

Racial Healing Through Agricultural Healing

Presented January 18, 2022

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>>Yolanda Owens: Thank you so much Dr Lechman and Dr Taylor just for having me and um, I'm glad to be part of this event especially with the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Uh, as you'll hear me talk about it after this, I will probably say CFAES because it's way too long otherwise um, and um, and-and I love the fact that we've collaborated with Moritz College of Law and also the partnership with uh, the WK Kellogg Foundation of which our distinguished Dean Kathann Kress was just recently named their board chair, so I think that that's really awesome so congratulations to Dean Kress for that appointment. I think that's really awesome to-to have that connection and the work that they're doing and the work that we are doing within CFAES.

Um, I just want to start on this national day of racial healing first and as always that I do in speaking I want to be sure to give reverence to the land that I inhabit personally both as a descendant of those whose land was stolen and those who were stolen. Um, I personally I inhabit the lands of the Adena, the Hopewell, the Kashkashian and the Shawnee people and with that I say Asé. As Dean, excuse me, as Dr Lechman said, my name is Yolanda Owens and I am the chief cultivator at Forage and Black which is a consulting and apparel company that is the intersection of black culture and green thumbs and I'm also the sitting president for the CFAES alumni society board and the first woman of color honestly to do so and I personally make it my mission to make sure that I'm not the last. So, I just appreciate you all joining us for today's conversation as we talk about the rich and very complex racial history of agriculture and how we look to be able to reclaim our spaces um, and as black and brown people so today I just want to be able to introduce the panelists and then they're going to share a little bit about themselves and the work that they're doing in the field so we have um, Julialynne Walker who is an international food justice advocate she is the founder of the Bronzeville growers market and the Bronzeville Agracademy then we also have I August Taylor who is the communications coordinator at the Ohio Ecological Food and Farming Association also known as OEFFA, as well as the garden manager of the Maroon Arts Box Park Garden also in the Bronzeville/King-Lincoln area. And we also have with us the Honorable Representative Juanita Brent representing the 12th district uh, up in the Cleveland Ohio area and she is a ranking member in the Ohio House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee. So oh my gosh I got a whole bunch of notifications that all popped up, oh. So I just want to thank all of you for taking the time out to be here I'm-I'm honored that you all said yes for the call, right, um, and just want to open it up for you all to share a little bit about the work that you're doing and then we'll dig into some of the questions that we that we have already planned as well as the questions from you all as the audience that I think will uh, will be fruitful and getting some answers.

>>Rep. Juanita Brent: I'll off first. My name is Juanita I just happen to be a State Representative for um, the Ohio House District 12. It's like the southeast part of Cuyahoga County, Cleveland, and a bunch of suburbs. But just to give you a little bit of background, I've been participating, while I participated in 4-H um, all the time when I was growing up going to county fairs so I know sometimes from people who hear about me being a black woman on the Ag Committee sitting as the ranking member of the Ag Committee people are always very surprised but I spent a lot of my youth for at least a good solid 15

years participating in 4-H and you know being at those county fairs those kids that had those projects that was me always growing something at one time I had a pig and I was very much supported in that field by my parents because it's a very expensive place to be at. So I'm just so grateful to be here and to say how we are doing at least on the policy side when it comes to state government regarding this topic

>>Yolanda: thank you

>>I. August Taylor: I can go [sneeze] um, uh, my name is I August um, I'm mute

>>Julialynne Walker: I'm-I'm Julialynne oh no [inaudible]

>>Yolanda: I think there was a delay

[inaudible]

>>Julialynne Walker: All right um, and as Yolanda mentioned um, I am uh, the founder and manager of the Bronzeville Agracademy and Bronzeville growers market both initiatives to um, develop an appreciation for the land basically uh, on the northeast side of Columbus and I am a third generation Columbusite um, and I remember my grandparents uh, both sides um, having very fairly extensive gardens and that was a reflection of their experiences of the south where they migrated from to come to Columbus. And so that appreciation for the land has been handed down to me through my parents and other members of the extended family. August.

>>August: Hello my name is I. August uh, you can just call me August. The I in case you're wondering um, actually stands for Isidore as in Saint Isidore the farmer if anybody's familiar with uh, Catholicism. My family um, I have a lot of family that's from New Orleans like going back a long, long time so we have a pretty deep um, culturally Catholic tradition which I also believe is really tied to how I view land and agriculture too but I'm actually originally from Pittsburgh didn't start farming until I came to Ohio and I couldn't even recognize grass. I thought it was the prettiest thing in the world and thought it was some you know wild plant. Turns out it was just grass so that's where I started and through a lot of work and a lot of relationships specifically with my elders I've gotten to the place today where I've worked on a couple farms. Right now I work at OEFFA during the day the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association. I'm specifically just hoping to connect and build more relationships with farmers of color across Ohio and strengthen you know our gardens our farms our food systems and increasing access to different USDA programs that have been historically really difficult for us to access um, and then by night I manage the community garden over at the Box Park um, for the Marine Arts Group and that's, I mean, it's separate but I mean you really throw it in the mix with all the other Bronzeville stuff it's-it's on the

same site as the Bronzeville growers market. Our volunteer days happen at the same time so it's like a it's one big continuation of each other so it's really nice

>>Yolanda: Awesome. Can you all hear me okay? So um, yes to-to kind of get into uh, and initiate the conversation I know that there are going to be I'm the kind of person I work in emergence and so I know that we have some questions that we have put together but I also imagine that there are going to be parts of this conversation that might veer in other spaces or bring up other things and I-I definitely want those things to allow space for those things to bubble up, right? Uh, but I think that the first thing is kind of when you talk about agriculture with our community with the black with the African American community how do they respond when-when you when you start talking about it

>>Rep. Brent: Well, I'll start off with my experience saying what letting you guys know from the beginning I was always part of 4-H. And people always particularly question my parents like why are you having this girl invested into all these activities where she's the only one um, because not a lot of times when you see us in those spaces you are one of the few or if you're the only one um, but a lot of my family's history has to do with dealing with the land um, we still owning land even to this day so it feels very natural for me to be in that place of being in agriculture. Um, and we're like the original black people. We're the original OGs of farming of all of this. If you look at how the cotton market-market started here in the United States it was off the black the backs of black people. So we've kind of always kind of allowed ourselves to be brainwashed to believe that farming was not something that belonged to us all along.

