



Morning Panel: Land & Markets: Where is our Power?

Mike Sayer: Good afternoon. Alright. The train came to the station a little late, but we're here. This is the first panel on your program. We have four panelists and the way we're going to do this is that we're going to pose a question or two to each of the panelists in order, and then they are going to speak to these questions and others can jump in. But in order to make sure that we get to all four panelists, Alicia over there is going to be our time control and she is going to hold up a sign when we have 5 minutes left and then 2 minutes left and then when there's no time left for that particular set of questions, in hopes that we get through all 4 sets plus have about 20 minutes for comments, questions and answers from the audience.

We ready? Okay, this first question is coming to Savi, and it reads as follows: In the Southern African American community, what is the connection between the ownership of land and individual family and community power, where power means the capacity to make things happen or not to happen?

Savi Horne: That's what you call a tall question for a short person. I'm Savi Horne and I'm with the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers/Land Loss Prevention Project. We were founded in 1983, 31 years ago, to stem African American land loss within the black belt of Eastern North Carolina. So that is where we do most of our work and provide legal tools to assist with land loss prevention. Before really going into my question, I think sometimes you need authenticity of voices and as someone with not actually from a farming background in North Carolina, I would like to uplift a study that was done on Eastern North Carolina looking at African American land issues. From an interview with a farmer, Mr. Mars, he articulated very passionately the significance of land ownership to citizenship. He said, and I quote, "Owned in land means to me it's been a part of this country. It means it's been a part of being a citizen."

So when we look at African American land ownership at a zenith, fifty years at the end of slavery, end of the Civil War where you had close to 20 million acres and today you have by some counts in terms of farmland about 1.2 million and about 7 million in families. And this is across the South. When you look at the drop in African American farm operators, between 1993 to 2003, we lost almost 95% of black farmland. Today, people are saying, "Okay, so you have seen an uptick in your numbers so we must all be doing good". But the numbers, you can't use number of farmers to make that assumption because at

the end of the day, it has been so drastically reduced. So today, in the 2012 senses, we are up to close to 1500, right. But if you look at the fact, if you go back 20 years when the figure itself was like 3,000, what you are really seeing is a 50% reduction, but an uptick from the 2007 number. So you can play the number game, but at the end of the day what does this all mean? What does this all mean?

We hear Reverend Barber, we know exactly what land is. This is a country that pursues a capitalist mode of development, and it is based on exploitation of land as part of its capital formation. Right? So you need land, labor and capital. And so if as a people you lose possession of the land, then your impoverishment is further entrenched, and you go back in time. Coming from a people who were once considered property, to then lose the physical manifestation of land, it is not only a monetary blow, but it also comes with a psycho-social impact in and of itself. And we see it across North Carolina, we see it reflected in the poor education, the poor health dynamics.

So, to stabilize land ownership in North Carolina through returning the small amount of farmers we have to profitability will stabilize not only families and lead to wealth retention, but also, it would stabilize rural communities because studies have been done that black farmers in small rural communities impact tremendously the economic bottom line. I think that's true throughout the South.

While I still have the mike though and giving poetic justice to my sister, Shirlette, I'd just like to do a riff and kind of open up the space to what I see is happening. My brother and mentor Ralph Page was waxing eloquently, as only Ralph can do, when he ground the fact that Civil Rights leaders in the Selma, Alabama Marches throughout the South were bailed out by black farmers who were willing to put their land up - to bond their land - so that the struggle would continue. So where are we now? Where are we now? Let's look at the international scope of this right. Everybody, because we are a good student of history, we all know about the middle, you know, the Middle Ages, and we know about the English manor and the vast land holdings, and the removal of Native Americans from the lands eventually here. But it was all part of a continuum. And, the continuum is moving Agrarian people off the land and relocating them in towns and cities, and that was very successfully done throughout the Middle Ages.

So, when we look today internationally of what is going on with the land, we're seeing the second enclosure of the commons. In that, this is where low-income people, if you will, agrarian people have their wealth, trapped in the land and land ownership. So if you re-enclose it by using the legal system, you are impoverishing, further entrenching poverty in communities, but you're also removing ownership of land and reconsolidating it in classes, in corporations. Because right now, if you look at what is going on in Africa, there is a second period of African re-enslavement, and that is the land grabbing in Sub-Saharan Africa, we see that it happened post-independence with the rise of the pleasure industry or resort industry in the Caribbean, and now we are seeing it rapidly in the United States where farmers are losing land, and

there are companies that are buying up land and large farms are just springing up all over the place. So where are we? We are at this place where we need to recognize that if we do not assist, we need to assist because it is our moral duty. We also need to find legal and economic instruments that will sustain the farms, keep farmland in farm families. Because for us, as Mr. Morris said, “When you have the land, you have democratic rights.” So we can recognize democratic rights for corporations. We need to see democratic fundamental rights in land ownership and in farmers. That’s kind of my comments. As a panel, we look forward to hearing from everyone in the room, because we know that everyone has been thinking about this fundamental issue, and I think it’s all part of our growth as a learning community in this room to really use the open mike when we get there to kind of teach us too. (Some blather in here)

Mike Sayer: Thank you Savi.

