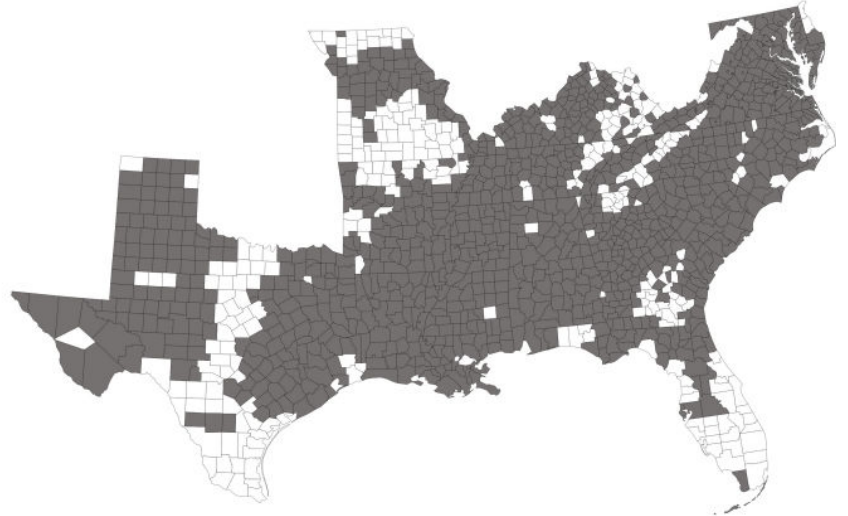


**STATE OF
AFRICAN
AMERICANS IN THE
BLACK
BELT**



LAND, FARMS AND FOOD:

Key Indicators of Black Belt Economic Sustainability

State of African Americans in the Black Belt (SAABB)
Carver Integrative Sustainability Center (CISC)
College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences (CAENS)
Tuskegee University, Alabama

November 2022 | Volume 1

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MESSAGE FROM THE CARVER INTEGRATIVE SUSTAINABILITY CENTER (CISC)

Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the State of African Americans in the Black Belt (SAABB) is a yearly report founded by Tuskegee University and the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund. It is a project of the Carver Integrative Sustainability Center (CISC) which is a science-based research and resource center that focuses on technologies and policies that impact underserved farmers, ranchers, landowners and the communities in which they live. On behalf of the entire staff, it gives me great pleasure to share this inaugural edition.

CISC is dedicated to using innovative and creative methods of improving the condition of men, women and children farthest down. Similarly, SAABB is designed to address the issues specific to the Black Belt Region while at the same time have national impact. It is a partnership of 1890 Land Grant Universities (LGUs), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and community-based organizations led by the Federation.

SAABB's goal is to provide policy makers, community leaders and citizens with research-based information that leads to just and equitable policies that could drive the region's economic development and create an environment that encourages and supports innovation and sustainability. The primary focus areas are agriculture, business/cooperatives, education, employment, food security, health, infrastructure, land tenure, and environmental justice.

It is our hope that this first edition, "Land, Farms and Food: Key Indicators of Black Belt Economic Sustainability" will become a resource for community based organizations, HBCUs and other advocates. We also hope that SAABB will serve as a guide for policy makers as preparations for the 2023 Farm Bill are already underway. In addition we hope the various commissions and authorities that in some way represent the Black Belt Region will find value in SAABB in their research and deliberations.

Finally, we thank all of our partners in this effort: W. K. Kellogg Foundation, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, and the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center at Alcorn University. Further gratitude is extended to our staff: Jerry Pennick, SAABB Editor, Dr. Gloria Bromell Tinubu, Lead Researcher, and our SAABB Research Fellows, Kourtney Sherrod and Dalal Alkordi.

We look forward to your feedback and to sharing the second edition in November 2023!



Dr. Raymon Shange
Director

MESSAGE FROM THE FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN COOPERATIVES/LAND ASSISTANCE FUND

On behalf of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/ Land Assistance Fund, I want to congratulate all those responsible for the first annual report on “The State of African Americans in the Black Belt Region. I am acutely aware that “The State of African Americans in the Black Belt Region” project (SAABB) is the end product of a dream that took root nearly two decades ago and is a prime example of what can be accomplished when community-based organizations and 1890 Land Grant Colleges and Universities work together toward a common goal. SAABB is filling what has always been an information gap as it relates to those sectors that impact the economic growth and independence of the region, such as agriculture, business, infrastructure, etc.

SAABB’s holistic approach to informing policy development will make it an important resource for a variety of community-based organizations and Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the region. More importantly, SAABB’s commitment to developing a cadre of young policy experts will ensure its longevity and impact far into the future. Congratulations again! We at the Federation look forward to strengthening our relationship with SAABB as part of our work to achieve true equity in the Black Belt Region.

Cooperatively,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cornelius Blanding".

Cornelius Blanding
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED FARMERS AND RANCHERS POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

We want to commend the State of African Americans in the Black Belt (SAABB) on its first annual report. Your holistic and unique approach to identifying, analyzing and creating a roadmap to solving some of the problems that have plagued the Black Belt Region since Reconstruction is much needed during this period of economic uncertainty. It is also timely as both the public and private sectors have begun a long overdue focus on equity.

SAABB's research on all sectors, including agriculture, that impact the Black Belt Region have already proven to be an invaluable tool for those of us who are in the business of developing fair, just and data driven policies to help the region move toward economic independence.

We look forward to strengthening our partnership as we all work to build a better and more sustainable Black Belt Region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eloris Speight". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eloris Speight
Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE TUSKEGEE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT AND NUTRITION SCIENCES

I am grateful for this opportunity to congratulate and thank the staff of The State of African Americans in the Black Belt (SAABB) for its first annual report. This historic project was a long time coming, but I believe it is on time; especially during this era of growing inequities in the Black Belt Region.

Those of us who have lived and worked in the Region are acutely aware of its many challenges and opportunities. We also know that in order to solve the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, there has to be a holistic approach toward equity that respects, values and involves all stakeholders. SAABB could well be the catalyst for that approach.

SAABB's unique approach to research and data gathering, as it trains 1890 and other HBCU students in the area of policy development and advocacy, will help ensure that there will always be a cadre of young African Americans in the Black Belt leadership pipeline.

I look forward to working with and supporting SAABB and encourage all who are interested in helping the Black Belt Region secure the equitable and sustainable development it deserves to join us.



Professor, PhD
Vice Provost for Land Grant Affairs and
Community Economic Development

MESSAGE FROM SAABB

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the State of African Americans in the Black Belt Region of the United States (SAABB). SAABB is the culmination of years of thought, debate, and several fits and starts. I want to thank the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund where the vision for SAABB was born, the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Center for a timely planning grant and Tuskegee University where the vision became a reality. We envision SAABB to be the place where policymakers, advocates and academics can come to access data driven information to assist them in their work on behalf of African-Americans in the Black Belt Region. SAABB is also recruiting and providing on the job training for students who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities; the goal is to develop a cadre of young African Americans who can become leaders and thinkers in the policy arena.

The first edition of SAABB – Land, Farms, and Food - attempts to address the growing inequities in farm and land ownership as well as access to healthy affordable food in the Black Belt Region. We consider these three basic issues to be the foundation of comprehensive, sustainable and community-controlled development in the Region. The decision to focus on these three issues is timely and appropriate because 2023 is the year the Farm Bill will be reauthorized. The Farm Bill is rural America's largest and most impactful piece of legislation, yet African Americans in the Black Belt Region have never enjoyed equitable access to the resources contained in the bill. Over the next year we will issue briefs that will focus exclusively on ways to ensure a fair, just and equitable 2023 Farm Bill.

This issue provides a historical perspective on African American land, farms and food as well as a profile of current conditions in the region. Our writers and researchers also offer an array of recommendations based on their research and experiences living and/or working in the Black Belt Region. Our intent is to provide different perspectives on how to achieve a common goal- build a more just and equitable Black Belt Region- and hopefully create space for establishing a consensus for moving forward.

Thanks so much and we welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward 'Jerry' Pennick".

Edward "Jerry" Pennick
Editor

SECTION ONE

THE BLACK BELT REDEFINED

GLORIA BROMELL TINUBU, PH.D.

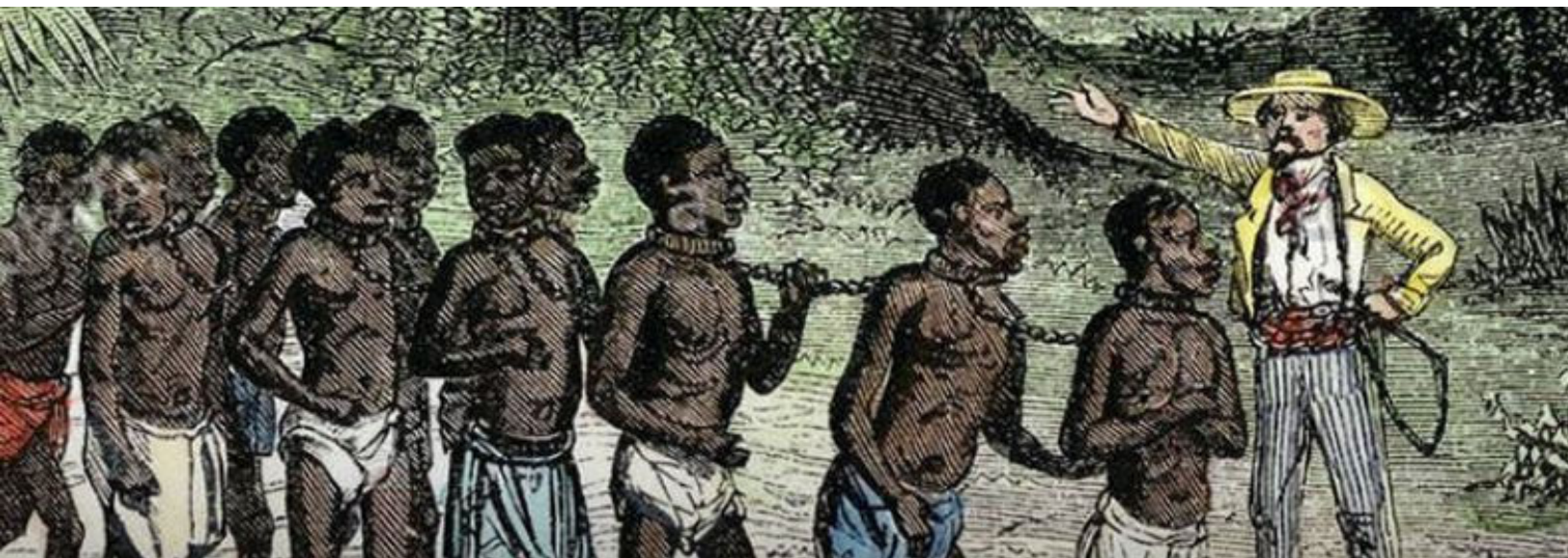
In searching for a definition of the Black Belt Region which was both centered around and honored the humanity and the bodies of enslaved Africans who numbered in the millions and labored under the harshest conditions known to humankind, we could not find one, so we constructed our own. In a similar vein, David Hacker, in his study on the growth of the enslaved population in the United States, could not find any published estimates, so he constructed his own and arrived at the following conclusion:

I conclude that approximately 10 million slaves lived in the United States and that 40 percent of these slaves were living at the outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861. Between 1619 and 1865, slaves in the United States lived about 179 million person-years and contributed 410 billion hours of labor. (1)

Hacker also indicated that ongoing debates regarding cost estimates for financial reparations to descendants of enslaved Africans will depend on estimates of the size of the enslaved population, such as his. He also indicated that this kind of research is important for “our understanding of the institution’s human cost and to the contribution of slave labor to the nation’s growth and development.” (2) A growth which would have been impossible had it not been for the presence of enslaved Africans.

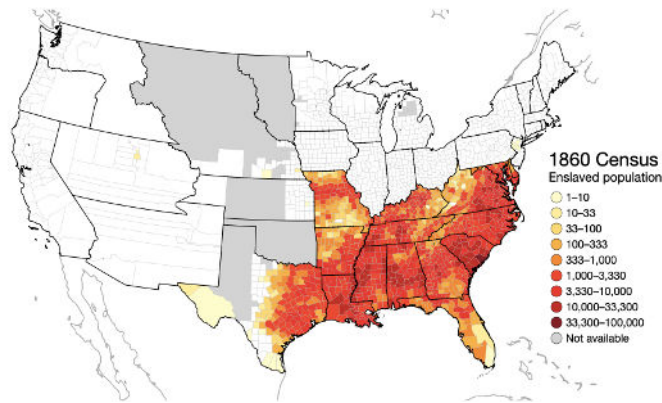
The term “Black Belt” has an extensive history going back to Booker T. Washington’s response when he was asked to define the term over 120 years ago:

So far as I can learn, the term was first used to designate a part of the country which was distinguished by the colour of the soil. The part of the country possessing this thick, dark, and naturally rich soil was, of course, the part of the South where the slaves were most profitable, and consequently, they were taken there in the largest numbers. (3)



In our efforts to redefine the Black Belt Region, the ubiquitousness of the enslaved population prompted a two-pronged approach consistent with Booker T. Washington’s definition as well as our mission. Identifying the part of the country where enslaved Africans were taken as other people’s property in the largest numbers was easy enough. It is the 15-state region known as the former slave states (Figure 1). In this region, the Constitution sanctioned the enslavement of people of African descent and federally enforced it at every level of government. Therefore, we consider this region to be the mother of all other regions with high concentrations of people of African descent. SAABB considers this region to be the definitive and the “Historic Black Belt Region (HBBR).”

FIGURE 1: SLAVE STATES IN 1860 (4)



In 1850, the number of enslaved Africans in the Historic Black Belt Region totalled 3.3 million which accounted for 90% of the Black population in the United States (Table 1). By 1860, the number of enslaved Africans had reached its peak for any given census at nearly 4 million and constituted 89% of the U.S. population. From 1870 to the present, the largest number of the descendants of enslaved Africans, like their enslaved forebears, still reside in the Historic Black Belt Region.

TABLE 1. BLACK POPULATION IN THE SLAVE STATES FROM 1850 TO 2020, UNITED STATES CENSUS

STATE	ENSLAVED BLACKS 1850 CENSUS	ENSLAVED BLACKS 1860 CENSUS	BLACK POPULATION 1870 CENSUS	BLACK POPULATION 1910 CENSUS	BLACK POPULATION 1930 CENSUS	BLACK POPULATION 1970 CENSUS	BLACK POPULATION 2020 CENSUS
VIRGINIA	472,328	490,865	512,841	671,093	650,165	861,368	1,607,581
GEORGIA	381,682	462,198	545,142	1,176,987	1,071,125	1,187,149	3,320,513
MISSISSIPPI	389,878	436,631	444,201	1,009,487	1,009,718	815,770	1,084,481
ALABAMA	342,844	435,080	457,510	908,282	944,834	930,000	1,296,162
SOUTH CAROLINA	384,984	402,406	415,814	835,843	793,681	789,041	1,280,531
LOUISIANA	244,869	331,726	364,210	713,874	776,326	1,086,832	1,464,023
NORTH CAROLINA	288,548	331,059	391,650	697,843	918,647	1,126,478	2,140,217
TENNESSEE	239,459	275,719	322,331	473,088	477,646	621,261	1,092,948
KENTUCKY	210,981	225,483	222,210	261,656	226,040	230,793	362,417
TEXAS	58,161	182,566	253,475	690,049	854,964	1,399,005	3,552,997
MISSOURI	87,422	114,931	118,071	157,452	223,840	480,172	699,840
ARKANSAS	47,100	111,115	122,169	442,891	478,463	352,539	453,783
MARYLAND	96,378	87,189	175,391	232,250	276,379	699,479	1,820,472
FLORIDA	39,316	61,745	91,680	308,669	431,828	1,041,651	3,494,615
DELAWARE	2,290	1,798	22,794	31,181	32,602	78,276	218,899
Slave States Total	3,286,240	3,950,511	4,459,489	8,610,645	9,166,258	11,699,814	23,889,479
U.S. Total	3,638,808	4,441,830	5,392,172	9,827,763	11,891,143	22,580,289	41,104,200
% U.S. Total Black Population	90%	89%	83%	88%	77%	52%	58%

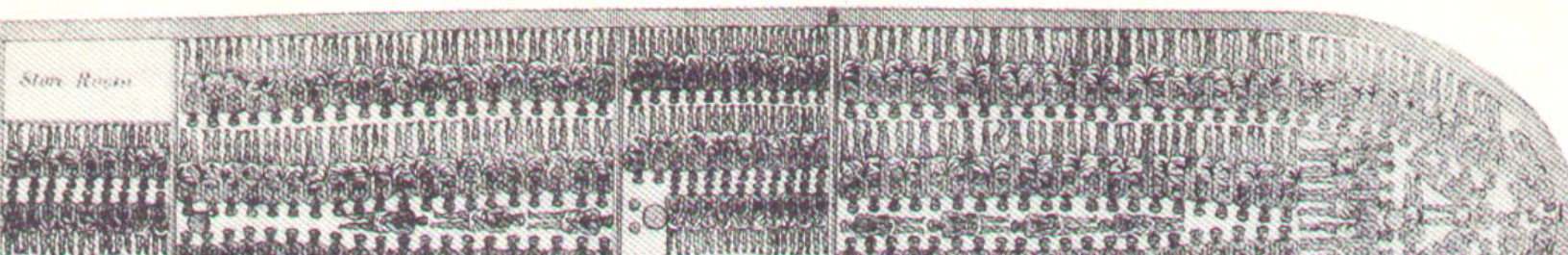
While it is obvious that the former slave states would be the place or region where the largest numbers of enslaved Africans were taken, what is not so obvious is that all of the original 13 colonies enslaved people of African descent (Table A1, Appendix). Primarily controlled by private business interests, either individuals or joint stock companies, the governments of the 13 original colonies were composed of the big planters who made laws in their own interests. **(5)** Of the 236,420 enslaved in 1750, 91% (214,716) were in the following 5 original colonies: 43% (101,452) in Virginia, 18% (43,450) in Maryland, 17% (39,000) in South Carolina, 8% (19,800) in North Carolina, and 5% (11,014) in New York. **(6)** The remaining 9% were distributed among the other 8 colonies, with the number of enslaved persons ranging from 550 in New Hampshire to 5,354 in New Jersey.

