



NASDA
FOUNDATION

SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT
FEBRUARY 2024

LETTER FROM SENIOR DIRECTOR, CHRIS JONES

In 2023, the NASDA Foundation continued its ambitious journey to support, amplify and energize food and agriculture communities nationwide. Our initiatives have helped connect state departments of agriculture with changemakers across backgrounds, from the next generation of aspiring agricultural leaders to small business owners looking to bring their value-added products to market. These efforts have only been made possible thanks to our members' commitment to stronger and more sustainable food and agricultural industries.

This year marks a pivotal milestone as we begin distributing funds for the Northeast USDA Regional Food Business Center, a transformative initiative that will bolster local economic development and bring increased coordination to producers, buyers and technical assistance providers across the region.

Our Farm2Food Accelerator initiative has also shaped a renewed focus on language justice by including programming for Spanish-speaking farm and food entrepreneurs, and we are planning to strategically expand both English- and Spanish-speaking programs to new regions in response to widespread interest from a number of state representatives.

We are also proud to share that projects are set to commence for the EPA Historically Underserved Farmers Grant Program, which is designed to both distribute resources previously inaccessible to some farmer communities while also supporting critical habitat resilience in the Gulf of Mexico watershed.

As NASDA Foundation's impact continues to grow, our work remains aligned with our five pillars and our guiding mission to support state departments of agriculture through education, outreach and research. Thank you for standing with us on this journey, and I look forward to continuing the Foundation's efforts to convene and collaborate with leaders and innovators across our nation's food and farming communities.



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chris Jones'.

CHRIS JONES
SENIOR DIRECTOR,
NASDA FOUNDATION

UNITED WE THRIVE.



Photo courtesy of U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ABOUT NASDA FOUNDATION

The NASDA Foundation enhances American food and agricultural communities through education, outreach and research.

NASDA Foundation is the only educational and research organization that directly serves the nation’s state departments of agriculture. Operating as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, our mission is to advance agriculture to shape a changing world.

“The NASDA Foundation continues to build resiliency and develop sustainable programs that impact producers and the communities they serve. Over the next year, we know that the Foundation will play a pivotal role in amplifying the work of our members and supporting all farmers as they work to transform regional food systems across the country.

TED MCKINNEY
NASDA CEO



STRATEGIC PILLARS



EDUCATION, OUTREACH, RESEARCH

Language Accessibility

Workshops began in January 2024 for the Spanish California Farm2Food Accelerator cohort, an initiative aimed to support language justice through courses taught entirely in Spanish. Similar to other programs, cohort participants will spend 15 weeks learning how to refine their value-added product, bring it to market and increase their business’ visibility.



FARM2FOOD ACCELERATOR

The Farm2Food Accelerator Program is a training program that supports small-scale, specialty crop farmers and food producers in refining their food and beverage products, targeting their marketing and expanding into new markets.

The program is a collaboration between the NASDA Foundation and state departments of agriculture in California and Nevada, with opportunities to expand to additional states for the 2024-2025 cycle. Along with California and Nevada, past programs have also been hosted in Florida, Oregon and Washington. This 15-module program is free to cohort participants and seeks to increase resiliency among small-scale farmers and food producers by increasing their food safety knowledge while providing support for the development of new or existing value-added products, or exploring new market opportunities.



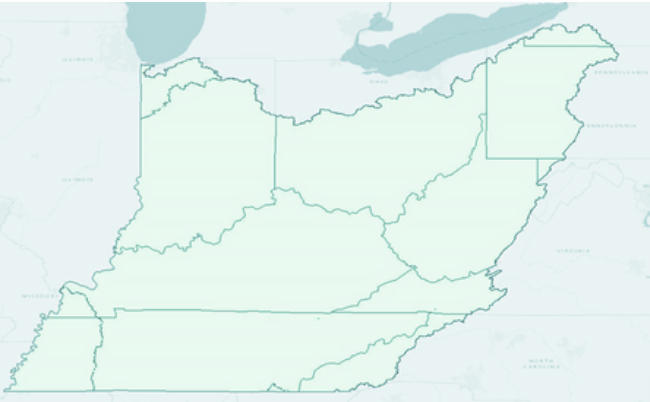
“Participating in the program will give myself, wife and children the greatly needed resources and education needed to take our business to the next level. We are a family-owned and -operated business. Our children work alongside us.