Savi: Oh yes, I do have something. I just want to lift up my sister Niaz. If I did not, I would not feel right if I did not raise up the commons that is found in fisheries that is also part of our farming traditions. So, I just want to give you a shout out Niaz.

Mike Sayer: Thank you, again. If each of the panelists would introduce themselves when they start out okay, that would be good. So Gary, we have two questions for you. First, “What is the impact of the loss of land ownership by African American families on the sustaining of community, the power of community and the capacity to achieve the long-term goals of these communities? The second question, “What is the impact of the long-term goals of African-American communities when younger generations of African-American family members who grew up on the farm decline to become farmers themselves?”

Gary Grant: Good afternoon. You see, they give me the easiest questions of all. My name is Gary Grant, and I come from Halifax County, North Carolina, out of a farm community that was established back in the 1930s and 40s under President Roosevelt’s New Deal. When, coming right after the Great Depression and the government bought former plantation land to restore the whites to their prosperity, and broke it up into 40-to-60-acre tracks to sell to former sharecroppers. Ten thousand acres of land in one spot has made the Tillery community a very powerful force to deal with during the Jim Crow era, because people who owned land could decide when their children were going to school, and when they would stay home. People who owned land also could decide where they would spend their money versus having to spend it at the local commissary that was owned by the fellow who owned the land. That makes a big difference in how things are defined. And I would say that to the point of that we probably have, and I know in the immediate area, that in my generation, and I am only 35, a young 35 at that. My generation that we probably have 70% of black children who finished high school, 70-80% of us finished high school, and 60-70% of us have college degrees. You will not find that in any other black community in Halifax County, and the reason is because our parents were buying land, and that we were working for

ourselves. So that's the first power that land gives to a community is that families can make their own decisions about the future of their children.

The loss of that land, and I deal with a lot of researchers and I have one researcher who tells me that I should stop saying that Tillery is 98% black, because it is no longer 98% black. I say to the researcher, "I live here. I know who lives in what house." So recently, within the last couple of years, he brought a GIS specialist, who is going to prove to me that my community is no longer 98% black. So they pull up all the maps, and they begin to show me where white people, they said, live. It's not the fact. The same thing is happening in rural America that has happened in the cities. Gentrification: who is owning the land? Our land is now being owned by people who have no relationship to Tillery, who don't even live in the state of North Carolina, less more in the Halifax County area. Because people with money are now buying farmland as an investment for a loss, not as a profit at this time. Then, they are coming in and planting trees so that they can hunt on land that we struggled to dig the roots of the trees up so that we could cultivate it.

I direct a group called The Concerned Citizens of Tillery. I am also the President of a group that's called the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association. Our acronym is BFAA "bee-fa". As one of our members like to say, that we "BFAA us" for a change because we "be for" everybody else all the other time. But when we started looking at this, we see the same thing happening when the children of my generation went to New York and within 10 years, they were being brought back home in boxes, because they had not been prepared for the city life. They were being shot; they were being killed. Does this sound familiar? What is going on in this country today? That there is still an attack on black men, black youth. We're building prisons for them. Land ownership helps you to keep your community intact, and that we ought to be able to create avenues for economic development that will keep our young people at home. However, when you have gone through the era that Savi was just talking about, as she talks about how much land has been lost in North Carolina, and the lawsuit *Pigford vs Glickman* and the U.S. Department of Agriculture that North Carolina is the only state where recapturing the land that was lost is not taking place. I tell people when I travel to speak that North Carolina has fooled the rest of the United States for many, many years with one word: North. If you have a conversation with someone and you say you are from North Carolina, there is one perspective. But if you say you are from South Carolina, there is another perspective. And we sent Jesse Helms to Washington, DC for over 22 years. Reverend Barber spoke to that some this morning.

Land ownership allows, if you remember even when the country was being organized, if you were not a land owner, you didn't have any power. If you were not a landowner, they were about to say, "You couldn't vote," and that didn't matter if you were black or white. Because power is in the land. And

no matter how long we let people, if you can't feed yourself, and you become totally dependent on what we are today, fast food, being told what grocery store we need to go to, being told what restaurant we need to go to. In Halifax County, we have two dialysis centers. Two! And that same 90% plus- black people are the ones going there because we no longer grow our food. Even under the plan where the New Deal of the Tillery resettlement, there was a resettlement also in Virginia, I can't think of the name right now; that's what happens when you turn 37. (It was 35 last time) 35 last time, aging fast. But I can't think of the name of it, but it will come to me shortly. You could buy a house, but it also had a garden spot. Therefore, you were also able to go do a public job, but you were also able to eat healthy food. That does not happen anymore. Our children have been programmed, even those of us who grew up on this land in the New Deal, we were told there is no question "you are going to finish school, and you're going to go to college and get yourself a *good* education, and then you will be able to get a *good* job." And what happened in the process of that was, they never taught on a whole realm of the goodness of the land, and the goodness of owning that land. Just as the farmers put their land up to get people out of jail, that land is still just as valuable today for growing food and still getting people out of jail whether they went for the right reason or the wrong reason, but the land still has the power and the economic base that we need to hold on to.

