...

Speaker 2: [inaudible 02:27:24].

Marcus Gaham: Yeah, I know, but...

Yeah, I got it.

Speaker 17: And so...

Marcus Gaham: A color would have to be 10 to 15, or 10 to 20. I would probably say 10 to 15. I'll have to give you the exact number. I'm trying to count them in my head.

Speaker 17: Okay, but he said people of color. Can I be more specific? How many are American?

Marcus Gaham: How many what?

Speaker 17: How many are African American?

Marcus Gaham: You have African American in Arkansas, one in Mississippi, one in Alabama, one in Virginia...

Speaker 17: Georgia.

Marcus Gaham: One in Louisiana.

Speaker 17: Someone said Geo...

Marcus Gaham: I'm sorry.

Speaker 17: Someone said Georgia here.

Marcus Gaham: And Georgia. I can't forget about Arthur Tripp. Yeah, so that's the African Americans we have.

Speaker 2: Okay, [inaudible 02:28:33].

Speaker 17: [Inaudible 02:28:33] just change. I wanted to change the topic just on new programming and the way some of the programming...

How can I say this?

... How you guys determine qualification on some of the programming. I've been working with some people in that community, and you have gross and adjusted income. Are you familiar with that side of it? And how some of our producers

use a lot of our income to do a lot of fertilizer, a lot of input. So, our gross and adjusted income are really drastically different.

So, my question to you is why can't we use adjusted income for some of this instead of gross income? I know this is a little different, but it's a problem with some of the producers in my community because a lot of our income is put right back into our productivity of our operation, and it can eliminate us sometimes when our gross income is high, but just income is low.

Speaker 16: That's a good question, and we can get back to you with more particulars, but we use...

Maybe you're speaking about ERP two?

Speaker 17: Right.

Speaker 16: The allowable gross income is what we use, and we can get you a definition on that so that it's clear what's included and what's not. We're doing our best to ensure flexibility and to accommodate the fact that the folks that we are trying to serve here in this cooperative effort with the advisory committee for minority farmers don't have the accumulated wealth to have a stockpile of money, so they're pouring that right back into their operation. It's similar in a lot of our underserved communities that we work with.

So, I'll get you a definition, and I'll offer that Marcus and I apologize for not being able to be there, but it does put us at a disadvantage of not having names for get backs. So, if the DFO there could make sure that when we get a question that we offer to get back to somebody, if we could get their name and email so we could share that with the DFO, the folks that ask the question and the committee read large so that we're being of the most use to you.

Speaker 17: We can do that.

Delmer Stampson: Thanks. I have another follow up, and I appreciate your you guys' time. I really do have a heck of a job. With the amount of increased funding coming in to USDA now for program, and with the interest with the focus on equity...

So, many of our producers still do not have computers, still do not have access to the internet. Can we not go back to at least getting a mail out to our producers about a program, at least once a quarter or once or something...

Maybe mean not every month, but that hard copy...

It's a amount of cost...

Speaker 16: Yeah.

Delmer Stampson: ... And the total cost of program implementation, so I think that in itself will show a lot of faith that you all have in doing what you're [inaudible 02:31:57] to do, getting the word out. The outreach people are doing a great job out there, but they can't do it all. That piece of paper come in black and white or whatever. What means a lot?

Speaker 16: You bet, Mr. Stampson. Let us know your specific county and state, and we can target some of those, 'cause we've got other places in the country where they'd rather have a text or an email or some other form...

Delmer Stampson: Right, right.

Speaker 16: ... But we want to make sure we're getting the right type of communication to folks as they prefer to receive it.

Delmer Stampson: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Speaker 16: Yes, sir.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 02:32:31] yourselves available [inaudible 02:32:36].

We're looking forward to having a good UFDA [inaudible 02:32:46] and got the administrator. We have the field operation person as well. So, I think you've given us some things to work on so we could put together our recommendations, but we may have to get back with you through an email or do some kind correspondence to clarify some things as well. Will you all be available to receive those things [inaudible 02:33:08] that we need? Okay. With that, I want thank you all for today, and our next thing is we get [inaudible 02:33:18], so thank you.

Delmer Stampson: Thank you very much.