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Maggie: Welcome to the Young Farmers Food Safety Focus Group series. I'm Maggie Kaiser. The produce safety training coordinator for the National Young Farmers Coalition. Throughout the summer of 2020, I, along with Bre Sliker, Billy Mitchell and Farmer Facilitators from across the country, hosted a series of focus groups with farmers where we discussed the challenges and successes of implementing various on farm produce safety practices and we recorded them because we want these conversations to be a resource for you. In every session, we bring together farmers with similar experiences for a discussion about a specific farm food safety topic. We begin each one with a farmer presentation followed by a roundtable discussion where farmers share problems and solutions with one another. We hope you enjoy them and find some practical information for your farm.

[music]

[1:04]

Maggie: So, hi everyone, welcome. My name is Maggie Kaiser and I'm the produce safety training coordinator for the National Young Farmers Coalition. I work on the business services team and I am also an urban farmer and nursery grower in New Orleans and part of our local chapter here in the coalition. I'm really glad you could all join us for our focus group today around produce safety for urban farms and we will be hearing from Jermaine Jenkins from Fresh Future Farm in North Charleston, SC. We will do introductions now. I'm gonna ask Bri to go next, but I just ask that after you introduce yourselves that you invite the next person to introduce themselves. Please share your name, where you're farming, where you live, and also why you decided to join this focus group today. So, Brie, would you mind going first?

[2:08]

Bre: Sure, absolutely. Hi everyone. Thank you so much for being here. My name is Bre and I am currently interning with National Young Farmers Polish in summer working with Maggie on food safety projects. I am also a graduate student at NYU studying food studies. I will pass it to Ashley because I saw her face yesterday and here she is again.

[2:34]

Ashley: Hello, I'm Ashley. I am from Kansas City. I actually run 2 urban farms. One we started three months ago and is based on permaculture principles. Then our other farm, Splitlog Farm, is a community farm in the sense that we grow all the food for the community, grade schools, and early education centers. I joined this call because I just wanted to get as much involved in my local chapter as possible and I think we're all facing some challenges and have some good advice to bring to the table and I wanted to see what you guys had to say about it. I am going to pick Jermaine.

[3:17]

Jermaine: Thanks, Ashley. I'm Jermaine Jenkins, the co-founder and chief farm officer at Fresh Future Farm in North Charleston, SC. We are made up of people who lived in that community that have been trained to do permaculture, which is a popular term. If you look into permaculture, a lot of that stuff comes from ancestral practices so we call what we do, ancestral conservation and farming. So, we don't use irrigation, we don't use chemicals, we are heavy on carbon sequestration and capturing water in the ground. I got an invitation to participate in the call. Chad Carter if he's here or coming is a buddy of ours, and an ambassador of the farm. He works for Clemson Extension. Oh and I didn't say we have an urban farm and a grocery store, USDA grocery store on site and we're in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Our buildings are where our store are so small that we've had to close it. So, Chad has helped us do some value edit cooking using hazard plans and all that good stuff since March. So that's it, I'm gonna pass it on to Lisa Welch.

[4:41]

Lisa: My name is Lisa Welch. I'm actually from Florida. We have a local microgreen produce farm that we've been starting for the last year. I joined this call because I saw the information and I just want to learn more. Florida is a little old so some of the practices are a little antiquated and they don't like to think outside the box. So I love the opportunity anytime I can get to learn from a more diverse environment because, well, the old farming methods don't always work. And I will pass it to, let's see, Samara.

[5:21]

Samara: Hi, I'm Samara. I'm also in Kansas City. Hi, Ashley. So, I am a program manager of a refugee training farm here in Kansas City. So, there were two of the talks that kind of fit to us. One was for an educational farm and one was for an urban farm. So, I'm attending this one and I'm having our farmer trainer attend the other one. A lot of our graduates go on to keep farming and all of them end up having an urban farm. I think the challenges for urban farmers are very different than for rural farmers. I'm really excited to hear from everyone else and I just want to talk to people about what they're doing. So, I'm excited about that. I invite Gerhard. Am I saying it right?

