

**Racial equity in the food system:
Perceptions, reality, and the road ahead
April 15, 2020 ---- 3:00 to 4:00 pm (EDT)**

**A webinar featuring results from a
national survey of food system educators and practitioners**

**Sponsored by the Racial Equity in the Food System workgroup and
MSU Center for Regional Food Systems**



Racial Equity in the Food System Workgroup (REFS)

WHEN: Initiated in 2018

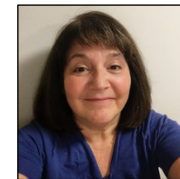
WHAT: A community of Cooperative Extension professionals and community stakeholders who *connect, learn, and collaborate* to facilitate change within our institutions and society to build racial equity within the food system.

HOW: Funded in part by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and oversight provided by MSU Center for Regional Food Systems

Racial Equity in the Food System (REFS) Workgroup

Steering Committee Members – April 2020

- Shorlette Ammons, NC State Extension
- Aurora Buffington, University of Nevada Extension
- Kimberly Carr, MSU (CRFS and C4i)
- Lucy Diekmann, University of California Extension
- Vanessa Garcia Polanco, Michigan State University
- Heather Heyden, University of Kentucky Extension
- Rachel Lindvall, South Dakota State University
- Lindsey Lunsford, Tuskegee University
- Marcus Coleman, Louisiana State University
- Erin Peot, University of Wisconsin Extension
- Rich Pirog, Michigan State University - CRFS
- Diego Thompson, Mississippi State University
- Courtenay Simmons, Consultant
- Gizem Templeton, Duke University
- Crystal Tyler-Mackey, VA Coop Extension - VA Tech
- René V. Wallace, Doers Consulting Alliance
- Dwayne Wharton, Consultant
- Mekko Tyner, College of Muscogee Nation



POLL QUESTION

To what extent do you perceive that leaders in your state or province (Canada) understand the equity implications of the Coronavirus Pandemic?

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

Webinars hosted by REFS



* % of survey respondents who attended each webinar



Racial Equity in the Food System

National Survey – Webinar registrants

WHAT: Qualtrics survey of 14 questions designed to provide feedback on value of previous webinars and topics for new webinars and other types of support

WHEN: Initiated in December 2019 with end date of January 6, 2020

WHO: Sent to nearly 3000 unique webinar registrants; approximately 2800 valid e-mails; 710 responses for a 25% response rate

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

Which best describes your organizational affiliation (check one)

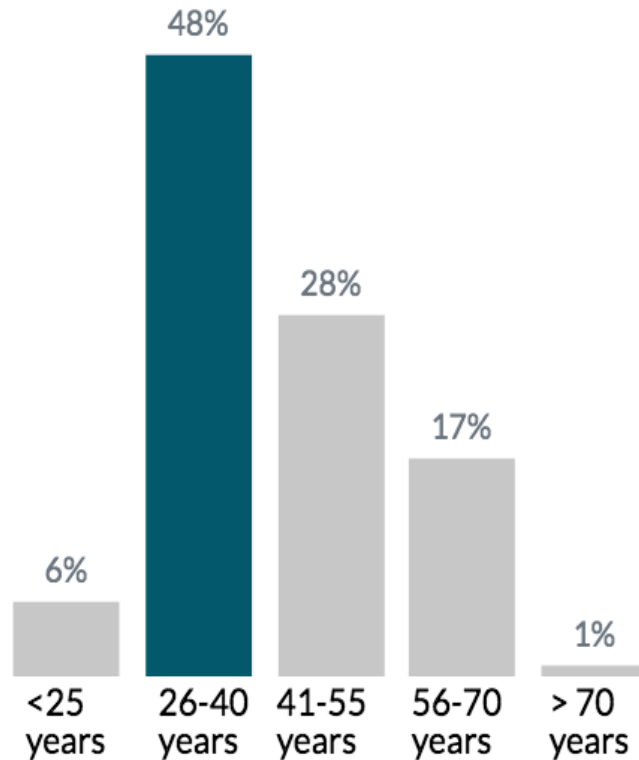
Answer	%
Land grant university or college	41%
NOT a land grant	7%
Non-Profit	33%
Local, state or Federal agency	13%
For-profit business (includes consulting)	3%
Other*	4%