>>August: Keep this

>>Julialynne: I would definitely agree and I'm really glad you-you introduced it like that because you know very often um, this whole uh, negative perception of these poor emaciated Africans that were stolen and brought over here and then forced into and without recognizing that there were skilled people and actually the most skilled people were often the most valuable as part of the whole human enslavement movement, and so though and many of those skills sat in agricultural development. So, you know, farmers fishermen uh, architects, iron workers, these are the people who were brought and who contributed significantly to the development of agriculture in the uh, particularly in the southern parts of the United States. And-and not only did we bring skills with us, we actually brought the uh-uh actual crops so many of the the-crops that were actually contributed to uh, that were used for people to eat um, and I'm thinking you know we just celebrated New Year's Eve and uh, you know, we're supposed to eat black eyed peas for lunch for luck and that really came they originated it was one of the props that originated from Africa that was brought to other parts of the Americas as a whole and so we really have to recognize that um, there is this link it's a very positive link. On the other hand, you know, when people say well how do people you know appreciate it yes. Um, there's some people now who take it whole hog, but we also recognize that there's a certain level of social trauma that is intergenerational, that even though people have not directly experienced it, it has come to us, you

know, as part of our culture. And specifically by this I mean that sometimes when I've been working in the garden and whichever one because I've got about a dozen that I work with but uh, very and then but they're all in communities that are experiencing extreme levels of economic and social stress. And very often when I'm working people will pass by particularly um, youngish men I-I say between 30 and 40 something like that and they literally will say sister why are you doing that? Why are you working like? We don't have to do slave labor. Why do you-you know you look like you could actually have an office job. Why are you getting your hands dirty? And so I really stop whenever I hear a comment anywhere along that line to say look, let's just have some discussion. You know, will you give me a few minutes to help you understand why I'm doing what I do. And sometimes they do. Sometimes they're like no-no I'm on my way to whatever, but I do try to remember that for some people even today, working with the land has very negative perceptions because of our historical experiences

>>August: And I would, you know, also add on to that in I think if you were to ask me this question of various times um, it would change and it depends on, you know, who you ask. But I used to always start off with this quote that I have no idea who said it and I feel very bad about it but um, so when it comes to black people and agriculture you know land, you know, is where the violence happened, but land wasn't the violence itself. Um, but that's a really hard just, you know, that's-that's a hard distinction to make whenever it was so pervasive um, and so I feel like sometimes people ask this question they like, they want to get to that like oh yes there's-there's a lot of trauma and you know it's hard-it's hard to convince people you know that they want to do this and you know xyz which is true and that, and that-that does come up a lot. But I found more and more recently that people are just kind of down with it like, you know, not everybody's saying oh my goodness can I come join me? I want to do that! But, you know, go walk by and see like oh that's dope my-my aunt grows tomatoes like that, you know. or um, oh I've never seen that grown before but I really like to eat them. Something like that. Um, even my dad when I first started he did make he made a slave joke. I mean like he-he was so good both my parents honestly they were hard ones to convince because you know they were sending me off to college to do all you know these things so when they found out I was farming they kind of felt like I was taking a step back and I think that's how farming is still viewed as is like a regression. Like Mr Lynn was saying, like we don't have to be doing this anymore. Why are we um, and it's because we always have and I don't-I don't see I-I think it's beautiful to continue that um, and farming is hard so I don't feel like you know I'm not using my brain um, you know. I don't think it would matter either way, but, you know, it's still a very intellectual task as much as it's you know a physical tactile you know you're using your body. It's like a dance um, but yeah anyway all that's to say is it used to be a little bit harder to have the conversation than I think it is now and more people see themselves in agriculture. Um, the more you talk to them about it and I'll finish with giving my dad as an example who made that joke in the beginning. Later on, and I-I don't know why it took him so long to tell me, he eventually remembered that his grandfather had a farm for years and he would go almost every summer as a kid. Um, it was in Michigan and they had hogs and cows and they grew vegetables, um, and I really do think there was some trauma built up there for why he just forgot to tell me for so long. Um, just a very significant memory so uh, yeah, there's a lot more connection that we have than I think we're even able to recognize.

>>Julialynne: Yeah, and again, we're just, you know ,it's a dialogue. Um, you're right! In terms of who you ask, when you ask it, and who where do they sit in terms of process. And there's been a lot of change um, certainly uh, you know, over the last say 20 years [clears throat] and um, it's-it's very interesting to me how um, we are always involved in social service. You know, when, you know, wherever we are, whether it's the church, whether it's a-a-a sorority, a fraternity, you know, there's always an element of social service when black people get together. We're always helping somebody and when I look at some of the uh, social service institutions that have you know uh, or the activities that have come up around food um, there was again sort of this dominant culture model of we have to give to help somebody. So it was a sort of a privatization of the welfare system, okay? And so we, you know, we establish these food pantries and we, you know, we solicited or waited for food to be given and then we handed it out. And so now uh, people are-are actually looking at being able to grow food themselves in the community gardens as a way of supporting these food pantries and social service institutions. And, you know, and-and-and I'm beginning to also see an element where the community gardens are saying okay, we've been giving food away, maybe we should also sell some of that as a way to support ourselves as opposed to you know chasing these grants and trying to be given money. So there's an empowerment process that, you know, goes through from a family having a garden to participating in a community garden to having a community garden that, you know ,becomes involved in other kinds of activities. The other thing I see happening is in terms of the demographics um, the farmer's market and the community garden, you know, sector as a whole is very female Driven and it's very and it's an older demographic interesting enough. There-there's some young folks and they're coming along, but it's really the-the older sisters and for, you know, I'm beginning to say now uh, you know more and more this year you're gonna hear it a lot in 2022, I'm tired. And so I have to be very conscious of what is the succession model for everything that I'm doing and so it's really important that we acknowledge that um, there are some very creative and energetic, you know, activities happening around specific institutions, but that's because of a particular personality. And we've got to broaden that out and learn from each other in ways to ensure that these activities and institutions continue because I'm serious. I am tired.

>>Yolanda: so um, essentially you're saying you're ready to-to-to pass you're saying let's pass it, let's-let's teach, let's absolutely, okay um. I know we have these-these questions here, but I kind of wanted, I want to get into that a little bit uh, especially as you're talking about teaching others and your-your thoughts around the creation of this Agracademy and, um, and the connections to or-or the-the teaching of education around the connection to of us to our land right and-and the work that we do. Can you speak a little bit to that?

