

URBAN AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING

APRIL 10, 2024 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 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 ninth public meeting on April 10, 2024, from 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M (ET). The meeting was open to the public and held fully virtually via Zoom webinar.

A [Federal Register notice](#) was published on March 20, 2024, 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

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ACRONYMS

- **CEA** – Controlled Environment Agriculture
- **DFO** – Designated Federal Officer
- **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.	Address Public Comments
4.	Deliberation/Voting on Proposed Recommendations
5.	Closing Remarks

MEETING ATTENDANCE

UAIPAC Members			
Name	Represented Industry	Attendance	Attendance Type
Allison Papp	Financial Entity	Present	Virtual
Angie Mason	Related Experience	Present	Virtual
Ted Fang	Urban Production	Present	Virtual
Carl P. Wallace	Non-Profit Entity	Present	Virtual
Jerry Ann Hebron	Urban Production	Present	
John Erwin	Higher Education/Extension	Present	Virtual
Kate Greenberg	Business/Economic Development	Present	Virtual
Kaben Smallwood (Chairperson)	Innovative Production	Present	Virtual
Jeff Young	Higher Education/Extension	Present	Virtual
Qiana Mickie (Co-Chairperson)	Related Experience	Present	Virtual
Viraj Puri	Innovative Production	Absent	N/A
Zachari Curtis	Food Supply Chain	Present	Virtual

For a full list of member biographies visit: <https://www.usda.gov/partnerships/federal-advisory-committee-urban-ag/members>

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

To request a copy of the general audience attendance list contact:

UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment period was open from March 20, 2024 to April 24, 2024. Formal written comments were accepted via email (UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov) and informal comments were also accepted during the public meeting via Zoom Q&A. All comments that align with the statutory purpose and duties of UAIPAC are reviewed and may be considered for further discussion at a future public meeting.

Oral comments were not accepted for this meeting.

MEETING RECORDING

To request a copy of the meeting recording contact:

UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov.

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 before introducing the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) for opening remarks.

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 Committee. He also provided an overview of the public comment process before introducing the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson to address public comments.

Addressing Public Comments

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) and Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) acknowledged previously received written comments regarding the impacts of electricity use and failures for urban and innovative production agriculture practices. Their remarks expanded on how a new type of insurance may be needed for Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) producers who suffer from crop loss due to electricity failure.

Deliberation/Voting

Brian Guse (DFO) provided an overview of the deliberation and voting ground rules before re-introducing the Chairperson and Co-Chairperson to lead the full Committee into their deliberation on the proposed recommendation topic.

Proposed Recommendation #5: Land-Grant Universities – Invest in Research, Extension and Education in Urban and Innovative Production

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) provide capacity and grant funding to Land-grant Universities for updated curriculum design, materials development, faculty development, student recruitment and retention and Extension program development support for urban, innovative and Controlled Environment Agriculture (CEA) agricultural production.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) provided background information from the last public meeting held on January 31, 2024, which was the first time the Committee presented and deliberated on the recommendation. He reminded everyone that the recommendation was amended by a simply majority vote to remove “1890” from the title and body of the originally proposed recommendation and add “capacity and grant” for funding.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) presented to the proposed recommendation and opened the floor for deliberation.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) responded to a question received by a public participant via Zoom Q&A regarding why “1890” was removed, by stating the reason was to broaden the recommendation.

John Erwin (Member) provided remarks supporting the amended recommendation for the purpose of supporting all Land-grant Universities covered in each state without limitations. He also gave remarks supporting the amended change to add capacity and grant funding due to many institutions not having facilities for teaching and research purposes.

Jeff Young (Member) provided remarks supporting the amended recommendation by stating Land-grant Universities (in general) are not equipped to address the needs of urban agriculturalist to the extent necessary and additional funding would help support better design and curriculum for urban agriculture and innovative production practices that are not standardized.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) provided remarks supporting the amended recommendation and echoed earlier remarks from other members. She also added that the broader nature of the recommendation would help better support recruitment efforts at Land-grant Universities.

Kate Greenberg (Member) provided remarks supporting the amended recommendation and offered the opportunity for the Committee to further explore the needs of non-Land-grant Universities as a means to support institutions and individuals who may be excluded from the amended recommendation, as written.

Angie Mason (Member) motioned to bring the recommendation to a vote.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) acknowledged additional members waiting to provide comments before proceeding with any formal motions to vote on the recommendation.

Zachari Curtis (Member) provided remarks pertaining to the intention of the original recommendation and to address previous comments made about the exclusion of certain institutions and/or individuals. She acknowledged that 1890 Land-grant Universities were established under conditions of legal segregation and their current budgets as it relates to approvals and denials on a Federal and state level reflect a structural inequality. She also encouraged the Committee to put more thought into addressing the institutions and/or individuals who may be excluded.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) acknowledged Zachari's comments and offered to assist in drafting new proposed recommendation(s) to address the inadequacies that were mentioned.

Jeff Young (Member) acknowledged and agreed with Zachari's comments. He also mentioned that not all states have 1890 Land-grant Universities and moving forward with the original recommendation as written, would have excluded many states from possible funding opportunities.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) motioned to vote on the recommendation, as amended.

Brian Guse (DFO) asked for a second motion and received multiple.

