

Racial Equity and Social Justice (RESJ) and Climate Change summaries

Racial Equity and Social Justice

OAG is utilizing a questionnaire to obtain various types of data, including demographic data for people actively using OAG services. While questionnaire data has not yet been tabulated, the Office believes access to land is an overarching issue. OAG programs such as the matching grant cost share program are most effective when the land is owner occupied as compared to farms that are leased. Cited in the Key Issues section, Bill 5-21, a policy change was submitted in OAG's FY23-28 CIP budget submission, where OAG supports the purchase of land less than 50 acres to address BIPOC farmer's access to land contingent upon the County appropriating additional County Funding to the project.

According to the 2017 Ag Census Data, Montgomery County has had an increase in the number of women and people of color farming.

Climate

OAG supports the farm community in its utilization of renewable energy through accessory solar and regenerative agricultural practices such as no till farming, crop rotation and others. The OAG along with the Soil Conservation District promote Best Management Practices (BMP) such as cover crop to help sequester carbon.

Cover Crop. Plants that are planted to cover the soil rather than for the purpose of being harvested; manage soil erosion, soil fertility, soil quality, water, weeds, pests, diseases, biodiversity and wildlife.

No-till farming. (also known as zero tillage or direct drilling) is an agricultural technique for growing crops or pasture without disturbing the soil through tillage. No-till farming decreases the amount of soil erosion tillage causes in certain soils, especially in sandy and dry soils on sloping terrain.

Crop Rotation. Crop rotation is the practice of growing a series of different types of crops in the same area across a sequence of growing seasons. It reduces reliance on one set of nutrients, pest and weed pressure, and the probability of developing resistance to pests and weeds.