>>Julianne: Surely as August mentioned um, it is uh, um, it's difficult for people to appreciate, you know, agriculture as an academic discipline you know within the African American community and um, I was looking for a way to introduce it at a, you know, with low barrier, low barrier entry. And in 2019 after, you know, working with various community gardens, and I'll mention also that I'm president of the Franklin Park Civic Association. We've got ten community gardens within our civic association and so we're very actively promoting and strengthening, you know, their capacity to involve their neighbors and, you know, provide uh, uh, crops as well as other services, and so um, but there but I kept getting

the same kind of questions and there's only so many times you could answer what's the difference between an annual and a perennial. And so um, I uh, you know, went for one of those small grants. Got it. This is 2019 and talk to um, the OSU African-African American Studies Community Extension Center which is located on Mount Vernon, and um, they agreed that I could host the class at the Extension Center starting when? March 2020. And um, yeah so when uh, you know, the big bang and-and Dewine closed the doors um, it was like, okay what now? Well zoom. And I was like what's a zoom? I didn't know any more about zoom than anybody else but I quickly learned and you know moved everything to my back porch and started class um, and so it's a 10-week introduction to getting your hands dirty and I think that part of the discussion is not using the big term agriculture, but actually looking at getting your hands dirty. So whether it's a pot on your balcony and I tell everybody-everybody can grow something. So whether it's a pot on your balcony or understanding that uh, many people are living in rental accommodations and therefore aren't able to actually dig up the earth, we have the Bronzeville urban growers where we actually provide a garden and a kit and he'll give you one to three 50-gallon bins and the soil and seeds and starter plants and then we come by and check on you periodically. So, and then for people who actually want to go in the ground, fine. Then we'll will work on number one making sure that the soil is viable having it tested and then providing other uh, inputs as necessary. So the online 10-week, you know, gardening course was really to have a-a forum in which people could raise whatever questions they had as to, you know, how to grow something. So whether it was people who just wanted a flower garden I'm like fine but could you include some herbs up in there [laugh] you know? Um, to people that wanted to uh, they had-they had grand schemes and I said just pick up a packet of seeds, any packet of seeds. Does it give you an idea of how many seeds are in there. Now, given the plant that is growing, how much will one plant produce. Now think about it! How much are you really going to eat? Do you really need that whole packet of seeds? And most people don't need more than five or ten seeds because the plants will produce enough for an individual or small families is what we're dealing with. But it's really uh-uh, but then begins to introduce other elements and we show people that through gardening or agriculture, you really begin to become more familiar or better acquainted with math, the old math not the new math. Um, you know when you're planning your garden uh, we talk about carpentry and building your beds um, we talk about uh-uh weather and climatology and just getting a better understanding of the needs of plants in terms of air and water and um, sunlight, and what does that mean in terms of you know shadows and all kinds of things and it was very interesting because we literally had in the course from seven to seventy. So we had a seven year old and we had a seventy year old and uh, and all the ages in between that really to reinforce that gardening is for everybody and the seven-year-old took the spring course, took the fall course, and then last summer he had a stall at the market. He was a vendor. [Laughs] So that's part of my experience and I'll turn over to my co-panelist.

>>August: And that little boy was awesome. Like he was, oh my gosh he was awesome. I can see why he was so uh, I can imagine how cute and energetic he was at those lessons considering how he was at the stand. I just wanted to say one quick piece about how important this succession is um, and I think it's-it's really-it's really key to all this and notice how Miss Julialynne not saying you know I'm building this up so I can pass it on to my son or you know so I can do blah blah blah you know it's I want to build up my community so that all of us can continue this. You know, Ohio celebrates family farms, you know. The longer they've been around the more they get celebrated. Um, I can tell you that they aren't black family farms um, and when you celebrate a farm where the baseline is you have to be a family farm for a

hundred years before you're recognized, that is just virtually impossible for so many black people. It's hard to even trace your lineage back 100 years let alone people to have land for that long. I'm not saying it's impossible, but it's in a high it's very-very difficult so it's-it's really hard to see the family farm be celebrated when you know that they're not talking about your family um, and it's-it's much more empowering to think about succession in this way where you know I-I, you know, I'm-I'm younger and I-I do feel like you know my elders have been you know working to build me up so that this this can continue um, and that's really important to me and seeing how important it is to them I just see this it's like this communal succession and that's just that's the essence of farming while black.

>>Rep. Brent: When I-when I um, heard Miss Walker talk about getting her hands dirty it actually made me think about my experience of being in 4-H and why I believe I was put in the 4-H program because I was a kid who liked to get dirty. I was the kid who liked to play in the ground. I was a kid who, you know, never came home with their hair in place so that was like a good fit for me to play with something that I liked playing with and that was soil. Understanding about the chemistry of it, of how you the minerals and everything that goes along with it so it was really pushing me into an area that I already enjoyed doing. I was messing playing in dirt with my hands already. So as we even look at our young people, if your kid is always out in the dirt they probably need to be in some type of um, you know program like that where they can utilize soil um, and so it just really expanded upon things that I already enjoy as a child. So, the 4-H program, for those who are not familiar with them assuming I'm among family of people who have the same love as me, but for kids that's a year around program and you know sometimes that's better than just seeing your kid an after-school program where they're just sitting there. With 4-H, I have you there every week involved with other children that you might not ever go to school with, you might not ever see on a regular, and you grow up as like this little pod of families where you have these same group of children who are with each other year round every year. And for me it was it was almost very eye-opening because the community I was raised in, I live in a very black, very urban neighborhood where more people thought about farming they talked about their ancestors in a way not in a recent term, but for my experience it was something I did year round I learned so much about um, just traveling, going off to all the county fairs, that's like a thing people who go to all the different county fairs and go into the state fair because that was our Olympics. So when you think about the big showdown as a kid you were like, yes, I'm getting ready for you know the county fairs and I can ex talk about that experience of even being in 4-H and seeing my first confederate flag and somebody having to explain because I was only it was only two black kids in our group of what that meant and why that was problematic. And they only had to do that because we showed up in that space on why the confederate flags at the county fairs were problematic for us so just even dealing with that but it was such a great learning experience and I think if we introduced this to children while they're young, I think it would not seem like so foreign when people are grown. So even when people talk about family farms, the reason why they're family farms because they started out with their children when they're young. That's a normal way of life. But if that becomes your normal way of life it won't seem odd if somebody's growing food in the back of their yard or anything like that, and we have to really focus more on our history as a country of that whole concept of 40 acres of mural it was a time, you know, three black men did get their 40 acres, but because of discrimination, we lost all that valuable land. So this is not a foreign thing we keep trying to brainwash ourselves or let the outside world brainwash black people that we weren't the original farmers here in this country and so programs like 4-H, you have to have

people that are culturally competent because when you are in those spaces where you-you know my 4-H leaders, they were all white and they had to really kind of bone up on their skills of just being culturally competent in that space of having only two out of out-of the 30 kids that was in the program with me were-were two black kids out all of us and so I think they learned a lot from that. I didn't realize how much they were learning but it was so necessary because we need to get more African American kids acclimated in that and also just try to figure out systems to help support it because it can become very expensive year-round and I think that's the part that people don't always understand. The kids that were in 4-H they weren't kids of meager means. They were kids a lot of times they were being financially supported in heavy ways within their family. So we have to figure out if we want children in this space how can we financially support um, having kids more acclimated in that and maybe a best way of doing that is even having it directly to the schools instead of kids having to utilize these programs outside ways.

