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### ***Acknowledgement of Thanks***

*This white paper is a combined effort of AgriSafe Network staff, and the AgriSafe Board of Directors as an immediate action following [AgriSafe’s Statement on Racism, Diversity and Inclusion](#). We would like to thank each member for your input, feedback and edits to complete this white paper.*

*AgriSafe Staff: Sarah Dauterive, MLIS, Linda Emanuel, RN, Ansley Fey, MPH, Charlotte Halverson, RN, BSN, COHN-S, Tara Haskins, DNP, RN, Stacey Jenkins, BS, Knesha Rose-Davison, MPH, and Natalie Roy, MPH.*

*Special thanks to Dr. Earl Nupsius Benjamin-Robinson, Deputy Director of the Office of Community Partnerships & Health Equity at the Louisiana Department of Health for serving as the lead discussant during the Racism and Agricultural Health Think Tank on November 12, 2020.*

*For questions, comments or additional information on this topic please contact, Natalie Roy, Executive Director at [nroy@agrisafe.org](mailto:nroy@agrisafe.org) or Knesha Rose-Davison at [krose@agrisafe.org](mailto:krose@agrisafe.org) . We also welcome your feedback, experiences and any resources on this matter.*



## METHODOLOGY

AgriSafe distributed an invitation via email to participate in a Think Tank style webinar. The invitation was emailed to AgriSafe's general contact list as well as individual, targeted invites to BIPOC organizations, ag leaders, and representatives of other special populations. Invitations were sent to about 5,000 contacts with encouragement to share with colleagues.

The plan for the webinar event included a brief welcome, 20-minute content share by Dr. Benjamin-Robinson to frame the issue and provide context on defining racism in the United States, followed by information gathering from the participants.

Data collection occurred through the GoToWebinar webinar hosting software. Registration and polling questions were used to collect basic demographic information. Participants had the option to use the app-based software, Poll Everywhere, to answer open ended questions on their mobile device. The Poll Everywhere responses were captured and shared on screen for participants to contribute to and follow the conversation. GoToWebinar chat was available for those who wanted to submit comments or questions in that format. Lastly, evaluation feedback was collected via a pop-up post webinar survey.

The questions created by the AgriSafe staff intended to gather information from people working in ag. The questions were developed to explore the impact of racism on health, identify barriers, systems of support that currently exist, and identify strategies for combating racism in rural and agricultural settings. As a team, AgriSafe submitted questions for review, voted on relevance, and determined which best matched the scope of the Think Tank. The questions asked during the Think Tank were:

- What are barriers to racial equality and accepted diversity in agriculture?
- What health conditions or health disparities are impacted by racism?
- What are some examples of actions agricultural health and safety professionals can employ to combat racism?
- What future training or webinar regarding diversity and racism would be helpful for your work in agriculture?
- How can residents and small business owners in rural communities make an impact and address this issue?
- What economic challenges have you experienced personally as a Black, Indigenous or Person of Color Ag Producer or observed in minority populations?

