

# *Land Loss Among African-American Farmers in North Carolina: Effects and Implications for the Next Generation*



**African-Americans face institutional and social discrimination. The deleterious effects of discrimination related to farm loan practices are a barrier to maintaining the family farm.**

---

Discriminatory lending is associated with farmland loss, such that the number of African-American farmers in the U.S. is falling at a much higher rate than that of Caucasian farmers. This community-based participatory research (CBPR) study investigates the experiences of African-American farmers in northeastern North Carolina, identifying concerns, strengths, and action steps around African-American-owned farmland loss. Researchers used Photovoice, a qualitative, CBPR methodology.

This study revealed lasting negative economic and psychological effects of discriminatory lending, but also protective factors from farming including increased self-reliance, strong work ethic, and hope for a new generation of African-American farmers. Institutional discrimination remains a reported risk factor for maintaining generational family farming. African-American farmers would benefit from continued modification to current lending systems, education, representation, outreach, and broadband Internet access.

## **For further information contact:**

Peter Balvanz: peter.balvanz@gmail.com  
Morgan Barlow: morganbarlow@gmail.com  
Lillianne Lewis: lillianne.lewis@gmail.com  
Donna Parker: Dlparker916@gmail.com  
Kari Samuel: kari.samuel@unc.edu  
Molly DeMarco: molly\_demarco@unc.edu



**UNC**  
GILLINGS SCHOOL OF  
GLOBAL PUBLIC HEALTH

## FINDINGS

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Historical and Current Discrimination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past discrimination has resulted in African-American farmers not trusting governmental organizations and African-American farmers report continued discrimination on the farm.</li> <li>• Lack of access to loans has led to an increase in the financial problems of African-American farmers and has been a factor in the dwindling size of the African-American-owned farm.</li> <li>• Discrimination has increased the psychological stress of African-American farmers, influencing sense of self-worth.</li> <li>• African-American farmers report that lack of representation in governmental agencies hampers their advancement.</li> </ul>
<b>Positive Perceptions of Farming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of funding and opportunities have had the effect of making African-American farmers innovative and entrepreneurial to sustain their farms.</li> <li>• Instrumental changes by government agencies to be more inclusive of African-American farmers have allowed greater success on the farm.</li> <li>• African-American farmers acknowledge that farming allows them to be more self-reliant and live a healthier lifestyle.</li> </ul>
<b>Farming and the Next Generation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• African-American farmers continue to cultivate the land, despite advancing age, with hopes to pass on the land for the next generation to farm.</li> <li>• African-American farmers believe farming will create a strong work ethic in youth and prevent them from becoming involved in illegal or otherwise dangerous activities.</li> <li>• African-American farmers believe that African-American youth avoid farming because of the financial and emotional struggles they witnessed while growing up, and are lured by activities that generate more money at a faster pace.</li> </ul>

### Action Steps to Address Land Loss

- Raise public awareness about injustices impacting African-American farmers.
- Educate and engage government officials regarding issues related to African-American land loss.
- Engage and mobilize the community, including farmers and non-farmers, through outreach activities.
- Utilize the church as a venue for engagement.
- Promote collective organization efforts and cultivate leadership.
- Provide greater access to Internet services to enhance communication efforts and accessibility to information resources.
- Facilitate on-going agricultural education in farming communities.
- Enlist mentors and youth involvement in farming activities.