ERNEST & GRACE HALL
PASO GRILL



“We want our farm to be a place that connects people back to nature and empowers people to take responsibility for their well-being and having a product to sell will support that vision and aid to bring awareness to our farm as well.

PERLA KLENK-SANCHEZ
ELEVATION EATING



EPA HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED FARMERS GRANT PROGRAM

NASDA Foundation was awarded \$3 million in cooperative agreement funding by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Gulf of Mexico Division. The program, which extends through 2026, is intended to assist underserved farmers, improve water quality and protect natural habitats while also providing benefits for climate mitigation and adaptation.

14 ORGANIZATIONS

Were selected to support historically underserved farmers through habitat resilience initiatives and knowledge-sharing efforts.

SIX STATES

Across the Gulf of Mexico watershed are engaged in the project, which will continue over the next three and a half years.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

To support reductions in non-point source pollution and inform best management practices across historically underserved communities for a more sustainable future.

WHAT’S NEXT IN 2024

Implementation of the projects by the 14 sub awardee organizations with the support of NASDA Foundation’s Subject Matter Expert David Hanselmann.

“Reaching out to Historically Underserved Farmers and helping them consider how their agricultural and woodland operations could better address water quality, habitat, climate and Gulf Hypoxia in the process is at the heart of this project.

DAVID HANSELMANN,
EPA SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

Photo courtesy of Resource Institute, Inc.



REGIONAL FOOD BUSINESS CENTER

In 2023, NASDA Foundation was selected by USDA to establish one of 12 Regional Food Business Centers – an initiative aimed at repairing and transforming regional and local food systems after pandemic-era supply chain disruptions.

The Center is directing funding streams and community hub resources to 11 states – Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont – and the District of Columbia. These efforts are led in partnership with NASDA Foundation, Buffalo Go Green, Cornell University’s Center for Regional Economic Advancement, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry.



\$23MM+

In sub-award funding to be distributed directly into local communities.

Emphasis during the outreach phase and application evaluation process will be placed on ensuring an equitable distribution of funds for historically underserved populations.



BUSINESS EXPANSION

Funding in allotments of up to \$100k will be distributed beginning in late 2024 to small- and mid-sized businesses to assist in overcoming barriers to market access, product development and other operational expenses.



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Funding in allotments of up to \$75K will be distributed beginning in mid-2024 to expand the reach of technical assistance providers across the region, who have expertise uniquely tailored to their local food systems.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Cornell University’s Center for Regional Economic Advancement will establish a hub in mid-2024 to provide free business development resources and coordinate technical assistance information-sharing.

FOOD SAFETY

The NASDA Foundation Food Safety Team administers two FDA Cooperative Agreements. The first cooperative agreement is the National Project to Support and Promote Consistent Implementation of the Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption, which assists the FDA and states with implementing the Food Safety Modernization Act’s Produce Safety Rule.

The NASDA Foundation collaborates with our affiliate association, the American Association of Feed Control Officials, to administer the second cooperative agreement named the Long-Term Improvements to the National Animal Food Safety System and Promotion of the Animal Feed Regulatory Program Standards. This cooperative agreement aims to assist with regulator training and outreach for advancing the integrated Animal Food Safety System.

National Produce Safety Consortium

The NASDA Foundation Food Safety Team hosted the seventh annual National Produce Safety Consortium on November 7-9, 2023. The year’s Consortium, which took place in St. Louis, Missouri, assembled over 250 attendees representing 47 state departments of agriculture, FDA, USDA and university extension. The presentations and breakout sessions centered around this year’s consortium theme, “Accomplishing More Together,” emphasizing the importance of education initiatives, collaboration across institutions and forward-thinking governance.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Led Animal Food Partnerships

NASDA is working with AAFCO, state feed control officials and NASDA members to implement the new model regulations for Pet Food Label Modernization. The Animal Food Cooperative Agreement also helped build a new collaboration portal for the states and AAFCO to streamline communications.

