



A Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust Report

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**Encouraging and Supporting
Black and People of Colour in
Agriculture**

Dr Navaratnam Partheeban OBE

August 2023

NUFFIELD UK

NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIPS TRUST (UK)

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A Nuffield (UK) Farming Scholarships Trust Report

Date of report: August 2023



*"Leading positive change in agriculture.
Inspiring passion and potential in people."*

Title	Encouraging and Supporting Black and People of Colour in Agriculture
Scholar	Dr Navaratnam Partheeban OBE
Sponsor	McDonalds UK and Ireland
Objectives of Study Tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the barriers to Black and People of Colour (BPOC) in agriculture • Engage with individuals working in the agricultural sector from BPOC backgrounds • Improve my understanding on leadership and social change • Build a network of likeminded individuals working for equity and diversity in agriculture
Countries Visited	United Kingdom United States
Messages	<p>If we want to create a sector that is diverse, equitable and inclusive for Black and People of Colour, we must work to the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn about the history and culture of Black and People of Colour in the UK. • Communicate and engage with Black and People of Colour. • Understand your own biases and barriers. • Work to become a positive ally. • Organisations need to look in before looking out.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The agricultural sector is the least diverse sector in the UK, especially when it comes to people who identify as Black or a Person of Colour (BPOC). Estimates of the numbers of BPOC people vary between 0.8-1.2% in UK agriculture, in a country where we are estimated to make up 17% of the general population and 33% of all children. We are not attracting a large population of the public and, wanting people to support us and join us, means we must represent them more.

The objective of the study was to travel and learn how we can understand the barriers and create solutions to encourage BPOC people to enter and thrive in the UK agricultural sector.

Initially I spent time understanding the situation in the UK and then travelled to the US as it has a large BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Colour) population, a shared history with the UK and very similar issues with regards to recruiting BPOC people into the agricultural sector. Visits included museums, speaking to farmers, ranchers, cowboys, growers, vets and educators and exploring other sectors like baseball and the military.

In US agriculture there is a current drive to highlight the social justice movement and history of BIPOC people. They are also actively celebrating difference including other faiths and cultures. This is something the UK agricultural sector should embrace. Engaging with more diverse groups and people and connecting with them, can only help increase understanding and highlight the similarities we share and break down negative biases which holds back so much progress. We need to do this at both an individual level and organisational level. We all have a responsibility to create a culture of making sure that everyone can feel like they belong.

Many barriers are systemic and were created in the past but are still very relevant and active today. Creating equity and inclusion is crucial. Equity means creating a more level playing field and inclusion is making people feel like they belong. From acknowledging and accepting the past, creating positive opportunities for marginalised people, platforming and promoting BPOC people, and creating support networks and systems to help BPOC people be an equal part of the sector is key to making any programme a success. BPOC people need to be included in the process to create effective solutions for them. There are plenty of inspiring BPOC who want to be or are in the agricultural sector, despite the barriers laid out in front of them. The belief that BPOC people do not want to work in agriculture is false.

By increasing the diversity of people in our sector and inspiring the next generation, we will help create ideas, innovation and talent plus making the sector more representative of the country we serve. To achieve this, we need to start investing more time, money and effort into working for positive change.

As Jesse Jackson said: *"When everyone is included, everyone wins."*

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The opinions expressed in this report are my own and not necessarily those of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust, or of my sponsor, or of any other sponsoring body.

Please note that the content of this report is up to date and believed to be correct as at the date shown on the front cover.

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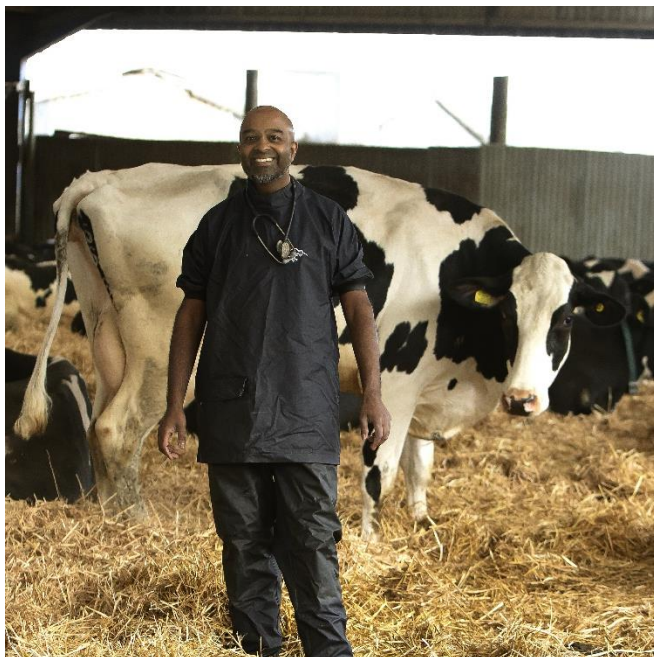
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Chapter 1: Personal introduction