As African Americans, we continue to shy away from this because the culture and the history of this country does not embrace the history of African Americans. We want to teach you about George Washington, we want to teach you are Abraham Lincoln. And I was 38 years old before I found out that Abraham Lincoln was forced into signing the Emancipation Proclamation. You know, this is not accurate history. Until we do that, our children are going to have a real difficult time in wanting to farm, based on what they've read and even in modern day times, when you look at 1983 through 1996, where the land amount of ownership was reduced, the number of black farmers was reduced, and there's this settlement of a law suit that says we're going to be paying you a minimum of \$50,000 and that we will write debt off at the U.S. government, not admitting any guilt. Just so you understand what I am talking about: in Halifax County, North Carolina in 1996, the U.S. Department of Agriculture did a study on "supervised loans." We had somewhere around 300 to 450 farmers; not one black farmer was on a loan that was not supervised. If you don't know what supervised is, that means, I borrow the money from the government, it is put into my account, and if I want to use it, I still have to go back to the government to get them to approve the bill that I need in order to fix my tractor so that I can work the rest of the day, which means I don't get any work done for the rest of the day. When children grow up and witness this kind of deprivation, watch their father, mother and grandparents be treated like less than citizens and then we want to encourage them to go back into a farming vocation, avocation, profession where they have

already seen every aspect of disrespect. We've got major work to do to bring young black children back to agriculture in this country. Thank you.

Savi: Thank you, Gary. I just want to say because Gary had uplifted this piece, in his community, a fence sign for Tillery is Caledonia State Prison. So it becomes a pipeline, if you lose your land, you wind up in prison, because you are so disassociated from your community that it leads to all kinds of social ills. So there is a direct pipeline between land loss, environmental justice and the prison industrial complex in rural communities.

Gary Grant: Very much so. We were warding off industrial hog growing in the early 90's, while black farmers were being foreclosed on. And the only thing we could see was an industrial hog facility on every one of these 40 acres. By the way, that's 350 farm plots right there in Tillery, and the farmers were in trouble. Found out that the Caledonia Prison - I don't know whether she said farm, because that is what it is. Caledonia Prison Farm. In North Carolina when I tell people I am from Tillery, and they go "Where is that?" All I have to say is Caledonia Prison Farm, and suddenly, they know where it is. They actually work the farm. At one time, they were providing about 2/3 of all the foods for prisons in the entire state of North Carolina. So now we have a population of black men who are working on a farm and yet when they come out, they won't have a place to go to work because the land is vastly being lost to people who want to hunt it.

Mike Sayer: Thank you Gary and Savi. Now Cornelius, we have a question for you. Even with land ownership, farmer communities have suffered major devastation. How have cooperatives address the urgency of the situation to create sufficient market power that brings the value of farm production back to the farmers? And what does the moral center of cooperatives have to be able to enable cooperatives to achieve sustainable economic and social goals for farmers and communities?

Cornelius Blanding: Well first of all, good afternoon. I'm Cornelius Blanding with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. The Federation is a non-profit association of cooperatives, black farmers and landowners all around the South that was created in 1967 out of the Civil Rights Movement. And I have to first of all point to a lot of people in the room because I grew up in the Federation and under the direction of a lot of people in the room: Ralph Page, Charles and Shirley Sherrod and Jerry Pennick, Ben Burkett and some others. So I feel fortunate to be up here today and I want to say if I make a mistake in anything, don't hold it against me and beat me when we get back home!

But, I want to point back to something that Reverend Barber said about the importance of our movements being led by indigenous and grassroots movements because that is what the Federation is. That is what the Federation was and how it started out. There were many cooperatives that started

forming during the Civil Rights time and even before out of necessity. And there were 22 of them that came together in 1967 to create the Federation of Southern Cooperatives. The primary purpose of the organization then and now, two of the primary purposes was; one, the retention of black owned land, and the other was the use of cooperatives as a tool for social and economic justice. So now let me try to take on that question, and I think I'll break it down to three parts.