At the time of the first census in 1790, which occurred soon after the American Revolution and the founding of this country, 11 out of the 13 colonies enslaved Africans, and the enslaved population had grown from 236,420 to 681,676, nearly 3 times or a 190% increase. Hence, the talk about "liberty and justice for all" did not apply to enslaved Africans. By this time, both Massachusetts and New Hampshire had reduced its slave population to zero, and Rhode Island and Connecticut had enslaved fewer Africans. On the other hand, all of the other colonies showed considerable increases in the number of enslaved, with Georgia surpassing New York among the top five colonies with the largest number of enslaved.

Between 1790 and 1860, the enslaved population in the United States grew from 697,681 in 1790, the first census taken after independence, to 3,953,760 in 1860, the last census before the Civil War. Of the African Americans living in the U.S. in 1860, 89% were enslaved while only 11% (488,070) were considered free. At no time during that period did the percentage enslaved fall below 86% or the percentage considered free exceed 14% (Table A2, Appendix). Even those who were said to be free lived in a tenuous state of existence, with their so-called freedom being subject to the whims of Whites.

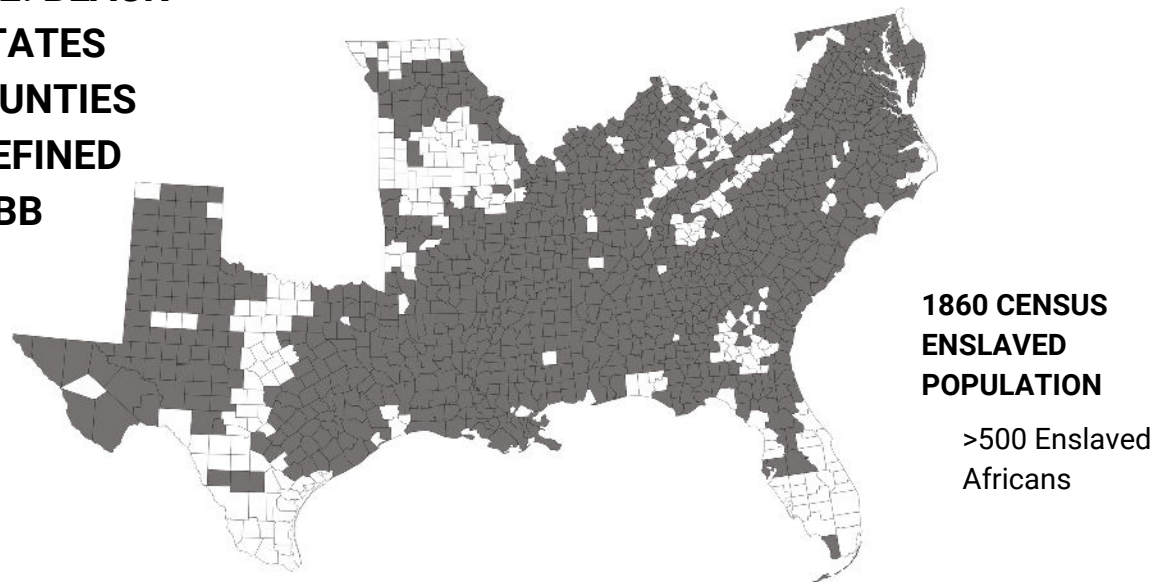
The situation was far worse for people of African descent in the top five states with the largest enslaved population (Table A3, Appendix), when it came to the percentage or number of free versus enslaved African Americans. While Virginia's enslaved and free population percentages were not impressive, they were almost identical to the U.S. average at 89.4 and 10.6, respectively. However, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina had enslaved percentages that were 99.2%, 99.8%, 99.4%, and 96.7%, respectively. These numbers are glaringly telling and provide insight into the current state of African Americans in the former slave states.

Given the fact that the counties of the antebellum south were controlled by private business interests (plantation owners dominated them for the most part), the final step in redefining the Black Belt Region was to use the standard criteria employed today to differentiate large businesses from small businesses. The Small Business Administration considers a firm with 500 or more employees a big business. Needless to say, counties with 500 or more enslaved Africans working for free in 1860 would have been considered very big businesses of their day.



Hence, there are 1,114 counties within the Historic Black Belt Region that meet this criteria and are categorized as “historic” Black Belt Counties (Figure 2). While some counties have experienced a decline in Black population, they are still considered to be a part of the Historic Black Belt Region.

FIGURE 2: BLACK BELT STATES AND COUNTIES AS REDEFINED BY SAABB

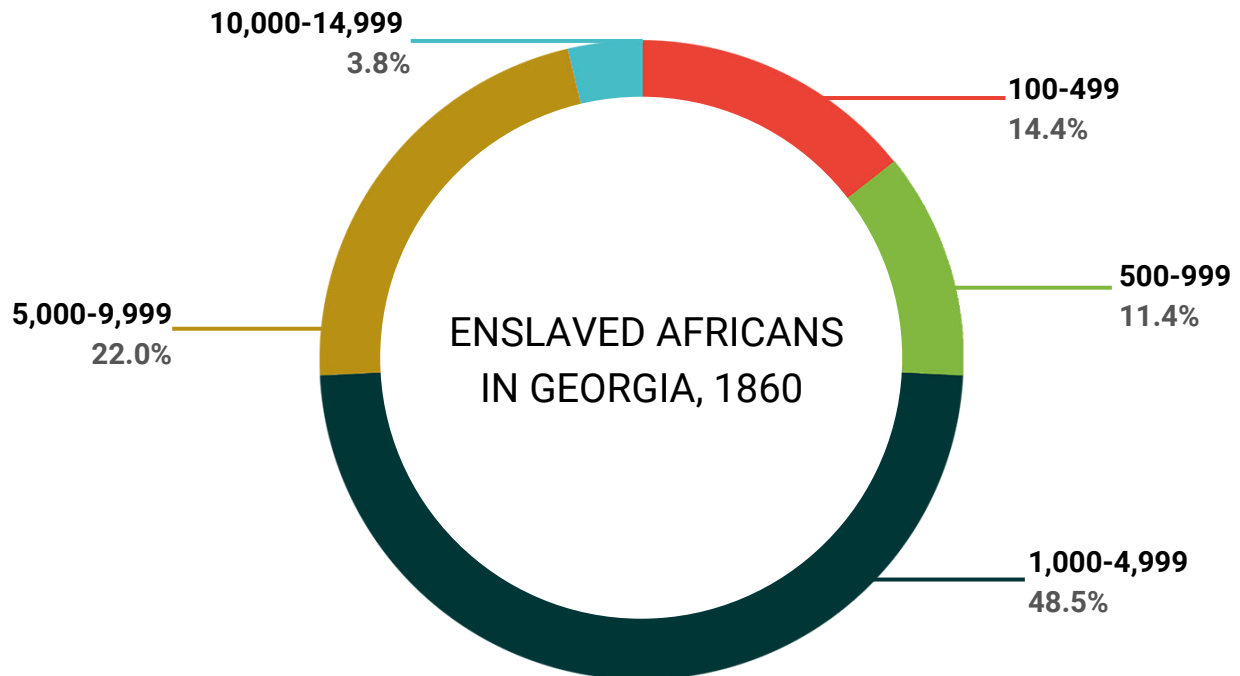
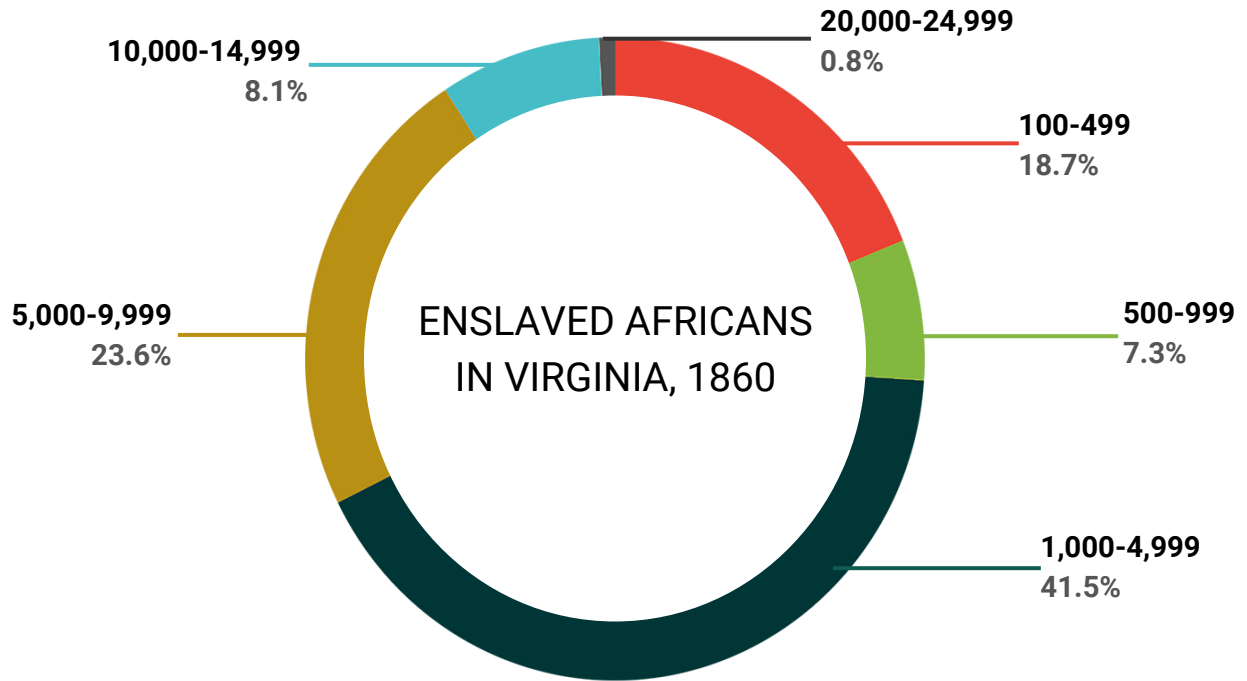


Every county in South Carolina and every parish in Louisiana is a Black Belt County. All, except for a handful, of counties in Alabama, Mississippi, Maryland, Arkansas, Tennessee, Delaware, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia are Black Belt Counties. Finally, the vast majority of the counties in Texas and Georgia are Black Belt Counties.

Some proponents of revisionist history would have us believe that the number of enslaved Africans was insignificant when it comes to the growth and development of the country. However, the United States’ own census records tell a very different story, particularly at the county level. Again, examining the top five states with the largest population of enslaved Africans in 1860 proves very instructive when viewed at the county level (Table A4, Appendix). At that time, these five states, namely, Virginia, Georgia, Mississippi, Alabama, and South Carolina, accounted for over 56% of all enslaved persons in the United States and over 76% of the counties had 1,000 or more enslaved persons. In fact, for all the states, the largest category was 1,000 - 4,999 enslaved persons per county, averaging 37.5% for all counties in the top five states. The second largest category was 5,000 - 9,999 enslaved persons per county, averaging 23.5%.

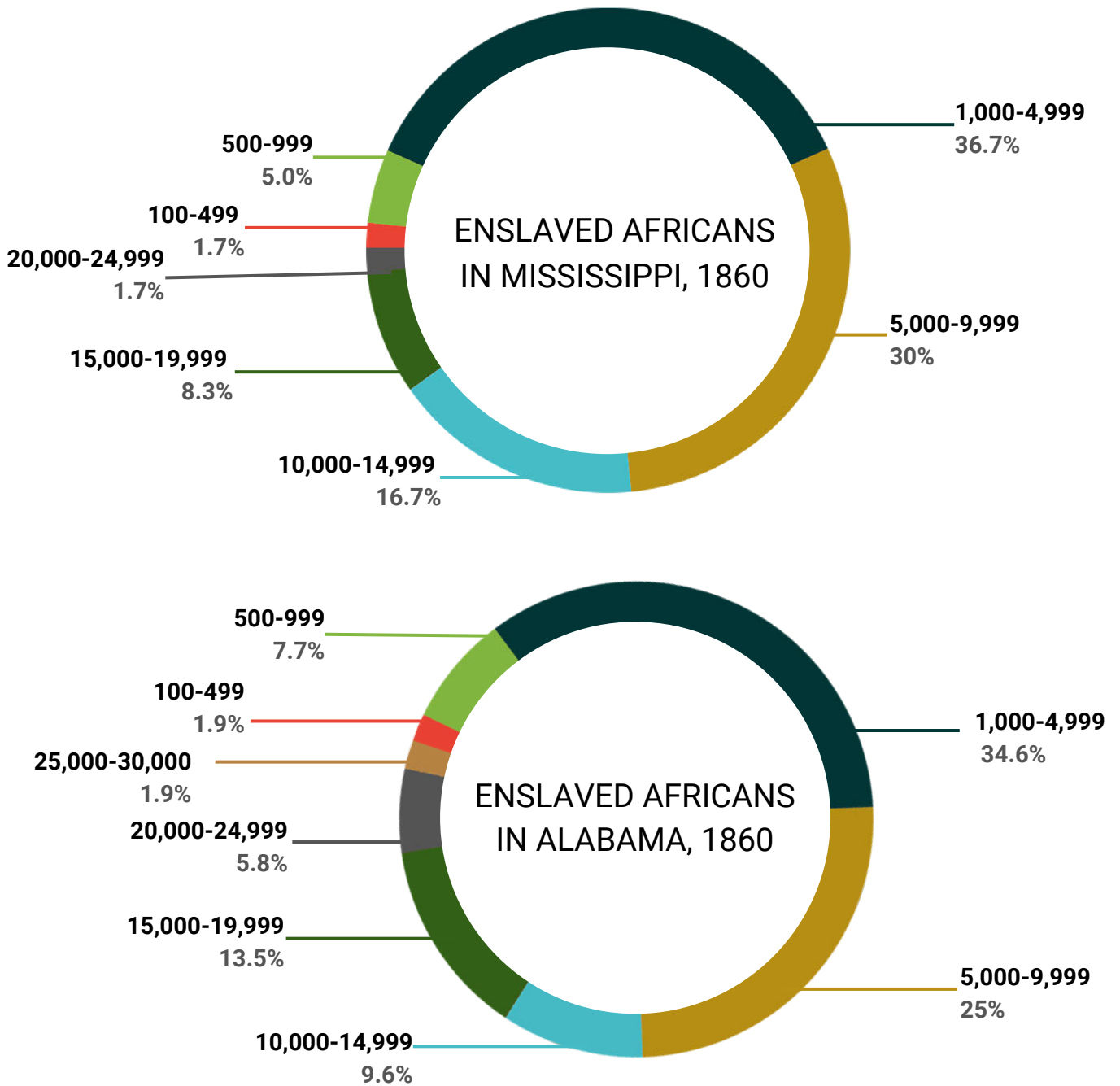
At the very top were the states of Virginia and Georgia (which together had nearly a million enslaved persons), where 74% of the counties had over 1,000 enslaved, and where 81% of the counties in Virginia and 86% of the counties in Georgia had more than 500 enslaved persons (Figure 3). The counties in Virginia with the largest enslaved population were Henrico, with over 20,000, followed by Halifax, Pittsylvania, Albemarle, Dinwiddie, and Mecklenburg, all with over 12,000. The counties in Georgia with the largest enslaved population were Chatham, with nearly 15,000, followed by Burke, Houston, Monroe, Troup, all with over 10,000. (7)