## RESULTS

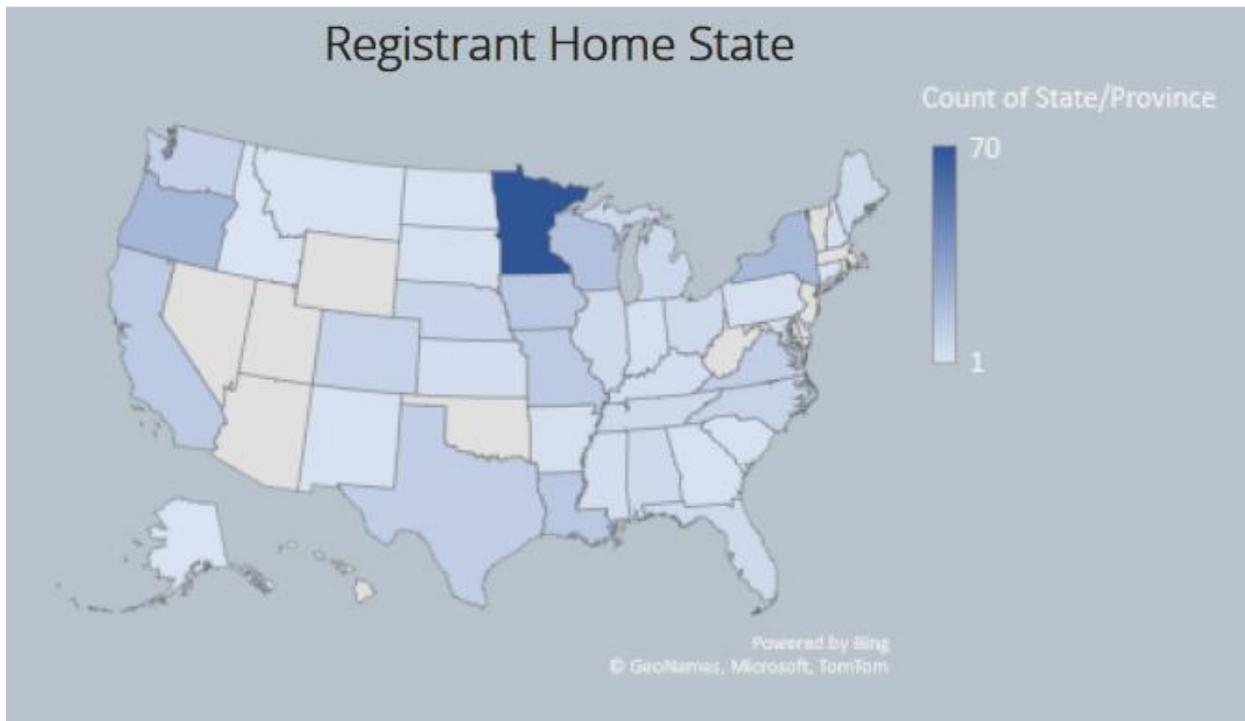


Image 2. Registrants Home State for Racism and Agricultural Health Think Tank November 12, 2020.

United States map above shows the home state of each person who registered for the Think Tank. Darker color indicates a higher number of registrants. There was at least one registrant from 37 US states as well as Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico.

### Participant Demographics

Three hundred thirty-four people registered for the Think Tank. One hundred seventy people (51% of registrants) joined in on the day of the live event.

Participants were asked to describe their gender. One hundred sixty-eight people responded; 52% identified as female, 18% identified as male, 2% as cisgender female, and 29% did not offer a response.

Participants were asked to identify their race. An open text box was used to allow participants to enter their own descriptions for race.

7 African American  
1 American Indian  
1 Anglo

4 Asian  
4 Black  
1 Native American

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17 Caucasian	1 Mestizo
1 Caucasian/African	1 Mexican
1 German/Japanese	1 Spanish
3 Hispanic	68 White
1 Latino	55 Not available

Participants were asked to identify their ethnicity. An open text box was used to allow participants to enter their own descriptions for ethnicity.

1 African	1 Italian-Irish
1 African American	1 Japanese
1 Africa, British, Native	1 Jewish
7 American	1 Kawaik'kome
1 Anglo-German	5 Latinx
1 Anglo-Irish-Scottish	1 Mexican
1 Asian	1 Mexican American
5 Black	2 Mixed
3 Caucasian	11 Non-Hispanic
1 Chicano	1 Northern European
1 Dutch	1 Norwegian-Italian
1 Eastern European	1 Portuguese
4 European	1 Puerto Rican
5 European American	1 Rural Southern White
1 German-Norwegian American	1 Scandinavian
5 Hispanic	1 Swedish-German
1 Indian	1 Ukrainian
1 Indigenous	7 White
1 Irish	76 No Response
1 Irish American	

## Participant Responses

**Q. What are the barriers to racial equality and accepted diversity in agriculture?** (not in any particular order)

- Lack of Access
  - o Land
  - o Financial resources
- Imbalance of Power
- Inequality
  - o Social determinants of health (housing, healthcare, education, where you live)
- Unjust socioeconomic policy
- Cultural bias
- Ineffective communication

**Q. What health conditions or health disparities are impacted by racism? (listed by frequency)**

- Mental Health - 37
- Healthcare access - 24
- All of them - 19
- Nutrition - 14
- Other chronic conditions - 9
- COVID 19 - 8
- Heart Disease/Hypertension - 7
- Diabetes - 6
- Maternal health -4
- Education - 4
- Insurance access or affordability - 4
- Financial resources - 4
- Life span - 3
- Trust - 2
- Lack of healthcare providers of color - 2

