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## **USDA Leadership and EPA Regional Administrator Co-Host Roundtable Discussion with Underserved and Underrepresented Producers**

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ATHENS, Ga., Feb. 16, 2023 - Yesterday, in recognition of Black History Month, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 Administrator Daniel Blackman and USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) Georgia State Executive Director Arthur Tripp co-hosted a roundtable discussion at Fort Valley State University directly engaging with underserved and/or underrepresented agricultural producers to learn about challenges, concerns and opportunities where the EPA and USDA FSA can provide support.

"The responsibility of feeding, clothing and fueling America is such a tremendous challenge farmers face every day. Additionally, dealing with variables like weather, pests, labor, cost of inputs, and regulatory compliance- underrepresented and underserved farmers face supplemental challenges like disparate access to resources and education. That is why it is so important for us to hear and directly engage with these producers to better understand how we can help and provide support," said EPA 4 Region Administrator Daniel Blackman.

"Farming is inherently risky. It is incredibly important that our producers are aware of all of the resources that the USDA provides," said USDA Farm Service Agency Georgia State Executive Director Arthur Tripp. "From access to capital options, to federal disaster programs, we are proud to support our agricultural producers."

The event was an opportunity to hear from underrepresented stakeholders about challenges and concerns faced, provide information on federal roles and resources, and discuss opportunities where the EPA and USDA FSA can provide assistance and support. In addition to the roundtable, EPA Region 4 signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Fort Valley State University, to demonstrate both parties' commitment to partnership, and the principals met with Fort Valley State University students to discuss federal career opportunities. Finally, EPA Regional Administrator Blackman and State Executive Director Tripp toured a farming operation in Hawkinsville, GA.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. Under the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient

local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy, and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit [usda.gov](https://usda.gov).

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