Dr Navaratnam Partheeban OBE. Source: Author's own

Navaratnam Partheeban OBE is a qualified farm animal veterinary surgeon. Previous roles include clinical farm practice, working in university higher education, the pharmaceutical sector and in the global animal health industry. He is currently the Regional Head of Farm for a large veterinary organisation overseeing many farm practices across the west, south and east of the UK.

Partheeban is a co-founder of the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society (BVEDS), an organisation that promotes, educates and celebrates ethnic diversity in the veterinary and agricultural sector. BVEDS were finalists in the National Diversity Awards 2021. He is also an Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) Director.

Working with OFC, he helped create and is run the Breaking Barriers Scholarship, created exclusively for Black and People of Colour interested in the agricultural and food sector, which is sponsored by McDonalds UK and Ireland. Partheeban was a co-principal investigator researching the experiences of racism and the impact it has on the mental wellbeing of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic people working or studying in the UK veterinary sector. This was funded by a Sarah Brown Mental Health Research Award.

He has worked with several organisations and higher education institutions to help promote diversity, equity and inclusion including the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons and Nottingham University. Previously, he was trustee of the Country Trust and St Werburghs City Farm, Bristol. Partheeban was awarded an OBE in the King's birthday honours list 2023 for services to inclusion.



Chapter 2: Background to my study subject

We now live in a multi-ethnic and multi-racial population in the UK, which is made up of around 17% Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) people, with 33% of all school aged children identifying as BAME according to the 2021 census. Yet Black and Minority Ethnic people make up only 1% in the agricultural sector and 4% of the veterinary sector, making agriculture being one of the least diverse sectors in this country along with the animal sciences and the environmental sector.

We know the importance of agriculture to feed the nation and look after the countryside, but it is currently being upheld by an increasingly older, white, male generation which does not reflect the society it supports. If we are to increase connection and communication with the public, plus promote more innovation and growth in this sector, then we need to diversify the people that belong and work within our space.

There are many terms that we talk about when talking about increasing the people in our sector. We need to consider diversity, equity, equality, inclusion and justice. All must be considered if we do really want to make a positive change. One without the others means we cannot achieve a positive result.

There are many reasons for why the agricultural sector has failed to attract and retain People of Colour. Racism is a problem and has been widely reported by many individuals in this sector. It is not only an individual event but structural in how it exists. This has the effect of promoting a negative stereotype of farming but also creates barriers for Individuals of Colour to join and/or thrive when here. Other barriers include a lack of opportunities, financial barriers, lack of role models, lack of contacts and the fear of the unknown.

Currently very little has been and is being done to break down these barriers and address these issues. My study aimed to visit the UK and US to try to learn and understand if there are ways we can be more proactive and successful in attracting a greater diversity of people into our sector with a focus on People of Colour.

In this report I will be using several terms. In the US, they use Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). In the UK we do not have Indigenous people so will be referring to just Black and People of Colour (BPOC) for my UK examples. The term 'Ethnic Minority' and 'BAME' will also focus on Black and People of Colour only.



Chapter 3: My study tour

My aim was to explore and learn how we can create a more equitable sector for Black and People of Colour in the UK agricultural sector. This includes all the different components of agriculture including farmers, agronomists, geneticists and veterinarians for example.

I chose the US because of its close connection to the UK, its shared history and its large BIPOC population.

The study was divided into two trips. My first visit was to the four southern states of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia and Louisiana. I chose these states due to having the largest percentage population of black and minority farmers in the US ranging from 3-6% of the total state farmer population. It was also an area that had a huge BIPOC population with some cities and areas recording over 90% BIPOC. Interestingly, a large part of the social justice movement also occurred here and was where slavery was essential to the cotton and sugar industry and supply to the UK, that made this area thrive.