[6:07]

Gerhard: You're saying it right. My name is Gerhard Lewis. I'm originally from Florida, did four years in the Marine Corps and went into Iraq a couple times. The name of my farm is Earnestine Organics and it's basically heirs property and I've been farming for about 3 1/2 years. I became interested with the urban safety procedures and stuff. So, it's nice to meet all you guys.

[6:35]

Maggie: Thanks you too Gerhart. We can kick it to you, Jermaine if you'd like to share your screen.

[6:43]

Jermaine: OK, hey again everybody, so I'll just go ahead and talk about my background. In the beginning I live 5 minutes from where our farm is in North Charleston, SC and we decided to put our farm in this particular community, the Chicora Cherokee community, that was historically white, and as the old Navy base nearby closed, it transitioned to a black and brown neighborhood. The Navy base closed in 99 and the last grocery store, and there used to be 5, closed in 2005. We got a lease from the city of North Charleston to do work on this vacant lot. They traded properties within a school that had been in the neighborhood since the 30s. So, it was just filled dirt there and just kids, no chemical plants or anything like that are prevalent in this particular part of North Charleston. Anyway, we got permission to take a vacant lot and turn it into an urban farm. Before doing this work, I had worked for the Lowcountry Food Bank as their nutrition coordinator for a few years. Years before that, I graduated from Johnson and Wales University here in Charleston with degrees in baking and pastry and food service management. So I had ServSafe training since 2001 that I've maintained through today. In my position at the food bank it I was the food safety training czar, so everybody that got ServSafe certification got it through me. So, just to give you some background about us before I go into the food safety conversation. we are very close to some highways and byways. Again, this is an old neighborhood that was predominantly white and when it was predominantly white most of the people that lived there were homeowners and it was full of businesses but as the Old Navy base closed, all that went away. Then you see what the results are with our census track. The median household income is less than \$30,000 and you see how many almost half of the households are below the poverty line and almost half are without vehicle. So, we know a lot of seniors in that community that don't have cars and have to either get a ride from family, friends, or a taxi to get to the grocery store. Or get on a bus and there's a Walmart that's 5 miles away from us, but it takes 2 hours round trip to get back home. As a result, most people, if they you know are using their money or snap benefits are buying the fringe food from the liquor stores, the corner stores, and gas stations. There are lots of liquor stores in this neighborhood, but no grocery stores. Our approach to ending like food apartheid in that place was to create a space where we have active farming. Our farm manager is my son. He did what we're doing at the farm on a small scale at our house since he was eight and he's 21 now. He manages our farm. That's my grandbaby on his back. This is our grocery store and then, besides the work we do with making the most nutrient dense fresh produce available to this neighborhood for everybody, whether you're paying cash, debit card, or SNAP