One, you say, even with land ownership, farmer communities have suffered major devastation. I want to reframe that because it is not even with the land ownership and just point back to what Savi's and Gary's comments were, "It was due to the loss of land ownership and due to the loss of land." The reason I think that these communities suffer so greatly. In some of the figures that have been used by both Savi and Gary, but I want to point to in 1910, there were 15 million acres of black owned land, and by 1992, there were only 2.3 million. So you see a significant decline in land ownership. I think that was a major cause of destruction in many of the communities especially in the South. So I want to just reframe that.

Now, the second part of this was "How have cooperatives addressed the urgency of the situation to create sufficient market power that brings the value of farm production back to the farmers?" So in general, cooperatives in themselves are an aggregation of people and sometimes people have to pool their resources. So one inherent thing within cooperatives is pretty much going to be the power that they have, the power that they get in terms of bringing their produce together. It's been economies of scale. So you automatically have economies of scale when you bring cooperatives together, when people come together in cooperatives. The other things that I think are important and many of the low-resource cooperatives that make up the Federation, and many around the country is that they now have the ability to do value-added production, to create value to their produce and also starting to control some distribution.

Let me move on so I know there is limited time. The third part is "What does the moral center of cooperatives have to be to enable cooperatives to achieve sustainable economic and social goals for farmers in communities?" In my opinion, I would say food sovereignty. The moral center would have to be food sovereignty, if you will. In that people have to be the ones who design, create and own the food system. So I think cooperatives give low-income folks that power to not only design the food system, but to control and own it. When we talk about the food system, we talk about everything from production to processing to distribution. Having that land and controlling the food, the production of the food is one thing, but being able to control the processing of that food, you create more revenue down that system and also the distribution of it. Ralph talked about earlier during our panel about how farmers lost pickles, for instance, where the sheriff would stop him on the road. That is because there was no control in the distribution. So I think we have to control that food system from the beginning from production all the

way to the end. I think cooperatives give small farmers and especially low-income farmers the power to do that.

Gary Grant: Cornelius hit on it. The pieces that the small farmers left out of the added value process, that we will grow the food or the produce and then we take it to someone else. We get a minimum cost, and then they do the added value, and they are the ones who reap in the benefits. So, we need to be sure that we understand that. While I am there, one of the pieces that we're not talking about is that I am not quite clear on the difference between a black farmer and a family farmer. That it's very specific in this country that when we speak of family farms, we are talking about white farmers, and then we have this group called the black farmers. I am still very confused and concerned about our U.S. Department of Agriculture and its policies to create a fund that is called for "disadvantaged farmers." And yet, they have the same stipulations for them to go through the process to borrow the money as the "non disadvantaged farmer," which I don't know who that is other than corporate America. So when we are doing things like that, we have special programs for women farmers. So we give a specific amount of money so that woman can go into farming. Does that mean once that amount is gone, that no other woman can enter farming? I think Reverend Barber spoke about language this morning as well. You know? So we have to also be careful about the language that is being used and being sold to us. Each one of those divisions: disadvantaged, new farmer, woman farmer, whatever, it does nothing but divide us. That's all that it does. It puts another division there that keeps us from being able to reach the goals that Reverend Barber spoke about this morning.

Savi: Yes, I just want to uplift what Gary was saying in the sense that it is a category of social disadvantage that is an encompassing category, of course, but at the same time the commonalities of treatment that is meted out across the board to people of color and women. In fact, the percentage-wise in the Census shows a very dramatic decrease in women operators across the country. When we were working on the Hispanic and Women farmer outreach we found that in terms of women farmers being able to access information to file their claims here in North Carolina, it was a very difficult and somewhat convoluted process. So, you had a lot of women farmers who just kind of gave up on the process. It was not just in North Carolina, but it was also in Kentucky, where we just spoke to women that seemed to have really good claims, but then were unable to back it up. So, I think in this post-settlement era, in which USDA might think that they have cured the issues, these lawsuits really have not done what we wanted to see, which is an increase in numbers of people who were discriminated against returning to farming.

In terms of the Latino farmers, we have seen a significant uptick in numbers, but again, they are using a cultural ability to collectivize their resources and growing on smaller acreages and that model is

working and that is a model that we ought to look at because it is working, and it could be a model that we can use to look at growing the youth in agriculture and the movement in general. So, I think we're in this space where we got to think very creatively in this post-discrimination period. If you will, it might be the post, about to be post-post- race Obama post period. Wherever we ended up, we got to look at who is controlling the land, our access to the land and how we can all have a farm future, small beginning, reentering farmers of African-American, women farmers and reclaim the space. We have to reclaim our space. Because if we lose that, I don't know what will happen to us as a future for all small farmers. Everyone is on the threat in terms of losing land. Period.

Gary Grant: If I could just add one piece of that and especially about the post-Pigford class action, what no one ever told you was, for example, my family was in foreclosure for 33 years. We just came out of court in 2010. If you see me after the meeting, I will tell you what the settlement was. But, that no one has told you that when the government under Pigford I or Pigford II, wrote off the amount of money that was owed to the U.S. government that was mostly interest and penalties that people had during the course of their struggle to try to save their land.

