



Action in Agroforestry

June 2020 Vol. 12, No.6 Michael Gold, Hannah Hemmelgarn, Kelsi Stubblefield, editors

Dear Agroforestry Community,

In this moment, we are experiencing a response to bold and violent acts of racial injustice that reveal much deeper wounds. Layered on these acute events are the chronic inequities that contribute to injustices, among them that “minoritized” communities face disproportionate impacts of a deadly virus.

The Center for Agroforestry has committed to a specific goal of supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion as part of our strategic plan. In aspiring to be informed and effective allies, we are committed to calling for social justice reform. We are committed to educating ourselves about systemic racism. We are committed to becoming media literate in order to identify factual information and avoid spreading misinformation. We are committed to supporting work on human rights.

How does agroforestry play into this conversation? On the positive side, agroforestry can be a tool to combat social and environmental injustices by improving conditions in communities disproportionately impacted:

- ◆ Riparian buffers can protect and clean water resources, particularly where water is used for drinking or recreation.
- ◆ Woody plants can remediate contaminated soils to make areas safer for food production.
- ◆ Windbreaks filter air-borne toxins and reduce spread of undesirable odors.
- ◆ Woody specialty crops in agroforestry systems can supply healthy, nutrient-dense foods for food security and improved human health outcomes.

But agroforestry systems are still embedded in the structural racism that affects all aspects of food and agriculture. Growers need access to land, and that access must be secure for decades in order for the

investment of agroforestry plantings to pay off. Trees, with their broad canopies, require a more substantial amount of space to expand and optimize production. Further resources are needed for the high up-front costs of woody plants, particularly the ‘improved varieties’ that are most productive and the infrastructure needed to protect and support them. In urban areas, food forests require safe green space, free of contaminants, yet green space is unequally distributed across cities. All of these “access” points suffer from inequality.

Land ownership may be the clearest example of the problem. As Leah Penniman states in her book, *Farming While Black* (2018), “As a result of decades of discrimination...Black people have been almost entirely dispossessed of our land. In 1920, 14% of all landowning US farmers were Black, and today around 1 percent of farms are controlled by Black people, a loss of over 14 million acres.” (p.12). Based on the 2017 Census of agriculture, only 0.5% of the land area is owned by Black farmers – half of one percent. Land ownership, more than other forms of wealth, offers endless opportunities for production, conservation, natural beauty, and life. Land ownership itself is wealth and power in a form that is available to a select few. We must work intentionally [to combat disparities in land ownership](#) and the countless other inequities present in the agricultural community.

Racist policies persist throughout our society. Racist policies impact research and practice in agroforestry. We must actively work to recognize and change the system, or we continue to be part of the problem. As we [educate ourselves about systemic racism](#), [become media literate](#), and [actively support Black and Indigenous People of Color \(BIPOC\) farmers and organizations](#), we invite you to do the same. Please join us as we work to cultivate real and lasting change within our communities and within ourselves.

Suggested Reading:

- ◆ *Farming while Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land* – Leah Penniman (2018)
- ◆ *Land Justice: Reimagining Land, Food, and the Commons* – Justine M. Williams & Eric Holt-Gimenez (2017)
- ◆ *Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class and Sustainability* – Alison Hope Alkon & Julian Agyeman (2011)

Educational Resources Produced by BIPOC:

[Cooperative Gardens Commission](#)

[BIPOC-led Online Learning Resources](#)

[National Young Farmers Coalition BIPOC Farmer Skillshare](#)

Soul Fire Farm inspirational and educational materials:

[Take Action](#)

[Food Sovereignty Online Resources](#)

[Selected Publications](#)

Resources for BIPOC Farmers:

[National Black Farmers Association](#)

[Black Farmers Network](#)

[National Black Food & Justice Alliance](#)

[Black Family Land Trust resources](#)

[Black Belt Justice Center](#)

COVID-19 Resources for Farmers and Entrepreneurs

Coronavirus resources can be found in [previous issues of E-News](#).