benefits, we offer farm camps so we can help young people understand not only the connection between how food gets to the grocery store from the farm, but also how specific produce items got here from other parts of the world. So, that just an example of one of our classes. This is what we were able to do in four years with the lot that the city leased to us. It went from maybe there might be 2 overripe bananas at a corner store or gas station and now there's over 300 food items available in our store that are either locally grown by us, or we procure them. At one point we were even getting pasture raised meats from a farmer friend of mine in North Carolina. We found more local resources, but COVID-19 has changed up our operations because that modular building that you see in the picture is 600 square feet and just for the safety of our staff and our customers, our store is closed to the public, probably through the end of the year. What we've been doing in the meantime is twice a month will deliver groceries throughout the neighborhood, not only to families, but also to unhoused guys, folks that frequent that space. We had a sliding scale in our store, so we've gotten grant dollars to be able to offer 100% discounts when we do those deliveries. Beyond that, we've done some interpretive work, talking about the contributions of our enslaved African African ancestors to this space, and cook the way that they would have over open fires and things. This is a friend of mine, Delwan Murphy, who is a black chef that lives in North Charleston. She came and just walked around with the kids and harvested stuff to make a salad as part of the cooking that we did that day. You know, these are folks who either work for us now or have moved on and work now at other farms or started their own landscaping business. This is just some of the recognition that we've gotten like over the years. So, folks even beyond North Charleston in Charleston where we live are interested and engaged in our work. This is a site plan for our space. We're working on getting this teaching pavilion done in the next few months and the other edition will be a mobile incubator kitchen so that we can close the loop and be able to go from raw product to value added product that can be frozen and sold in the store all on site, with goals of expanding our current grocery store inventory, and increasing education in programming. Because of COVID-19 a lot of the gardening classes that you could take in person are starting to move online. Through this delivery work that we're doing now, there's an opportunity for us to reach more people who hadn't actually come into the store. There was just notification recently that folks in South Carolina and Utah that have snap benefit will soon be able to order groceries online. Chicora Cherokee is just one of 11 places that experience food apartheid in North Charleston, so our goal is to reach more communities by creating a variation of this model in other places that employs the people that live in those spaces and they grow the food and stuff such and such. In doing that, we feed more people, but we also make this type of work more affordable because of economies of scale. So, I was talking about COVID-19 impact on our work. We do a bimonthly grocery delivery and because we have several black chefs in the community who would come and do events, we had a whole thought out plan of doing an Air BNB experiences at our farm with these chefs and they lost all of their business over the course of this time. So, we paid them, if you see these two-quart containers here, one is lima beans and the other is what we call chicken bog, which is chicken sausage and rice together and we paid two different chefs to prepare those dishes, cook them to a certain temperature, chilled them, and refrigerated it to be able to come the next day come and deliver them chilled with these other items, including this sausage here that we sourced from a black pork farmer in our area. So, we do that for the families, but we have bachelor bags that more ready to eat like add water, microwave stuff and produce. We have also done some utility and rent assistance for folks in the neighborhood and became a fiscal sponsor, with mutual aid fund that goes beyond our neighborhood to support folks who didn't get or wouldn't have gotten stimulus checks for various reasons. I'm going to talk about some things that are not covered here on our food safety plan that we do. First, like I said, we're a USDA grocery store so unlike the food bank that I used to work at, that would distribute donated food, we do not accept and distribute donated food or accept to sell. Sometimes, a neighbor will have some hot Peppers that they grew or something like that. So, anything that we did not grow, we just give away for free and with a note that says that we did not grow this. We want to be able to have control over time and temperature with anything that we sell, so our staff does all of our procurement outside of what we harvest and then sell from the farm. Additionally, we have, created like a standard operating procedure for all of the ancestral conservation farming practices that we apply at the farm that have incorporated some food safety techniques. So, when volunteers, for example, come, the groups can sign something that says that

they understand and will follow our food safety practices when they come and help us. Because we're a small operation, there are only like 4 full time staff and right now one of our farm staff, because the neighborhood like is gentrifying, their apartment had some challenges and was expensive. They ended up moving out of the neighborhood, so now it's just our farm manager who's doing all of the work for that 0.8 acres that we managed. So, to keep things simple for us, what we've done in discussions with folks as we start to try to get not only organic certification, but gap certification, we have made life simple for us in that if it's these peaches that we harvest are from our trees, the bananas, the citrus along with the kale and squash, we sell them unwashed and we just have signs near the refrigerators and freezers and right there at our cash register that remind customers that they need to wash their foods. The only items that we wash are root vegetables that come out really dirty. In addition to that, there are signs in our bathroom reminding employees that they need to wash their hands after using the bathroom and this last graphic here is the hazard plan steps that we use to make sure that when we prepare chicken bog with those butter beans that they are cooked to a safe temperature and also cool to save temperature. We're doing that like right on our deck right now at the farm. We've done it near our crop tunnel. The goal is this is kind of practice for what we'll do and replicate once we get our on-site kitchen. So that's us.

[19:24]

Maggie: Thank you Jermaine. Yeah, that was incredible. You're doing so much work. We had a few questions that popped up in the chat box while you were speaking, so maybe we can start with those and then we can open it up for other questions. Two of the questions that came up, well the first one was from Ashley, was around pricing and using EBT. You do use EBT and you have a sliding scale but you also just recently got a grant that is helping subsidize the entire cost curves. Where did that come from?