FINAL RESULT:

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

Proposed Recommendation #6: Amend NRCS High Tunnel Initiative

Include innovative production techniques including but not limited to aeroponics, hydroponics, and aquaponics as allowable styles of agricultural for the NRCS High Tunnel Initiative.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) presented the recommendation and opened the floor for deliberations.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) provided background about the NRCS High Tunnel Initiative program including some of its successes as well as pointed out that innovative production techniques specifically, is an area the program is very limited and that is also unclear from state-to-state which types of agricultural is considered allowable under certain circumstances. He also clarified the goal of the proposed recommendation is to ensure innovative production is included in the program from the beginning versus later on in the process after producers complete other activities.

Kate Greenberg (Member) acknowledged the importance of the recommendation and pointed out her personal desire to do more work with the urban agriculture communities in Colorado to understand more of their perspectives on the topic and become more educated before voting.

John Erwin (Member) gave remarks in support of the recommendation and acknowledged the particular interest in hydroponics from academia students and how the recommendation would allow for them to be included once practicing in the field.

Kaben Smallwood (Member) acknowledged a comment from a general public participant regarding the understanding of the NRCS High Tunnel Initiative and provided a example of how innovative production is a key component in repairing soil health.

Ted Fang (Member) provided general background information about the mission of NRCS and shared some of his direct and positive experience with the High Tunnel Initiative program.

Jerry Ann Hebron (Member) gave remarks about her personal experience with high tunnels in Detroit and acknowledged the recommendation as rejuvenative agriculture.

Dr. Carl P. Wallace (Member) gave remarks in support of the recommendation. He also briefly shared his personal experience and mentioned it is referred to as “hoop houses” in Ohio instead of high tunnels.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) acknowledged the comments from the general public attendees and motioned to bring the recommendation to a vote as written.

Brian Guse (DFO) asked for a second motion and received multiple.

FINAL RESULT:

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

Proposed Recommendation #7: Increase Technical Support for Urban Producers Through Cooperative Extension

Increase Land-grant University Cooperative Extension (Smith-Lever Capacity Funding) funding targeting larger urban communities in each state.

- a. Credit and Urban Agriculture funding formular (TBD).
- b. Fund use would be restricted to urban communities.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) presented the recommendation and opened the floor for deliberations.

Jeff Young (Member) provided background information and mentioned the recommendation is similar and aligned with recommendation #5 that supports the creation of curriculum and

students who want to advance their careers in urban agriculture and innovative production but does not support the researched base information and data being provided to the end-users, which cooperative extension can support.

John Erwin (Member) acknowledged his prior experience as an extension specialist and provided background on how it tends to work in better favor of rural communities. He also gave remarks in support of targeting urban communities to be more inclusive of funding benefits and reducing restricted areas.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) asked Jeff to explain sub-bullet a of the recommendation to better clarify the meaning in theory and practice.

Jeff Young (Member) explained the creation of an urban agriculture funding formula would allow for more fair distribution across states by using population, demographic, and other data points.

Allison Paap (Member) asked for more clarification on the Smith-Lever Capacity Funding and how it would be used.

Jeff Young (Member) provided background on Smith-Lever Funding as explained in the Farm Bill, which specifically funds cooperative extension in all states.

Kaben Smallwood (Chair) posed a question to Jeff asking if there may be a different mechanism to achieve the same result due to the USDA Secretary not having authority of legislative processes (i.e. Farm Bill).

Jeff Young (Member) acknowledged Kaben's point and mentioned the possibility of amending the recommendation in a way that would better align with the purview of the USDA Secretary. He also acknowledged experiments involving creative funding models being used at the state and local level between NRCS and Cooperative Extension programs across the nation to bring targeted technical extension expertise to local communities.

Zachari Curtis (Member) posed a question to Jeff to better explain the background information on Smith-Lever Funding to better understand the recommendation.

Jeff Young (Member) responded to clarify the intent is not to reallocate existing funding to Land-grant Institutions but to expand the pool of funding due to the number of people living in cities that could benefit from the technical expertise as previously discussed in recommendation #5 because the existing funding does not allow it.

Dr. Carl P. Wallace (Member) posed a question to Jeff asking if there was any importance for using the word “larger” when referring to urban communities and if it can be removed.

Jeff Young (Member) responded that he is open to removing the word “larger” in front of urban communities.

Ted Fang (Member) acknowledged a question from the general audience regarding the types of mechanisms in place to ensure equity with community based urban agriculture organizations.

Qiana Mickie (Member) acknowledged additional comments and questions from the general audience and mention the Committee would take a further look at them at a later date.

Jeff Young (Member) acknowledged the number of questions and concerns from both the Committee and general public and proposed to postpone deliberation until the next public meeting to allow the Committee additional time to research and prepare for a more engaged discussion.

Kaben Smallwood (Member) asked Jeff to clarify if he was making an official motion to postpone the deliberation and received confirmation.

Brian Guse (DFO) asked for a second motion to postpone and received multiple.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members the recommendation was postponed and will be scheduled for additional deliberation at the next public meeting.

Closing Remarks

Brian Guse (DFO) thanked the committee members and the public for their participation. He also provided additional instructions on how the public can provide formal written comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:30 P.M (ET).

CERTIFICATION

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

USDA Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

Kaben Smallwood

Chairperson, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

Brian Guse

Designated Federal Officer, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee