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Description of document: Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) 2015-2016 Outreach and Engagement Plan

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Source of document: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service  
FOIA Officer  
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Room 2095-S, STOP 0203  
Washington, DC 20250-0203

May 2, 2019

**Delivered via Electronic Mail**

**Re: Final Response to FOIA Request 2019-AMS-00065-F**

This is the final response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, dated December 15, 2018, to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). We received your request in our office on January 31, 2019, which sought a copy of the AMS OUTREACH STRATEGIC PLAN.

The AMS FOIA staff works with subject matter experts across the Agency to locate responsive documents. For this request, a search was conducted within the Public Affairs (PA) office. The PA Office plans, coordinates, executes and evaluates Agricultural Marketing Service communications, enhancing the Agency's brand and protecting its reputation as the trusted authority consumers and stakeholders can rely on to ensure the quality and wholesomeness of agricultural commodities moving into the commercial marketplace. The Public Affairs office works responsibly with news media of all types so that AMS messaging is clearly understood by the Agency's numerous stakeholders and consumers nationwide. AMS' search began on April 3, 2019. Our search provided responsive records in AMS' control on that date.

The search identified eight pages that are responsive to the request. After a thorough review, we have determined that these pages may be released in their entirety. Accordingly, this request is granted in full. Additional information regarding AMS' Strategic Plan can be found via the following link: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/strategic-plan>

This concludes processing of your request. You may appeal our determination within 90 days from the date of this letter. Your appeal should be clearly marked to indicate that it contains a FOIA appeal and include specific reasons why you believe modification of the initial action is warranted. Any such appeal should be addressed to:

Bruce Summers  
Administrator  
Agricultural Marketing Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Stop 0201, Room 3071  
Washington, D.C. 20250-0201

**Request No. 2019-AMS-00065-F**

**Page 2**

If you have any questions about the way this request was handled, please contact Jewell Little at (202) 572-5441 or [jewell.little@usda.gov](mailto:jewell.little@usda.gov). If you have general questions or concerns regarding AMS' FOIA procedures or regulations, please contact our FOIA Public Liaison, Bill Allen, at (202) 720-3785 or via email at [ams.foia@usda.gov](mailto:ams.foia@usda.gov).

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at (202) 741-5770; toll-free at 1-(877) 684-6448; or facsimile at (202) 741-5769.

Thank you for your interest in AMS programs and policies.

Sincerely,

*Mark R. Brook*

Mark R. Brook  
FOIA Officer  
Agricultural Marketing Service

Enclosure

# AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE

## 2015-2016 Outreach and Engagement Plan

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### AMS Mission

*To facilitate the strategic marketing of U.S. agricultural products in domestic and international markets, while ensuring fair trading practices and promoting a competitive and efficient marketplace to the benefit of producers, traders and consumers of U.S. food and fiber products.*

### Executive Summary

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will conduct outreach and engagement activities that emphasize two-way communication with stakeholders so that their concerns are heard and addressed, effective partnerships are established and maintained, and program delivery is enhanced. AMS will also promote diversity within its programs, boards, and committees.

### Alignment to USDA and AMS Strategic Plan

The goals of the AMS outreach and engagement plan cascade from and are in alignment with the Department's efforts to engage low-participating and under-represented stakeholders who produce, handle, manufacture or import a variety of agricultural commodities. The outreach goals also align with AMS' strategic plan as follows:

**AMS Objective 1.1:** Strengthen Relationships with Stakeholders and Understanding of the Agency's Role in Facilitating Agricultural Marketing

**AMS Objective 1.2:** Increase Outreach Efforts by Building and Maintaining Effective Partnerships

Outreach Goal 1: Improve public awareness, understanding and trust of AMS' mission and accomplishments, programs and services.

**AMS Objective 1.3:** Encourage Board and Committee Teamwork and Diversity

Outreach Goal 2: Increase diversity on AMS Boards and Committees.

**AMS Objective 5.1:** Enhance the Procurement Business Model

Outreach Goal 3: Increase participation in AMS programs and services, including commodity procurement initiatives, from small and minority farmers and businesses.

### Targeted Audience

This plan is designed to serve and reach low-participating and underserved populations in rural and urban America, including the following aggregate groups:

- Minority and Traditionally Underserved or Under-Represented Farmers
- New and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers
- Veteran Farmers
- Women Farmers
- Tribal Nations
- Industry Leaders
- Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) (special emphasis on Strike Force counties and Promise Zone areas)
- Land-Grant Universities (1862s, 1890s, 1994s)
- Faith Based Organizations
- State and Municipal Leaders
- Community Planners and Economic Development Organizations
- Rural and Underserved Community Planners/Advocacy Groups
- Targeted Media Personnel and Outlets
- Local Food and Sustainable Agriculture Advocacy Networks
- Research, Education, and Extension Community

### **Overall Strategies**

1. Continue building relationships with organizations and community leaders that work closely with new and beginning farmers and ranchers, traditionally underserved/underrepresented farmers and ranchers, and minority-owned businesses.
2. Introduce potential customers/stakeholders to others who have used AMS programs and services.
3. Arrange educational meetings/conference calls between potential customers/stakeholder and AMS program specialists.
4. Organize informational Webinars, presentations, video conferences and training sessions targeting underserved/underrepresented communities.
5. Make written information available in user-friendly and easy-to-understand formats (including translating information into other languages when deemed appropriate for enhancing outreach or understanding).
6. Conduct quarterly consultations with Tribal Nations.
7. Participate in USDA's Native American Working Group, Asian American and Pacific Islanders Working Group, New and Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Working Group, and StrikeForce Working Group.