[20:01]

Jermaine: Because we started serve a low wealth community that's been marginalized and just invested in, whenever there was a threat of a hurricane and things closed our neighbors were always impacted negatively and that they couldn't work and stuff and had to be faced with bills. So, two years ago, we talked about implementing relief infrastructure. So, we got a grant two years ago that was supposed to be the second year of a grant. Some of those monies covered the cost of finishing our incubator kitchen. We were able to request those funds early and apply them all to being able to feed folks in the neighborhood. We still need to find some funders to help us get solar panels and stuff, because what we've done in hurricanes and what we did again in this situation is if you go in our store now, the shelves are empty because we gave everything away knowing that our customers had limited resources and still had to pay the bills. So, we just give it away and then do fundraisers to bring it all back. With the hurricane, we thought that we would lose product because the power would go out. So, we that's why we gave it away the first time and with solar panels we won't have that worry. So, we're adding more and more relief infrastructure as we go.

[21:24]

Maggie: Do you do CSA's? Because that's one of the things that I'm considering obviously. Well, some farmers here are doing pickups. Obviously, you drive up and pick up your food so that you don't necessarily come in contact, and I thought about doing scaled CSA's in that way. So, if you want to go, you can sell to a higher price to outside neighborhoods and lower price to the inside neighborhood because they would be considered local, so it's a cheaper price. I thought about doing something like that and I didn't know what kind of responses you might have had if you've done it?

[22:00]

Jermaine: We have had lots of interest in CSA's. We don't do one yet, but I got the idea for the sliding scale, because we have customers that said, even though Walmart is a 2 hour round trip, they have, because of economies of scale, prices that are way cheaper on produce in most places. So, a customer who is making minimum wage came in with that concern that compared to Walmart this is real expensive. So, that day because we're a small organization we were able to change all the prices overnight to be comparable to Walmart. We got the idea of a sliding scale because everything was cheap for

everybody and that wasn't working because we had people come from outside the neighborhood. Reading the book *Farming While Black* gave us the idea about doing a sliding scale. So, the price that you see on the shelf looks like what you would pay at Publix, but depending on if you have immigration costs, debt from hospital, or children or whatever you can get 35 to 100% off the prices on the shelf.

[23:22]

Maggie: So, my next question with the EBT, are you allowed to change the prices? So if somebody has an EBT card it's cheaper, obviously.

[23:31]

Jermaine: They are a group that automatically gets the discount.

[23:35]

Maggie: OK.

[23:35]

Jermaine: Yes, I don't think EBT cares about the price you charge.

[23:38]

Maggie: OK. Our house is directly across the street from the farm and we are on a busy street that used to be a nice neighborhood. I mean it used to be nice and it used to have businesses and basically there's just churches and liquor stores now so.

[23:55]

Jermaine: Yes, same here.

[23:57]

Maggie: Yeah, so it's a lot of older people that live in the neighborhood, not a lot of young people over here. A lot of vacant lots, and basically everything that you're doing is exactly what we want to do here to be able to create a sustainable farming location in general and take over those vacant lots and be able to grow more food.

[24:18]

Jermaine: I'll tell you that before we opened the store, there was a car rental place nearby that had a modular building that they used as an enterprise rental place and they were remodeling and it was in the way, so we just had to pay to remove it and while we were waiting for that construction or renovation work to be done on that, we operated a farmer's market. What we found is when it's rainy and cold, folks are not coming out only for produce. We always knew that we were going to open a grocery store but the first winter we decided that we're just going to close this and focus on getting the grocery store open. We have customers who, when the store opened, they came and only bought the packaged goods that we had on the shelf. We're a judgment free zone, so we encourage people if there's something that you want that's not here, let us know what it is, and we'll get it the next day. So, you know we did that. We have greens and we have neck bones because folks wanted that. So, we got to the point where customers trusted us enough to start tasting things that we recommended. So, a customer that went from only getting packaged goods, now has 50% produce and 50% shelf stable stuff. I didn't mention, along with black chefs, we're trying to get away from not only just having products that are produced on a national scale and in all grocery stores, to intentionally sourcing products from BIPOC communities, whether it's hot sauces that we have or soap that we have. We even got tinctures and teas. That same customer is interested now in the tinctures. We sold out of those tinctures, that's a matter of fact, when we put them on the shelf. So yeah, we are intentional about elevating food systems of color.

[26:26]

Maggie: Jermaine, Lisa had a question about the process of actually becoming a USDA grocery store. Lisa, is there anything you want to add to that question?