My second trip was to Texas. This state has the most farmers and most black farmers in the US in terms of numbers. Texas has many programmes and history which I wanted to understand.

There are many examples in the UK which I aim to highlight and share as both examples of good practice and bad practice.



The southern states of the United States. Source: [Burningcompass.com](https://burningcompass.com)



Chapter 4: History - it all starts here

Black and Brown people have been part of Britain for thousands of years. Not only have the remains of Black people been found dating from the Roman times but also there are drawings and descriptions of 'coloured people' in Edwardian and Tudor times.

Britain has had a long history of trading and interacting with the world. It is not long ago that Britain controlled the largest empire in history spanning a quarter of the world's land area, with nearly a quarter of the world's population within it. A vast majority of the people within this empire were People of Colour inhabiting Asia and Africa, the West Indies and the US, and they were all British subjects. The Empire served the UK and the labour of the empire, which included slavery and indentured labour, worked for the growth and support of the UK population. This means that millions of black and brown people were involved in creating what Britain achieved and is today.

Unfortunately, history is poorly taught and there is an unfortunate amnesia which means we are led to believe that Britain excelled due to British exceptionalism. This is untrue. Even in British agriculture, we have still not recognised and accepted this. The UK food system relied on imports from the colonies and the work of millions of colonial subjects. This reality must be researched and told going forward. The current history of British agriculture is not what is being promoted and the current story leaves out Black and Brown people from the true history of the British agricultural sector.

If we are to include BPOC into the agricultural sector, then their ancestral contribution must be given respect and inclusion. Having a shared history, even if it is a difficult subject, is key to encouraging people of African, West Indian and South Asian ancestry in connecting to the British agricultural sector. Even the famous Scottish shortbread would not have existed if it wasn't for the slave produced sugar from the plantations in Jamaica.

History is difficult and the truth is not everything was positive. This can be a barrier to engaging BPOC people about working in the field. Many Black and Brown people were forced to work on the land to provide for the British including the worst kind of forced labour, slavery, and this leads to generational trauma, where working the land is linked to this brutal system of work. This was something much more apparent when I visited the US and it was a huge turnoff for many of the young Black individuals who were seeking out opportunities for work. But I have heard this by individuals in the UK who also find this connection very difficult to take.

Another area where BPOC people are left out in the history of agriculture is innovation and change, as almost no Black or Brown individuals are mentioned. For example, the whole field of regenerative agriculture has been practiced by Indigenous communities in the global south for centuries. This knowledge has formed the basis for a lot of what is preached by white western individuals, who claim to be the creators of this knowledge and practice. Visiting West Indian growers in the UK and Indigenous American growers in the US, I saw for myself the use of traditional techniques being used which had been handed down for generations, yet I had not heard about this contribution in regenerative talks given by so called 'experts' in conferences. There are also individuals such as George Washington Carver, one of the most prominent Black scientists of the early 20th century, who was instrumental in developing techniques to improve types of soils depleted by repeated



plantings of cotton and created many ways to use peanuts as a food product such as in peanut butter.

In the US, the history of agriculture which involves BPOC people is being encouraged and promoted. There are museums celebrating individuals such as Dr Carver but also highlighting the contribution of other marginalised individuals in this area. Something we lack in the UK.



Entrance to the William Carver Museum in Texas. Source: Author's own



Larry Callies with the author in Texas. Source: Author's own

Another interesting thing is the manipulation of history to fit a narrative. How many people know about black cowboys? How many stories and pictures are commonly shared? Spending time with Larry Callies, founder of the Black Cowboy Museum, learning about his story as a bull rider and cowboy and some of the amazing experiences he had was fascinating. One of the most interesting facts he shared was the story of the Lone Ranger. We all believe the Lone Ranger to be a white fair-haired man with an indigenous American as a side kick. However, the truth was that the Lone Ranger was based on Bass Reeves, who was

born into slavery in Arkansas and relocated to Paris, Texas, in 1846. He wanted to be a sheriff but was told he would have to capture an unrealistically large number of criminals in a short space of time. As deputy marshal, Bass is said to have arrested more than 3,000 people and killed 14 outlaws, all without sustaining a single gun wound. When TV production companies wanted to make a series and film about him, they felt a black person would not be popular so cast the image we see today.