>>Julialynne: you know uh, August and um, uh, Representative Brent, you know mentioned two historical factors I would like to pick up on and-and kind of expand a bit because so very often again it's like um, it's your fault. It's our fault. Well, actually it's not our fault and, you, know when Representative Brent previously mentioned the 40 acres in the mule um, yes there was this, you know, meeting under Sherman and Georgia where the community and he said well what do you need to move forward after towards the end of the civil war. And that particular community said well if you divide up the land we have available it'd be like 40 acres a person and then you know we could make a go of that. And that informal decision discussion became national policy and the mule just got added on when they had all these animals after when the war ended they didn't know what to do with it they say we'll give them to the black people maybe they can make a use of it. But uh, but that policy wasn't enforced and unfortunately that then begins a historic pattern of we have a policy put into place but it isn't supported and unfortunately the institutions that are supposed to implement it are staffed by people who don't believe. And so not only were everybody not get their 40 acres and a mule, but uh, when Representative Brent says we need financial support, the Freedmen's bank that was instituted wasn't supported. It was in fact not only gutted but the funds were actually given to the white farmers as opposed to the black. And then later, after uh, uh, you know, the turn of the 20th century, 1900-1914, when the Department of Agriculture um, was established and the Farm Services Agency, again, the same common policies because the white people in the community were the extension agents. They carried their culture with them in their jobs and so when we look at the pattern of discrimination and the nefarious activities for instance around voting and you hear about people who have to come in and explain the constitution, the same kind of things happen under the Farm Services Agency so uh, people who went to apply for a loan were told you could only apply for a loan if, you know, you-you-you can explain the Constitution. It would have nothing to do with anything. Or, they were given uh, office hours outside the county or given office hours and when they went to uh, or given a-a-a appointment, and when they went for the appointment the office was closed um, or they were given an application the day before it was due or given an application the day after it was due. So there were all kinds of practices that really undermine the ability of African American's not only to keep their 40 acres, but to grow it and become the 100 year old farm that-that August referenced. And then you know so we see this this incredible uh, loss of land uh, by 1950 that had nothing to do with our commitment or capacity to grow as farmers and strictly

from, you know, the undermining of the system from within by the people who were responsible for its implementation. You see I get passionate so I'm gonna calm down. [laughter]

>>Yolanda: No worries. I-I will say um, as you were speaking um, both about the being able to set up-set up our younger generations as well as 4-H. We did have a question come in and so I did want to make sure that I acknowledged that question. Tim spoke here. He asked "are 4-H educators finding success when reaching out to black youth um, and that he works with 4-H member projects and which one he was glad to hear you of Representative Brent talking about your experience with 4-H, and one of the I just I wanted to at least acknowledge this question and I did want to mention because I don't know if the panelists can really speak really in depth to that but one thing I did want to mention is that having um, talked to Dr Bloir who is the director for the State of Ohio's 4-H and as well as Extension, I know that they are seeking to be able to do more work with a new role uh, a pathways uh, a pathways role, an ag pathways role that is looking to create better connections into spaces that-that connect those dots for our community. Right? Um, and also wanted to mention as we were talking about like farms so last since 2007 and between the 2007 and then the 2020 census so in 2007 it was mentioned that there were 2.2 million farms in the U.S. um, when we just recently had our most recent census in 2020, it was we lost um, is only about 2 million farms in the U.S. Of those two million farms about 1.4 percent are black owned as opposed to 100 years ago when about 14% of all of the farms in the U.S. were actually black owned. So as-as August was talking about the-the um, the lineage and being able to have these farms and the discrimination. Also, I'll put it in the chat, but I think a really uh, amazing and-and a great point to listen to is the 1619 project and there is a there's a young man who is a farmer um, and he does sugar cane and he talks about even other farmers and his family and how they've been discriminated against and what that looks like. Uh and-and when we think about that we can get into some of the-the policies and things that we've seen historically that have happened to black people when it comes to discrimination of-of the loans and-and the difficulty on the purposeful difficulty in distributing those loans to these black farms, but this isn't this is an old hat. This isn't things that happen to our grandparents these are things that are actually currently happening now to families and to people um, and that's what this young man is talking about on-on the-the 1619 project which was I mean it's-it's a really good lesson it's-it's long but it's a really good lesson where he shares his story um, but with that being said and knowing that this discrimination is not this-this racial discrimination which makes it racism because it's coming from a place of power is not it's not an individualized thing it is very systemic because it is coming from the systems that are put into place that are that are supposed to be guiding and governing our country um, and knowing that we had-we had a really big win some years ago with um, the Pigford case right and so uh, what does that look like or do what does that look like now that we are having more conversations because I saw that Leo had actually mentioned having more conversations around reparations and um, being able to help black farmers as we as we see more people trying to reclaim land and things like that. Are there any things that you can speak to um, Representative Brant ,that we might be doing here in Ohio?

>>Rep. Brant: So it's still very problematic even when we look at the American Rescue Act where it was money that was supposed to go out for payments for black farmers and I'm gonna just be honest with you white farmers had a problem with it. And people are not understanding the need of equity and

what's happening when particularly when it comes to farming and people sued the Biden Administration because they say we don't want these black people receiving this money. And so the bigger picture of just even looking how the history is where we've had a million farmers at one time back in the 1920s and to go back to now where you have like 50 000 farmers across the United States there is, you know, racism in this space. There are, you know, in equities, there in this space. There's a and the government entities are not helping push the necessary policies to make sure this is happening um, even when you look at the different deals like the justice for black farmers and how it is not received a floor vote to be pushed out of the Senate um, it was a bill that was introduced by senator Cory Booker, but has not received the votes to be pushed out of the senate like a very simple bill to bring equity for black farmers because there is so much racism is so entwined within our system that is sometimes is preached like it's okay with how things are happening within the policy sector of government. Um, so it's just it's very just problematic that even when we set up systems to particularly help-help deal with the equity, that there are a lot of roadblocks that stop it from occurring

[inaudible]

>>Julialynne: Okay we uh, we do what we see and uh, I used to tell people, you know, I understand the stock market because we didn't sit around the table talking about stocks and bonds when I was growing up and that's something I have to learn separately and it's the same thing um, for-for agriculture in terms of if the youth don't see it, they don't know that's a viable option. And so when we talk about pathways I was recently involved in the um, facilities review committee for the Columbus City School Board and what's very interesting uh, uh, one of the issues that came up was very interesting is that uh, funding from the state of Ohio increases with size. So in order for the city to get a sufficient funding not to go to the-the, you know, the voters and-and you know and get more uh, a bond issue through that way, then you have to get the money from the State of Ohio. But the State of Ohio will only give money if the elementary school is 600, the middle school is 800, and a high school is 1,200. And programs go along with size. So if I have a if I'm principal of a high school with 800, I actually cannot have agriculture as part of my programming. It only comes in for a school that is 1200 or more. And so many of the uh, schools in the historically African American communities are the smaller schools because they're the older buildings. And so even if we get programming follows size and follows structure. And so we really have a lot of discussion, have to have a lot of discussion, in order to ensure that our children actually see. Uh, the other part for me is if we-we if we if we don't do that within the school how do we do that in the community and be able to support and uh, um, you know so that they actually again see this either attached to a community garden or attached to a uh, a social service agency or-or what have you. So we have to be really creative in making sure it's uh, it's seen by us all. The second point I'll make this fairly quick is the-the American Rescue Act. I just want to underline that not only was it about funding for farmers, it was also about uh, providing more support to HBCUs so that they would have a stronger agricultural um, discipline academic program. And um, there was all there were awful funds to uh, increase the extension agents so that and-and so that and very often the extension agents come in at a fairly high level. They assume you already know x y and z and so the discussion was really about making sure the extension agents come in really at ground level to really help people understand really very basic fundamental issues in developing um, the land. So I'll stop there. August.