So let's say that Jerry over there, he wrote off 100, they wrote off \$150,000 for him. They then sent to the Internal Revenue Service that he had an income of \$150,000. Therefore, you are no longer in foreclosure under the USDA, you are now in foreclosure under the Internal Revenue Service, because Jerry never saw the \$150,000. This is the kind of language that prevents farmers from bounding back and people are still being put off of their land today because of that element within the Pigford class action. That makes women and the Latino community and the Native American communities as vulnerable as the black farmers were in that case.

Mike Sayer: Thank you all. We'll go to the last set of questions for Scott. What are the benchmarks that indicate that the organizing work is headed down the right path to achieve long-term goals, and how do we recognize these benchmarks, and what are the red flags that indicate the organizing work may be headed down the wrong path to achieve long-term goals and how do we recognize them? Everything we do as a means to an end or to multiple ends. How do we know when the means are aligned with one or more of the ends we seek to achieve? What are the consequences if the means and ends are not aligned?

Scott Marlow: I'm going to take a crack at the first one. The second one, I am going to start out with, I am going to ask the other folks to really join in. I'm going to punt it back over, so I will give you guys a chance to think. My name is Scott Marlow, and I am with the Rural Advancement Foundation-International. We are based about 30 miles west of here. First of all, I want to say how grateful I am to be

in the room with a lot of y'all and a lot of folks and especially my fellow panelists all of whom are folks from whom I have learned a lot and really appreciate their presence and to be able to be with them.

I speak to this from, our organization does a significant amount of, as well as international and national policy work, we also provide direct service to individual farmers who are in trouble of losing their farms. Our farm advocacy program works with 75 to 100 farmers a year. Many of them have been the recipients of discrimination and abuse at the hands of bankers and other folks. The issue that Gary brought up about the debt forgiveness becoming IRS debt – so what that means is that if because of USDA actions, they are forced to forgive the debt, that then becomes taxable income even though you never saw the actual money, it becomes taxable income so now you have a tax debt. What that speaks to is the history that we're laying out here is a history of systemic dominance, control and exploitation for economic gain. It's dominance, control and exploitation for economic gain.

And what Gary is speaking to is that as we have advocated for power in those situations and as our community and other communities have advocated for power, the mechanisms of domination, control and exploitation have become increasingly complex, increasingly sophisticated and have done their best to stay a step ahead of us. Reverend Barber said earlier, "Yeah, they read all my stuff." Yeah, they read all of our stuff! There's a reason for that. So as we look at, in our experience working with individual cases over a long period of time - Benny, since what? You've been working since 1983? Over that time, what we have seen is increasing sophistication of abuse. So that it started out as straight up refusal, it became simply delays. It simply became, well, a black farmer just takes twice as long for the loan to get approved than a white farmer does. It becomes "supervised accounts." Well, we don't trust you to handle this money, actually handle it, so we are going to force you if you need to get it to pay a bill, to drive to the FSA office in the county, have them write the check to your feed and seed and then have to drive all the way back and then you can get your tractor fixed or buy the seed. So as these mechanisms become increasingly complex and increasingly sophisticated, we must match that with the ability to understand the terms of power and be able to discern what those are and to be able to look at it in that way.

What that dominance is used for in these days, and we see it over and over again, is to import value and import money and to export cost and risk either on the farmer or the land owner, on the community or increasingly the exportation of that risk and cost on the general population through tax, through federal programs. It is the socialization of cost and risk. What we're talking about is how do we create mechanisms that equitably distribute the value back down the chain? So when we talk about vertical integration, one of the terms we use a lot is vertical integration, that's the integration of all of the different steps that bring a product from production all the way to the market place. The two most vertically integrated sectors in American agriculture are contract poultry and the farmers' market.

Because in a farmers' market, the farmer controls the entire chain, owns and controls the entire chain. They control production, they control distribution, they control processing, they control marketing, and they control final sale. It is completely integrated.

So if we use those two as ends of a spectrum, we can look at what are the mechanisms of those that either allow them to be a good thing or not? Allow them to be exploitative of the community or not. The most obvious is ownership. I'm going to quote my friend Daniel over here. Daniel, is it okay if I use your quote? "I'd rather have a shithouse of my own, than an oil well that belongs to somebody else." Right? On the land issue, that's one of my favorites. Is that from your grandfather or your dad? That was your dad. I heard him say that before, that's one of the greatest things I have ever heard. But that ownership is an obvious. What's that? (audience). "I'd rather have a shithouse of my own than an oil well that belongs to somebody else." Right? So, when we look at, we have been doing work that is, what makes a poultry contract a poultry contract? We know what makes a farmers' market a farmers' market. There is value there. One of the reasons why we are having this conversation is that this community has created value in the marketplace, and that value is power. If you don't believe that, go into the Minneapolis-St. Paul Airport and look at the bank of vending machines, which have a sign over it that says, "Farmers' Market." Right? If you think there is not value in the genuine connection to farmers, then walk into any grocery store and look at how many grocery store produce sections are now labeled Farmers' Markets. That is not by accident, that is because we, this community, created value, and that value has economic power.