KUDOS

Recent Publications

Borucke, M., D. Howard and S. Jose (2020) A spatially explicit tree search application for agroforestry in the United States. *Agroforestry Systems* 94: 831–842. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10457-019-00462-9>

Forrest Keeling Nursery Names New President

“On May 18, Forrest Keeling Nursery (FKN) announced that Kimberley Lovelace-Young will take the position of president. This is a milestone for the family-owned Midwest company, which was established in 1948. The nursery's mission is to restore the earth's ecosystem one tree at a time.” <https://www.nurserymag.com/article/forrest-keeling-nursery-names-new-president-kim-lovelace-young/>

Congratulations to Dr. Chung Ho Lin's students, Shu-Yu Hsu, Elizabeth Rogers, and Ho Van, for being awarded travel grants to attend the following events: The International Phytotechnology Conference at the Argonne National Laboratory and The Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) in Chicago, Illinois.

Congratulations to Chung-Ho Lin's student, Mohamed Bayati for receiving the 2020 Civil and Environmental Engineering Outstanding Doctoral Student Award.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Juneteenth Broadcast

June 19, 2020 | 12:00-6:30pm | A Growing Culture | Free Online Social Media Broadcast

In observance of Juneteenth, A Growing Culture will host a daylong broadcast of The Hunger for Justice Series, celebrating Black voices and the fight for justice in the food system.

<http://www.agrowingculture.org/HFJ/>

Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Partnership's Risk Management

June 18, 25 and July 2, 2020 | 11:00-12:00pm | Illinois Sustainable Agriculture Partnership | Free Online Webinar Series

Join the Illinois Sustainable Ag Partnership for a three-part webinar series highlighting the use of land stewardship and soil health management as a tool to mitigate production and market risks.

<https://attra.ncat.org/event-calendar/illinois-sustainable-agriculture-partnerships-risk-management-webinar-series/>

Soil Health Principles – Applications and Results of Investing in Your Soils

June 23, 2020 | 12:00-1:30pm CDT | NCAT | Free Online Webinar

Hear from farmers Paul Kaiser and Ward Burroughs how they invest in their soils by applying the 5 principles of healthy soil management on their farms. Two very different farms growing different crops in different locations show how these principles are applied at different scales.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/6393299882850606607>

Facebook Live! Farm Tour with Darren Bender-Beauregard

June 23, 2020 | 7:00pm | Savanna Institute | Free Facebook Live Farm Tour

This tour will cover: Brambleberry Farm's 3 acres of silvopasture and rotational grazing methods, the nursery and plant propagation methods, the strawbale house, how the farm uses 100% rain water.

<http://www.savannainstitute.org/events.html>

Fruit TreeKeepers

July 1 & July 15, 2020 | 7:00 pm | Trees Forever | \$15 Two-Part Video Conference Course

Learn how to grow fruit and nut trees in your backyard or orchard. Trees Forever Field Coordinator Patty Reisinger leads this two-part beginner's course on fruit and nut trees in the Midwest. Learn about planting, pruning, maintenance and more.

http://www.treesforever.org/Fruit_TreeKeepers

Do the Numbers: Organic Dairy

June 24, 2020 | 7:00pm | MOSES |Free Virtual Field Day

Thelma Heidel-Baker and Ricky Baker will share how they manage their grass-based, organic dairy farm. They'll cover pasture management, conservation practices, pollinator habitat, livestock health, and some of the financials to think about when running a grass-based dairy farm.

<https://mosesorganic.org/events/organic-field-days/do-the-numbers-dairy-june-24/?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=d1541e0d-f71e-47f4-95ef-1484081c5a44>

Food Safety Webinar with Eliza Greenman

July 14, 2020 | 7:00 pm | Savanna Institute | Free Webinar

Learn how to meet food safety FSMA guidelines while incorporating livestock into orchard systems and about the timing and spacing of fruit and nut trees for livestock fodder.

<http://www.savannainstitute.org/events.html>



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