>>August. Yeah I'll-I'll continue on with the American Rescue Act uh, since that's where we are right now. Um, I-I recently read something pretty disheartening about it um, it was I mean similar it's the same thing that um, Miss Juanita is talking about um, you know that we have this American Rescue Act. They say we're gonna, you know, we're gonna help black farmers we realize we did you wrong. Our bad. We're gonna help you out. It is like it's so personally cynical if you ask me, you know, they even sent out and people got letters, you know. Oh my gosh my debt is gonna be forgiven. Oh thank God. You know, this is finally what I've needed. And white people said absolutely not. Like they think it is racist to say that black people need this and they lobbied hard um, and you know one like they do. It's, you know, making it more about economics than race which you know in an ideal world that would be just fine but um, in our world that-that means that uh, John Boyd who is, I promise this will make sense. John Boyd who is he founded the National Black Farmers Association. Um, on this he said whenever black people get thrown into the pot with everybody else, we always lose. Um, so that's exactly what happened with all of this lobbying is it became, you know, we can't focus on you but we'll throw you in there and you'll get what you get. And now many of those black farmers that got that letter are not getting their debt forgiven. Why? Um, because in order to have your debt forgiven you have to have a direct loan from the FSA. Um, that doesn't; like the definitions of what they are is not as important as knowing that you know you get the loan from the FSA because they trust you. Otherwise, if you have to get a guaranteed loan, maybe you guys know more about this than. I do I just learned about loans recently but um, uh, the guaranteed loans come from the bank. Um, and the banks didn't want the government just forgiving all, you know, they want their money. They want, you know, black people to be in debt to them. So banks lobbied um, and so now you've got white people and banks lobbying and boom, you know, a bunch of black people with guaranteed loans aren't getting their debt forgiven because they weren't trusted by the FSA and the banks don't want to help them out. Um, so you know when we talk about you know their systems, it's racism. There's institutions. You know, there's, you know, xyz my-my great grandfather that I was talking about who has had a farm and the reason there's no Taylor Family Farm in New Buffalo, Michigan anymore is because of I-94 you know um, it's you know. It's-it's institutions and um, so I have like a billion and one notes but you know I'll stop I'll stop there um, just recognizing how much of, you know, we are making noise which I think is forcing them to at least acknowledge the conversation um, which in my view the positive on that is we can hold them accountable to their words. Um, do they honor that? I don't know, but you know they're saying they want to do xyz, they want to help black people, they want to be doing more. So I'll hold you to that.

>>Yolanda: Absolutely um, so I want to, I just want to acknowledge some of the things because this chat is-is going crazy just a little bit which I'm-I'm-I'm happy to see. Um, one of the last comments here says unfortunately many don't see the difference between equality and equity. Uh, and they say look you have the same opportunities we do so why are you complaining instead of seeing all of the barriers to accessing the same services that white-white farmers have had for decades. Absolutely true Samantha, and um, we also have a couple of um, questions that came up in here as well and so um, one of the things what someone had mentioned in thinking of the-the complex history when it comes to agriculture you have everything from slavery to even something that as amazing as the Ohio State University is-is, it's a Land Grant Institution and so they we're complicit in some of this taking of the lands of people. Right? To be able to build this amazing what is amazing university but they're-they're

complicit in this-this land grab, right?Um, push-outs from USDA programs um, and how do how do we work with that so this is a twofold question because I got I saw a couple of folks in the comments I want to make sure that I pulled them right correctly here um, but one person was asking about the space of um, kind of this reclaiming the space of agriculture with younger generations and how it has been both in the spaces that it's it exists in when you look at urban spaces like King Lincoln District and Bronzeville um, how they've been gentrified and how some of the this work and even the space that you might be in August um, with OEFFA have been gentrified and put into this space of-of a white um, elite space. And it makes it very difficult so what does that look like for-for black people to gain access in those spaces as well in this-in this reclamation, right? And it was like and any of you can speak to that or your thoughts and-and your view um, also I was like I just want to make sure I'm...

yeah so I just want to bring that up and-and what-what are you seeing and what are your thoughts around that in this space of, I guess, creating a space of food sovereignty for black communities but the access, the barriers that are existing um, in-in [inaudible] the accident I'm just trying I'm trying to put all these questions together and reform them into one question.

>>Julialynne: No-no don't-don't-don't-don't Yolanda, don't!

>>Yolanda: Okay, Okay, I'll let it be.

[inaudible]

>>Julialynne: We'll see where it goes.

>>Yolanda: that works for me too.

>>Julialynne: For a uh, um, you know, I wear a lot of different hats and one of the hats I wore for a while was as a research assistant for the Ohio Farmers Market Network and part of my responsibility was just collecting data around [clears throat] diversity within this space. And if you remember when I started I talked about the food that was brought from Africa because it was indigenous to Africa to the Americas and so part of the discussion with within with the farmers markets was to say, you know, diversity comes in all forms, shapes, and sizes and it's and yes it's about who comes to your market but it's also about what do you have in your market that attracts them. And so if you actually have okra where you're going to get more black people to your market. And they didn't think about food as having some kind of ethnic connotation. Um, we say all right and it's not just about African-Americans, it's also about Africans and there's a very large, you know, Columbus, Ohio, where I am there's a very large African demographic representing key populations throughout the continent. So what do they eat and how does your market support what they eat and then how do you have a discussion so that other issues are

addressed? Uh, um, you know, one of the things I you know really had to uh, you know, be people over the head with is whoever I am I shouldn't have to ask each and every vendor am I allowed here. And what I mean by that is if I'm a uh, EBT, electronic benefits person, whether whatever it is whether it's WIC or senior or whatever, I should know as I approach the market or I approach the vendor, I should know whether or not these benefits are accepted. I shouldn't have to ask each and every time, you know, am I welcome here? Because that's what it is and you don't demand that of other people. Other people assume that they are welcome that you know their cash or their uh, cash what is it cash app [laughter] or whatever it is is accepted. And so there are a lot of different ways in which, you know, you show whether or not your space is welcoming and in-in-in terms specifically uh, for gentrification, we still have what, you know, many of us in the community you know regard as the um, a legacy residents or heritage residents, you know, and generally these are the older African American families who were there uh, as opposed to the younger white coming in as part of this gentrification but they're also African Americans coming in with money and a disconnect from the culture because that's really what we're talking about. And so uh, when I and again I began I said well I'm third generation and I remember my grandparents having my maternal grandparents having a guard in a backyard garden at 22nd and Mount Vernon. Then um, and then when my parents had a-a garden where we lived really two places since then on a bride and now you know um, there's always been a garden. And so it is how do we go back to that history and that culture in this particular space and show people where there's a-a-a narrative that extends, you know, multiple generations to show that we have grown? And then, you know, as I said again just encourage people to grow something even if it's a pot on your back porch.