**FIGURE 3: VIRGINIA AND GEORGIA,
ENSLAVED AFRICANS BY COUNTY AND SIZE, 1860**



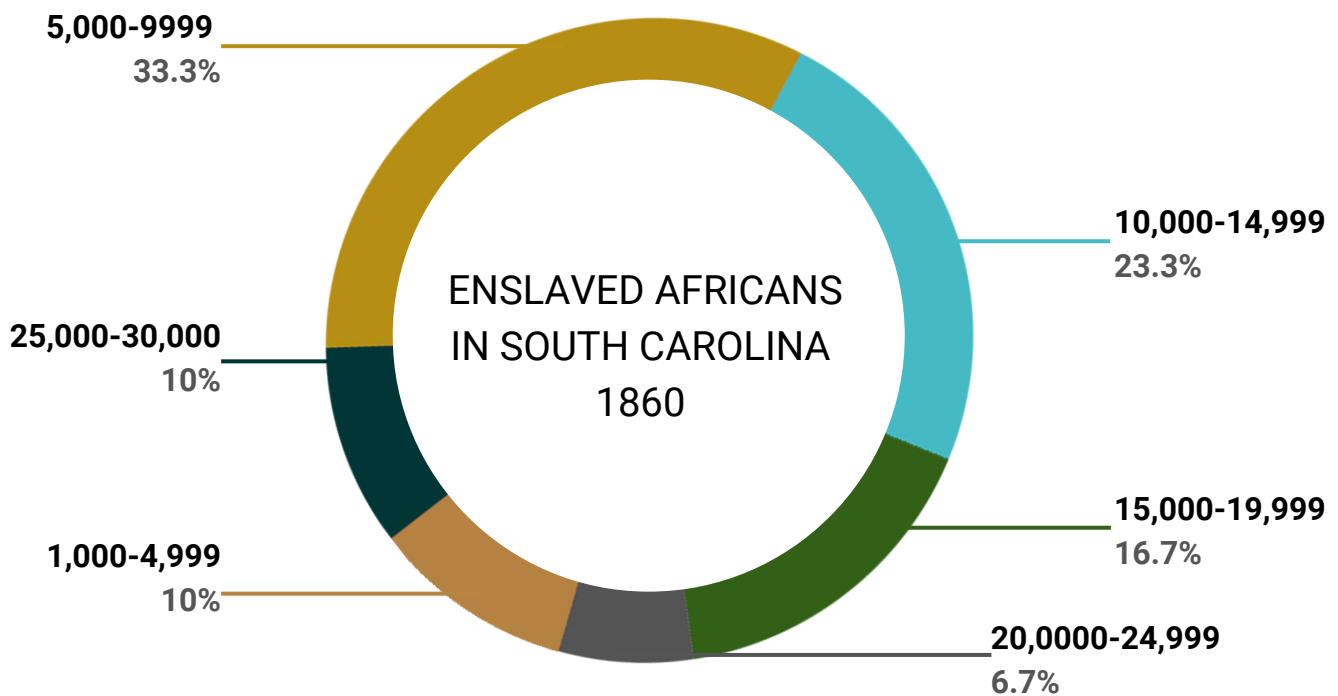
Among the second tier of the top 5 states, Mississippi and Alabama (with an enslaved population totaling nearly 900,000), 98% of the counties had over 500 enslaved, and 57% of the counties in Mississippi and 55% of the counties in Alabama had more than 1,000 enslaved persons (Figure 4). The counties in Mississippi with the largest enslaved population were Hinds, with over 22,000, along with Madison, Marshall, Lowndes and Yazoo, all with over 16,000. The counties in Alabama with the largest enslaved population were Dallas, Marengo, Montgomery, Greene/Hale all over 23,000. (8)

FIGURE 4: MISSISSIPPI AND ALABAMA, ENSLAVED AFRICANS BY COUNTY AND SIZE, 1860



Of the top five states, South Carolina with 402, 406 enslaved Blacks, stands apart with all of its counties (100%) having more than 1,000 enslaved. In fact, 90% of the counties in South Carolina had more than 5,000 enslaved Blacks (Figure 5). What is even more shocking is that a majority of the counties (57%) had more than 10,000 enslaved! The counties in South Carolina with the largest number of enslaved Black persons were Charleston, Beaufort, and Colleton, with over 32,000. In addition, Edgefield, Abbeville, Abbeville had over 20,000. (9)

**FIGURE 5: SOUTH CAROLINA, ENSLAVED AFRICANS
BY COUNTY AND SIZE, 1860**



In closing, the magnitude of the enslaved population at both the state and county levels among the 15-slave states paints an indelible picture of the significance of the enslaved population's contribution to the growth and development of the United States. This is particularly obvious in states like South Carolina and Mississippi, where the enslaved population exceeded the White population (in the case of South Carolina, it was 2 to 1). In states like Georgia and Alabama, the enslaved population compared to the White population was close to 1 to 1.

SECTION TWO

LAND-BASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE BLACK BELT REGION: A CASE FOR EQUITY

EDWARD "JERRY" PENNICK

A major outcome of America's Civil War was the promise of forty acres of land and the loan of a mule for "freed" Black men. The original proposal came from a group of formerly enslaved Black leaders who were actually willing to pay for the land. Relying on that promise, the formerly enslaved were well on their way to building wealth and creating an independent

economic system for the benefit of what they believed would eventually become a self-sustaining African American community. Unfortunately, like so many other promises over the past 400 years, the promise of "forty acres and a mule" was unfulfilled then and remains so today.

Even so, through hard work and perseverance, by 1910 approximately 9,000,000 African Americans had acquired over 15,000,000 million acres of farmland. Rather than support these herculean efforts, the federal, state and local governments conspired with former plantation owners to thwart the Black community's march toward true freedom and economic independence. The conspirators used terrorism, legal trickery, and the outright denial of resources in order to steal land from or prevent the formerly enslaved from becoming landowners.

The campaign never ended - instead it proliferated until racism became even more ingrained into this country's overall economic development system; especially for African Americans in the Black Belt Region. The unfortunate result is that today there are less than 45,000 Black farmers who own approximately 4,500,000 acres of land. In stark contrast, White farmers own over nine hundred millions acres and 97% of land value. Over the past two centuries African Americans have experienced an almost unabated decline in farmland ownership while Whites have experienced a steady increase. The loss of this economic engine has and continues to have a negative impact on the social, political and economic development of the region,

Much of the responsibility for inequitable economic development in the Black Belt Region rests with the United States Department of Agriculture. Yet, for over a century and a half White farmers have had almost untethered access to the USDA resources that are necessary to develop successful farm businesses. Because African Americans have a history of being denied access to these resources, they often lose their farms and related businesses, both of which are key to sustainable economic development.



Over the past five decades African American led organizations, 1890 Universities and community advocates have fought continuously for fair and just policies to address the growing economic disparities in the Black Belt Region. Following are the unintended results of some of those policies:

ONE

Section 2501 of the 1990 Farm Bill. Originally called the Minority Farmers Rights Act, the impetus for this program was the recognition that Black farmers *Dean and Research Director - College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition Sciences Professor of Animal Sciences* did not have equitable access to the USDA resources that are necessary to survive and prosper. Unfortunately Congress decided that it could not support legislation that focused primarily on Black farmers. That position resulted in Section 2501 becoming a catchall for almost any category of farmer or their advocates who could claim minority, limited resource or socially disadvantaged status thereby ending the original intent and effectiveness of the program.

THREE

Pickford V Glickman. Tim Pickford, an African American farmer, who at the time was a member of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, filed a class action lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture for racial discrimination. A settlement was reached and over ninety five percent of successful claimants received fifty thousand dollars plus, in some cases, limited debt relief. Unfortunately the settlement made very few farmers whole. Although USDA actually admitted that it did discriminate against African American farmers, no one in the department was held accountable and as of today there have been no systemic changes within the USDA that would significantly address racial discrimination.

TWO

The American Rescue Plan (ARP) Section 1005. In order to try and repair some of the damage done to Black farmers and the communities in which they live; in 2021 the Biden Administration included a section entitled the Emergency Relief for Farmers of Color (Section 1005) in the ARP. Section 1005 was intended to help close the racial equity gap between African American and White farmers. It would have provided debt relief for certain farmers of color who had an outstanding debt with USDA. This would have begun the process of leveling the playing field between African American and White farmers; unfortunately a group of White farmers, led by right wing politicians and lawyers, filed a discrimination lawsuit claiming that section 1005 discriminated against White farmers. They won a court injunction and the provision was never implemented. Unlike Black farmers the White farmers never had to prove their claim of discrimination in a court of law.

FOUR

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). Failure to implement section 1005 led Congress to include in the IRA a provision that provides loan modification for some African American farmers as well as farmers who are struggling in distressed areas of the country no matter their race or color. This effectively repealed Section 1005 of the ARP even though section 1005 was being vigorously defended in court by a group of African American farmers.

By modifying the original intent of these, and other programs, they became nothing more than failed attempts to implement race neutral programs to end centuries of racism. They can best be described by the following quote from the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund when discussing the repeal of Section 1005 of the American Rescue Plan and its inherent promise to Black Farmers "... this promise has been repealed and replaced with...programs that ask Black farmers to trust in promises that heretofore remain untrustworthy." **(10)**

For over fifty years there have been dire predictions that African Americans would be landless and powerless by the end of the twentieth century. Fortunately that prediction was wrong and the loss of African American owned land has slowed- unfortunately it has not been reversed. For nearly two hundred years African American farmers have been denied equitable access to both public and private resources that could help close the racial wealth and equity gap that has plagued the Black Belt Region since before Reconstruction. Well over seventy percent of African American owned farmland has been stolen. The robbery of this critical asset has deprived African Americans in the region of the opportunity to create intergenerational wealth and economic independence.

Over the years public and private entities have made promises to pursue equity in all of their policies and programs with little success. That promise can only be achieved if there is an unwavering, long term commitment to provide targeted resources to the Black Belt Region. There must also be an acknowledgment that it cannot be accomplished on the cheap. A recent study suggests that the value of land taken from African Americans has a conservative value of three hundred and twenty six billion dollars (\$326 billion). **(11)** That amount should be the initial starting point for achieving equity in the Black Belt Region. Although individual farmers should be made whole, true equity has to be about building and/or strengthening African American controlled institutions and systems.

With a solid commitment of \$326 billion minimum over the next ten to twenty years, the USDA, other federal agencies and the private sector should support a comprehensive equity plan that would include but not be limited to the following:

- Debt relief for all African American farmers who have a loan with USDA
- Funding an African American owned and controlled lending institution in the Black Belt Region
- Permanently closing the inequitable funding gap between 1890 and 1862 land Grant Colleges and Universities.
- Permanently funding a scholarship program for Black students to attend 1890 Land Grant Colleges and Universities as well as other HBCUs in the Black Belt Region.
- Set aside a minimum 6 percent of the budgets for each title in the Farm Bill, in perpetuity, for African Americans.

The details of the plan should be the responsibility of an independent Black Belt Equity Coalition (BBEC) composed of African American academics, activists, economists, and government representatives. The BBEC should replace any and all commissions that have studied, researched and made recommendations over the past decades- most of which, at worst, were irrelevant or never implemented or, at best, were seriously underfunded.

The government as well as others who claim to support equity in the Black Belt Region should reflect that commitment in their budgets, otherwise it is not a commitment but just another in a long line of broken promises.

SECTION THREE

BLACK LAND AND FARM TENURE: 1870 - 2017

KOURTNEY SHERROD



1870 TO 1910

There is a devastating yet powerful story that lies behind the formerly enslaved Africans' struggles to own land within a system that was designed to keep them subservient and landless. **(12)** Shortly following Emancipation, African Americans began to explore the difficult process of acquiring land. For many of these individuals, owning land represented power, class status, and wealth. **(13)** While some remained tied to an unhealthy system of exploitation, others pursued opportunities to fully and partially own land. Those within the system became sharecroppers, tenants, and managers of the land.

From 1865 to 1910, African Americans leveraged the opportunity to acquire land and began the struggle for full citizenship. This not only provided employment opportunities for the formerly enslaved, it also became an investment and symbol of pride for the community. However, acquiring land was not an easy process. Newly freed individuals did not have access to capital or other resources needed to purchase and develop the land. Notwithstanding the lack of capital, they understood the power of landownership and the role it could play in achieving economic independence.

The Confiscation Acts of 1861 and 1862, passed by Congress, enabled President Lincoln with the authority to “seize property used in the aid of the Confederate rebellion.” **(14)** Freed Blacks had the option to rent the seized property for three years with the opportunity to purchase forty acres through the Bureau of Refugees, Freedman, and Abandoned Lands or Freedmen’s Bureau that was created by Congress in March of 1865. **(15)** Unfortunately, President Andrew Johnson’s pardoning of the confederates barred freed individuals from acquiring the seized land. Half of the available land was restored to its previous White owners, leaving 425,000 acres with the Bureau by 1866. These pardons also affected the 1866 Southern Homestead Act (SHA) that was enacted to guarantee landless citizens the rights to up to forty-six acres of federal land without charge. **(16)**

The SHA initially would provide applicants with approximately eighty acres of settlement land, yet it proved to be a failure when the lands were returned to the pardoned confederates. **(17)** Due to the lack of financial resources to purchase land, many African Americans found themselves trapped in the system of sharecropping as a means of survival. By 1868 sharecropping began to spread rapidly through the South as large plantations were split, by landlords, and issued to individual families. **(18)** After harvesting, the families were supposed to be compensated with a portion of the crops in exchange for wages- a “contract” that was rarely honored leaving sharecroppers with no recourse other than to continue to provide virtually free labor.

There were a multitude of issues connected to this repressive system. First, this continued the control over Black lives. Since planters owned the land, many African Americans resorted to working the same land on which they were previously enslaved. **(19)** They were placed under intense contracts and scrutiny, essentially signing away their newfound freedom. **(20)** By stealing the labor of African Americans, this system solidified the racial wealth gap for generations to come.

Even with the false promises and failed programs, African Americans remained steadfast in their journey towards land ownership and its inherent benefits. The government’s refusal to properly intervene left African Americans with only one option for acquiring land: private purchasing. **(21)** This was a challenge in itself as the African American community was under heavy intimidation and violence when entering the private market. Nevertheless, African Americans acquired, managed and were tenants on over forty million acres of land in farms by 1910.

The data for Figure 6 and 7, retrieved from the 1910 Census of Agriculture, accounts for African American owners, managers, and tenants correlated to the states included in our definition of the Black Belt Region. **(22)** Out of the total land within these states, factoring in owners, managers, and tenants, 11.83% belonged to African Americans (Table A5, Appendix). The highest percentage of African American land ownership is in Mississippi (34.8%), followed by South Carolina (29.6%), Georgia (26.3%) and Alabama (24.6%). More than half of Black land in farms (22 million), accounting for owners, managers and tenants, is located within four states: Georgia (7,092,051 acres), Mississippi (6,457,427 acres), Alabama (5,091,435 acres), and Texas (4,283,663 acres).

The data for Figure 6 is displayed as the percentage, whereas the data for Figure 7 is displayed as the count. The percentage provides a foundation for comparison meanwhile the count provides the true amount of Black land acquisition. If the analysis was solely based on percentages, the information would be misleading. For example, South Carolina would be included in the four states with the highest percentage of African American land ownership. When viewing the data by count, South Carolina is replaced by Texas and no longer considered in the top four states. For the purposes of this research, using the actual count is absolutely necessary.

