

URBAN AGRICULTURE AND INNOVATIVE PRODUCTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PUBLIC MEETING

JULY 11, 2024 | 12:00 PM – 2:30 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 tenth public meeting on July 11, 2024, from 12:00 P.M. to 2:30 P.M (ET). The meeting was open to the public and held fully virtually via Zoom webinar.

A [Federal Register notice](#) was published on June 18, 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

- **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
2.	Opening Remarks
3.	Address Public Comments
4.	Public Forum Response
5.	Public Forum (Oral Comments)
6.	Deliberation/Voting on Proposed Recommendations
7.	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	Absent	N/A
Carl P. Wallace	Non-Profit Entity	Present	Virtual
Jerry Ann Hebron	Urban Production	Absent	N/A
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
Terry Cosby	Chief, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Brian Guse	Director/Designated Federal Officer, Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production
Markus Holliday	Coordinator, Office of Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production

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

UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The public comment period was open from June 18, 2024 – July 25, 2024. Formal written comments were accepted via email (UrbanAgricultureFederalAdvisoryCommittee@usda.gov) and informal written 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 also accepted during the 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.

Opening Remarks

Terry Cosby (Chief of NRCS) provided opening remarks thanking the committee members for their hard work and dedication.

Brian Guse (Director/DFO) called the meeting to order and proceeded to go over the meeting agenda as well as provide an overview of the UAIPAC purpose and duties.

Addressing Public Comments

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) shared previously received written comments to open a full committee discussion. One public comment was regarding the impacts of funding for urban producers from higher education institutions. Another comment was regarding available funding options through the USDA Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to address barriers producers face with water irrigation.

Public Forum (oral comments)

Markus Holliday (Coordinator) facilitated the public forum segment by providing instructions and reminders to those who pre-registered to provide oral comments and un-muting each commentator's microphone when it was their time to speak. Oral comments were heard for four individuals total on the following topics:

- **Lilly Kasra:** *Increased population in urban areas and impacts of food insecurity*
- **Corey McNair:** *Dynamic funding options (school gardens production and education)*
- **Tomyro Dobbs:** *Direct funding opportunities and oversight for discriminatory behavior*
- **Kristin Reynolds:** *Reinstate recommendation for 1890's Land-grant Universities*

Public Forum Response

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) opened a full committee discussion to respond to oral comments by first mentioning the committee's statutory nature and ability to provide recommendations as it pertains to the committee's unique purpose and duties.

Carl P. Wallace (Member) addressed multiple oral comments including welcoming other committee members to work with him to reinstate the previously proposed recommendation regarding 1890's Land-grant Universities.

Several other members acknowledged the oral comments given and agreed the issues were important and worth looking further into for more discussion in the future.

Deliberation/Voting

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

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

Capacity funding for the Cooperative Extension System is limited and provided by formula within the Farm Bill. To provide additional technical support to urban agriculture producers and those initiating innovative production methods, additional funding is needed in each state.

It is recommended that the USDA Secretary direct NRCS and NIFA to explore creative ways to fund additional Extension Educators in urban communities.

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

Jeff Young (Member) who authored the recommendation provided some additional background information on the amendments made based on the first time it was introduced at the previous public meeting.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members the recommendation passed by majority vote.

Proposed Recommendation #8: NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

Require NRCS' flagship conservation program known as EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) to serve urban agriculture and innovation production (UAIP) producers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, and to create a new set of reimbursement rates that matches the financial assistance needs of UAIP producers.

- a. Offer EQIP program to UAIP producers in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.
- b. Train Urban District Conservationists on all NRCS conservation practices.
- c. Provide one-on-one technical assistance to UAIP producers through the Urban District Conservationists or through subject matter experts provided through the Urban District Conservationists.
- d. Develop EQIP financial assistance rates that are appropriate for and match the needs of UAIP producers.
- e. Provide Advantage Funding for EQIP projects when needed by producers.

FINAL RESULT:

The originating author (Ted Fang) was not present. The recommendation was postponed and will be scheduled for deliberation at the next public meeting.

Proposed Recommendation #9: Alternative Reimbursement Process (NRCS and Rural Development)

Require eligible vendors to accept vouchers from urban farmers and innovative producers as opposed to requiring urban farmers and innovative producers to pay out-of-pocket then be reimbursed. Vendors then submit vouchers to the USDA for reimbursement.