*Other includes k-12 educators, farmers, foundation program officers, writers

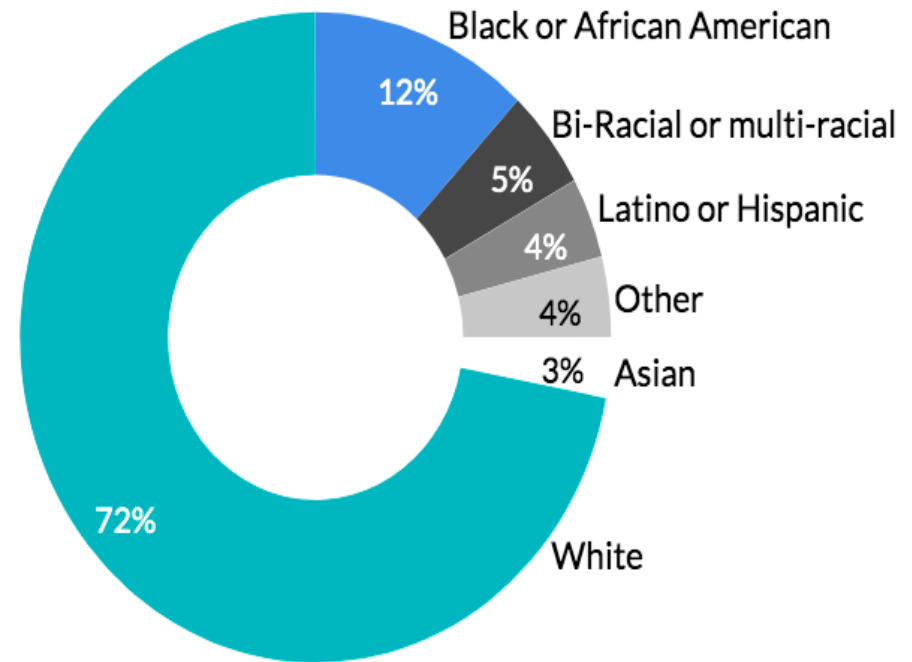
N = 710

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

Almost half of respondents are between **26-40 years old**



The majority of respondents identified as **white** or **black** or **African American**



Most (83%) survey respondents identified as **female**

How do we talk about equity?

“Different cultures, life experiences, and social situations have their own philosophies, concepts, and practices of or relating to equity that are unique. There is no such way to anchor equity in any one language or cultural usage. So the topic of equity requires cultural, experiential, and social **pluralism**.”

Kyle Powys Whyte

Member – Potawatomi Nation

Professor, MSU

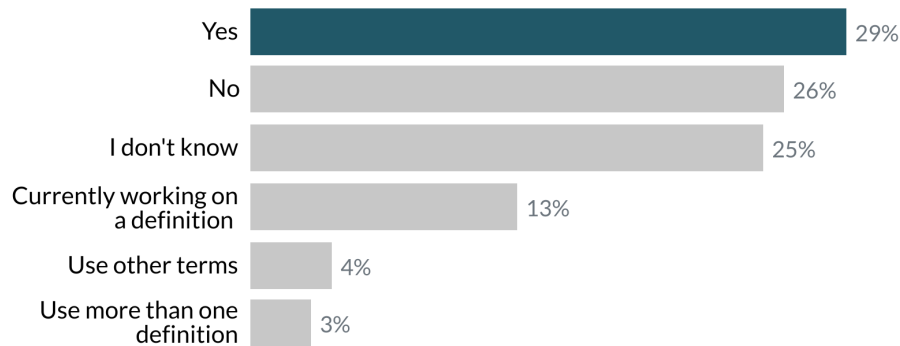
Department of Philosophy,

Department of Community Sustainability

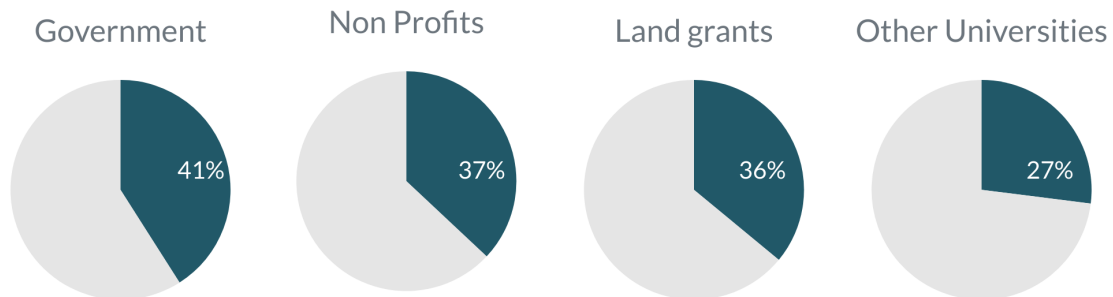
Pluralism - a condition or system in which two or more states, groups principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

Nearly one third of respondents have a working definition of racial equity



Governmental agencies are the most likely to have a working definition of racial equity



What are your top priorities in learning more about racial equity in the food system?