Chapter 5: Racism

Racism is present in the agricultural sector both in the UK and in the US. It is also part of wider society. Acknowledging this exists and shapes a lot of what we do is important if we want to move to create positive change. Race is a social construct created to uphold a power hierarchy where white people sit at the top and black people at the bottom. Described in the late 16th century in the magazine *Systema Naturae*, it was used by the British to justify slavery and colonialism. This concept was so well promoted and integrated into society that the power dynamic created is the cause of many of the inequities we see today.

Unconscious bias, which includes racism, is when one creates stereotypes about people. A lot of peoples understanding and ideas about Black and Brown people are not based on experience and fact and so there is a huge level of negative racial unconscious bias. This can lead to prejudice, which is when one has negative feelings about someone and this could later lead to discrimination, when one treats people differently. This can lead to members of the sector creating barriers for BPOC people to enter and thrive. Identifying this problem and working to supress and stop it is key in creating a positive culture. Racism does have a part to play in the lack of representation of Black and Brown people in the UK agricultural sector.

Racism is both individual and institutional. For example, in the US, the loss of land by black farmers is a very acute example of that. Black people owned 18 million acres in the US but now only farm one million acres. This land loss, which is also seen in South Africa and Zimbabwe for example, occurs under policies which discriminate against Black and Indigenous people. The lack of land ownership for People of Colour is a huge problem also in the UK and is a huge barrier. The way land is owned and controlled needs reassessment as it does prevent marginalised people having any access.



Segregation and exclusion is a huge element of racism. An extreme example displayed at Mississippi Civil Rights Museum. Source: Author's own



Chapter 6: Debunking myths *'It's not in their culture'*

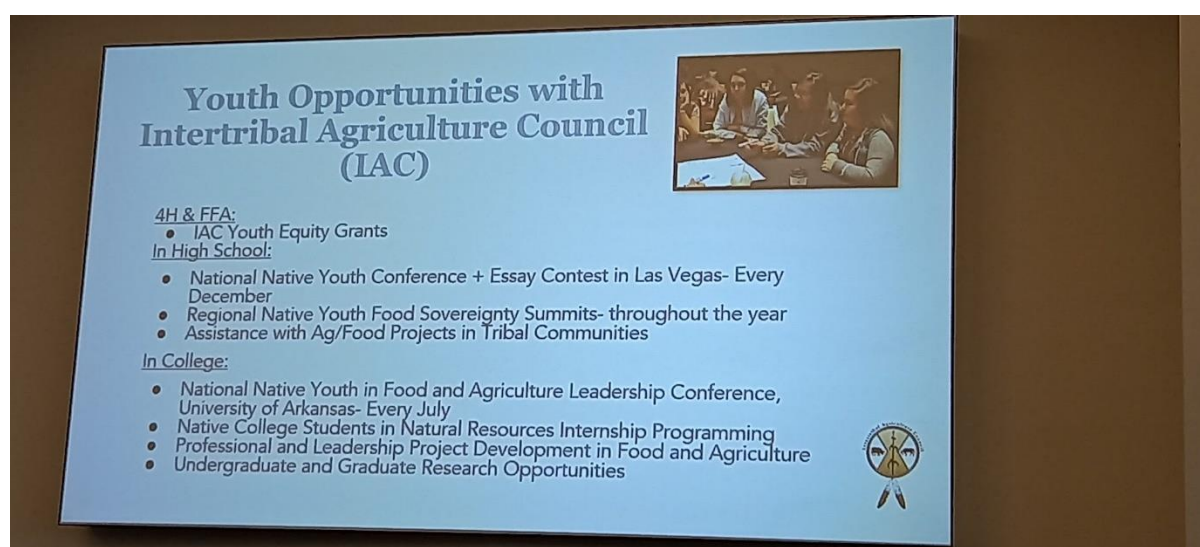
It's a phrase that a farmer told me referring to the British Asian community in Leicester about why they are not part of the British agricultural sector. Black and People of Colour possess a lot of agricultural knowledge and practice. Just because they do not practice it in this country, due to a variety of reasons, does not mean they do not know or do not care. There are plenty of examples where we can see the beauty of Minority Ethnic people excelling and being proud of their farming.