**[LEAVE BLANK]**

## Strategic Framework

**AMS Objective 1.1:** Strengthen Relationships with Stakeholders and Understanding of the Agency’s Role in Facilitating Agricultural Marketing

**AMS Objective 1.2:** Increase Outreach Efforts by Building and Maintaining Effective Partnerships

Outreach Goal 1: Improve public awareness, trust, and understanding of AMS' mission and accomplishments, programs and services.

**Strategy:** Engage with Tribes, beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers and ranchers in timely and meaningful consultation on policies that directly affect these populations and to provide services that are unique to their needs.

<u>Performance Metrics</u>	<u>Baseline</u>	<u>Target</u>	<u>Actual</u>
# of stakeholder meetings with organizations and groups that support traditionally underrepresented and underserved farmers and ranchers (e.g., Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Hmong, etc.).	4	6	
# of consultation meetings with Tribes to identify and discuss changing AMS policies and regulations, discuss Grants programs and board member openings	4	6	
# of FMPP/LFPP projects benefitting beginning and socially disadvantaged farmer	55	65	
# of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program projects benefitting beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers	57	60	
% of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program dollars awarded benefitting beginning and socially disadvantaged farmers	4%	6%	
Number of participants registered for Webinars to learn about AMS Programs	2,500	2,700	
Translation of Webinars and other materials for Participants with Limited English Proficiency	2	5	
Market News reports developed targeting small traditionally underserved/underrepresented farmers and ranchers and minority-owned businesses (i.e. grass fed and local foods)	2	4	

**Actions**

AMS will begin a series of stakeholder meetings with organizations and groups that support traditionally underrepresented and underserved farmers and ranchers (e.g., Hispanic, African-American, Native American, Hmong, etc.). We will conduct national workshops and widely disseminate opportunities to educate stakeholders about grant opportunities, as well as opportunities to serve on research and promotion boards. In addition, AMS will translate materials and Webinars to various languages (i.e. Spanish, Korean, Mandarin, and Vietnamese) to reach out to underrepresented populations.



**AMS Objective 1.3:** Encourage Board and Committee Teamwork and Diversity

Outreach Goal 2: Increase diversity on AMS Boards and Committees.

**Strategy:** *Develop partnerships* between USDA, diverse agricultural organizations, Research and Promotion (R&P) boards, and associated nominating organizations to encourage greater diversity on R&P Boards.

<b><u>Performance Metrics</u></b>	<b><u>Baseline</u></b>	<b><u>Target</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
# of partnerships developed to further develop awareness of opportunities to serve on boards/committees	1	1	
# of Research and Promotion Programs diversity training sessions for board members, staff and nominating organizations to make them more sensitive/aware of diversity needs	2	2	

**Actions**

AMS will reach out to R&P boards by developing and providing diversity training for staff, board/industry members, and nominating organizations. The training will assist them in disseminating information about leadership opportunities and encourage interested individuals to serve on boards/committees that administer research and promotion programs.

AMS will also collaborate and communicate with leadership from various groups such as the National Black Growers Council, the Latino Farmers and Ranchers Association, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, 100 Ranchers LLC, the South Dakota Sheep and Wool Growers Association, and others to ensure they understand nomination procedures for the various boards, how to become a certified nominating organization, vacant seats, and existing certified nominating organizations.

**[LEAVE BLANK]**

**AMS Objective 5.1: Enhance the Procurement Business Model**

Outreach Goal 3: Increase participation in AMS programs and services, including commodity procurement initiatives, from small and minority farmers and businesses.

**Strategy:** Increase contract awards to small disadvantaged business by increasing knowledge of and participation in AMS' Commodity Procurement program.

<b><u>Performance Metrics</u></b>	<b><u>Baseline</u></b>	<b><u>Target</u></b>	<b><u>Actual</u></b>
Develop and conduct webinars on “How to Sell Domestic Foods to the USDA” specifically targeting disadvantaged populations	1	1	
Number of potential small business vendors contacted	56	60	

**Actions**

AMS will attend conferences and meetings of targeted populations to disseminate materials and participate in panels discussing how to sell food products to USDA. We will contact and follow up with disadvantaged potential vendors to assure they have opportunities to bid on our food procurement needs.