1. Learn how to use a racial equity lens in my work (29%)
2. Understand and address issues of racism in the food system (30%)
3. Understand issues of racism within my own organization (18%)

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

What are your top priorities in learning more about racial equity in the food system?

Topic	White	Person of color
Using an equity lens in my work	32%	22%
Understand and address issues of racism in food system	28%	33%
Understand and address issues of racism in my organization	19%	18%
Build network of people working in this space	13%	11%
Work with others to partner workshops/share resources	4%	10%
Learn about historical context of racism	4%	14%

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

In the next five years, what level of progress do you expect your organization to make in reaching racial equity related goals?

Answer	% of total
Significant progress	30%
Some progress	53%
Little to no progress	9.8%
Do not know	7.2%
Total	100%

N = 710

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

In the next five years, what level of progress do you expect your organization to make in reaching racial equity related goals?

Organization Type

Response Description	Land Grant N=290	Non-Profit N=232	Other University N=48	Federal, state, local government N=93
Significant progress	21%	43%	27%	22%
Some progress	61%	46%	52%	59%
Little to no progress	12%	5%	15%	9%
Do not know	6%	6%	6%	10%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%

Significant progress --- (35% - Persons of Color) (28% - White)

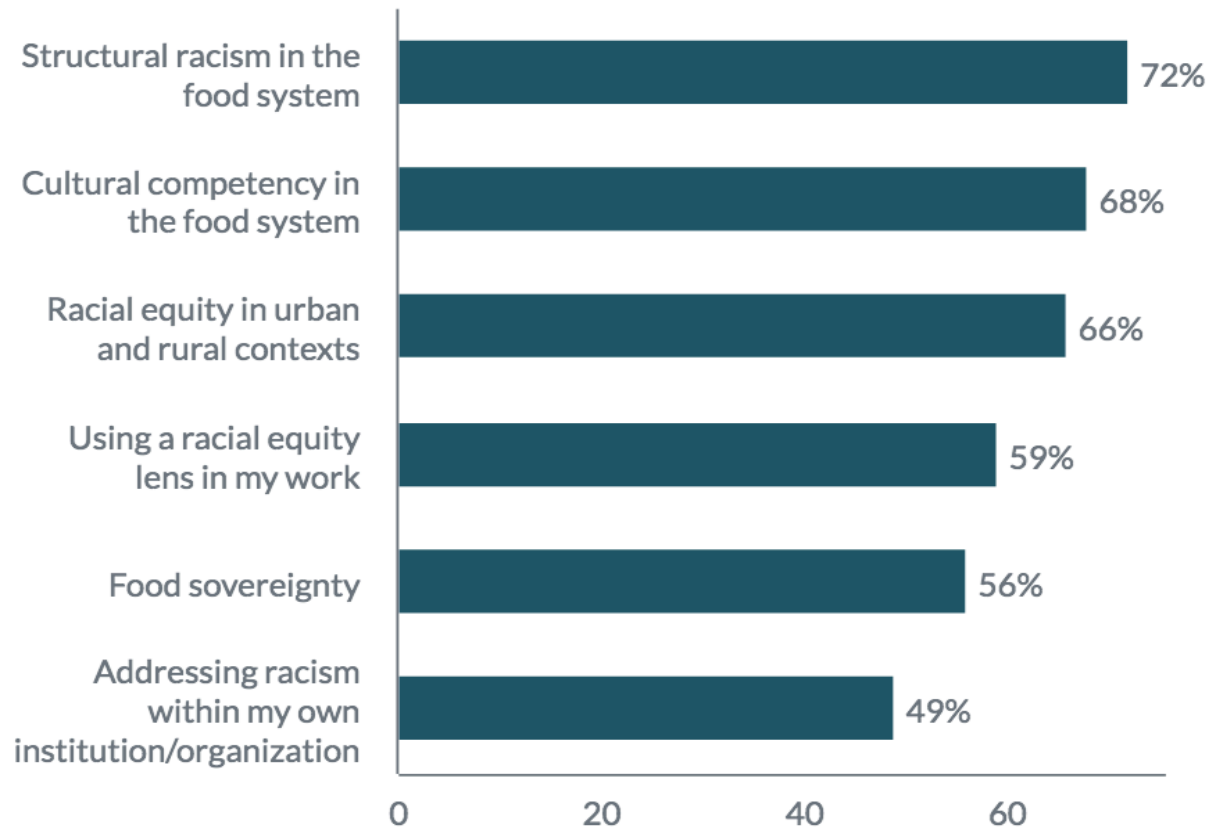
Top challenges that limit your ability to work in the racial equity in the food system