FIGURE 6: BLACK LAND IN FARMS FOR OWNERS & PART-OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND TENANTS IN 1910

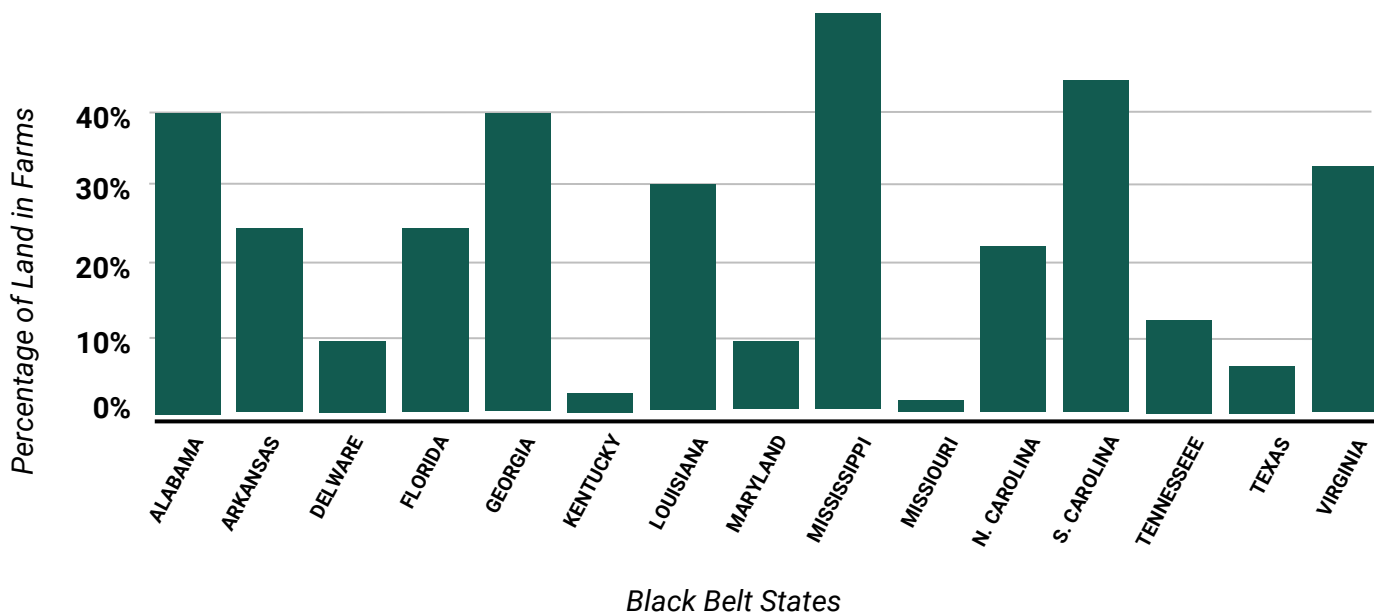


FIGURE 7: LAND IN FARMS FOR OWNERS & PART-OWNERS, MANAGERS, AND TENANTS 1910

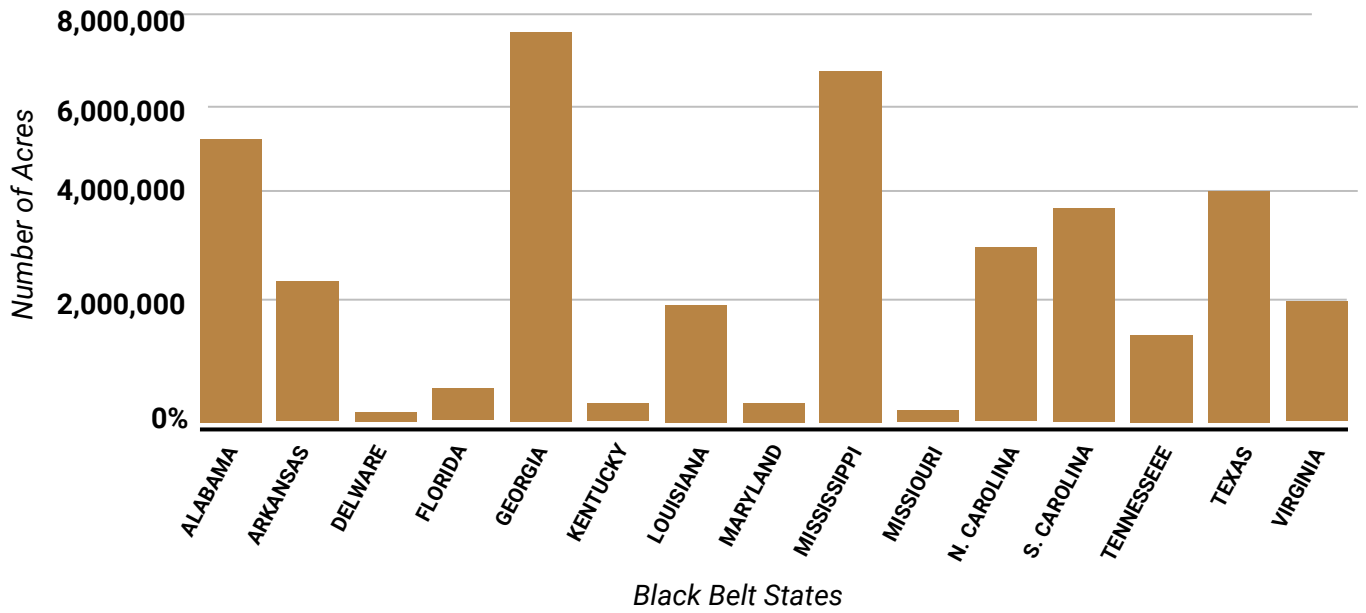


FIGURE 8: BLACK LAND IN FARMS FOR OWNERS & PART-OWNERS IN 1910

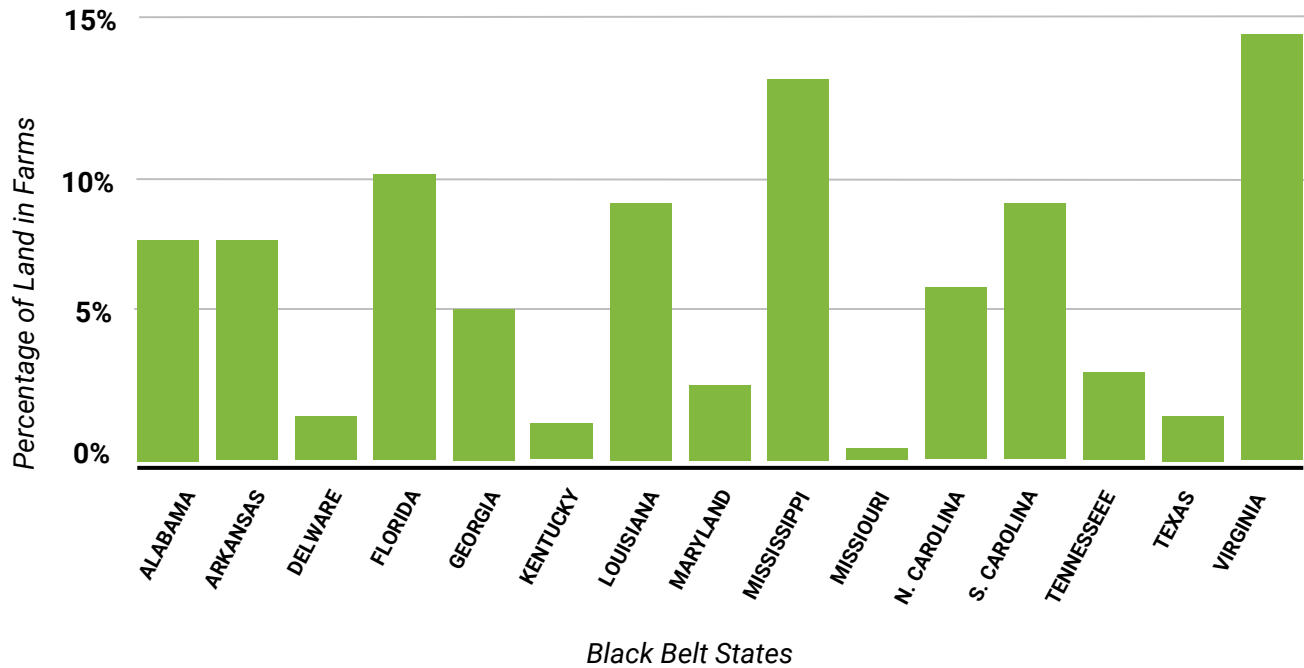
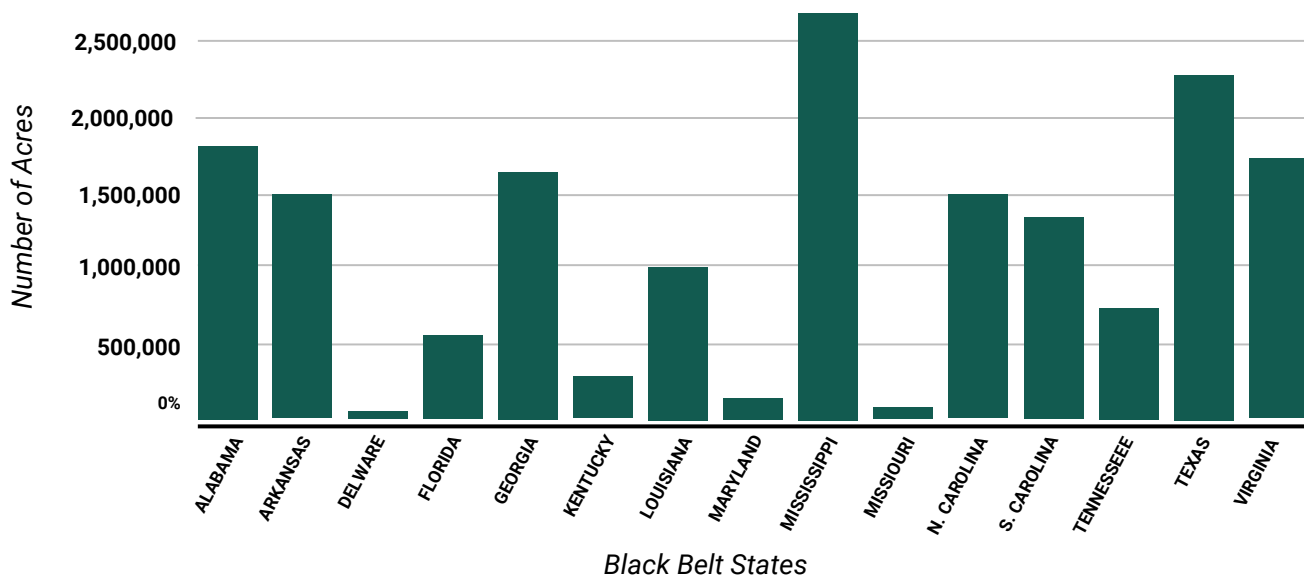


FIGURE 9: LAND IN FARMS FOR BLACK OWNERS & PART-OWNERS IN 1910



To better understand the extent of African American land ownership, the differentiation of the data for the 1910 graphs is an important detail to note. Figures 6 and 7 represent land ownership for owners and part-owners, managers, and tenants. Managers refer to individuals “conducting farm operations for the owner for wages or a salary,” and tenants refer to individuals who rent land from owners. **(23)** Whereas Figures 8 and 9 represent land ownership solely associated with the owners and part-owners. Owners and part-owners are individuals who either fully or partly own their land in farms (Francis et. al, 39). This separation displays the true property ownership of the African American population. In the southern states, there were few Black planters who owned real property. **(24)** In comparison to their White counterparts, the few Black property owners and their land assets were considered rare. Especially when considering the plethora of laws that denied enslaved Africans the right to acquire land. **(25)**

With Black communities primarily concentrated in the South, land was their ticket to economic security. Yet entering the agricultural field and reaping the full benefits required full ownership of the land. In spite of all the challenges, African Americans remained resilient and by 1910 acquired over 15 million acres of land as owners and part-owners, visualized in Figures 8 and 9. Within the fifteen Black Belt states, 4.12% of all land was either fully or partly owned by Black people. The state in which African Americans acquired the most land is Mississippi where African American owners and part-owners acquired 12% or 2,227,194 acres of land in farms. Interestingly, Texas displays a major disparity in land ownership with Black owners accounting for only 1.66% or 1,866,742 acres of land in farms out of the total 112 million acres. Alabama, with the third highest accumulation, possesses 7.07% or 1,466,719 acres of Black land in farms (Table A6, Appendix).

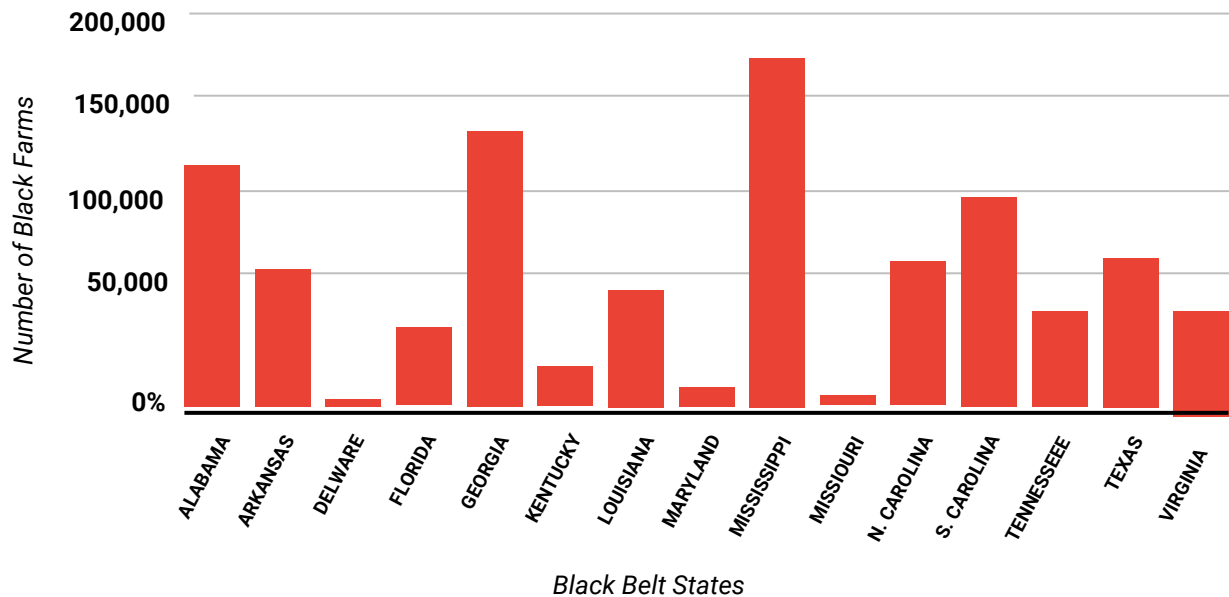
Historically, African Americans labored with no reward; however, land ownership changed their prospects for the future. For the African American community, this was an amazing

accomplishment given the fact that it emerged from a system that tried to prevent Blacks from acquiring any land at all. By 1910, the value of African American owned land and buildings in the Black Belt Region amounted to over \$239 million.

This represented \$239 million in investments that appreciated over time as demand for land increased. In other words, land based economic development allowed African Americans to finally reap some of the benefits associated with freedom. Furthermore, land was more than economic capital, it became a form of social capital. Land ownership and farming symbolized “self-determination, self-sufficiency, and a foundation for economic and political power. (26)

The majority of income for African Americans in the Black Belt Region came from farming. Owning a farm equated to owning a business and providing for the family while also building sustainable communities and accumulating intergenerational wealth. In 1910, there were over 868,556 Black farms. These were Black owner-operated farms that contributed to not just the local economy but America’s economy as well. Mississippi, Georgia, and Alabama were home to the highest number of Black farms in the Black Belt Region. Mississippi was home to 19% of all farming operations in the region. With 164,737 Black farms and having the highest amount of Black land ownership, it is understandable that the number of Black farms is equally significant. There were 122,559 Black farms in Georgia, 110,443 in Alabama, and 96,708 in South Carolina. These four states contributed to more than 56% of all farms for the Black Belt Region in 1910 (Table A7, Appendix).

FIGURE 10: BLACK FARMS IN 1910



Even with the threat of violence, racist policies, and a racist culture, Black people in the Black Belt Region were relatively successful in acquiring land during the period from Emancipation to 1910. As owners, part-owners, managers, and tenants, the Black community leveraged the American system. They began to seize opportunities to own land and build wealth. However, within the span of a few decades, Black people saw their quest for economic independence stymied by a system intent on denying them the freedom they thought they had won as a result of the Civil War.

1910 TO 2017

Although there is evidence of disparities between Blacks and Whites in other categories of financial wealth, such as homeownership and stock portfolios, the story of stolen land is particularly tragic. **(27)** Many advocates believe that land ownership is a key to eradicating poverty for the Black community, particularly in rural areas. Land ownership enabled African Americans to pursue the “American values” of political, social and economic independence. However, when it comes to the Black Belt Region, the impact and value of African American land ownership are too often ignored by policymakers.

Since 1910, African Americans have experienced a sharp decline in land ownership in the South. Between 1910 and 2017, over 36 million acres of Black-owned land was lost in AL, AR, DE, GA, FL, KY, LA, MD, MS, MO, NC, SC, TN, TX, and VA. **(28)** This amount includes African American owners and part-owners, managers, and tenants. For Black owners and part-owners only, over 11 million acres of land in farms was lost in the Black Belt States. **(29)** While there are numerous legal, political, social, and economic factors that contributed to this decline, it is devastating for any demographic to experience such a drastic loss of wealth. Land is the backbone of generational wealth, and given that Black landowners heavily relied on farming as their primary source of income, the loss of land negatively impacts the entire Black community. **(30)**

Developing an agrarian spirit and accumulating land at a rate beyond that of Whites in the first few decades of freedom, despite seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Black land ownership peaked in the early 1900s. Thereafter, African Americans began to lose their land faster than Whites. **(31)** In addition, there are a few key moments in American history that correlate to the loss of Black farmers and landowners. For instance, the introduction of state laws prohibiting African Americans from owning property, the USDA’s discriminatory practices against Black people, the threat of lynchings, the impact of Jim Crow laws and even redlining. The delicate era of Black land acquisition was met with a terrifying era of institutionalized racism. The loss of landownership and farm operations has and continues to contribute to the poverty of many rural communities in the South- the area where almost all (93%) remaining Black farmers live. **(32)**

Racist policies exacerbated the disparities between Blacks and Whites. For instance, in 1878, the state of Georgia’s Supreme Court upheld the case of Swoll et al. v. Oliver et al. and prohibited land ownership by African Americans. **(33)** Racist policies at the local and state level created a blueprint for the institutionalized discrimination that would become the norm throughout the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Over time and under intense scrutiny, the USDA at the federal level claimed to be non-discriminatory, however, decisions ultimately rested in the hands of local administrators. That is where African American farmers experienced abject racism. For example, a tactic of local administrators was to delay loans for Black farmers that resulted in immense debt and foreclosure (Francis et al, p. 38). With agriculture being the primary source of income in some areas, these foreclosures were devastating to entire communities. Additionally, the laws and problems associated with heirs property contributed to the Black land loss. The result is that Black landownership now stands at 2,906,243 acres.

Slavery, failed Reconstruction, Jim Crow and continuing systemic racism have not dulled the desire and struggle by Blacks to own land. Over the past few decades both the public and private sectors have proposed, in some cases implemented, policies and programs meant to address the disparities in assistance between Black and White farmers/landowners. Complete success however has and continues to be limited because none of these policies have effectively addressed systemic racism within America’s food and agriculture system.

Figures 11 and 12 capture the extent of Black land ownership in 2017. Texas is home to 880,016 acres of land yet when comparing Black land with the total acreage, Black land ownership accounts for 0.75% of land in the state of Texas. In this case, the percentage can be misleading as Texas is the state with the most Black land for the Black Belt. In Mississippi, Black people own 5.65% or 516,884 acres. For Alabama, 3.70% or 283,848 acres of land are Black-owned. Georgia consists of 2.20% or 205,786 acres of Black land. By 2017, all of the socioeconomic, political, and cultural conditions contributed to over 11 million acres of Black land loss. Black property decreased from 4.12% in 1910 to 1.11% roughly a century later (Table A6, Appendix).