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

Jeff Young (Member) provided comments supporting the recommendation.

Zachari Curtis (Member) voiced concerns about potential ripple effects for service providers.

Allison Paap (Member) questioned if the recommendation (as written) is outside the purview of the USDA Secretary due to third-party actions involved.

Carl P. Wallace (Member) provided additional background information as a co-author and mentioned the intent is to take the onus off the producer. He also agreed with an earlier comment to postpone the recommendation for further discussion.

FINAL RESULT:

The recommendation was postponed and will be scheduled for deliberation at the next public meeting.

Proposed Recommendation #10: FPAC Grant Award Process

We recommend the following:

- a. Grant process be revised to be customer friendly. All required forms shortened, written in easily understood language, such as at a third-grade level, and any missing documentation be sent in writing prior to determination.
- b. USDA Urban Centers and Extension programs provide food producers with technical training and assistance regarding all grants and loans.
- c. Grant requests will be released between November and April of each year. Taking time away from food producers during the growing season is not desirable.
- d. Grants and Agreements Division have the appropriate staff returned to the respective divisions for accountability. IE Grants and Agreements staff that review NRCS requests report to NRCS.
- e. Revise reimbursement requirements. Having food producers to be reimbursed at level above \$1,000 is unconscionable and does not reflect reality. Awards above \$1,000 receive advance payments. Currently, advance payments are laborious and time un-sensitive.
- f. Remove requirements for matching grants as this reduces access to beginning and historically underserved producers.

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

Carl P. Wallace (Member) provided additional background information as a co-author and mentioned one revision left out was to remove “and loans” in bullet letter “b”.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) suggested drafting amended language to better articulate the intent of the recommendation.

Carl P. Wallace (Member) added remarks to welcome any amendments to the language originally used.

Zachari Curtis (Member) added additional remarks agreeing to draft amended language that would achieve a clearer intent.

Kate Greenberg (Member) suggested additional language amendments to bullet letter “c”.

Angie Mason (Member) also provided comment to bullet letter “c” not including innovative producers as they work year-round and suggested further discussion for possible amendments.

Carl P. Wallace (Member) motioned to postpone the recommendation to address the concerns and comments provided by other members regarding amended language needed.

FINAL RESULT:

The recommendation was postponed and will be scheduled for deliberation at the next public meeting.

Proposed Recommendation #11: FPAC Grant Award Process – Digital Signature Option

Implement a digital signature option for grant award paperwork for the grantor sub-agency as well as the grantee.

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

John Erwin (Co-Chair) gave remarks supporting the recommendation and mentioned it would help align with the digital signature process already implemented with various other grants.

Qiana Mickie (Co-Chair) questioned if there was a need to further specify which agencies or programs the recommendation should apply to.

Kate Greenberg (Member) motioned to bring the recommendation to a vote as written.

FINAL RESULT:

With no additional comments from other members the recommendation passed by majority vote.

Proposed Recommendation #12: FSA Cooperative Agreements

Develop and integrate transparency and accountability measures within the FSA Urban Agriculture Outreach, Education, Technical Assistance cooperative agreement process.

Reference: <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/cooperative-agreements/index>

- a. Share on FSA website vetting criteria for organization selection and steps to be considered for a cooperative agreement.
- b. Create evaluation and review matrix for grantors to meet within agreement term period to ensure agreement scope and budget are being appropriately met.
- c. Develop and integrate accountability measures, including transitioning of agreement to another organization with the agreement term, if milestones are not sufficiently achieved.

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

Allison Paap (Member) asked for an example of FSA cooperative agreements which was provided by Brian Guse (Director/DFO).

Carl P. Wallace (Member) questioned if a brief description of a cooperative agreement was needed to provide better context for the recommendation.

Kate Greenberg (Member) suggested adding a reference to the FSA website providing background information to cooperative agreements and made a motion to vote.

FINAL RESULT:

With the amendment made to add reference to the FSA website for cooperative agreements, the recommendation passed by majority vote.

Closing Remarks

Brian Guse (Director/DFO) thanked the committee members and the public for their participation. He provided information about the National Urban Agriculture Conference in Detroit, MI and also provided additional instructions on how the public can provide formal written comments.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at approximately 2:30 P.M (ET).

CERTIFICATION

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

Kaben Smallwood

Chairperson, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee

Brian Guse

Director/Designated Federal Officer, Urban Agriculture and Innovative Production Advisory Committee