>>August: Um, I-I remember, wow, I don't know why I decided to go after Miss Julia Lynne, but um, maybe it's because I'm-I'm inspired by her. So this is whenever you ask like you know this has become a kind of an inaccessible space, especially, you know, urban agriculture has become kind of trendy so a lot of there's a lot of whiteness in the spaces now um, and it becomes more expensive, more exclusive, harder to get land, you know. How do we gain access to that? We don't. And we don't want to, and I there have been times where I've been in uh, meetings with other forces in black agriculture and, you know, they have an idea that I'd say if I was with any other group of people I would think this is outlandish. Like what? But because I'm with this group of people. I know we're gonna get it done, and, you know, it's not, I mean sure to you know sometimes to survive, to-to make an income, to, you know, network or whatever, you have to have you do have to gain access to some of those more white dominant dominated spaces. Um, but for the most part there is-there's kind of a way to stick your foot in and say we-we deserve to be doing this and it's your duty to be helping us as well. Um, and that's kind of how I view my role at OEFFA I mean it is-it is OEFFA is a very wonderful and very sincere organization, and it is very white. But they're very resourced. So what I see is, you know, non-profits do not own money and we get a lot of government money too. So especially we are not the keepers of government money um, so I see my role as finding ways to redistribute these resources that we are kind of holding unfairly as a non-profit um, and making sure that whenever you know my community comes in and says, you know, we-we want to do this thing how can you support us, I'm like, okay, I've got this bank of resources that, you know, we can help make this happen. And I will stop there.

>>Rep. Brent: There was a point that was just made in the chat about making sure things are just accessible and how we do that across the state. That is why, you know, elections matter, and who we have, and the General Assembly which makes made of the Ohio House and Ohio Senate really matters when it comes to access to be able to allow everyone who has different forms of payments to be able to access our farmers market. So those are those barriers if we talk about equity versus equality um, that if we're all trying to get everybody to the goal. Um, if you talk about kids in school, one child you might just need to give them a pencil because they know exactly what they need to do because they don't have any type of stipulation. They know the information. Their-their dad taught them. Their granddad taught them. Their mama taught them. Their cousin taught them. And then another child you might need a tutor. You might need a follow-up phone call. You might need to sit them down with a therapist. They might need a new bed so that's what we talk about equity versus equality because everybody's needs to get to that goal is very different so we have to right-size it to get everybody there. So one of the things, even when you talk about being in this space, is also talking about capital. Access to capital. If, you know, if people are having problems with land, you know, they're definitely not going to have the money to get the seeds, the equipment um, and so just even having that access to capital is very important. Right now at the Ohio, in the General Assembly, we have a bill that's the first time farmers tax credit. I think it's a great bill, but there's a but. I tell people not to get too excited. You have to have at least five acres of land to qualify for it. So we as a state about to be giving all this money out to farmers but you have to have five acres of land. You know who disproportionately don't have five acres in the land is our urban farmers which consists of a lot of African-Americans um, where you see those different hoop farms and different, you know, smaller farms um, within our urban communities and so that exempts a lot of people from having access to a full state program that's about to get passed out of the senate and that's the first time farmers tax credits. So even when you talk about spaces like that, like how we're still making policy that's happening in 2022. This is not something that happened decades ago when you talk about your great grandma was living. This is a policy that's being implemented in 2022 at the um, the General Assembly within Ohio House. So, we just really have to look at that if we're really pushing for equity and all these different spaces and making sure equity is also in how people get capital, how they are receiving tax credits, how they are being protected with their land, too, within this space.

>>Yolanda: With that, what-what do you think that um, when it comes to the folks who are who it is their job to speak for the communities, right, just as you do um, what would be the best way that you think that we could work toward being able to have more equitable access to programs to capital to resources to be able to support these smart smaller agricultural programs that are typically black and brown folks?

>>Rep. Brent: There's been so many spaces of tables that I've been at where I might have been the only one and it's a fight against sometimes major universities. I don't want to shout anybody out but sometimes this fight against major universities or major entities that benefit from these policies not being in effect. So we have to constantly be at the table and it can't just be one of us. Like I can't sit at the table by myself and say "well we made it girl, it's I'm here and I'm gonna represent all of us." We also have to have those allies who are willing to say like no! This is not right. If we're gonna have a tax

credit for first-time farmers, you know, my friends who have the-the hoop house who are over here making hops which are used for beer, which don't need a lot of land to grow and be successful, also should be able to benefit from the first time farmers tax credit too. So just of having multiple voices at the table um, and then having multiple voices in different parts, you know, republicans, democrats, independents, they have to come from all different facets to to have that and then just-just be willing to have those hard conversations like why, you know, and how this could improve our economy if we would just add more equity to this space. But a lot of this is-is rooted in racism. I know for some people that might not be the pretty answer that they would like to hear but a lot of it's just rooted in racism and it's so institutionalized within our system. We think it's normal.

