



## Honoring Black Agricultural Contributions: Past, Present, and Future

February was Black History Month and agriculture is full of historical figures to highlight from our past, present, and future. Black farmers and innovators have shaped agriculture for generations, from George Washington Carver's groundbreaking research to Fannie Lou Hamer's fight for Black land ownership. Their contributions laid the foundation for today's Black row crop farmers.

Young agricultural leaders like **Sedrick Rowe** who is making history in the organic peanut farming business, continue this legacy. NBGC members **Dexter Gilbert**, **Howard James**, and **Keith White** exemplify excellence in the field, proving that Black farmers remain a vital force in agriculture.

Looking ahead, Black farmers are embracing technology, sustainability, and advocacy to expand opportunities. NBGC is committed to supporting their growth, ensuring a future where agricultural leadership thrives. We will continue to support farmers through education, advocacy, and community-building. We will continue honoring our past, amplifying the voices of today's farmers, and investing in the future.

### In this newsletter you can expect:

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Sustaining  
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# NBGC Board Winter Retreat: Strengthening Vision for 2025



NBGC’s board and staff convened in Huntsville, Alabama, for a productive and forward-focused winter retreat. Over the course of the gathering, board members engaged in team-building exercises and strategic discussions centered on key initiatives for 2025, including enhancing field days, refining the annual meeting, and expanding outreach to better serve row crop farmers. The retreat provided an opportunity to align on organizational goals, ensuring that NBGC continues to be a strong advocate and resource for its members.



## Member Spotlight

We are proud to honor the **Bridgeforth Family** as having the largest Black-owned farm in Alabama, that continues to thrive. They are showcasing resilience and success in agriculture and are featured on [WAFF Chanel 48](#). Located in Tanner, Ala., the farm has expanded its operations while preserving its legacy. Their story is a testament to the importance of Black-owned farms and the role they play in shaping the future of agriculture.

## NBGC Executive Team



Armstrong



Bibbins



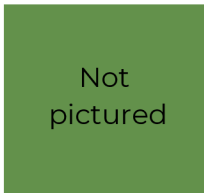
Bland-Miller



Mellion



Washington



Wright

NBGC celebrates the achievements of women in agriculture, including our first female board members, **Christi Bland Miller** and **Ashley Armstrong**. Christi made history as the first African-American woman to graduate from the Rice Leadership Development Program, sponsored by USA Rice, and Ashley grows row crops and vegetables in Louisiana. Their leadership is shaping the future of farming. This month, we also recognize NBGC’s first all-female staff: **Dawn A. Mellion, Ph.D.**, Executive Director; **Elzadia Washington**, Associate Director; **Lacey Bibbins**, Administrative Assistant; and **Brielle Wright**, Program Director. Their expertise and dedication are advancing NBGC’s mission and impact.





# SUSTAINING MEMBERS CORNER

## HONORING WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

In this edition of the Sustaining Members Corner, we recognize the invaluable contributions of women leaders who have been instrumental in supporting the NBGC through their dedication and partnership.

- Natalie McGrady** (Cargill) – Drives supplier diversity and industry partnerships.  
**Tharlyn Fox** (John Deere) – Advocates for landownership solutions and farm equity.  
**Kianna Wilson** (FMC) – Strengthens industry relations and inclusive initiatives.  
**Karli Coughlin** (Tyson Foods) – Elevates visibility through strategic marketing.  
**Macie O'Shaughnessy** (Syngenta) – Supports industry collaboration and outreach.  
**Debra Quade** (Kellanova) – Champions diverse supply chains and corporate partnerships.

These are just a few of the many women who exemplify leadership, innovation, and dedication to advancing agriculture. NBGC is grateful for every woman in agriculture—whether you're employed by our sustaining members, partners, or a trusted ally. Your continued partnership and support of our farmers make a lasting impact.



### Ag Fact: Demeter, Greek goddess of agriculture

In Greek mythology, Demeter is the goddess of agriculture, harvest, bread, grain, and the cycle of seasons. She is also called the "Grain-Mother" or the "Earth-Mother" and is believed to sustain mankind with the earth's rich bounty. Demeter was depicted as a mature woman, often wearing a crown and bearing sheafs of wheat or a cornucopia, and a torch. Demeter's sacred plants were wheat, barley, and the poppy.



# Model Farm Field Days

- **Nelson Field Day (NBGC):** June 5-6, 2025 Vidalia, LA
  - [Registration Link](#)
- **Smith Field Day (NBGC):** June 26-27, 2025 Greenville, MS
  - [Registration Link](#)
- **Mahogany Farms Field Day:** July 10 - 11, 2025, Orangeburg, SC
- **KWB Farms Field Day:** July 31 - August 1, 2025, Memphis, TN
- **Haynie Farms Field Day:** August 21 -22, 2025, Altheimer, AR
- **Gilbert Farms Field Day:** September 11-12, 2025, Marianna, FL

*Thank you for reading!*

Don't forget to share your stories, accomplishments, and highlights for a chance to be featured in this monthly newsletter.

Use the QR code below to submit your information and let your voice be heard!



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