FIGURE 11: BLACK LAND IN FARMS 2017

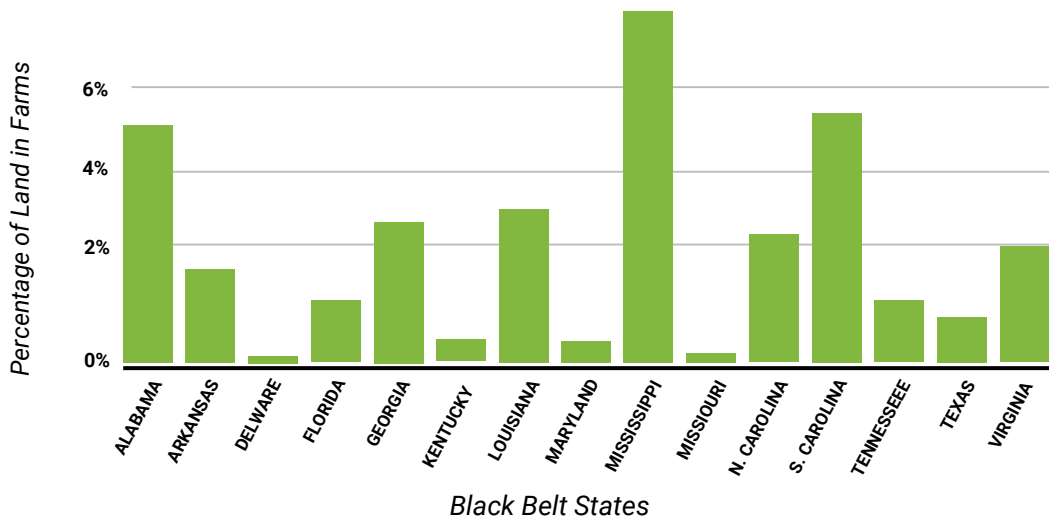
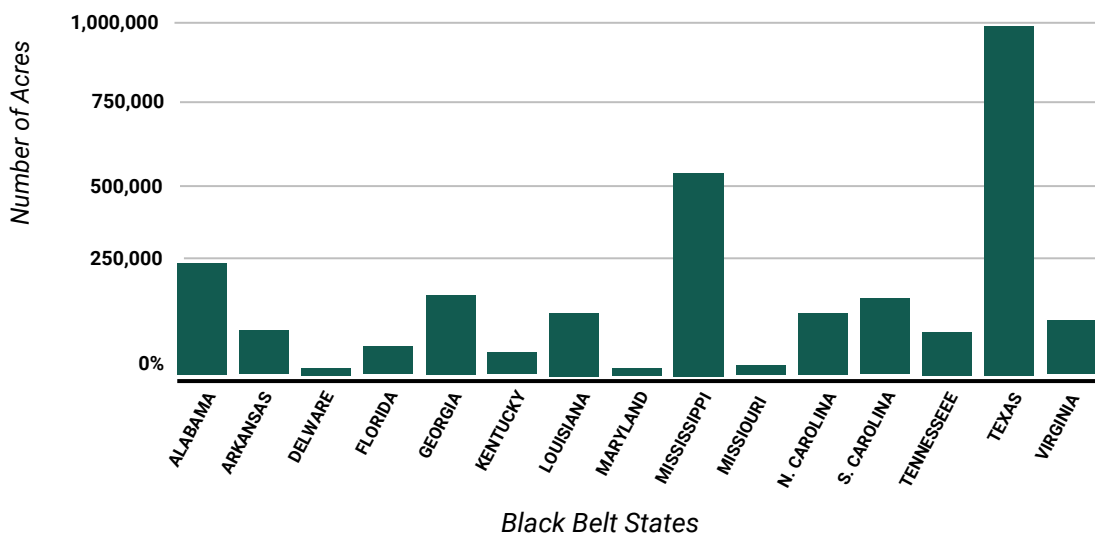
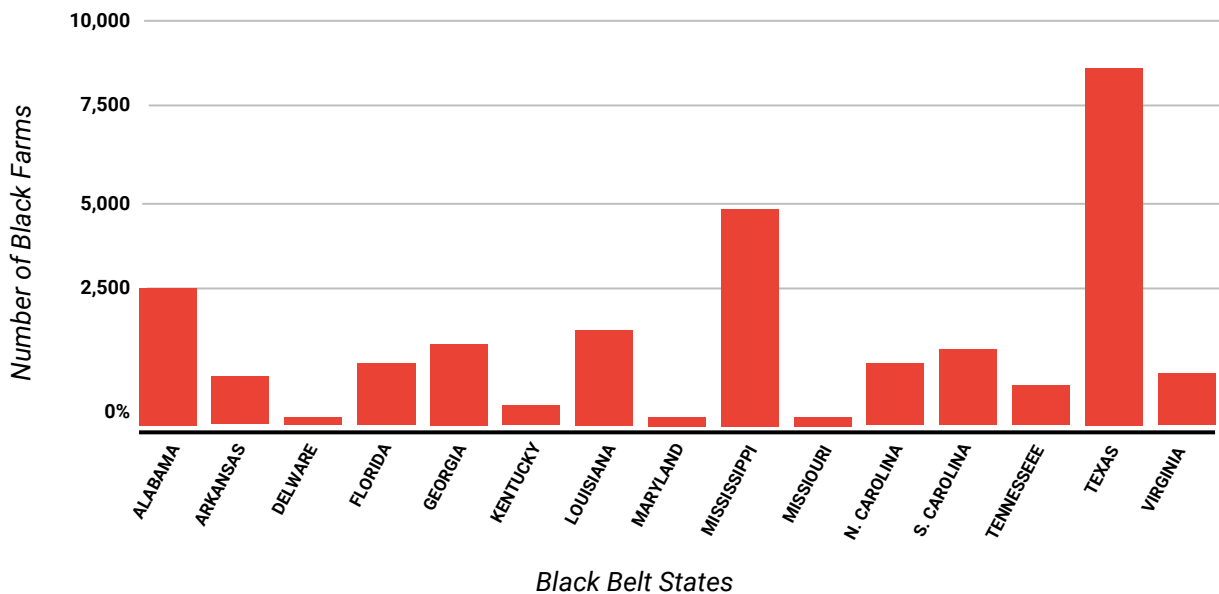


FIGURE 12: BLACK LAND IN FARMS 2017



The loss of Black land correlates to the loss of Black farms, particularly in the Black Belt where the “majority of Black-owned farms are located.” (34) As mentioned, farming was the primary source of income for Black land owners. Coupled with systemic racism and discrimination, farmers were forced to seek off-farm employment opportunities to avoid living in poverty. The 2017 Census of Agriculture reported a total of 28,677 Black farms out of the total 854,470 farms in the Black Belt Region (Table A7, Appendix). Figure 13 depicts the remaining Black farms in the Black Belt. The states with the highest number of Black farms in 2017 are Texas (8,011), Mississippi (4,885), Alabama (2,905), and Louisiana (2,179). Less than 4% of Black farms have survived the unimaginable circumstances placed upon Black people.

FIGURE 13: BLACK FARMERS IN 2017



The total number of Black-owned farms lost between 1910 and 2017, within the Black Belt Region, is 840,034 or 96.72%. There was a total loss of 159,852 Black farms in Mississippi, 120,634 in Georgia, 107,538 in Alabama, and 94,901 in South Carolina (Table A7, Appendix). In terms of economic capital, this is equivalent to a loss of 840,034 Black businesses and an untold number of jobs. Politically and socially, this represents the loss of individuals, families, leaders and voters. While land provided security, independence, and power, for many the conditions Black people endured overpowered the will to stay- thus the Great Migration where thousands of African American individuals and families moved North and west in search of a better life. As Black people were driven from the South, the loss of land helped fuel under-development in the Black Belt Region.

To address this issue, there were numerous initiatives, projects, and legislation introduced with the intention of reversing the loss of Black owned land: 1) the Emergency Land Fund was founded to primarily address problems related to heirs property; 2) the Federation of Southern Cooperatives was founded to develop cooperatives as an alternative land based economy; 3) and the Land Loss Prevention Project of North Carolina was created to provide “legal support and assistance to all financially distressed and limited resource farmers and landowners in North Carolina.” (35) The 2018 Farm Bill’s Heirs Property Relending Program was created to provide assistance with heirs’ ownership issues. (36)

The problem is that there has never been a well funded coordinated plan to use Black owned land as the primary engine for economic growth in the Black Belt Region. Land has empowered generations of Black people and can continue to do so with the support of community leaders, the government, the private sector, and the will of the people.



SECTION FOUR

FOOD INSECURITY IN THE BLACK BELT REGION

DALAL ALKORDI

Even though food retailers are generally accessible worldwide, millions of Americans are not able to afford enough food, or enough of the right kinds of food, to meet their household's nutritional needs. These households are referred to as food insecure. The federal government classifies a household as "food secure" if all household members always have access to enough food for an active, healthy life. (37)

Food is among the basic needs of every being on this planet. The shortage of access to nutritional food leads to a family or individual compromising on the quality and quantity of their food choices. (38) This has become a priority concern throughout the United States, especially in the Black Belt Region, where some of the most food-insecure people in the country live. Food insecurity is a broad concept covering issues associated with the nature, quality, quantity and security of food supply and access. Through the 1980s and 90s, food scarcity and food deprivation were known as problems among the poor in many regions within the United States. According to government research in 2021, one in ten American households struggled to feed their families, with more than five million families missing meals and reducing food quantities due to poverty. (39)



The steady increase in food insecurity rates is mainly due to the severe rise in unemployment, shortage of access to school meals, and food supply chain problems. (40) There is also a dearth of locally controlled food systems. The concept of "food desert" was invented by academics, advocates, and policymakers referring to the geographic area where the lack of fresh food retailers can lead to food insecurity. The term was defined in the 2008 Farm Bill as an "area in the United States with limited access to affordable and nutritious food, particularly such an area composed of predominantly lower-income neighborhoods and communities." Food desert concept also shows the important connection between geography and food access. It raised awareness about how systemic racism impacts access, including the persistent effects of redlining. (41)

African American and Hispanic households are more likely than White households to be food insecure, and rural African Americans are an especially vulnerable group. Based on Zekeri (2001; 2003; 2004), the Black Belt is home to persistent poverty, low employment, chronic unemployment, limited education, poor health, single parenthood and heavy dependence on public assistance programs. (42, 43, 44)

Comparing and contrasting the difference between the nation and the region in the prevalence of household food insecurity and poverty uncovered some important findings and demonstrated the harmful consequences of food insecurity in the Black Belt Region. Analyses at the national level suggested that children from food-insufficient homes have a poorer overall health status than children from food-secure households. (45)

Recently, Americans have watched the prices of goods and services, including food, rise steadily. As expected, this increases the likelihood of even more food insecurity. **(46)** Insufficient nutrition can impact an individual’s growth and physical development, as well as their ability to thrive, learn, and enjoy life. Nationally, while 11.8% of the total population is considered food insecure, a closer look at race-specific data paints a much more serious picture for African Americans. While food insecurity for Whites is a mere 7.6%, food insecurity for Black individuals is a worrisome 24%, three times the rate for Whites (Figure 14). Meaning Blacks have to sacrifice on their food selection and typically opt for the least expensive meal with less nutritional value.

In comparing food insecurity at the national level (11.8%) to the Black Belt Region (12.3%), generally, we find that food insecurity is higher for the region (Figure 15). However, when examined from a racial lens, we find that while the rate for Blacks (22%) is more than two times that of Whites (9%) in the Black Belt Region, Blacks in the Black Belt Region are doing better than Blacks nationally (24%), and Whites in the Black Belt are doing worse than Whites nationally (7.6%). While additional study is needed to explain this interesting finding, Blacks in the Black Belt Region are far worse off than Whites and are choosing cheaper meals which compromise on the nutrients, calories, and freshness of food. This prohibits the body from functioning at full capacity and leads to physiological changes. **(47)**

FIGURE 14: FOOD INSECURITY IN THE U.S.

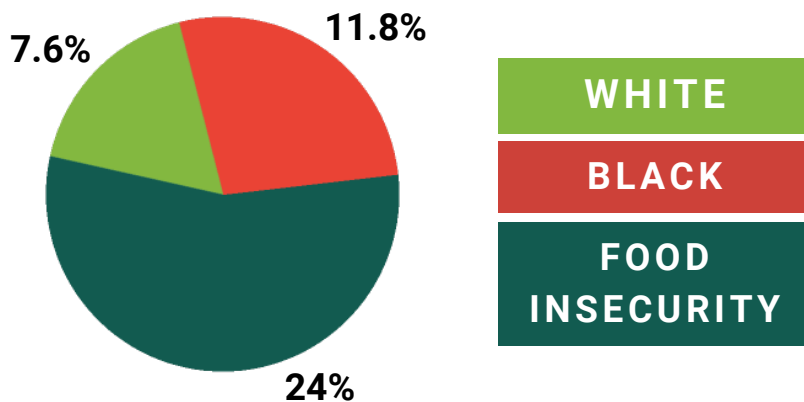
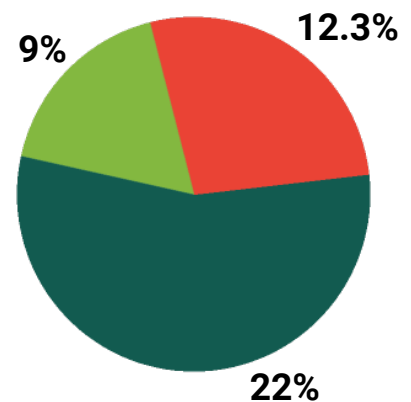


FIGURE 15: FOOD INSECURITY IN THE BLACK BELT



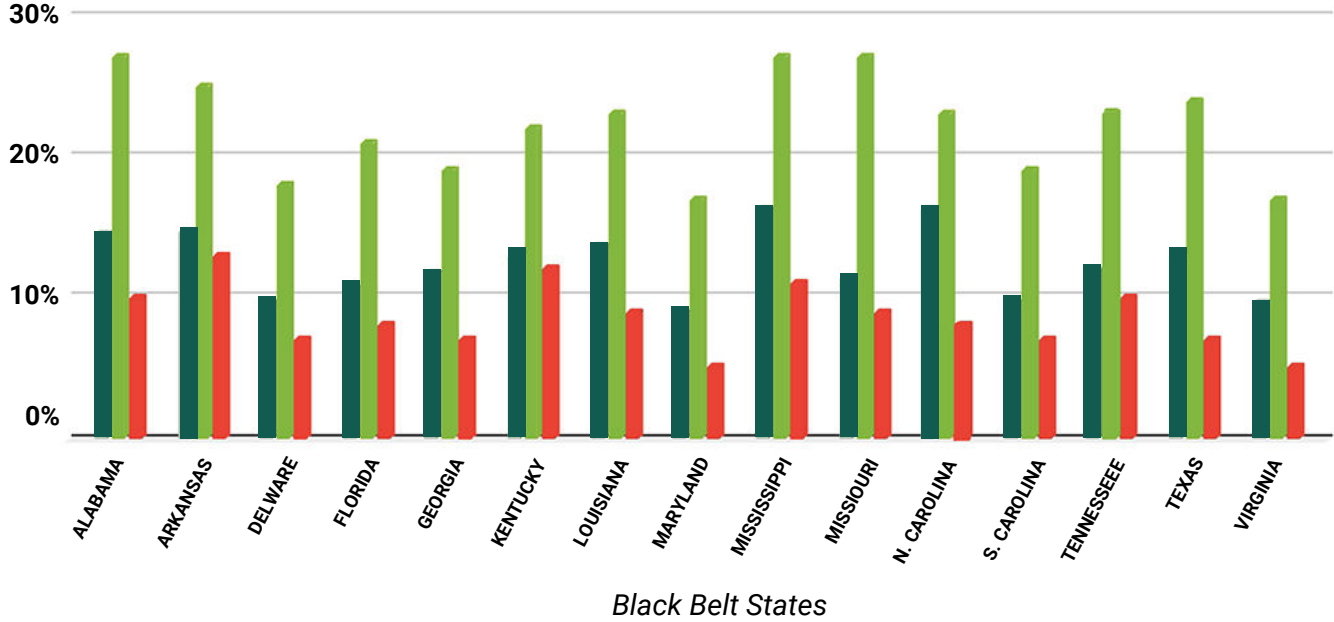
The racial disparity in food insecurity is not only reflected in rates at the national and regional levels, it can be seen starkly at the state level as well, according to data released by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 2005. **(48)** Figure 16 reveals the stark contrast of food insecurity between the White and Black population in fifteen Black Belt states. Mississippi and North Carolina have the highest percentage of food insecurity (16.2%), followed by Arkansas and Alabama (14.7%) and (14.5%) respectively. There is a variation in disparity of how the Black Belt is affected by food insecurity, for example, in Alabama 27% of Black individuals experience food insecurity and only 10% for White. The same substantial difference between Black and White can be found in Mississippi and Missouri. When the issue of poverty is added (Figure 17), an even clearer picture is painted.

FOOD INSECURITY

BLACK

WHITE

FIGURE 16: FOOD INSECURITY FOR BLACK AND WHITE INDIVIDUALS

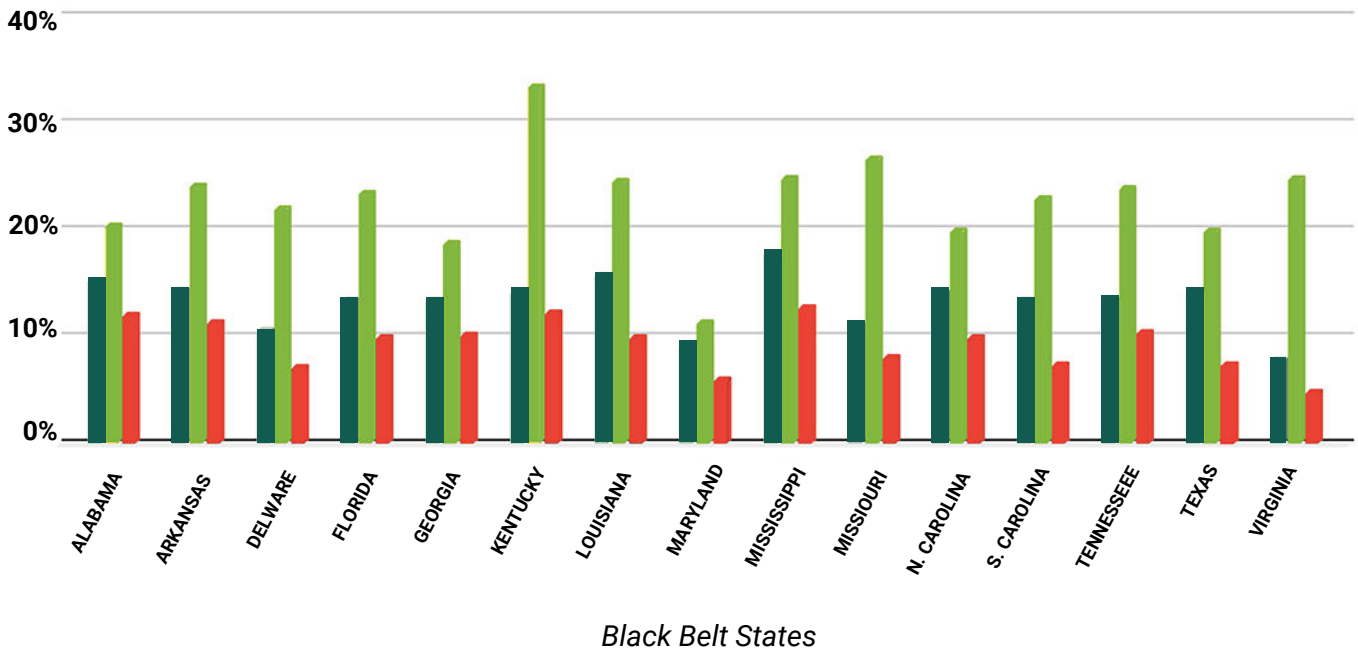


POVERTY RATE

BLACK

WHITE

FIGURE 17: BLACK AND WHITE POVERTY RATE



Black Poverty Issue

With its close correlation to poverty, food insecurity reflects a shortage of resources that impacts many aspects of one's quality of life. There are public health as well as social problems related to household food insecurity. Insufficient nutrition can impact children's growth and physical development, as well as their capacity to thrive, play and learn. Food insecurity and unequal access to healthy affordable food play a major role in a range of public health issues, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease and tooth decay. Unhealthy processed foods with high levels of fat and sugar are often cheaper and more accessible than healthier options. In 2020, food insecurity in White households was the lowest level within the Black Belt Region, while Black families accounted for higher food-insecure households.