>>Julialynne: You know, and it's interesting in 20 what is this 2021 uh, it hasn't happened in '22 years simply because I haven't been out the house that much, but um, how many times, August, have we like the day before okay we don't want to be the only one at this meeting. Are you gonna go to this meeting? Or, [laughter] you know, I mean we really have to-to-to check our team to make sure we don't only as ones you know um, it's-it's-it's crazy and so um, and that's part of why I took on another kind of part-time job recently um, to develop community advocates and um, they said look, you know, and it's for um, people who are in communities experiencing health disparities because of food insecurity. Well, that's pretty broad, right? Um, and it's to develop uh, 20 people to begin to address policy issues around whatever the particularity of this health disparity is in their community. And I've got six months to do it, but you can tell it's a dream job for me because it's really helping people understand, you know, you know, making a plan, identifying the issue. You know, making a plan. Go have the consultation within the community, you know, coming up with how or what you want to address and then helping them to do it and being able to move into a space and be able to articulate what it is that your concern is. And so because and I took it because I'm tired again of being the only as one it's another way of succession planning having people who can step forward and address some of the policy issues. Um, and I want to just briefly uh, pull something else in because it is the Moritz College of Law and we have to have a very brief discussion about decedents estates or wills of the states, okay? Because this is a crucial part of this whole discussion and it's still not too late. And this is-is error property. One of the major reasons that we uh, uh-uh-uh-uh have this severe decline is because as people moved from the great migration out of the south um, connections weren't necessarily kept with various family members or if they were when decisions came when it came time to make decisions about the land because of the death of someone, very often people said "oh do what you want. I don't care. I'm not coming back." And, unfortunately, a lot of that land moved into the hands of the dominant society for various reasons or it became a-a so tied up in terms of being reduced in size so it may have started as three or four hundred acres and there were, you know, farms of significant size, you know, down to 10 acres or five acres per person. So, in order to get a sizable productive, you know uh-uh-uh, acreage, people need to knit this land together. And so we have people uh, like Savi Horn in North Carolina who really dedicated, you know, themselves the past few years to saying how do we successfully track land and the-the-the loss of land through um, you know, through the uh, um, estate process um, and then begin to be able to put it back together. And so there this is still a fairly successful project in some areas, less successful than others, but it is still possible to recoup land through knitting together, you know, this air property. And so that's something that uh, some of the the-the-the law students may want to take on as an internship here in Ohio.

>>August: Yeah, I was just seeing I saw some comment basically getting around like you know how can we help. Um, I-I just wanted to plug one thing, something that we're um, like focusing on at OEFFA but also just uh, generally a thing that people in-in our community are working on is a lot of land transfer. And I did not realize, you know, until recently that tran the transfer of land, you know, especially if it's not in family even if it is in the family, is-is quite the process and it's-it's a legal process too um, so if any if any of you are lawyers um, and this is something that you're interested in um, it can be really powerful to, you know assist, with land transfer especially when it's, you know, think about some, you know, white landowner who doesn't want to farm anymore and doesn't want the land and is willing to transfer it on to-to black people, black, you know, indigenous other people of color um, like I said that's huge and we need I mean unfortunately fortunately I don't know um, we need the law for that. Um, and second um, same with, you know, the lawyers are just people who are interested in policy. Um, I know we're-we're really trying to tackle a lot of issues with soil health um, recognizing that, you know, like everything's kind of, you know, starts with the soil. The soil is the intermediary between, you know, life up here and life down there and um, yeah that's just a big a big project that OEFFA has kind of been working on um, but I know it's a it's a big issue or a concern that's been brought up in the community a lot um, especially when you talk about urban areas that you have to remedy the soil a lot before you can even grow and we're really trying to make that um, as grass roots as possible. As grassroots as it should be. So yeah, I just wanted to plug a couple of those things because I feel like people with a law- and policy-oriented mind might be able to contribute to something like that.

>>Yolanda: Awesome. I'm I will say I know to one of the things that um, Julialynne was speaking to around the um, the air, the error rates and estate laws. I know that there is an organization called farms and-and that-that they are doing a ton of work and helping to represent their it was started by a lawyer, a young woman who was a lawyer who was trying to help families to be able to find paperwork because when we're thinking of this this issue of systemic racism, these folks oftentimes sometimes you have folks who are in families uh, where they and they received land um, but maybe were not literate enough to be able to have a written will um, or an estate or for folks who might who even besides the lack or literacy or having literacy, just don't have the actual tangible paperwork because they didn't have access to a lawyer. But there are all of these things that the systemic racism passes down that makes it so when that land is available um, that it has been taken over unfortunately by eminent domain um, by-by the, you know, and then you have-you know you have universities who might end up acquiring that land or you have communities that end up acquiring that land who end up turning it, you know, into a high school just like we have here in central Ohio. When you look at Upper Arlington and the high school that is there that they are now naming unfortunately for um, you know for-for the man who owned that land, who owns a significant amount of land in that area, and had a familial burial ground there that is now what is where the high school is, right? Um, so you have situations like this where you don't just because of not being able to find a piece of paper it was easily passed over. So in thinking of some of those things, I will share hopefully with the recording I do want to share a list of resources because there are a number as we're talking about also folks in purchasing land or if they're looking to figure out what to do with their land when they do pass on themselves and being able to-to allow it to be part of agricultural commons, right? And so there are a number of agricultural commons groups that I've seen emerge probably in the last uh, five to ten years that are specific to BIPOC communities for folks that

look like us uh, that are working with folks who are, you know, they're-they're passing on and they-they want to know what best ways to support our communities. Um, so I can definitely share that so that it can be shared out in that space. Um, I was like and then there was one more part that I think I wanted to share um, but I do see that there are some things that are coming in as well for the um. Okay Leo had shared some information about the remainder of today um, so I do want to make sure that folks are paying attention to that for kind of the networking session where we have a little bit more space where folks can kind of interact and we can do some small rooms uh, as well as the discussion on I am Not Your Negro as well so um, it looks like Jackie had mentioned kind of what you were talking about August, and many farmers transitioning and not really having folks who are interested in taking over the farm and yes. So absolutely and there are definitely some spaces. Um, we also even right here in Ohio we have some amazing work that's being done. I know out of Yellow Springs with Aguaría who have their um, they have their farmer fellowship program. their regenerative farmer fellowship program which uh, is open to all but specifically uh, are targeting um, underrepresented minorities um, so both black uh, BIPOC communities, black, indigenous people of color, LGBTQ+ like there's focusing specifically on these communities to be able to help them to find ways not only to acquire the land, to be able to get the education, to be able to farm, and using regenerative practices um, and accessing the resources that they need to become a thriving business, and so I think that that's really amazing. Something that we have right here in our own backyard uh, we were able to have a couple of those folks on their panel with the Ohio environment the OSU Environmental Professionals Network a few months ago um, to talk a little bit about that program and what some of the other things that we are doing as well um, and August, absolutely throw it out there. I saw your comment. Yes, all of the things to say about racial healing and how it relates to yes.