One of the reasons why we are having this conversation is because the history of slavery and racism is one of the most systemic systems for exploitation and control. What we are seeing is the recreation of hallmarks of that system in other ways to take over the value that is associated with the things that this community has created.

So what are those mechanisms that create? The first of those mechanisms when we look at poultry contracts, one of the first things is economic dependence. It does not matter what's in a contract if the farmer cannot walk away from it, they cannot enforce that contract. So when a farmer takes out an extensive debt on a product that is single use, and this is the second part of it, which is the concentration of markets. If you have only one place where you can sell and only one thing that you can produce and a whole lot of debt based on it, you're going to take whatever they give you. And what they are going to give you is going to be barely enough to keep you afloat, if that. So, as we look at the mechanisms of control, we start to create, so what is the alternative? We have a program that is in partnership with a series of other organizations, FOG is in the room, CATA is another partner, NOFA is another partner on our Agricultural Justice Project and creating food justice certified labels and standards. What we are

trying to do with that label is to create the alternative. What is the alternative that brings that value back equitably down the chain? The other thing that I would note is the work of the Ag of the Middle program. It was a project for Fred Kirschenman, Steve Stevenson and a bunch of us that looked at values-based value chains. So what are the hallmarks of those systems? We've talked about ownership. We need to talk about financial independence rather than financial dependence. It's wrapped up in the concepts of food security that we've talked about before. One of the reasons why the cooperative movement is so important is because this is a way of folks creating the economies of scale and retaining community ownership.

The other pieces of that puzzle that are incredibly important are transparency. It's the information differential between the farmer and others. One of the things that we've battled, and this is certainly true of a lot of the livestock markets, it's true of a lot of other markets, is not knowing what is the real price. What is the real price in the marketplace? A lot of the information transparency. So part of our standards are, that if the buyer is not willing to meet the farmer's price, they have to open up the books and show why. There has to be transparency of what's in it.

Conflict resolution. How do we resolve conflict and how is that addressed in advance? There's a concept that I want us to make sure we understand, which is the difference between personal trust and procedural trust. Which is, I can get into a deal with Cornelius because we trust each other and that's great and until money gets on the table, that's all going to be good. That's personal trust. But procedural trust is that we have clear standards, clear modes of resolving conflict and clear ways of working things out that both of us can trust in and that both of us know that we will be treated fairly. So one of the pieces of a poultry contract is the requirement that you go to arbitration. They don't say that the arbitration takes place in the city of the company so you have to travel to go there. You lose the right of discovery, you have to pay for it, you have to pay 30 grand for it. And by the way, anyone here who is carrying a cell phone in your pocket already signed one of those arbitration clauses. If you have a disagreement with the cell phone company, there is a forced arbitration clause in your cell phone contract. That's one of the issues that we fought with on that.

The other piece to it is the ability to have multiple outlets. So the concentration, what we call *monopsony*, which means that there is only one place to sell something. USDA just came out and said that 50% of contract poultry growers are in a geographic area with only one or two integrators. Which means that they are operating in a geographic monopoly. They also said that an operator that is in a place that has one integrator, the farmer receives 8% less gross return than one that is in a place that has four. So if we look at concentration and fewer and fewer, one of the pieces that we have is the importance of multiple outlets and the ability to move to multiple streams.

The other piece that we have to put as a benchmark is the political accountability. Because increasingly, regulations are becoming a mechanism of control and exploitation. A lot of us in the room have talked about FSMA. A lot of us in the room have talked about other pieces. But increasingly, those mechanisms of government are being used to keep people in their place. What Gary was saying about, “they are in financial trouble, the only place that they can go is a hog contract.” Let’s create financial, the creation of financial dependence and then use that to leverage into heavily exploitative relationships. I need to wrap up. I want to throw it out to my other panelists as well. The point here is that the mechanisms that have been used over time have gotten increasingly complex and increasingly sophisticated, which means that we have to match that with our sophistication and complexity of recognizing power, recognizing when we’re giving it away and recognizing what power we have and making sure we retain it.

Mike Sayer: Thank you, Scott. If I am correct, now is the time for comments, questions and answers. We have 15 minutes for that. How are we going to do that?

Gary Grant: If I could add on to the benchmarks, and I want to first apologize to Ben Burkett. Because I’m 39, I could not think of his name when I called Jerry. One of the strongest farm advocates that we’ve had. Glad to have you here with us, Ben.