**Q. What are some examples of actions agricultural health and safety professionals can employ to combat racism?**

- Education and Awareness
- Communicating and listening with BIPOC communities
- Celebrating and valuing cultural differences through social media, local newspapers
- Revising policies, rules, laws and ordinances, tax structures through institutions and political power.
- Efforts to create collective community events
- Workplace promotion of diversity hiring, leadership with equal pay structures
- Inclusive marketing

Other ideas shared:

- Using local papers to share stories of BIPOC communities and support anti-racist actions
- Support BIPOC producers, buying local
- Share your successes in your rural communities with others as a model

Additional comments:

- "Participating in events for some is a hardship, time is also a privilege"
- "Own our true history, dispel myths underlying patriotism."
- "Banks allowing ag workers to cash their checks"

**Q. What economic challenges have you experienced personally as Black, Indigenous or Person of Color Agri Producer or observed in minority populations? (not listed in any particular order)**

- Disparaging or negative comments
- Discrimination regarding loans (access, interest rates, etc.)

5/12/2021

- Devalued voice or product
- Poor working conditions
- Lack of healthcare access or resources (insurance)
- Lack of accessibility for social resources (housing, food, education)
- Inaccurate assumptions or discounting one's experience
- Lack of opportunity for advancement

## Questions from Think Tank Participants – November 12, 2020

- 1) How would you recommend initiating a conversation about race in the workplace, especially if microaggressions are occurring?
- 2) What are we doing to provide awareness and understanding of Racism in primary and secondary schools -for student, staff, administration and parents?
- 3) I work in safety in Agriculture and often there is a hesitation from workers on trust due to former bad experience. How would you best recommend approaching safety when often it comes off or has come off as enforcement?
- 4) Can you talk about the black experience not being monolithic? Also, the "model minority" narrative that pits communities of color against each other. This was pushed through by various policies of past administrations by awarding various Asian minority communities, though still racist in nature, taking advantage of cultural nuances
- 5) What laws or institutional rules are important to focus on now to help create equitable change? I'm thinking about the overtime exemption for ag workers, hiring policies, etc.?
- 6) How can we address non BIPOC individuals about White Supremacist Culture Norms in organizations?
- 7) Can you talk more about the legacy of slavery and how that relates to the exploitation of ag. workers in the present day? For example, the migration of black Americans to the North to work as agricultural workers?
- 8) We often lump nonwhite European people into the people of color/BIPOC label. Many countries in central/north & South America, & Asia, "Middle East" have racial hierarchies and race-based class systems that aren't acknowledged. It appears as though they get the best of both worlds but may hold the same general views of people of African descent as Europeans. How do you manage this, to lift up those that have been historically and geographically discriminated against?

## CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

AgriSafe has examined the issues surround racism, diversity and inclusion in agriculture since August 2020. Our immediate action items included a statement on racism as a public health threat and its impacts on the agricultural workforce. Our second area of action was to host a virtual Think Tank with the goal to recognize racism as a public health crisis and explore the impact of racism on the agricultural workforce. The Think Tank was held November 12, 2020 and this report summarizes the results and any emerging themes for next action steps.

This report aims to address issues of racism and identify ways to promote change for inclusion and diversity through an agricultural health lens. AgriSafe has committed to hosting a series of webinars on the following subjects:

- Creating Cultural Competence in Agricultural Health and Safety Leadership
- Historical Context of Racism in Agriculture
- Populations at Risk (including BIPOC, immigrant and migrant farmworkers, AIAN)
- Mental Health and the Impact of Economic Racism

AgriSafe will continue the process of intentional inclusion aligned with our mission and values. Our next step includes using a tool offered by the American Public Health Association on [Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Action Toolkit for Organizations](#). This guidebook serves as an interactive self-assessment for organizations to integrate Equity- Diversity and Inclusion (E-D-I) best practices into their governance and organizational structure. We encourage our partners and other stakeholders in agricultural health and safety to use this toolkit as well.

Our hope is that each organization will self-assess their cultural, personal and organizational bias to eliminate issues of racism and expand diversity and inclusion. Here are resources that AgriSafe has identified during our reflection. Please consider joining us as we highlight diversity and inclusion in the field of agriculture and its impact on leaders, employers, employees, workers and the broader community.