Food insecurity is a vital measurement when assessing quality of life. From the data provided in Figure 17, Kentucky shows a massive disparity in the poverty rate of the Black population (33.3%) compared to the White population (12.1%) and for the entire state (14.1%). A percentage of 24.8% for the Black poverty rate in Virginia means that the state has a higher concentration of poor Black people (roughly 5 times higher) compared to the White (4.7%) and the total population (7.8%). At the heart of food insecurity lies agriculture and land. Land provides a platform for individuals to grow healthy, nutritional, and affordable food. The shortage of access to nutritious foods and land leaves Black people to continue living an unhealthy life in extreme poverty. Challenges related to health status and health conditions, medical insurance status, income and poverty can keep people out of the workforce, increase expenses, and limit resources. **(49)**

In fact, the agri-food supply chain is a vertically integrated system from "farm to fork," including food production, processing, distribution, and consumption. It also relies on certain inputs from foreign countries. This can lead to vulnerability within the U.S. food supply chain and negatively impact those with the greatest need.

Although we live in a country that has a highly productive agricultural system, weaknesses in the system highlight the need for alternatives. One of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) efforts is to assist schools in meeting student nutritional needs and the additional support given to food banks and pantries to ensure access to food by our most vulnerable populations during a period of high demand. Other recent efforts were to facilitate trade and transport of essential agri-food products. **(50)**

There have been initiatives to identify the food desert areas by the USDA's Food Access Research Atlas, formerly the Food Desert Locator. It highlights census tracts below certain income, supermarket proximity, and vehicle access thresholds and helps identify critical links between neighborhood-level food access, legacies of redlining and segregation, and the role of structural racism in the built environment and food system. **(51)**

There needs to be an understanding that healthy food access problems cannot be solved by proximity to supermarkets or agri-business. There needs to be a commitment from policy makers and advocates to create alternative food systems that are locally and regionally controlled by African American consumers and entrepreneurs working with and supporting African American farmers. Food insecurity is a man-made disaster and to paraphrase the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, Black farmers should be the first responders.

Alternative systems could provide the basic, healthy and affordable food needs while still encouraging culturally relevant, healthy food focused supermarkets to locate in the region. Alternative food systems would include production and marketing cooperatives, value added facilities, healthy food stores, and strategically located farmers markets at the macro-level. Alternative food systems would also provide jobs for the community and stable markets for Black farmers. The micro-level would not only include backyard gardens, but the many successful models of community gardens that should be replicated across the Black Belt Region, such as Southern Sky's Village Community Garden located in Sylvester, Georgia (Worth County) which provides food and education for its residents and is designed to meet the needs of community youth, seniors, and their families. (52)



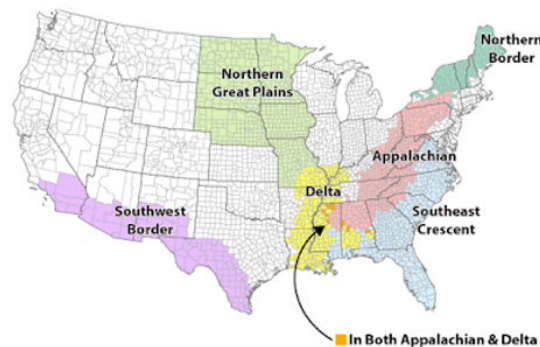
SECTION FIVE

ROLE OF FEDERAL REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND WEALTH BUILDING IN THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BLACK BELT REGION

GLORIA BROMELL TINUBU, PH.D.

The Black Belt Region is home to five federal regional commissions (Figure 18), namely, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Delta Regional Authority (DRA), the recently activated Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC), the currently inactive Southwest Border Regional Commission (SBRC), and the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA), which is defunct. However, there is no coherent policy or plan to address the 400 years of systemic economic and racial inequities imposed upon people of African descent. Sanctioned by the Constitution and enforced at every level of government, enslaved Blacks were precluded from accumulating substantial wealth which is the foundation of economic growth and development.

FIGURE 18: NATIONAL MAP OF THE FEDERAL REGIONAL COMMISSIONS AND AUTHORITIES



Of the 15 Black Belt states, two are a part of three commissions, seven are a part of two commissions, and five are a part of one commission, and one does not have any commissions. ARC includes parts of Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi. Parts of six of the above states (minus Maryland) and all of Florida, make up the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC). Parts of the following five Black Belt States are located in the Delta Regional Authority (DRA): Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Missouri (also a part of the Northern Great Plains Regional Authority (NGPRA)). Texas is a part of the Southwest Border Regional Commission, while Delaware is the only Black Belt State not associated with a commission.

Unlike the Appalachian Region, dubbed “a region apart” because of the high levels of poverty among rural Whites compared to the rest of the nation and given special federal assistance to address economic disparities at the height of the Civil Rights Movement in 1965, no such consideration was given to address economic disparities in the Historic Black Belt Region, i.e., the 15 former slave states where the majority of the descendants of enslaved Africans still live.

The Historic Black Belt Region was the poorest region of the country, then and now. In fact, it’s the only region that has a legitimate claim as “a region apart,” given its 400-year history of racial apartheid. Unfortunately, rather than establishing a federal commission to seek economic parity for the descendants of the formerly enslaved at the height of the Civil Rights Movement, the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations saw fit to create the ARC at the behest of governors like George Wallace, a well-known racist. (53)

Since the ARC offered itself as a model for the rest of the nation, the General Accounting Office (GAO) decided to review ARC's nonhighway programs with an eye toward answering the following question in its 1979 report: Should the Appalachian Regional Commission be used as a model for the nation? The GAO concluded that the Commission did not have "a complete project and program evaluation system which systematically identifies project benefits, measures program effectiveness, and links the results to ongoing planning and project selection." (54) A recent 2021 study commissioned by the ARC itself arrived at a similar conclusion. (55)

With respect to ARC suitability as a model for the Black Belt Region, a 2003 proposal for a Black Belt Regional Commission from a coalition led by the Southern Organization for Food Systems and Education Consortium (SOFSEC) determined that due to the region's unique history of racial oppression, it should address issues of race and racism as well as have the following six priority areas: a) education, b) health care, c) transportation systems, d) housing, e) economic development, and f) infrastructure. (56)

Needless to say, the ARC has not addressed the issues of race and racism and has only focused on three of the six priority areas, namely, transportation, economic development, and infrastructure. However, even the three that are included as priorities do not target the populations that are most economically distressed. In fact, a recent assessment of the suitability of the ARC as a model for the Black Belt Region found that the ARC model was woefully inadequate. (57)

A Federal Commission Built on Wealth is Sustainable and Suitable for the Black Belt

A USDA research report on sustainable rural development had this to say about the role of wealth creation in this regard:

Policymakers and rural development practitioners increasingly recognize that a short-term focus on creating jobs or increasing income is insufficient to generate sustainable rural development or achieve a long-term reduction in rural poverty. A focus on creating and maintaining wealth offers the potential to achieve more lasting rural prosperity. (58)

The report defined wealth as "the stock of all assets, net of liabilities, that can contribute to the well-being of an individual or group" and adopts the notion of wealth as capital. It identified eight types of capital, namely, human, intellectual, physical, natural, financial, social, cultural, and political (Figure A1, Appendix). They are all durable, can be accumulated or depleted through investment and consumption, and can contribute to the value of production or well-being. (59) Other ways of defining and measuring wealth were also reviewed (Table A9, in the Appendix).

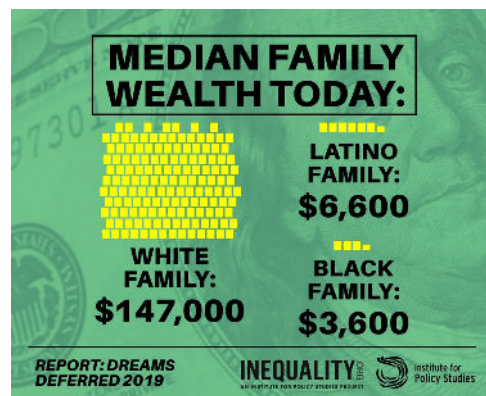
In a similar vein, a wealth-building approach to regional development is offered by WealthWorks, a project of the Aspen Institute. WealthWorks defines wealth building as increasing the ownership, control, and income generated from the various forms of capital (individual [human], intellectual, natural, financial, physical, cultural, political, and social) while not harming any other capital. It "connects a community's assets [capitals] to market demand in ways that build livelihoods that last." Furthermore, it "aims to advance a region's overall prosperity and self-reliance, strengthen existing and emerging sectors, and increase upward mobility for many—always including people, places and firms on the economic margins." (60)

Denying a group of people the opportunity to own capital places them squarely on the economic margins of a capitalist economic system. It's an economic death sentence which systematically relegates them to the bottom of the economic ladder while systematically propping up others at the top. It bears repeating that within the Black Belt Region, enslaved Africans were denied the right to own or control all forms of capital. The aforementioned wealth building and wealth creation approaches are not only consistent with our mission, but also are in alignment with other approaches used by many proponents of equitable sustainable development such as advancing racial equity and engaging communities in solving their own problems.

From the 1600s until the mid 1800s, enslaved Africans were denied the right to accumulate wealth or capital of all kinds. Even 100 years after the Civil War, descendants of the enslaved were denied equal opportunity to acquire wealth through federal, state, and local laws and policies as well as through violent measures that were ignored by authorities. Since they were not allowed to accumulate or build wealth, the wealth disparity between Blacks and Whites that was created by slavery will never be resolved on its own. It stands to reason that the Black Belt Region would become the poorest region of the country since this was the place where enslaved Africans were brought in the largest numbers and the vast majority of their descendants still reside.

Hence, wealth building was not an option available to enslaved Africans who were denied the right to even have agency over their own bodies or that of their children. They had no right to the fruit of their labor, inventions or other intellectual property. They had no control over where they lived, what they ate, what they wore. They were denied access to education of any kind. They could not own property nor did they have the right to defend themselves. They could not socialize in large groups or form social organizations. They could not vote or hold political office. In a nutshell, enslaved Africans were denied all rights afforded other immigrants with respect to wealth building and wealth creation.

Unfortunately, unlike the federal intervention in the Appalachian Region to bring rural poor Whites into parity with the rest of the nation which has lasted for 57 years and running with nearly \$8 Billion being spent, the primary federal intervention on behalf of the formerly enslaved and their descendants has been almost nonexistent, except for the Freedmen's Bureau which lasted for a mere 2 years. **(61)** Hence, a federal regional commission that is rooted in wealth building and wealth creation is the only rational model that has the potential for bringing descendants of the millions of enslaved Blacks into economic parity with the rest of the nation.



Source: Dreams Deferred 2019. <https://ips-dc.org/racial-wealth-divide-2019/>.

To address these issues in a sustainable manner, the federal government must marshal and provide additional resources to this country's most resilient and productive assets, namely, our Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs). HBCUs have been found to be "engines of economic mobility" for its Black graduates, outperforming non-HBCUs 2 to 1, with an economic mobility rating of 3.0% compared to 1.6% for non-HBCUs. (62) While accounting for only 3% of all colleges and universities, this higher economic mobility rating than non-HBCUs translates into HBCUs accounting for:

- 10% of all Black students matriculating
- 17% of all bachelor's degrees earned by Black students
- 24% of all STEM-related bachelor's degrees earned by Blacks
- More applicants to medical schools than non-HBCUs
- 40% of all Black engineers
- 40% of all Black U.S. Congress members
- 50% of all Black lawyers
- 80% of all Black judges

Moreover, Black students who attended HBCUs were less likely to develop risk factors for chronic disease later in life than those who attended predominantly White institutions. In addition, HBCUs account for twice as many Pell Grant-eligible (low-income) students and help create upward mobility for those students. HBCU graduates are 51% more likely to move into higher income quintiles than non-HBCU graduates.

In partnership with HBCUs, particular emphasis should be placed on HBCUs that are Land Grant Universities (LGUs) which are referred to as 1890s. LGUs have a long history of being the first practitioners of sustainable rural economic development through its county extension agents. The country's first county extension agent was Thomas Monroe Campbell, a graduate and employee of Tuskegee University. (63)

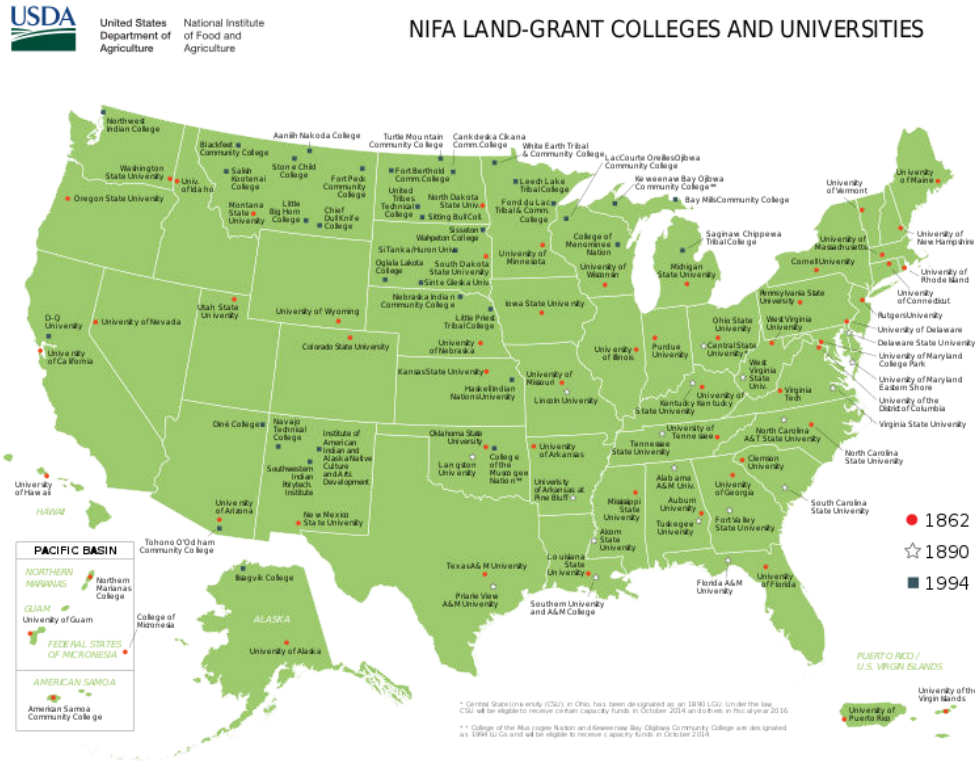
However, all of the resources of the country's Cooperative Extension System (CES) housed within the 111 Land Grant Universities (the 19 HBCUs included) should be brought to bear within the Black Belt Region and without. Given the fact that descendants of enslaved Blacks migrated to other parts of the country to pursue freedom and escape oppression, it's imperative that the work of wealth building and racial healing not be confined to the Black Belt Region or to the South alone (Figure A2, Appendix).

This is what CES had to say about its mission:

All universities engage in research and teaching, but the nation's 111 Land-grant Universities and Colleges, including Historically Black Land-grant Universities and Tribal Colleges, have a third critical mission—Extension. "Extension" means reaching out and extending university research and resources to meet public needs through non-formal educational programs at the community level. The Cooperative Extension System (CES) engages people in these educational opportunities to help them solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future where they live and work. (64)

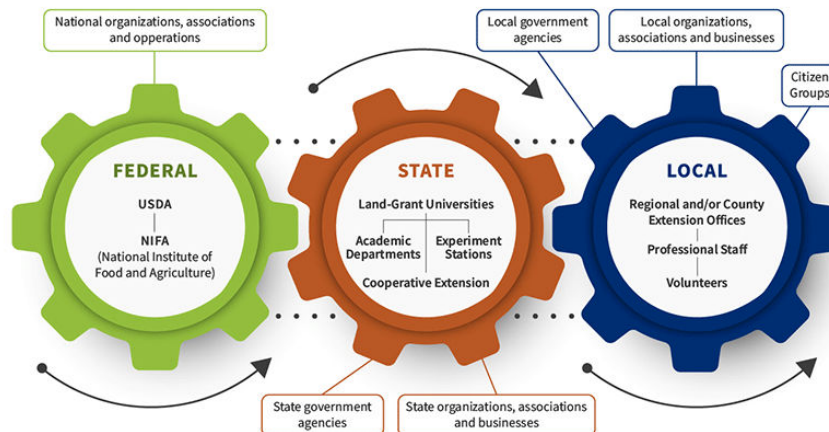
The Cooperative Extension System has a presence in every county and crosses every state and U.S. territory (Figure 19).