[26:36]

Lisa: I don't know. She's got an amazing farm. I would have never thought about doing some of those things that you're doing. It's pretty awesome. Yeah, I was just curious, you've created an actual store and I had always thought about doing a market outside of my property or on my property. I'm just kind of curious as to how you did the USDA store. I'm just curious.

[26:57]

Jermaine: It was fairly straightforward. You had to have a business license. We were a farm stand when we just had the farmers market and then we became a grocery store. So, we had SNAP benefits before we had a store or we were able to accept them. To move up to USDA certification, I think you needed a business license. We were able to just send the peddlers license that we had at the time until our store was open, and that was enough for them to come and do an inspection and then certify our store.

[27:31]

Lisa: That's really cool.

[27:32]

Samara: I have a question. Well, I work with refugee farmers and everyone has a varying degree of knowledge and also a different way of doing everything. Every farmer does everything differently, but I feel like every talk that I go to from a food safety specialist or someone at a University, they always say to not wash any of your produce. How do you not wash your produce? I get it for certain crops, but we grow a lot of greens. What about your kale? I saw you had collards, you wouldn't wash those?

[28:08]

Jermaine: No, and I didn't mention that the way we're able to soak to absorb so much water. There was a random snowstorm two or three years ago, and normally when it snows here it melts the next day, but that particular snowstorm there was four feet of snow that stayed around for a week. Everything was snow covered and then we came back to the farm and it looked just like it did on any other day because we have sheet mulch around our spaces. So, we got cardboard from the dollar store around the corner and wood chips that are free, and we just keep sheet mulching and keep sheet mulching. The other thing that we do is we have freeform raised beds and we mulch our beds so our grains are almost like spotless when it comes to dirt because there's when it rains, dirt doesn't get on our grains. So, all of our produce in general is clean already, except for the root vegetables.

[29:08]

Samara: I guess you maybe just don't grow things like spinach or arugula or?

[29:13]

Jermaine: We do, it just doesn't get dirty.

[29:15]

Samara: What? I'm just like how? OK, incredible!

[29:19]

Jermaine: Just thick mulching with free woodchips.

[29:23]

Samara: Also, when you started your talk I was like are you gonna talk about food safety or are you just gonna inspire everyone to make a million changes?

[29:32]

Jermaine: Yeah, I was getting there but just to do a brief introduction on what we do because we're a grocery store, I think like some of the stuff is unique. Oh, and that's another thing, my last certification with food safety, I thought I needed it in order for us to get a deheck or health department to approve us, but because we're not a full service grocery store, we don't have a deli or bakery, we didn't need health department approval. We can even do coffee and tea without the health department approval. I wanted to talk about all we do to talk about some unique things about food safety with our work. It's a challenge, especially when it's green season, because folks are marvel at how clean our greens are that our one farm chef can't stop. We can't stop the store fast enough. So, it's times like those I think that we're going to be have to be intentional until we can find somebody from the neighborhood that we can train and hire to have volunteers help us, who have the food safety training to be able to help them meet demand of getting those those pruners washed and sanitized and all that stuff. When we have a lot of volume we even got walkie talkies last year so folks can call from inside the store and say hey they need five more bags of green.

[31:04]

Maggie: Do you have cold storage on the farm?

[31:07]

Jermaine: We have a refrigerator, but not cold storage like you would see on a larger farm. We don't have that. We'd like to get it and that's one of the challenges and reasons why we want to have other stores in places so that we can then afford to have cold storage and also have farms in other places. I didn't say that I went through commercial urban act certification with growing power when they were doing trainings. They are an organization that used to be in Milwaukee that started with 3 acres and ended up with 300 acres all over town. So, we want to replicate that model here.

[31:55]

Maggie: Samara, I just wanted to mention real quick to that my expertise is with the produce safety rule, so the regulation under FISMA, and just regarding washing produce, there's nothing in the rule that does require you to wash produce and that I think a lot of it is about how you communicate with your customers. So, I've known other farmers that also don't wash their produce and it could be because they don't have a clean water source that they can rely on. I think sometimes they can see a difference in how long their produce lasts. When they harvest it and just get it right to the customers. As long as you are having this conversation with your customers and talking about how you know how you are farming and you know your reasons for not washing it or washing it, you can kind of just do what works for your farm. I do understand I'm in New Orleans and I know a lot of you are in the South where it's really hot, so we often use water just to get things crisp again. That helps the produce last a little bit longer. I do also want to say that when I talk about washing produce that I usually don't use the word wash but instead rinse because you do want to put the ownage on the customers to wash their own produce and its really on you if you feel like you want to rinse it further, or wash it to a higher standard at your home. So, I just wanted to mention that.