>>August: Yeah, so I usually don't have a lot to say about racial healing and how it relates to white people, but um, today I do. Um, I was really thinking about this um, and I can't see everybody I'm on my phone so I can't even see the whole gallery um, but I would assume that there is a lot of white people here um, and I think what's necessary to racial healing is that white people acknowledge they have a race. Um, you know, people talk about the-the violence of whiteness, how it's so pervasive, how it's, you know, and that is this what has become whiteness, you know. Um, that's like-like sounds so academic. What I really just am meaning to say is that before, you know, everybody got lumped into being white similar to how before we got lumped into being black we had nationalities, we had you know uh, we had big distinctions in our culture through a different practice whatever-whatever um, and now, you know, it's just white and-and that can kind of be used in-in a lot of powerful yet often violent ways. Um, and whenever I hear people talk about healing race like racial healing it's usually, you know, talking to black people and other people of color, you know, telling to look back. We go to our history. I go on ancestry.com and go back as far as I can. um, try to like reconnect with you know something. Um, but I don't really hear a lot of white people, you know, going on ancestry.com and looking back and, you know, finding out that their ancestors had slaves and, you know, all of the, I mean we know it's true. I just think a lot of people don't want to acknowledge that hard truth, but if, you know, if we're constantly asking black people to re-remember that we were slaves, I feel like, you know, in order to to move forward at all, white people have to acknowledge that they were slave owners um, and yeah I especially, and this is the last thing I'll kind of say on the history um, is I was digging through the archives which I enjoyed doing um, and learned uh, from someone's dissertation from Ohio State that he wrote in like

1913 um, that when Ohio became Ohio back in 1803 at their, you know, little constitutional convention, they only outlawed slavery by one vote. Um, so we were one vote away from, you know, having legal slavery in Ohio. So, you know, what does that say about the attitudes that were there at the time and how those have, you know, maintained through, you know, the history that we're living now. Um, so when I say, you know, look back, I know you can, you know, because um, I've done it and I've been surprised. Um, you might do it and feel uncomfortable um, but, you know, race can't just mean everybody who's not white um, because I feel like that kind of gives you a pass and we all deserve we will not deserve, we all need to be a little bit uncomfortable with this. Um, that's how we that's how we go forward.

>>Yolanda: Thank you so much for that August, Um, I really I appreciate that a lot and it made me think of this quote that I had pulled um, from the side from an indigenous uh, artist. She's actually indigenous to Australia but the context still bears the same truth and she says if you have come here to help me, then you are wasting your time, but if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. And I-I think that that's kind of the-the thought um, that I-I want to leave us with uh, and I think it kind of it ties into what you were saying there August. So we still have a few more moments uh, before we need to kind of.

>>Julialynne: Okay, I've got two quick points. One, I don't know this is, you know, I don't consider racial healing. I consider it the way you should live and that is just to always ask why and don't stop at the one answer. Remember the three-year-old, the two-year-old, when they were the most irritating, and they would say well why, and then you'd answer they say yeah, but why, and then they'd answer and then, but why? Well, we need to go back and be that three-year-old and when we look at a map and we see where farmer markets are located, we need to ask, well why? Why aren't they actually in historically African-American um, uh, areas, and then well, but why? And I know that uh-uh-uh, you know, we have to just keep going, peeling back the onion until we get to a very fundamental answer. Because very often, the first answer is just too easy and we accept it at face value and move on because that's the way it is. No. But why is it the way it is? And keep going. That's number one. And number two: challenge the gatekeepers. And I'm like if I haven't challenged a gay keeper you know in a month, [cough] something's wrong. I'm not doing my job. Because, you know, uh-uh, that's where the power is. [cough] Sorry, and [cough] when um, [cough] I'm sorry. I know when I began the Bronzeville um, Growers Market it was at the time of 2018. Those of you in Columbus may remember that the Kroger's on Cleveland had closed and there was a big political brouhaha and people were really upset and they were like, oh, we have to have a market, you know. We haven't had a grocery store and um, here on the near east side we were like well we still haven't had a grocery store in 20 years. Why is Linden getting all this attention and uh, you know, folks came together and we said, well, we can't put a Kroger's can't be open, but we can put a farmer's market up there. At that same time. I was actually in the process of developing the Bronzeville Growers Market and so I went and I said, well uh, they were putting forty thousand dollars into creating a market, and I said well could I have like two. That would help me get started. And literally-literally, you know, the white women, the liberal white women in charge, literally looked me in my face and said it is not your time. You have to wait because in terms of addressing, you know, needs for African-Americans in Columbus, we're putting energy in our focus into Linden and the

east side will have to wait. But you can imagine how I felt because I was just like I walked out the door and I said if it's me and two tomatoes, it's me and two tomatoes. And this year we will celebrate our fifth year of hosting the market and the Linden market closed after two years because it was not organic. It was top down without an understanding of the needs of the community and who was responsible, whereas Bronzeville has grown from the bottom up. Challenge the gatekeepers!

>>Yolanda: Do you have any parting thoughts Representative Brent?

>>Rep. Brent: As long as we talk about agriculture or farming or land, it will always intertwine what's happening on within government no matter if it's the federal, state, county, municipal level, and some, and everyone always tell people agriculture is always relevant because everyone eats. Just on a very basic level. Even if you are not concerned about how pharma is affecting people or where people are getting their. you know. their food from. everyone eats and everyone should be concerned about what's going inside their body, where products are coming from. Being a local Clevelander, I shout out to highness which is um, their headquarters in my district, and in their produce section they always show where all their food comes from. So a lot of the farmers that they use are local farmers and they intentionally say, hey this is from you know Mayfield Heights, Ohio or this is from Berea, Ohio, which are all areas in here in the Cleveland greater Cleveland area. So we just have to be intentional about where we shop, who we're shopping with, and what policies are being put forth because elections matter. I know sometimes people don't always think about that when we think about this space, but elections do matter because elections matter on how things happen with banking, where tax credits are going out, and who is receiving access and who's having to break down the door for access. So we always have to think about that and everyone needs to be at have a seat at the table, Um, it's a shame that, you know, at the state house there had never been a African-American ranking member on agriculture which is crazy to think because people didn't always understand the value of us being at the table but we deserve to be at every table. So if we want to, you know, break down those barriers, people have to be at the table and have to be consistent in this space and being in a space, I see a lot of the same faces, but they're all fighters so we all have to figure out how can we support those fighters because people get tired of just fighting alone. We need to fight together and work instead of working like a bunch of fingers we need to work like a fist and be more powerful with it so my name is Juanita Brent. I just happen to be a State Representative. Thank you so much

>>Yolanda: Thank you all so, so much just for taking the time out today to share both your passion and the knowledge that you have uh, around how what does it look like from your different perspectives I guess is what I'm saying. Is to be able to reconnect or how you've reconnected to the space of agriculture and then sharing how you see it being able to benefit our community so I thank you all so, so much. Just because agriculture is something that is near and dear to my heart um, and something that I continue to push forward and want to do more to educate folks that look like me and little people that look like me uh, to get involved in. So I-I just I thank you all. Um, I didn't know if Dr Taylor or uh, Dr Lechman have any final words or anything else to share before we close out?

>>Dr. Lechman: I just want to say what an amazing panel. I so appreciate all of you taking time to be with us today. Such insight. I'm just overwhelmed. I mean August, uh, Representative Brent, Julia Lynne, I mean, it's just you all are amazing. Thank you so much for the work that you do and for taking time to be with us today.