FIGURE 19: NIFA LAND-GRANT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (65)



CES “empowers farmers, ranchers, and communities of all sizes to meet the challenges they face, adapt to changing technology, improve nutrition and food safety, prepare for and respond to emergencies, and protect our environment.” (66) With thousands of employees and millions of volunteers, brings science-based resources to people who need them most and works within a network of both public and private organizations. CES works at the federal, state, and local levels and is at the center of issues relating to land, farm, and food (Figure 20).

FIGURE 20: COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SYSTEM (67)



Hence, a logical solution to the racial wealth disparity which is at the center of a host of other disparities is to institute a concerted wealth building effort that is federally driven and supported at all levels. This would entail establishing a federal regional commission exclusively for the 15-state Historic Black Belt Region as defined by SAABB that is centered around a comprehensive wealth building strategy that addresses all of the eight kinds of capitals as well as race, racism and racial healing. This Historic Black Belt Regional Commission (HBBRC) should follow the guidelines as set out by SOFSEC. A recent publication by the Southern Economic Advancement Project (SEAP) described the SOFSEC recommendations for a Black Belt Commission as follows:

Overall, the SOFSEC recommendations were ahead of their time in calling for racial/social equity and inclusion as they relate to the proposed commission's structure, strategies, and priorities. The report called for a commission centered around a community-based approach with representation from a broad group of stakeholders that includes low-income representation to provide input and program direction as well as guidance for targeted resource allocation...SOFSEC called for a broad and inclusive structure reflecting the population being served. Furthermore, they stressed that strategies should reflect local best practices for addressing persistent poverty in the South with a focus on comprehensive community planning, education, community economic development, and resource [capital] development. Finally, with respect to priorities, they indicated that resources should be equitably distributed to areas of greatest need as defined by census tract data and community strategic planning priorities. (68)

Unfortunately, the Southeast Crescent Regional Commission (SCRC) as created through the 2008 Farm Bill to address economic distress in the so-called Black Belt, not only did it not adopt the guidelines offered by SOFSEC, to avoid dealing with issues of race and institutional racism, the term Black Belt was dropped from its name. Unlike the ARC, which was created and activated in less than two years, the SCRC took 18 years to create and an additional 13 years to activate (activation only required the appointment of a Federal Co-Chair by the President and confirmation by the Senate). What's even more striking is that in 1965, the ARC was authorized to receive \$130 million annually in non-highway funds for the 393 counties it then served. The SEAP had this to say about the disparity in funding:

For the 423 counties it now serves, the ARC has an annual authorization of \$200 million for non-highway funds, however, it was appropriated \$1.2 billion in 2022, with \$1 billion covering the period 2022-2026. By contrast, the SCRC is authorized to receive \$30 million annually for the 434 counties it is expected to serve and has been authorized to receive a mere \$5 million for its first year's operations. (69)

The SEAP report goes on to say that while SCRC is supposed to be modeled after the ARC, the level of funding that it receives is nowhere that of the ARC. This goes for all of the federal regional commissions which combined, receive less funding than the ARC alone.

In addition to supporting the recommendations offered by SOFSEC and the SEAP report, SAABB supports the following additional recommendations:

- The 15 former slave states be removed from all other federal regional commissions and reconstituted as the “Historic Black Belt Regional Commission”(HBBRC)
- Parity in funding would mean annual appropriations for HBBRC that is equivalent to the 1965 funding made to ARC (in 2022 dollars), that is, \$1.2 billion annually, which comes to \$4.8 billion for the first four years (2023 - 2026)
- Commit to funding for at least 50 years (ARC is in its 57th year of funding)
- Instead of having Governors and local development districts (LDDs) as the key decision-makers with respect to resource allocation, LGUs/HBCUs and community based organizations would be the key actors
- Employ a wealth building/wealth creation regional development strategy
- Connect HBBRC to the Permanent Forum of People of African Descent **(70)** and the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 - 2024) **(71)**
- From the very beginning, engage the Environmental Justice community in all projects and generally in formulating and implementing a comprehensive regional economic development strategy
- Connect economic justice with environmental justice by instituting EPA’s Environmental Justice Academy throughout the Region via HBCUs/LGUs **(72)**
- To address food insecurity issues, institute throughout the Region, The Village Community Garden model (Sylvester, Georgia) which engages the general public, students in public schools and colleges as well as senior citizens **(73)**
- To address access to healthcare, climate change, and environmental degradation, amplify and replicate projects such as Regenesiis in Spartanburg, South Carolina



SECTION SIX

RACIAL EQUITY: A POLICY FRAMEWORK

DANIA DAVY, ESQ., GUEST CONTRIBUTOR | FEDERATION OF SOUTHERN COOPERATIVES/LAND ASSISTANCE FUND



Racial Equity Strengthens Democracy

On January 20, 2021, shortly after taking office, President Biden issued Executive Order 13985 (74) making it clear that racial equity would be a focal point of his administration's leadership. The President charged the Federal government with "affirmatively advancing equity, civil rights, [and] racial justice." The Executive Order defined equity as –

The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color.

On February 10, 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), under the leadership of Secretary Tom Vilsack and Deputy Secretary Dr. Jewel Bronaugh, (75) the first Black Deputy Secretary of the disseminated a comprehensive Equity Action Plan (76) to effectuate the Executive Order throughout USDA's sub-agencies. The Secretary and Deputy Secretary's accompanying joint memo acknowledged that USDA had to "take accountability for its role in the precipitous decline in the number of Black farmers in the United States." They further recognized that because of USDA's

...flawed design of programs as well as individual acts of discrimination, over the course of decades, many underserved producers ha[d] lost equipment, land, farm operations, and opportunities to train future generations of diverse producers. In some cases, they lost their family home and valued links to their culture, history, community, and identity.

Complementing this strong statement on racial equity, a key priority outlined in the USDA's Equity Action Plan was full implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act Section 1005's Emergency Debt Relief Program, promising that despite constitutionality challenges in the court system resulting in preliminary injunctions halting the implementation of the program, "the USDA, the Department of Justice, and the Biden-Harris Administration will continue to vigorously defend the program in federal court." (77)

Unfortunately, despite the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund's ("Federation") successful intervention in the Miller v. Vilsack lawsuit to add the voices of Black farmers to the defense of the program in court, Congress ultimately repealed the debt relief program by passing the Inflation Reduction Act (79) ("IRA") on August 12, 2022. Thus, the first major challenge to the Administration's focus on racial equity left the country without any ruling on the constitutionality of race-based set asides in USDA programs and services.

Notwithstanding the definition of equity cited in the President's Executive Order above, in the most fundamental sense, racial equity is distinguishable from the long-standing focus on racial equality in fundamental ways. While racial equality seeks to equally distribute the benefits of our economy and democracy, racial equity demands significantly more. Racial equity requires an acknowledgement of historical and institutionalized racial disparities which establish disparate positions in society based on race and requires equitable distribution of resources in ways that meet communities where they are in terms of resource access.

USDA's Economic Research Service ("ERS") recently reported, (80) "Nonmetro Blacks/African Americans had the highest incidence of poverty in 2019 (30.7 percent)." Ignoring this, among other, critical inequities in the starting position of different racial groups is a fundamental flaw and limitation of equality-only policies. A robust democracy and economy require strategic, long-term investments in historically underserved, discriminated against and excluded groups to achieve racial equity.

At its 2022 annual meeting, the Federation's members voted to approve advocacy priorities under an overarching framework of racial equity. Their approved broader advocacy platform aligns with the organization's long term and immediate goals including:

Credit & Debt Relief

- Promote Racial Equity in credit access and self-help by supporting a cooperatively owned, government-backed, Black Farmer Financial Institution
- Promote racial equity in farmland retention, USDA must impose permanent foreclosure moratorium on direct & guaranteed borrowers who qualified for debt relief under American Rescue Plan Section 1005
- Promote racial equity at the local USDA level; create a Civil Rights Ombudsman position responsible for conducting annual Civil Rights audits of any lending institutions receiving or backed by Federal funds

Cooperative Development

- Promote Racial Equity in Community Economic Development by advocating for Uniform Coop Enabling Legislation at the state and local level
- Expand the recognition and funding of cooperatives at all USDA agencies

Land Retention/Heir Property

- Promote Racial Equity in land retention by:
 - Expanding implementation and funding for the Heir Property Relending Program Pilot
 - Continuing to advocate for the passage of the Uniform Partition of Heirs Property Act (UPHPA) in all states
 - Advancing Uniform Heirs Property legislation that reduces barriers to heir property management decisions when less than 100% of the heirs agree

Regional Marketing System

- Promote Racial Equity in the economy with increased financial support to expand cooperatively owned, local & regional marketing systems with access to diverse markets

2023 Farm Bill

The upcoming November elections have brought particular attention to the Farm Bill, which is scheduled for reauthorization in 2023. Federation members recognized the importance of racial equity in conservation and credit within the Farm Bill. These issues were of particular significance given the unique challenges rural, Black communities face.

Due to the disproportionate impact **(81)** of the climate crisis on Black communities, it is critical that these communities participate in developing and benefitting from solutions to climate change. The conservation programs authorized under the Farm Bill could play a critical role in ensuring that Black Americans are engaged in significant climate harm reduction and conservation opportunities.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture shows Black farmers comprise 1.4% **(82)** of the U.S. farming population; however, the 2020 US Census revealed that Blacks comprise 12.4% **(83)** of the nation's population. Federation members saw this as an opportunity to re-engage the broader Black community in discourse and education on the importance of aggressive climate and conservation practices. To increase the number of Black farmland owners broadly engaged in sustainable conservation practices particularly, members voted to advocate for no less than 13% of Farm Bill conservation program funding set aside for Black farmers and landowners. Aligning the set-asides in conservation programs with the growing population size of the Black community increases the likelihood of engaging new and next generation Black farmers and landowners as land stewards.

Similarly, the Federation recognized that engaging the next generation of Black farmers, especially those who do not come from generational farming operations, will be a critical solution to the decline in both Black farmers and Black owned land. In response, Federation members voted to create a farm and student loan forgiveness program for Black farmers and professionals, prioritizing HBCU alum, with 20% reduction in farm or student loan debt for each year spent working in farming or with Black farmer-serving institutions with retroactive application available. This program would result in full student loan forgiveness upon completion of five (5) years of work in these fields.

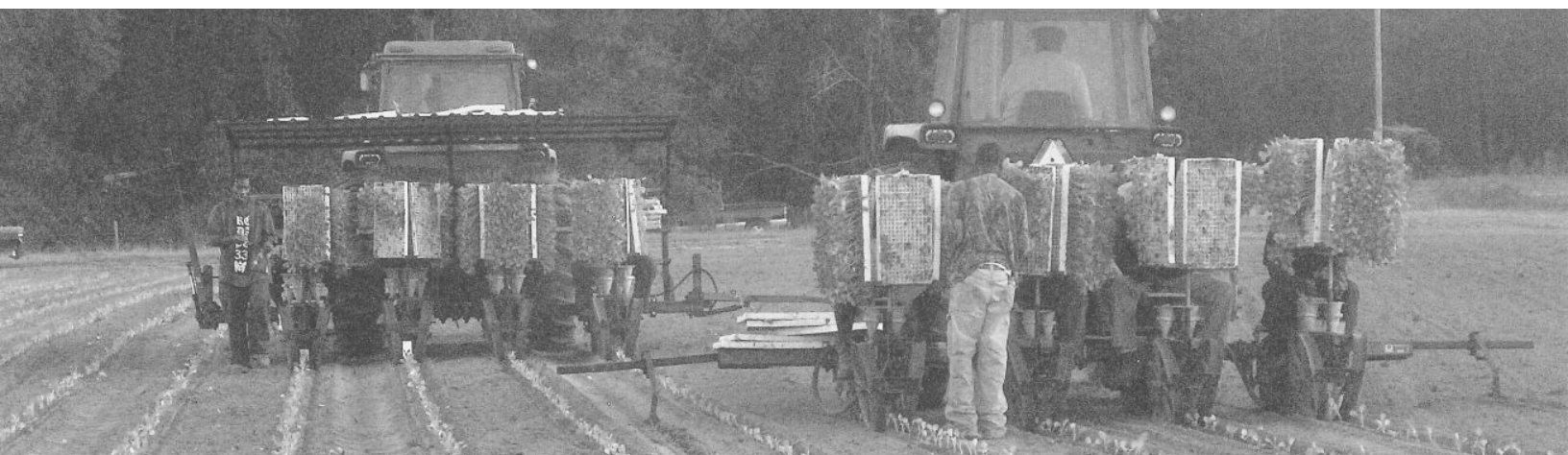
The Federation's members also voted to advocate for racially equitable access to both conservation and credit programs in the upcoming Farm Bill by streamlining program and loan application processes. Throughout 2022, the Federation's Advocacy Institute hosted listening sessions to better understand the membership's needs and challenges which we believe reflect the concerns of Black farmers, landowners and their communities throughout the lack Belt Region. The difficulty of navigating the USDA loan and conservation program application process was consistently raised by members and could make the biggest difference in USDA program participation. The Federation's membership voted to approve three (3) related recommendations to improve racial equity in credit access under the Farm Bill –

- Increase the Microloan limit to \$100,000 to increase access to the shorter application requirements in the Microloan application process.
- Align farm ownership and farm operating loans to the farm ownership loan's \$600,000 limit.
- Prohibit Farm Service Agency (FSA) loan collateralization (i) of farmer's primary residence and (ii) limit collateralization to no more than 100% of the loan value.

These priorities help address the most pressing needs of Black farmers today including efficient access to sufficient capital to begin and maintain their farming operations. Further, the loan collateral priority mitigates the overwhelming threat of farm foreclosure further perpetuating the disproportionate decline in Black land loss.

Due to the acknowledged racial discrimination by USDA which continues to discourage Black farmers from submitting applications to USDA programs there should be dedicated technical assistance provided by community-based organizations and technical service providers with a proven track record of no less than 10-years of documenting history of providing technical assistance to Black farmers and landowners. This priority will incentivize the USDA to focus on organizations that fully understand the application process and the unique needs of the Black, rural community. It would also disincentivize groups and individuals who do not have adequate expertise, networks, and infrastructure from competing for these technical resources.

Rooted in democracy as both a cooperative principle **(84)** and civil rights organizing practice, the Federation continues to work in partnership with several critical coalitions to amplify its shared Farm Bill priorities. As a result, the Federation recognizes the role that these Farm Bill and broader advocacy priorities will play in engaging underrepresented groups in the democratic process. Racial equity is not just a moral imperative or political football, it is a fundamental framework through which together we can create the America we have all dreamed of.



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TABLE A1: ENSLAVED AFRICANS IN THE 13 COLONIES, UNITED STATES, 1750 TO 1860

Population of Enslaved Africans in the Original Thirteen Colonies of the United States, 1750 to 1860.							
13 Colonies	1750*	1790	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans	Enslaved Africans
Connecticut	3,010	2,764	4,509	25	17	0	0
Delaware	1,496	8,887	97	3,202	2,665	2,290	1,798
Georgia	1,000	29,264	140,656	217,531	280,944	381,082	462,198
Maryland	43,450	103,036	107,397	102,994	80,737	90,368	87,189
Massachusetts	4,075	0	0	1	0	0	0
New Hampshire	550	0	0	3	0	0	0
New Jersey	5,354	11,423	7,557	2,254	674	236	18
New York	11,014	21,324	10,088	75	4	0	0
North Carolina	19,800	100,572	204,917	245,601	245,817	288,548	331,059
Pennsylvania	2,872	3,737	211	403	64	0	0
Rhode Island	3,347	948	48	17	5	0	0
South Carolina	39,000	107,094	258,475	315,401	327,638	384,984	402,406
Virginia	101,452	292,627	425,148	469,757	448,987	472,528	490,865
13 Colonies	236,420	681,676	1,159,103	1,357,264	1,387,552	1,620,036	1,775,533
13 Colonies %	100%	98%	75%	68%	56%	51%	45%
Other States	0	16,005	378,919	651,779	1,099,803	1,584,277	2,178,227
US Total	236,420	697,681	1,538,022	2,009,043	2,487,355	3,204,313	3,953,760

Source: Population of the United States (By States and Territories) 1790 - 1870.