In Liverpool I visited a farm where local individuals were given small plots of land to grow. The population around the farm included communities from many different countries and cultures including Pakistan, Iraq, Poland, Syria and Sudan. Everyone grew side by side, which not only brought more communication between people, but a greater understanding of each other's cultures. People shared growing and cooking techniques for all the different vegetables that were being grown. Even the farm staff were engaged with learning about these things.

In the US I visited a few farms all growing food but embracing their own different cultures and traditions.

6.1 Native American agricultural practice

In Alabama, I visited Angie Comeaux of Hummingbird Spring Farms, who was following Native American practices. I learned about the three sisters growing method, native fishing and the use of herbs alongside other medicinal produce found naturally. When I visited Mississippi State University, Native American agriculture was being empowered by the students who were given spaces and resources by the college. This was claimed to be a pull factor for other native American students to apply and attend the university. Buffalo farming and Indigenous Culture was highlighted to me at the Buffalo Tribal Project in Texas.



An example of the support given by the IAC as presented at the Texas Small Farmers Conference 2022. Source: Author's own



6.2 African agricultural practice

In Alabama, I met Sarah, a farmer from South Africa who was passionate about growing African vegetables and used her native knowledge to grow them. She had two sons, who also helped and were keen to carry on the traditions and be involved in agriculture. She was also working with students from Tuskegee University to share this knowledge and experience with them. This personal connection was what inspired her and her children to pursue this form of farming. Habesha Farm in Georgia, Atlanta is a pan-African farm based in the city which helped individuals with leadership skills and trains them in growing vegetables. It's a safe space for BPOC people to meet and share their passion for culture and the land.

6.3 Hindu agricultural practice

In Texas, Bhakti farm raised animals and grew vegetables within Hindu cultural practice. The main farmers were religious disciples and volunteers who could support the animal husbandry or growing of vegetables. There was no heavy machinery, and the imagery was reminiscent of a scene from India; the farming practices can be classed as regenerative agriculture. Many people travelled from far to work on the farm and engage with the farm work. This is also something practiced at the Hare Krishna Temple near Watford, UK



Bos Indicus at Hindu Farm in Texas as is found in India. Source: Author's own

6.4 Jewish agricultural practice

A farmer from Sadeh Farm in Kent spoke about how he embraced regenerative practices on his land at the Land Workers Fair, UK. He spoke about the importance of the number seven in Jewish culture. For example, in the seventh year, the land should be left fallow. Again, something we don't explore in the wider story of sustainable farming and the influence of religion.

6.5 Caribbean agricultural practice

Jamaican growers grew callaloo in the allotments in Bristol; it still grows today even after they have been displaced. They arrived in the 1950s and 60s and grew vegetables on the inner-city allotments. Unfortunately, they were displaced and pushed off the land. There are many people of West Indian

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heritage who grow Caribbean food around Somerset and Gloucestershire today, maintaining their culture and knowledge and sharing this with school groups, especially those with children who share a similar cultural heritage.

6.6 Islamic agricultural practice

In the UK, Willowbrook farm is an example of an Islamic-led farm, which produces food but also acts an education hub for others to learn. They also open their farm to the public and share their practices and are keen to promote this type of farming.

At a meeting in Texas, among white cowboys, the question of Islamic slaughter was discussed. What was fascinating was how much knowledge was in the room and how important Islamic slaughter and Muslim people were to the meat industry. It was encouraged to visit a mosque (local if possible) and constructively engage with the Muslim population to help build a positive relationship and trust so that the Texas meat industry can thrive.

The UK sheep sector would not survive if it wasn't for the halal sector. Four per cent of the UK population is Muslim yet 25% of all sheep meat is consumed by UK Muslims. As a population they are one of the fastest growing in this country and they have an ever-increasing financial strength. Halal is also important for our meat export sector.

So, we can see that every ethnicity has a passion and culture of farming and agriculture. Many British BPOC people are not hugely removed from farming and in general will have less degrees of separation than the white British public to agriculture.



