



Growing Black Farmers' Markets in North Carolina

*"WHEN I'M TOUCHING THE SOIL, IT JUST GIVES ME FREEDOM," SAMANTHA FOXX,
OWNER OF MOTHER'S FINEST FAMILY URBAN FARMS IN NORTH CAROLINA.*

How We Got Here:

Black Farmers in North Carolina

Black and Indigenous communities have a long history of implementing regenerative agricultural practices. These communities, however, face some of the highest barriers to keeping access to their land much less these practices. The US has had systemic and intentional historical barriers that still have purchase today: legal and social barriers to land ownership, discrimination from banks and the government for loans, credits, and subsidies, a legal system tilted toward White farmers, prejudicial competition from large White-owned farms, and biased lack of access to markets, knowledge, and technical support.

Historically, Black farmers held almost 25% of farms in North Carolina; now it's three percent - less than 1,500 farms with women leading around 530 of them. The reasons and the impact on Black Farmers are well-documented by the Equal Justice Initiative [here](#) and The Atlantic [here](#). At the same time, with less than two percent of U.S. land farmed as organic and even less with regenerative or restorative practices, industrial agriculture contributes to an overwhelming amount of climate emissions, habitat loss, soil erosion, and water, land, and air pollution – impacting frontline farming communities.

N4J's Farmer Inclusion Program seeks to increase access to resources and strengthen, particularly Black and Indigenous but also other farmers of colors', climate resilience through social justice approaches and a focus on regenerative agriculture. You can learn more about our Farmer Inclusion program [here](#).



"We Are Each Other's Harvest"

We are inspired by the words of Natalie Baszile in her book 'We are Each Other's Harvest' and the work Black farmers in North Carolina are doing to reclaim their land and their heritage in the state. For example, there is a grassroots effort to improve market access by increasing the number of local Black farmer markets. These markets translate into produce sales which help to support Black farmers' agricultural efforts and in some cases provide organic produce for Black people living in food deserts around the state. According to the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, as of January 2020, there were 47 Black-owned farmers' markets in North Carolina with more on the way. Do you know who's in your area?



Here are five worth highlighting, in their own words:

Tall Grass Food Box (Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Cary) - A platform to support and encourage the sustainability of Black farmers, by increasing their visibility and securing space for them in the local marketplace.

Perkins Orchard (Durham) - We are your one-stop shop for local eggs, cheese, meats, jar goods, honey, greens, herbs, flowers, fruits, vegetables, pumpkins, Christmas trees, and so much more.

Black Farmer's Market (Durham, Raleigh) - Black farmers were once the heart of our food ways. It's time to reshape our agricultural systems, starting by protecting and supporting them.

Black Church Food Security Network (based in Baltimore, MD, with programs in NC and elsewhere) - We help Black churches use their assets to establish gardens on their land, host miniature farmers' markets and buy wholesale from Black farmers.

The Food Justice for All Farmers Market (Greensboro) - "We just want to promote and to help strengthen the commerce and to help save their family farms and then to bring awareness," said Executive Director of the Guilford Urban Farming Initiative Paula Sieber.

TO SUPPORT THESE EFFORTS, CONSIDER DONATING TO THE MARKET(S) OF YOUR CHOICE. THIS WILL HELP TO GROW THESE MARKETS, INCREASE THE NUMBER OF FARMERS INVOLVED, AND EXPAND OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP BLACK CONSUMERS WHO CAN'T GET TO THEM.