1. Lack of financial resources within my organization (White – 26%.... POC - 27%)
2. Lack of personal knowledge on how to move forward (White - 28% POC -15%)
3. Lack of support/interest/priority by leadership (White – 16%POC - 24%)

POC = Persons of Color

Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

Participants are interested in a range of topics of future webinars



Racial Equity in the Food System – National Survey

In addition to webinars, what type of support would you like to receive from the Racial Equity in the Food System Workgroup? REFLECTS % SELECTING EACH RESPONSE

Organization Type

RESPONSE	Land Grant N=286	Non-Profit N=231	Federal, state, local government N=93
More informational resources and tools	57%	56%	60%
List of speakers and/or facilitators who can participate in workshops or other programs	49%	51%	45%
Developing and/or implementing an equity plan in your organization	46%	60%	45%
More opportunities to network and connect with others who want to use an equity lens in their work	46%	53%	35%

Webinar Discussants

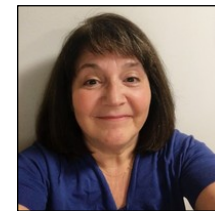
- **Insights** - on survey results
- **Implications** of COVID-19 racial disparities
- **Examples** of operationalizing equity principles



Aurora Buffington
Nevada



Dwayne Wharton
Philadelphia



Rachel Lindvall
South Dakota



Paul Taylor
Toronto, Ontario

Reflections on: *top challenges that limit your ability to work in racial equity in the food system*

- Lack of personal knowledge on how to move forward (W 28%; POC 15%)
 - "...one of the challenges in dealing with racial equity is people want to keep it over there, when it's very much in here. If you're going to do racial equity work, if you're going to do justice work, you have to do some self-work, which means uncovering some truths that are very uncomfortable, that may hurt." – Storme Gray*
 - My feelings
 - My actions
- Lack of support/priority/interest by leadership (W 16%; POC 24%)
 - "Often times when we're having these conversations around diversity, equity, and inclusion, and racial equity in particular, it's more often than not, people of color who are leading that conversation. And the pressure has consistently been put upon us to be the drivers and organizers and strategists around having that discussion." –Dwayne Marshall*
 - My personal experience
 - My challenge

Aurora Buffington – REFS committee - Nevada

Dwayne Wharton – REFS Committee - Philadelphia

Due to the lack of resources to prepare for and protect against COVID-19, lower income & POC face a higher risk of contracting and subsequently spreading the virus.

- Lower income jobs can't be performed remotely (farming, food retail, hospitality, gig economy) so exposure is greater.
- Same workers don't get consideration for worker safety.
- Likely no paid sick leave or health insurance
- Workers less likely to have savings to weather income loss
- Jobs are associated with higher rates of chronic health conditions (diabetes and heart disease) that increase vulnerability.
- Less likely able to stock up on food = more dependence on pantries, school meals



Racial equity in the food system should include those most impacted by issues in the process as well as benefit the most.

- How do we increase the participation of business, specifically food system labor?
- Where are the strategic entry points to address issues now and in the future?
- Where is the intersection between urban and rural, different parts of the food system, etc?
- Government intervention = increased opportunity. How can a racial equity lens be applied around institutional food, procurement, production, healthy food, choice/sovereignty?
- Where are the opportunities for jobs, living wages & labor rights, business development, and community capacity building?
- How do we sustain these new social supports and benefits to vulnerable people and the planet?

Wizipan Leadership & Sustainability Certificate Program



©Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation

Dynamic educational partnership between Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation and SDSU to “Indigenize” curriculum and learning; weaving together Sustainability and Leadership immersive studies.
Sdstate.edu/wizipan

The Wokini Initiative is SDSU’s bold new step in bringing Indigenous viewpoints and concerns to the University and the state while helping support students and tribal communities



Sdstate.edu/wokini



Lakota Food Summit
A collaboration between tribal colleges, tribal organizations, charitable partners, other Indigenous groups and citizens, and SDSU’s Extension & Wokini Initiative.

Paul Taylor

Executive Director
@PaulTaylorTO

 FoodShare
@FoodShareTO



Racial Equity in the Food System (REFS) Workgroup

- Link to webinar recording and slides will be sent to all
- webinar registrants
- Funding support for REFS comes in part from the
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation

To join the EQUITYFOOD list serv, and find other resources, go to:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/racial-equity-workgroup/>

Peace and Respect to All.....

Racial Equity in the Food System Committee