Habesha Gardens in Georgia, Atlanta. Source: Author's own



Chapter 7: 'You can't be what you can't see'- the power of role models

How does a child or young adult get inspired to do a job or want to join a sector? It is by seeing people that reflect them. Imposing an idea without reflecting the background of the people we want to join and thrive in our sector does not work. People need to feel like they can do it and will feel like they belong. This is where I was able to spend some time meeting many inspirational individuals reflecting diverse backgrounds.

7.1 Education

In New Orleans I visited a school which was based in a small shopping complex with a small bit of land on the side of a highway. They gave opportunities to Black and Hispanic children to spend a year being educated on growing. The classroom had been designed with important black historical figures painted on the walls and flags from all around the world. The sessions had been designed so that students not only learned about growing food but also learned musical instruments and other artistic programmes. The teachers represented the students in both ethnicity and cultural background. The students were given an opportunity to grow what they wanted but they had to learn about how to grow it and then give their parents or carers a guided, informative tour once their crop was ready to harvest. This year they had chosen bananas. Most children went on to study agriculture or a food-related subject long-term.



The classroom at the Agricultural School in New Orleans. Source: Author's own



Art at a school growing project in Mississippi representing the students who study there. Source: Author's Own

Tuskegee University, a historically Black university, graduates 80% of all the black veterinarians in the US. The draw being that they know and understand black people. Outreach is an important part of their remit and they work with many organisations and local farmers. Being representative of the communities they work with and the students they support is a huge part of the success of this institution.



Tuskegee University, a historically black university. Source: Author's Own

7.2 Social media and influencing

How we promote agriculture to the public can make a huge difference on how we influence people. In the UK, individuals such as Jeremy Clarkson who upholds the 'male, pale and stale' tag we have with our sector does not help. Additionally individuals like him, who have controversial views on women and People of Colour, will keep marginalised people away. His comments about Meghan Markle in 2023 (Jeremy Clarkson's Meghan article was sexist to duchess, press regulator rules, 2023¹) highlighted his negative views which further push people away who do not hold such abhorrent feelings and ideas. There are some fantastic individuals we should be promoting more such as JP Gill, The Roots Farmer or

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Natasha Pencil who started the Black Farmers Market in Brixton, all doing incredible things in different ways. A celebration and promotion of diverse people visually helps other people connect with our sector but also their ideas and practices can benefit everyone.

In the US, diverse farming influencers are becoming more and more popular and are being supported by their organisations. People such Dr Hodges and Dr Ferguson, Leah Perimann, Abril Giles and Caitlin Gooch all highlight that black people can belong and thrive in the agricultural space and this is a great example of how we can do more.



Chapter 8: Representation in agricultural spaces - we belong everywhere

Representation cannot be underestimated. If the image of a space is just white then this will perpetuate the cycle. Initiatives must be created to help encourage and support marginalised individuals to navigate these spaces.

8.1 Conferences

Inclusion means we must all feel like we belong. Too many conferences in the UK have the same people talking about the same things. The audiences are homogenous. In fact, one conference organiser in the UK once told me that this is because they only wanted 'experts' for an arable event.

In Texas I was lucky enough to attend the Texas Small Farmers Conference. The talks ranged from regenerative chicken husbandry to Indigenous agriculture and even media training for farmers. The participants were hugely diverse. A workshop on increasing diversity was a highlight and very well attended. There were many people at the conference openly talking about the barriers to Black and People of Colour.

The annual Multicultural Veterinary Medicine Conference in the US is new and allows only People of Colour to present but can be attended by anyone. This is an interesting way to try and turn the tables and give more time to marginalised people to share their experience and allows for several voices to speak who would normally be held back.

In the UK there are great examples of inclusion in agricultural spaces. In 2021 I was lucky to attend the Land Workers Alliance fair. Not only were there talks on a variety of subjects with a diversity of speakers on topics such as Jewish farming, but also breakout sessions which focused on marginalised groups such as Black and Brown justice. The stalls also reflected diversity with those typically seen at many agricultural events but also unusual stalls such as a few showcasing West Indian growing and music for example.



West Indian culture being celebrated at Land Workers Fair in Wiltshire, UK. Source: Author's own



8.2 Affinity groups

The importance of inclusion cannot be stressed enough. In the UK farming sector, we have groups for women and LGBT+ individuals but not for People of Colour. There is recently a small BPOC group that has been formed at the Land Workers Alliance and the British Veterinary Ethnicity and Diversity Society also exists in this space. What these group bring is a space for people from marginalised groups to share experiences and seek solutions. It also provides representation and a safe space.



