



## FOOD AND AGRICULTURE REGIONAL MEMBER POLICY COMMITTEE

### THIRD ANNUAL FORUM WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Friday, April 12, 2024  
10:00 am to noon

Optional tour at 9 am and lunch at 12:15 pm

US Department of Agriculture  
Whitten Building  
1400 Jefferson Dr SW  
Washington DC 20004

Virtual meeting connection information for 10 am to noon:

**Zoom link:** <https://www.zoomgov.com/j/1619931126?pwd=SndoSFkvZEYxeUtBUGhkbVZYSjBXUT09>

Meeting ID: 161 993 1126  
Passcode: 966665

*In-person meeting registration is closed.*

#### AGENDA

**9:15 A.M. TOUR OF USDA HEADQUARTERS (OPTIONAL, IN-PERSON ONLY)**

*Dr. Shelby Callaway, Historian, Natural Resource Conservation Service*

FARM members and guests will meet in the Whitten Building for the tour of USDA headquarters.

**10:05 A.M. INTRODUCTIONS**

*Alex Córdova, Deputy Director, Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, USDA*

Reasonable accommodations are provided upon request, including alternative formats of meeting materials.  
Visit [www.mwcof.org/accommodations](http://www.mwcof.org/accommodations) or call (202) 962-3300 or (202) 962-3213 (TDD).

*Councilmember Jon Stehle, Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) Chair*  
*Councilmember Zachary Parker, FARM Vice Chair*  
*Kevin Atticks, Secretary, Maryland Department of Agriculture*  
*Additional speakers invited*

Mr. Cordova will provide a brief welcome.

Chair Stehle will provide a short introduction to FARM and its work, including informal remarks on FARM's Third Annual Forum with the USDA. He will facilitate brief participant introductions.

Vice Chair Parker will introduce Secretary Atticks and other invited speakers to provide remarks.

**10:25 A.M.                    THIRD ANNUAL FARM POLICY COMMITTEE FORUM WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

*Rudy Soto, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs, USDA*

Mr. Soto will provide welcoming remarks, including a high-level overview of USDA's mission areas, agencies, priorities, and footprint in the Metropolitan Washington region.

**10:35 A.M.                    FEDERAL UPDATES AND INFORMATION ON FOOD SECURITY AND FARMING IN METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON**

*Dr. Patty Bennett, Regional Administrator, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Mid-Atlantic Region, USDA*  
*Joseph Parsons, Acting Administrator, National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), USDA*  
*Councilmember Zachary Parker, FARM Vice-Chair*

Dr. Bennett will share updates on key federal programs administered by FNS with and through the region's state departments of education, health, human services and more. She will discuss participation in SNAP, Summer EBT, WIC, school meals, and farmers market nutrition programs, and flag opportunities for local and state governments in DC, MD, and VA to extend the reach of these programs.

Mr. Parsons will give an overview of some of the new information on farms and farmers in the U.S. and the Metropolitan Washington region, as provided in USDA NASS's February release of data from the 2022 Census of Agriculture. There will be time for questions and general discussion.

**11:10 A.M. FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION: RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS**

*Robert Bonnie, Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, USDA  
Dr. Melissa R. Bailey, Associate Administrator, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), USDA  
Jon Stehle, FARM Chair*

Under Secretary Bonnie and Associate Administrator Bailey will provide updates on key federal investments and programs supporting resilient and climate-friendly food systems in Metropolitan Washington related to agriculture, conservation efforts, and local food aggregation, distribution, and marketing. They will explain how USDA works with our region's state and local agencies to support the implementation of these programs; noting future state and regional opportunities that may be of interest.

There will be time for questions and general discussion.

**11:45 P.M. BRIEF MEMBER UPDATES AND ADJOURN FOR INFORMAL NETWORKING**

*Jon Stehle, FARM Chair*

Chair Stehle will ask for any critical staff or FARM member announcements. He will share FARM's appreciation to the USDA for hosting this year's forum, before small group conversations and networking. The meeting will adjourn at 12 pm.

**12:15 P.M. ADDITIONAL NETWORKING AND LUNCH (OPTIONAL)**

Lunch is available for purchase in the USDA cafeteria.

**The next FARM Meeting will be held virtually on Friday, June 14, from 10 am to noon.**