But, one of the other benchmarks that has been done, and it has only been done necessarily here in North Carolina, and that is the Land Loss Prevention Project. Farmers cannot afford attorneys. Farmers cannot afford attorneys and I imagine that if it had not been for this group, that we probably would not have any black farmers left in North Carolina. Even though they went screaming and hollering, they can’t go to other states and practice, but we have certainly sent people from other states to them to find out if there is a lawyer near them that would work with them and all. The Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the oldest group that’s been on the farm trail for black folk especially for the longest kind of time, but is now multi-cultured, if that is correct, that they have been around. So we have some benchmarks that have been made and that can be used. I just wanted to get that piece in.

Savi: I just want to put a plug in for our sponsor, Farm Aid and to thank Farm Aid for their support of the advocates network, because by having the advocates network, we are able to reach farm and farm families throughout the United States. But also as a cautionary note, is that we need to grow the farm advocates network, we all need to pitch in and make it our duty. No, farm policies and farm regs are not sexy, but we still have sexy Ben who could help us from RAFI to really help us and we have some of the great works of the Rural Coalition, who are members of the farm advocate and the National Family Farm Coalition.

So I just want to say the last piece is what if we do nothing? Right? And don't get re-aligned? What is the consequence? Well, we're seeing the loss of democratic rights in land ownership across the country. When we saw it in places that had the confined feedlot operation, where even common trespass, common nuisance, fundamental statutes and concept of law got shoved out of the way, so another landowner could pollute the stream or they can put NOX in the air and because they're not classified as industry, they are still farms, then we have no rights. Well, we are about to see that being revisited again with the fracking. So as a fracker, and I am hoping that does not get transmuted, I said fracker, I can trace that oil and gas onto somebody else's land, because I am on the ground. So even trespass goes through the door. So unless we stay together to make sure that we're really looking at protecting all rights, the rights in spaces above our land, under the ground of our land, then it is going to be a lose-lose. Yes, as the social reformers have been saying another world is possible, and it is possible. We have seen the work of Via Campesina and we have groups here like the Rural Coalition and the National Family Farm Coalition, our members, and they have been really working at really honing the message of Via Campesina in this country.

So we need to organize, not just in the United States, but to recognize the alignment with farmer of color across the planet to make this space a better place. When we look at China, China has some active policy of removing 10 million farmers from the land every year for the next ten years. That is 100 million farmers. So if we don't begin to uplift the rights of a global small farm movement, then it becomes a lose-lose all around. To try to make the movement safe here for us, and lose the struggle across the planet for small farmers and people of color farmers, I think would be a mistake. I want to uplift the work of Shirley Sherrod in New Communities - that's another way. They have actually dismantled slaves, a history of slave and racism in their community by buying the bastion of its representation: a plantation. Right? And in so doing, we uplift the work of a legal organization that grew out of Farm Aid, and that is Farmers' Legal Action Group as part of the legal core of making Shirley's victories possible. Yes, so we know what we need to do, but we just have to seize the moral imperative and know that we must do. As the prophet in Deuteronomy said, "Justice, justice, shall ye do." There's no middle ground. We just got to just do justice. Thank you.

Danny Doyle: Thank you all very much. Quick question. Do you see the advantages or opportunities, or do you see advantages or opportunities in communal or cooperative ownership, as opposed to individual ownership as it applies specifically to land? And the sustainable stewardship of that land over multiple generations, cooperative ownership of land, communal ownership of land as opposed to individual ownership of that land, is there opportunities in that model, where there might be limitations in the individual ownership of that land? (Could you repeat that question?) From communal ownership of

land rather than individual ownership of land, are there other opportunities that are communal ownership of land other than just individual ownership?

Cornelius Blanding: I don't know if I'm the best person to answer that question, but let me say what the stats are. 40% of this country is a farm. It's owned by individual owners. 97% of that are small farmers. So there is already a mass majority of individual ownership. I don't know if you will put that genie back in the bottle where you become communal ownership. What we are more focused on in terms of individual landowners operating together through cooperatives, so in essence, cooperating around production, around marketing, distribution, and things of that nature as opposed to the ownership of the land. There are some examples of communal land ownership, but the majority of land is owned by private landowners. Our focus is more on cooperating in those other areas and not trying to redistribute the land.

Scott Marlow: If I can take a shot at that for a second. This is the place. This is one of the exact places where we are talking about the difference between personal trust and procedural trust. Because what we see a lot of, the pattern that we've started seeing created in the beginning farmer movement is a person who owns the land, connects with a person who wants to farm and says, "Hey, this is great. I've got the land and you want to work it so we will just split the take." And it's called sharecropping. It has some history here. We know how that story ends. One of the reasons why we started speaking out about that is because they were winding up in our office out of those relationships. I think that Shirley, you've created a land trust, which is a model of community ownership which is an extraordinary model in their community of the community and based there. But we're also seeing the growth of land trust and beginning farmer programs that are wealthy folks getting together as an investment strategy, buying up tracks of land and then leasing it out as an incubator and then leasing it out. So they are really wonderful models, but Shirley you can speak better than I can to the difficulties of making that model work and retain its community basis. But it's definitely one of those places where we see, this is one of those places where there's got to be procedural and structural trust, not just personal trust. So the devil is in the details.