Representation from the National Latino Farmers and Ranchers at the Texas Small Farms Conference. Source: Author's own

In the US there are many different groups present. In veterinary, for example, there is the National Association of Black Veterinarians and Multicultural Veterinary Medicine Association. The Intertribal Agricultural Association and the Latino Farming Association both had talks and representation at the Texas Small Farmers Conference. Their presence not only drew many Indigenous and Latino people to the conference but also helped educate others who were there.



8.3 The strength of community farming

The definition of farming is a complicated one. It can be both an inclusive and an exclusive term. Interestingly, in the US the official definition is that you make \$1,000 a year in produce, which means a great number of people are included.

Community farming is such an important tool in linking the public with food and agriculture. Farming in an area that is familiar with the people working there and growing food that's culturally appropriate brings a huge connection. In fact, the first farm I visited was an inner-city farm in Alabama which grew vegetables and had started hydroponics with the aim of distributing to local people living in the area.



Hydroponics in inner city Birmingham, Alabama. Source: Author's own

In Atlanta, Georgia, I visited another inspirational community farm. Farmer Bobby Wilson was passionate about giving opportunities to BPOC youth to grow. The advantages of being close to their homes, having people who understood them and supported them in other ways, including mental health, meant that he had many people coming and later in life attending college when before they might have not.



Figure 14: Inner city farming for BPOC individuals in Atlanta, Georgia. *Source: Author's own*



Chapter 9: Increasing opportunity - equity of BPOC people in agricultural practice

Equity means levelling up. Equality assumes that everyone starts from the same place, but equity allows for individual barriers to be identified and overcome to give people a chance to be present and have a chance to thrive.

9.1 Farming opportunities

In Texas I visited a farm where students first were given a row to grow vegetables which was bought by the farming company and sold in a market. After a year, the students were given half an acre and a year later, an acre. The farm aims to step up to 10 acres in future. The student's day was split between theory and practical. On my visit, all were Minority Ethnic people and all extremely enthusiastic about growing.

9.2 Widening participation in vet schools

As a profession that is very elitist, many children do not have the opportunity to attend and study veterinary medicine. The need to have experience with animals, visit vets, financially afford to travel, achieve high academic grades and in some cases, have contacts, means many will not get the opportunity to enter. In fact, over 45% of vet students come from private school when only 7% of the population goes to private school. To balance this, some vet schools have created equitable admission policies and summer schools to help those students who are marginalised, to have the opportunity to experience and apply to vet school and all personal circumstances are taken into consideration. As this is early on, we have not seen the full impact of this policy, but early indications are very promising.

9.3 Targeted programmes specifically for people of colour

General diversity programmes still fail to target Black and People of Colour. It has been reported that general diversity efforts in higher education benefit white, middle class women but fail to attract BPOC people and people with disabilities. Regularly, we see programmes to attract people from non-farming backgrounds are so broad that they fail to attract BPOC people into our sector. Targeted approaches mean we can work on removing barriers that may be unique or impact more on People of Colour than white people.

In the US there are financial programmes for Farmers of Colour to encourage them to upskill and grow their business. There are also many programmes in various agricultural organisations which give bursaries and places for BPOC people to attend conferences and trainings.

In the UK there have been some recent programmes which have been proactively working to encourage BPOC people to enter this space. The New Faces of Farming scheme run by Writtle College, in which 16 of the 18 participants were BPOC, was encouraging. They were mostly from inner city London and between the ages of 16 and 18. The mentors were also BPOC. At the Oxford Farming Conference, The Breaking Barriers programme was created to increase support and participation from BPOC individuals involved or interested in the food or agricultural sector. The Landworkers' Alliance held a two-day residential getaway specifically for People of Colour engaged



with agriculture. IVC Evidensia, a large veterinary corporation, created a BAME Scholarship for students studying veterinary medicine which includes financial and mentorship support.



Oxford Farming Conference Breaking Barriers Cohort pictured with the author 2023. Source: Author's own



Chapter 10: Leadership

Change is a difficult process, especially when it must occur in a sector that is very much stuck in its ways. We have all heard about the inspirational change-makers in the world such as Mahatma Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Malala Yousafzai, Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela.