*Source: Historical Statistics of the U.S. (1970), Franklin (1988);<http://www.eh.net/encyclopedia/wahl.slavery.us.php>

TABLE A2: ENSLAVED AND FREE BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES, NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE, 1790-1860

Enslaved and Free Blacks in the United States, Number and Percentage, 1790 through 1860.								
	1860	1850	1840	1830	1820	1810	1800	1790
Enslaved	3,953,760	3,204,313	2,487,355	2,009,043	1,538,022	1,191,362	893,602	697,681
Free	488,070	434,495	386,293	319,599	233,634	186,446	108,435	59,527
Total	4,441,830	3,638,808	2,873,648	2,328,642	1,771,656	1,377,808	1,002,037	757,208
% Free	11%	12%	13%	14%	13%	14%	11%	8%
% Enslaved	89%	88%	87%	86%	87%	86%	89%	92%

TABLE A3: TOP FIVE STATES WITH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ENSLAVED BLACK POPULATION, 1860

State	Enslaved	Free	Total	% Free	% Enslaved
Virginia	490,865	58,042	548,907	10.6%	89.4%
Georgia	462,198	3,500	465,698	0.8%	99.2%
Mississippi	436,631	773	437,404	0.2%	99.8%
Alabama	435,080	2,690	437,770	0.6%	99.4%
South Carolina	402,406	9,914	412,320	2.4%	97.6%
Total	2,227,180	74,919	2,302,099	3.3%	96.7%
U.S. Total	3,953,760	488,070	4,441,830	11.0%	89.0%

TABLE A4: ENSLAVED POPULATION: VIRGINIA, GEORGIA, MISSISSIPPI, ALABAMA, AND SOUTH CAROLINA, 1860, BY COUNTIES (NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE)

STATE	> 100	100 - 499	500 - 999	1,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 9,999	10,000 - 14,999	15,000 - 19,999	20,000 - 24,999	25,000 - 30,000	Total Counties in 1860	Total Enslaved Africans	Total Free Africans	Total Whites
VIRGINIA	24	23	9	51	29	10	0	1	0	147	490,865	58,042	1,047,299
	16%	16%	6%	35%	20%	7%		1%					
GEORGIA	0	19	15	64	29	5				132	462,198	3,500	591,550
		14%	11%	48%	22%	4%							
MISSISSIPPI	0	1	3	22	18	10	5	1		60	436,631	773	353,899
		2%	5%	37%	30%	17%	8%	2%					
ALABAMA	0	1	4	18	13	5	7	3	1	52	435,080	2,690	526,271
		2%	8%	35%	25%	10%	13%	6%	2%				
SOUTH CAROLINA	0	0	0	3	10	7	5	2	3	30	402,406	9,914	201,388
				10%	33%	23%	17%	7%	10%				
STATE TOTALS	24	44	31	158	99	37	17	7	4	421	2,227,180	74,919	2,720,407
	5.7%	10.5%	7.4%	37.5%	23.5%	8.8%	4.0%	1.7%	1.0%				

TABLE A5: LAND INDICATORS FOR OWNERS, MANAGERS, & TENANTS

States	Total Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Owners, Managers, & Tenants Black Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Percentage of Total Black Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Value of all black land and buildings in 1910 (\$)	Total Land in Farm in 2017 (acres)	Black Land in farms in 2017 (acres)	Percentage of Black Land in Farms in 2017 (acres)	Number of Black Land in Farms Lost 1910-2017	Percentage of Black Land in Farms Lost 1910-2017
Alabama	20,732,312	5,091,435	24.56%	\$73,918,727	8,580,940	317,092	3.70%	4,774,343	93.77%
Arkansas	17,416,075	2,653,323	15.23%	\$69,013,109	13,888,929	157,803	1.14%	2,495,520	94.05%
Delaware	1,038,880	56,973	5.48%	\$1,981,716	525,324	887	0.17%	56,086	98.44%
Florida	5,253,538	768,705	14.63%	\$11,915,568	9,731,731	90,340	0.93%	678,365	88.25%
Georgia	26,953,413	7,092,051	26.31%	128,883,732	9,953,730	218,588	2.20%	6,873,463	96.92%
Kentucky	22,189,127	440,777	1.99%	15,031,908	12,961,784	39,654	0.31%	401,123	91.00%
Louisiana	10,439,481	2,124,321	20.35%	44,933,658	7,997,511	197,061	2.46%	1,927,260	90.72%
Maryland	5,057,140	358,517	7.09%	10,269,784	1,990,122	8,009	0.40%	350,508	97.77%
Mississippi	18,557,533	6,457,427	34.80%	148,524,557	10,415,136	588,706	5.65%	5,868,721	90.88%
Missouri	34,591,248	-	-	-	27,781,883	25,619	0.09%	-	-
North Carolina	22,439,129	3,185,804	14.20%	69,266,216	8,430,522	170,450	2.02%	3,015,354	94.65%
South Carolina	13,512,028	3,940,476	29.16%	98,999,754	4,744,913	189,769	4.00%	3,750,707	95.18%
Tennessee	20,041,657	1,666,078	8.31%	42,192,560	10,874,238	108,645	1.00%	1,557,433	93.48%
Texas	112,435,067	4,283,663	3.81%	91,588,948	127,036,184	946,751	0.75%	3,336,912	77.90%
Virginia	10,495,636	2,238,220	21.33%	45,224,504	7,797,979	141,186	1.81%	2,097,034	93.69%
Total	341,152,264	40,357,770	11.83%	\$851,744,741	262,710,926	3,200,560	1.22%	37,182,829	92.13%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1913). 1910 Census of Agriculture.

Source: USDA/NASS. 2017 Volume 1, Chapter 1: State Level | 2017 Census of Agriculture | https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/

TABLE A6: LAND INDICATORS FOR OWNERS (INCLUDING PART-OWNERS)

States	Total Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Owners & Part-owners Black Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Percentage of Black-owner operated Land in Farms in 1910 (acres)	Value of owner land and buildings in 1910 (\$)	Total Land in Farm in 2017 (acres)	Black Land in Farms 2017 (acres)	Percentage of Black Land in Farms in 2017 (acres)	Number of Black Land in Farms Lost 1910-2017 (acres)	Percentage of Black Land in Farms Lost 1910-2017
Alabama	20,732,312	1,466,719	7.07%	\$17,285,502	8,580,940	283,848	3.31%	1,182,871	80.65%
Arkansas	17,416,075	1,204,114	6.91%	\$20,694,215	13,888,929	122,450	0.88%	1,081,664	89.83%
Delaware	1,038,880	13,615	1.31%	\$547,551	525,324	-	-	-	-
Florida	5,253,538	458,443	8.73%	\$6,786,810	9,731,731	82,384	0.85%	376,059	82.03%
Georgia	26,953,413	1,349,503	5.01%	20,540,910	9,953,730	205,786	2.07%	1,143,717	84.75%
Kentucky	22,189,127	255,363	1.15%	7,154,168	12,961,784	34,419	0.27%	220,944	86.52%
Louisiana	10,439,481	834,695	8.00%	12,779,570	7,997,511	158,636	1.98%	676,059	80.99%
Maryland	5,057,140	122,039	2.41%	3,924,773	1,990,122	7,970	0.40%	114,069	93.47%
Mississippi	18,557,533	2,227,194	12.00%	34,317,764	10,415,136	516,884	4.96%	1,710,310	76.79%
Missouri	34,591,248	-	-	-	27,781,883	25,452	0.09%	-	-
North Carolina	22,439,129	1,197,496	5.34%	22,810,089	8,430,522	165,102	1.96%	1,032,394	86.21%
South Carolina	13,512,028	1,098,044	8.13%	22,112,291	4,744,913	185,495	3.91%	912,549	83.11%
Tennessee	20,041,657	590,676	2.95%	12,179,780	10,874,238	103,857	0.96%	486,819	82.42%
Texas	112,435,067	1,866,742	1.66%	30,687,272	127,036,184	880,016	0.69%	986,726	52.86%
Virginia	10,495,636	1,381,223	13.16%	28,059,534	7,797,979	133,944	1.72%	1,247,279	90.30%
Total	341,152,264	14,065,866	4.12%	\$239,880,229	262,710,926	2,906,243	1.11%	11,171,460	79.42%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1913). 1910 Census of Agriculture.

Source: USDA/NASS. 2017 Volume 1, Chapter 1: State Level | 2017 Census of Agriculture | https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/

TABLE A7: FARM INDICATORS

States	Number of Total Farms in 1910	Number of Black Farms in 1910	Percentage of Black Farms in 1910	Number of Total Farms in 2017	Number of Total Black Farms in 2017	Percentage of Black Farms in 2017	Number of Black Farms Lost 1910-2017	Percentage of Black Farms Lost 1910-2017
Alabama	262,901	110,443	42.01%	40,592	2,905	7.16%	107,538	97.37%
Arkansas	218,678	63,593	29.08%	42,625	1,031	2.42%	62,562	98.38%
Delaware	10,836	818	7.55%	2,302	19	0.83%	799	97.68%
Florida	50,016	14,721	29.43%	47,590	1,543	3.24%	13,178	89.52%
Georgia	291,027	122,559	42.11%	42,439	1,925	4.54%	120,634	98.43%
Kentucky	259,185	11,730	4.53%	75,966	401	0.53%	11,329	96.58%
Louisiana	120,546	54,879	45.53%	27,386	2,179	7.96%	52,700	96.03%
Maryland	48,923	6,372	13.02%	12,429	169	1.36%	6,203	97.35%
Mississippi	274,382	164,737	60.04%	34,988	4,885	13.96%	159,852	97.03%
Missouri	277,244	-	-	95,320	155	0.16%	-	-
North Carolina	253,725	65,656	25.88%	46,418	1,435	3.09%	64,221	97.81%
South Carolina	170,434	96,708	56.74%	24,791	1,807	7.29%	94,901	98.13%
Tennessee	246,012	38,308	15.57%	69,983	961	1.37%	37,347	97.49%
Texas	417,770	69,918	16.74%	248,416	8,011	3.22%	61,907	88.54%
Virginia	184,018	48,114	26.15%	43,225	1,251	2.89%	46,863	97.40%
Total	3,085,697	868,556	28.15%	854,470	28,677	3.36%	840,034	96.72%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (1913). 1910 Census of Agriculture.

Source: USDA/NASS. 2017 Volume 1, Chapter 1: State Level | 2017 Census of Agriculture | https://www.nass.usda.gov/Publications/AgCensus/2017/Full_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_1_State_Level/

TABLE A8: FOOD INDICATORS

States	Poverty Rate	White Poverty Rate	Black Poverty Rate	Food Insecurity (%)	Percentage of Black Households with Food Insecurity (2020)	Percentage of White Households with Food Insecurity (2020)	White Poor or Fair Health Status	Black Poor or Fair Health Status
Alabama	15.1%	12.0%	20.3%	14.5%	27%	10%	18.9%	27.7%
Arkansas	14.2%	11.1%	24.0%	14.7%	25%	13%	20.9%	28.8%
Delaware	10.6%	6.9%	21.8%	9.7%	18%	7%	13.0%	19.5%
Florida	13.4%	9.7%	23.2%	10.6%	21%	8%	14.2%	14.6%
Georgia	13.4%	10.0%	18.7%	11.8%	19%	7%	16.7%	17.7%
Kentucky	14.1%	12.1%	33.3%	12.9%	22%	12%	21.3%	23.3%
Louisiana	15.7%	9.9%	24.5%	13.7%	23%	9%	16.5%	27.1%
Maryland	9.2%	5.8%	11.2%	9.0%	17%	5%	11.2%	14.7%
Mississippi	17.6%	12.7%	24.7%	16.2%	27%	11%	18.2%	27.5%
Missouri	10.9%	7.9%	26.5%	11.4%	27%	9%	15.0%	23.9%
North Carolina	13.9%	9.9%	19.8%	16.2%	23%	8%	13.8%	16.2%
South Carolina	13.4%	7.2%	22.9%	9.6%	19%	7%	15.3%	23.0%
Tennessee	13.4%	10.2%	23.8%	11.9%	23%	10%	15.8%	21.8%
Texas	14.1%	7.2%	19.7%	13.0%	24%	7%	13.4%	17.7%
Virginia	7.8%	4.7%	24.8%	9.6%	17%	5%	13.3%	18.5%

Source: State Health Facts (2022), Kaiser Family Foundation. <https://www.kff.org/statedata/>

Map the meal gap. Overall (all ages) Hunger & Poverty in the United States. (n.d.). <https://map.feedingamerica.org/>

TABLE A9: DEFINING AND MEASURING WEALTH

DEFINING AND MEASURING WEALTH							
INCLUSIVE WEALTH INDEX (UNU - IHDP)	FACTORS OF PRODUCTION (ECON 101)	CWON2021 (World Bank)	Measuring Comprehensive Wealth (IISD)	Wealth Economy (Bennett Institute)	Community Capitals Framework (Flora & Flora)	WealthWorks (Aspen Institute)	Economic Research Service (USDA)
1) Human	1) LABOR 2) ENTREPRENEURSHIP	1) Human	1) Human	1) Human 2) Intellectual	1) Human	1) Individual 2) Intellectual	1) Human 2) Intellectual
2) Natural	3) LAND	2) Natural	2) Natural	3) Natural	2) Natural	3) Natural	3) Natural
3) Manufactured	4) CAPITAL	3) Produced/Urban	3) Produced	4) Physical/Produced	3) Built	4) Built	4) Physical
-	-	4) Social	4) Social	5) Social/Institutional	4) Social	5) Social	5) Social
-	-	-	5) Financial	6) Financial	5) Financial	6) Financial	6) Financial
-	-	-	-	-	6) Political	7) Political	7) Political
-	-	-	-	-	7) Cultural	8) Cultural	8) Cultural

FIGURE A1: DEFINITION OF THE TYPES OF WEALTH

Physical capital - Includes the stock of produced capital goods (i.e., buildings and equipment) used by firms to produce outputs; infrastructure used by firms and households to reduce costs of commerce (e.g., roads, bridges, waterways, telecommunication networks); and durable goods used by households for either production or consumption purposes (e.g., buildings, vehicles, household equipment).

Natural capital - The stock of naturally occurring assets that yield a flow of valuable goods or services into the future (e.g., air, water, land, minerals, flora and fauna) (Costanza and Daly, 1992). Natural capital includes renewable natural resources such as ecosystems and non-renewable resources such as fossil fuel and mineral deposits.

Financial capital - Money and other liquid financial assets (assets than can be readily sold and converted to money), such as stocks, bonds, futures contracts, and letters of credit, net of financial liabilities.

Human capital - Human capital investments were defined by Becker (1993) as investments that "improve skills, knowledge, or health, and thereby raise money or psychic incomes" of people. Examples of human capital include the level of education, training, and health of workers.

Intellectual capital - Knowledge and innovation. Unlike human capital, which is embodied in individuals, intellectual capital exists separately from individuals and is thus "nonrival" in nature, meaning its use by one agent does not reduce its availability to others (Romer, 1990). Examples include knowledge and innovations stored in books, articles, patents, etc.

Social capital - Defined by Putnam (1993) as "features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit." Examples include formal organizations and informal associations and networks, such as networks of migrant workers and the social relationships that bind them.

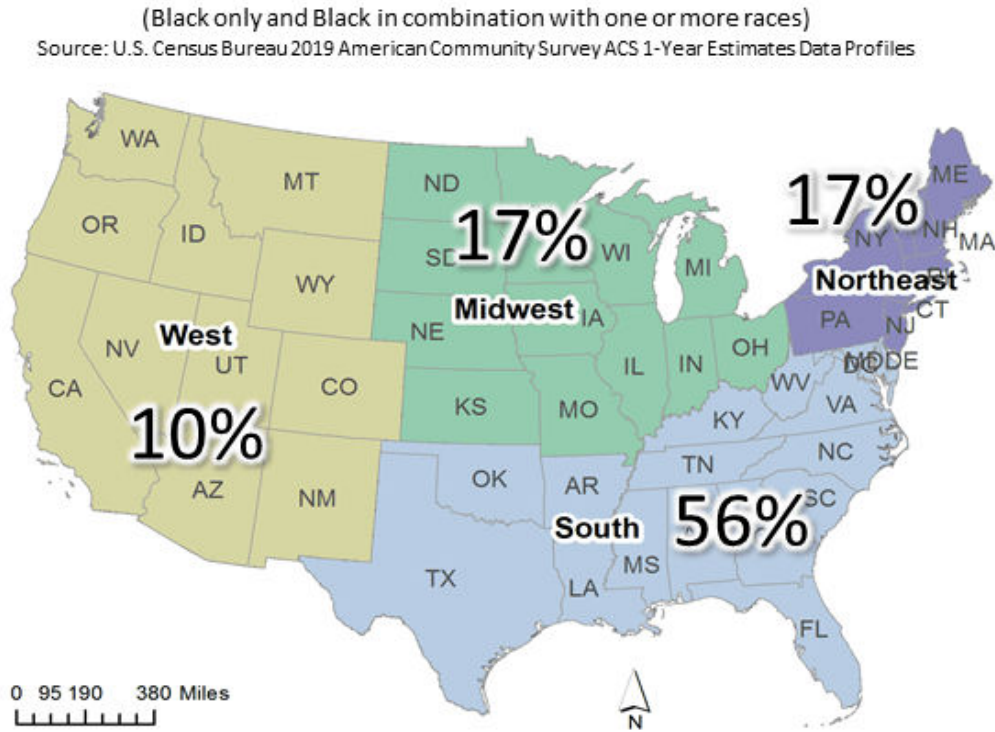
Cultural capital - Defined by Flora and Flora (2004) as people's understanding of society and their role in it, values, symbols, and rituals. An example is the "Protestant work ethic," which Weber (1905) argued was an important factor contributing to the rise of capitalism in the West.

Political capital - Defined by Flora and Flora (2004) as "the ability of a group to influence the distribution of resources within a social unit." An example is a political strength held by farm lobbies and agribusiness companies in agricultural policy circles.

Source: Rural Wealth Creation:

https://www.ers.usda.gov/webdocs/publications/44957/16573_err131_1_.pdf?v=0

FIGURE A2: BLACK REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION



Region	2019	2010	2000	1990
South	26,126,614	23,105,082	19,528,231	15,828,888
Midwest	8,143,949	7,594,486	6,838,669	5,715,940
Northeast	7,746,381	7,187,488	6,556,909	5,613,222
West	4,696,906	4,133,687	3,495,625	2,828,010
Total	46,778,764	42,020,743	36,419,434	29,986,060

Source: <https://Blackdemographics.com/population/Black-regions/>



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