Gary Grant: And I would add to that, then the focus becomes organizing it rather than the production. I also say that there is a certain, I can't think of the word right now, but there is a certain population that can afford to do that, because when they are tired of it, they can go out, cut their hair, do whatever is needed to fit into the larger society. People of color cannot change the color of their skin.

Mike Sayer: I'm told that we have time for one more comment or question.

Geo Ammons: I have a question. Whenever I receive the census, they want to know the prevalence of what color you are. When we fight a war, we are all Americans. I got so that I ask the question, and I would like to invite anybody who wants to answer, "Is it illegal, when they send you all a

definition of what color you are to say, for instance, if you are black, African-American, colored boy, black, a negro or whatever it is, you get all these different definitions to be an American. When you go to war, we're all Americans. So how can they really justify all of these illegal things that when it comes up to opportunity, saying that we are out of the loop? It is like the ISIS situation. Whenever you look around, you wonder where do those folks, you know, what are they actually looking at? I went to a Confederate meeting in my hometown, and it was a tax payer's organization. It was slaves and slaves and slaves. At the meeting, they was trying to say that the Confederate had nothing to do with the war. I think that we have to be very cautious of how they are actually planting us against one another. I was wondering how come some of the leaders in my community didn't catch that because it was right across of McDonalds. It was in the newspaper that they were going to have a film - Slave and slaves. I thought it was quite ironic that I was the only one sitting there, and they were asking a lot of questions, and they were point blank to what their beliefs were. I thought I am actually living in a society that not only about a month ago, we are still having to face these types of complaints. The way you look at it. Don't have anything to do with the NAACP, anybody supporting them, anything to do with them. I said isn't it a shame that we had a service people that sit for 30 something years with that belief system sitting on the board. How can we get justice? I came back to a board meeting and the school board was at odds with one another, and I was asking the attorney, which was a black attorney, one on the board of education and one on the school board. I said, do you all actually see how you are all being played in this day and time, and you are all professional people, do you see the strategy of how they are really playing you? I said, now we have had all of these issues. And that's why owning the land is very important. I just wanted to say a little bit on how we are being played. But thing of it is that whenever you fill out this definition is it illegal, whenever you don't put the definition of what color you are, why do we go to war and fighting as Americans. I put on all my applications that I am an American. Do I have to give the definition of what color I am?

Savi: I understand in terms of the point that you are making in the sense of this seemingly arbitrariness of what the Census takers want, when, in fact, they really ought to just capture data on just a small farm population and that race should not matter. But there are some members here who are fresh back from the National Ag Statistical meeting like Loretta Picciano. Would you like to chime in on that? Like, why do you think that the census finds that it needs to capture all of these racial - What do we get if we identify, if we respond to the more race based questions on the census?

Loretta Picciano: We just had a workshop with a number of people in the room. We looked at the numbers, and the overall numbers between 2007, due to all of our hard work here, and 2012 show a net increase in African-American, American Indian, Latino, Asian American, Hispanic farmers of about 20,000 and 28,000 if you count all operators. But, we also looked at the income numbers. You know we had Calvin King and Ben Burkett and several of them sitting around the table and saying why are the

income numbers not up? So we are looking at there is baked in discrimination in things like Calvin pointed to maybe the established yields particularly of the black farmers are so much lower. So even if the farmers are able to stay on the land, which is a testament to the work here, there's so many levels of other types of discrimination and the poverty figures are still not changing. So that is just a brief overview. There is a lot more there.

Mike Sayer: We have to bring this panel to an end. This is good stuff.

Jerry Pennick: I think it is important that last question about why you don't check the box if you are an American? I don't check it, because I don't feel like an American. Once you're are treated like an American, then you check that box. So that's why. There's a lot of black people who don't feel like Americans in this country. And If the election of Obama and the resistance to it didn't tell you that, then we have serious problems. I check African-American. Once I feel like I am an American and have all of the benefits of an American, and treated in the Constitution like all Americans, then I would check the box that I'm American. That hasn't happened yet, and I don't see it happening in the near future.

Gary Grant: When all people will just be Americans, and we stop. The Irish had to go through a process to become white. Every light skinned group that came into this country. Race was invented for a reason, and that's the power structure that continues to do it. But, I'm in total agreement with Jerry that when we are all treated the same way, then we can check American. Until we do that, until that happens which seems to be getting further and further away. You have a black President that has been totally disrespected, the office has been disrespected, he has been disrespected, and it's all been because of his color. He's not even all.

Mike Sayer: Let's thank this panel.