Martin Luther King, like other great leaders, showed a huge amount of resilience and determination for change. Throughout his life he faced opposition and difficulties but persisted for change. Rosa Parks was another inspirational person who famously refused to sit at the back of the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, despite being told that she should. People like this stood up for what was right despite being told that it wasn't. They had to go through difficult hardships and work when they were opposed by others around them.

Our sector needs leaders to speak-up. For example, in the US the Young Farmers of America regularly speak-up about racism and the need for social justice. They organise bursaries to uplift marginalised individuals and call out poor behaviours and actions. They attended a conference I was at in Texas and spoke about actions we need to take in the agricultural sector to make it more equitable. This is something lacking in the UK.

Racism exists in our sector today. The Farmers Guardian British Farming Awards 2022, which I attended, included a host making an overtly racist joke, victimising the young waiting staff at the event who were BPOC. The almost exclusively white audience reacted with laughter. It was perpetuated however, as there was no formal apology calling out the racism from the organisers, no major criticism from the sector and no calling out from the sponsors. This is an example of where leadership fails in the face of racism in our sector.



Museum in honour of Martin Luther King close to where he was born and is buried in Atlanta, Georgia. Source: Author's own



Chapter 11: Discussion

This report has highlighted some of the main things I have seen and experienced on my Nuffield journey. There is no doubt that racism exists and Black and People of Colour are marginalised in our sector. The industry makes many false assumptions on why there is a lack of BPOC people but the simple fact is that not only do we not do enough to encourage Black and People of Colour to join but we also create an environment which can be non-inclusive for BPOC people in general. As a Person of Colour, I have personally experienced some horrific examples of racism and had opportunities denied to me due to my race and ethnicity. But we can change and do better.

There are some great examples of people and organisations doing things to change that and they must also be acknowledged and supported. From organisations working to bring BPOC people into the sector to individuals being role models for others. I learnt that there is more that we have in common than divides us. There are plenty of inspiring Black and People of Colour who want to be or are in the agricultural sector, despite the barriers laid out in front of them.

The solution is not just opening a farm and saying everyone is welcome or blaming Black and Brown people for not being part of the sector. The real solution is acknowledging there is a problem, learn and educate ourselves, instigate positive actions and then assess and improve. It's a journey and there is no end point. We all must be on this journey and, even though there will be some that will not join, a positive and inclusive future is based on those that do.

Many of the examples and ideas in this report can and should be actioned. They demonstrate that we can make a difference if we try.

Going forward we can do more. Celebrations and highlighting them is important. We see Easter and Christmas commonly but what about Eid, Hanukkah or Diwali? What about Black History Month or South Asian Heritage month. We can promote difference and share the diversity of our country with our sector being a part of that.

Change takes time and so my journey must continue. For real change we need positive active allies. People who are willing to platform and support Black and People of Colour. Unfortunately, this is not happening enough, and a lot of the work is being done by the people who are marginalised in the first place. It's time to stand up and be counted to make our sector one that everyone is welcome and belongs.

By increasing the diversity of people in our sector and inspiring the next generation, we will help develop more ideas, innovation and talent plus makes the sector representative of the country we serve. To achieve this, we need to start investing more time, money and effort into working for positive change. As Jesse Jackson said: *"When everyone is included, everyone wins."*



Chapter 12: Conclusion and recommendations

From the report, we can see that improving diversity, equity and inclusion is not only the right thing to do but can be achieved. There are a lot of positive examples of how things can be done right but also examples of what we are doing wrong when it comes to encouraging and supporting BPOC people in our agricultural sector.

Based on my journey and lessons, there are a few recommendations if we are to create a sector that not only welcomes and includes all, but also reflects the population we serve:

- Learn about the history and culture of Black and People of Colour in the UK.
- Communicate and engage with Black and People of Colour.
- Understand your own biases and barriers.
- Work to become a positive and active ally.
- Organisations need to look in before looking out.

12.1 Going forwards on my journey

My journey does not stop here and I will keep on working and fighting to help make this sector a sector for all. It has been incredible to have had this opportunity to meet and learn from amazing people and organisations. Diversity, equity and inclusion has been embedded into everything I do, and I plan to keep growing as an individual and hoping I can contribute to keep working to help create a sector where everyone can belong.



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