Hosted Training Workshops

The On-Farm-Readiness Review Development Team has hosted 12 virtual OFFR training sessions since 2021, with 223 participants trained. In addition, the team created an “on-farm” training module to facilitate broader access to the program’s educational resources.

Facilitated Working Groups

The Food Safety Team facilitated a comprehensive workgroup comprised of state produce safety programs and FDA members to address data sharing, communication pathways and shared definitions of inspection classification between the FDA and state produce safety programs.

Drafted Produce Regulatory Standards

In collaboration with state produce programs and the FDA, the Food Safety Team developed the draft Produce Regulatory Program Standards and submitted them to FDA for review and approval.

NASDA FOUNDATION AND NASS: DRIVING PROGRESS WITH DATA

NASS survey data forms the backbone for the NASDA Foundation's extensive and diverse range of programs and initiatives. These activities include areas such as food safety, environmental stewardship, collaborative regulatory frameworks and standards, and support systems for farmers and regional food businesses.

It guides innovative research efforts and stands as the cornerstone for crafting well-informed policies and fostering economic opportunities within and beyond the agricultural and public sectors. The Foundation's commitment to education and training further strengthens its role in empowering individuals and communities.

Outreach

Informing stakeholders about the partnership’s mission and data accessibility.

Specialized Data

Showcasing NASS data’s economic impact and adapting to evolving needs.

Insight Gathering

Collecting trends, challenges, and feedback for quality statistics.

Feedback

Encouraging producer engagement and program efficiency.

Diversity

Fostering inclusivity and strengthen connections across the industry.

Timely Updates

Disseminating regular updates about program developments.

NASDA-NASS Cooperative Agreement Overview

Established in 1972, the cooperative agreement between USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service and NASDA stands as our longest-standing collaboration. This partnership plays a vital role in advancing U.S. agriculture by employing approximately 2,500 part-time enumerators who conduct NASS surveys and gather critical statistical data that supports the agricultural community and fosters a robust agricultural economy.

Agriculture Policy Summit & NASDA’s Next Generation

117
Student
Participants

42
Colleges &
Universities

33
States

The Agriculture Policy Summit and NASDA’s Next Generation programs offer college students the unique opportunity to engage with state departments of agriculture, industry leaders and policymakers at NASDA’s Winter Policy Conference and Annual Meeting. Each year, the NASDA Foundation team selects students to build agricultural awareness in terms of advocacy, leadership, and career opportunities and exploration. Together, these initiatives will support a stronger, more resilient agricultural workforce.

What’s Next in 2024

Partnerships

With the generous support of our partners and the steadfast commitment of our collaborating organizations, we look forward to providing new, innovative opportunities to spotlight each state’s unique agricultural industry, expand student engagement in agriculture, provide entrepreneurship programs and more.

New Grants

The foundation is actively pursuing new engagement and outreach opportunities through grant applications. These grants will not only continue to position our organization as forward-thinking in the midst of evolving issues in food and agriculture, but also expand programmatic initiatives that align with all five of our strategic pillars.

Building Awareness

Through strategic press outreach, dynamic social media engagement and compelling storytelling, our mission is to build a showcase of the transformative work taking place in food and farm communities around the country while also highlighting the critical role that each state department of agriculture plays in catalyzing change.

Research

Serving as a USDA MyPlate Strategic Partner, the foundation co-published a “Build a Better Sandwich” resource toolkit in January 2024. We look forward to contributing to new research initiatives as an expert voice of agricultural grant programs and outreach to producer communities.



4350 North Fairfax Drive #810
Arlington, VA 22203
202-296-9680

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Thank You to Our Partners