## RESOURCES

- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: Action Toolkit for Organizations: [https://apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/affiliates/equity\\_toolkit.ashx?la=en&hash=C64BDE9B65A81EFC01C93B8C152024BE556D9E7D](https://apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/affiliates/equity_toolkit.ashx?la=en&hash=C64BDE9B65A81EFC01C93B8C152024BE556D9E7D)
- Racism and Health Info from APHA: <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/health-equity/racism-and-health>
- APHA Policy Statement on structural racism as a public health crisis: <https://www.apha.org/policies-and-advocacy/public-health-policy-statements/policy-database/2021/01/13/structural-racism-is-a-public-health-crisis>
- Commentary from CDC Director on connection of racism and health: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/racism-disparities/director-commentary.html>
- CDC Portal for information on racism and health: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthequity/racism-disparities/index.html>
- Actions taken by the American Medical Association related to racism as a public health threat: <https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/health-equity/ama-racism-threat-public-health>
- An Annotated Bibliography on Structural Racism Present in the U.S. Food System, Eighth Edition: [https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/structural\\_racism\\_in\\_us\\_food\\_system](https://www.canr.msu.edu/resources/structural_racism_in_us_food_system)

# APPENDIX

## Appendix A. Email promotion with Lead Discussant- Earl "Nupsius" Benjamin-Robinson, Dr.H.Sc.



**AgriSafe Virtual Think Tank:  
Racism and Agricultural Health**  
Thursday, November 12, 2020  
12:00 PM- 1:15PM CST



This Think Tank Webinar will address racism as a public health crisis and its impact on the agricultural workforce. Your help is needed to identify, disrupt and dismantle racism to protect the well being of agricultural producers of Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) ethnicities. AgriSafe is committed to fostering dialogue across the nation that results in a racially equitable response to this crisis. Join us for this Think Tank where together we will define the problem and discover solutions to reduce health disparities that are amplified by racism.

[Register Now](#)

**Discussion Leader**



**Dr. Earl Nupsius Benjamin-Robinson,**  
*Deputy Director of the Office of Community Partnerships & Health Equity in the Louisiana Department of Health*

Dr. Benjamin-Robinson led the development of Louisiana's first health equity plan and is thus leading efforts, in LDH, to operationalize health equity protocols and practices agency-wide. Dr. Benjamin-Robinson is a public health practitioner with over 19 years of experience and is adjunct faculty at Xavier University's Public Health Science Program. Since 2015, he's been distinguished by the American Psychological Association as a Health Equity Ambassador and is a practitioner-scholar member of the Health Disparities, Education, Awareness Research & Training (HDEART) Health Equity Scholars and is the Co-founder of The BACH Group - a community and behavioral health consulting firm.

Lastly, Dr. Benjamin-Robinson is an alumnus of Loyola University, the University of Louisiana at Monroe, completed post-graduate work at the University Of Mississippi Medical Center & John Hopkins University, and is a Doctor of Health Science graduate from Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Health Sciences.

AgriSafe Network | 8342 NICC Dr., Peosta, IA 52068

[Unsubscribe \(recipient's email\)](#)

**Appendix B. AgriSafe Statement on Racism Diversity and Inclusion (December 16, 2020)**



## AgriSafe Statement on Racism, Diversity and Inclusion

AgriSafe is a national 501©3 organization representing health and safety professionals who strive to reduce health disparities found among the agricultural community. Our mission is to support a growing network of trained agricultural health and safety professionals that assure access to preventative services for farm families and the agricultural community.

AgriSafe is committed to protecting the health and safety of everyone working in agriculture and especially those who experience racism and other risks that increase vulnerability. Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) experience disproportionate rates of poor health outcomes for physical and mental health. Racism has been identified as a public health crisis by professionals, cities, and municipalities across the nation. Racism impacts social determinants of health by disrupting the distribution of money, power and resources at national and local levels (WHO). For example, BIPOC populations experience structural racism through unfair practices that limit access to financial resources and fair working conditions.

Tackling racism as a public health issue is an important priority for AgriSafe staff, board members and stakeholders. It requires an examination of hidden, sometimes unconscious, biases in nearly every arena of daily life, from labor relationships to health care access. AgriSafe will invest in personal and professional growth in working against multidimensional aspects of racism, seek diversity in our partnerships, board leadership, staffing, and programs. We recognize the need for critical changes in policy and action towards racial justice and call on our partners to join us in creating this transformation.

Sincerely,

AgriSafe Network Staff & Board

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