[33:24]

Jermaine: Oh, and I'll go ahead. If you have questions, we have a land justice fight right now, so we're kind of extra busy in the season, but I just put our email address there for folks who might have questions.

[33:42]

Maggie: Jermaine, what's your land issue right now?

[33:45]

Jermaine: Oh, it's a whole drama. We leased this property from the city of North Charleston in 2014, and we've been angling to buy it because we only had a five-year lease. So, we've been angling to buy it for the last almost three years. A white led organization came around, and because our farm is part of the same plot of the school and where the basketball court and stuff are you saw in the picture. They want to buy it from under us. Last year we were able to negotiate what the appraised value was for the whole place, and what our percentage would be if we paid to buy our stuff. We raised that money in 60 days, and they are still screwing around with trying to sell it to us. I guess the challenge for us is that we want to a clean deed with no restrictions, so it will have value as we try to expand into these other spaces and they are not budging on these deed restrictions that will make it so the land has no value for us.

[34:54]

Maggie: I'm so sorry that that's happening. You put so much work in. You need space. I mean, I think that city regulations and zoning are something that affect a lot of urban farms. I'm also wondering if other people on the call have had issues.

[35:13]

Jermaine: Well that's the irony about North Charleston because they have the most progressive laws around livestock anywhere in the Tri County area. If I had a fence, I could have a horse, a cow, and a goat in my yard. Nobody cares. As a black led organization it's real difficult for them to relinquish control of this property.

[35:43]

Maggie: The organization I work for started an urban farm task force, essentially to address all the challenges that come from trying to start an urban farm. Luckily, because I already run a community farm and I already work with nonprofits and I'm on the Farmers Market Board I knew who to talk to for my land. So, my land is all in land Bank and our farm is basically taking a huge risk because it's a two-year free contract, but the government could take it away at any moment if they wanted to, right? We're technically not supposed to put any permanent structures on the farm. This includes installing water, so right now we drag hoses from our house to three lots across a busy road. It's a lot of fun. We can't put any permanent structures, which means all of our tools are basically tied to a chain link post at the back of our house. So, we have had to get creative. One of the things being that we needed refrigeration, we needed storage, and we wanted a certified kitchen, and one of our friends a couple months ago sent us this Craigslist post for a free 50-foot-long semi-trailer and we had a friend go out and check it out and it was there. It's an old vintage refrigeration truck so it has two doors on it and a sliding door. It had been sitting in the back of a garage for three years in the back of this storage facility. Basically we paid \$350.00 for the tow to bring it to our house. So, we put it on one of our vacant lots but I didn't check all the rules for my trailer before. Thankfully because we live in the neighborhood where the government doesn't really pay attention anyways, we have not gotten any penalties for it, but essentially you can't have a shipping container or semi-trailer or anything like that parked in a residential area for more than a month. You're supposed to move it. So, these are the type of challenges that I'm bringing up with Urban Taskforce. So, Roots for Refugees is just down the street, it's only maybe less than a mile away from my farm. It's a great program, but the problem is that it doesn't create ownership, and those farmers can't expand and they also cannot really focus on planting perennials and plants that are actually going to help replenish the soil, so there's a lot of there's a lot of input into that farming that doesn't necessarily help the environment and it also makes it to where those farmers have to depend on a nonprofit to be able to grow their food instead of being able to go out and get vacant land and be able to really invest and expand. They have to put a lot of money in just to get there to buy the property to install water. Basically, it makes it really difficult to be an urban farmer so. What we're doing is trying to change policies to make it easier, and I don't know if that's something you guys have there, but you might consider teaming up with other farmers.

[39:06]

Jermaine: The same rule about containers in residential neighborhoods exists here because before we found the car dealership with the modular building, we said we can just turn a container into a store, but that was



not allowed. What we've done, just in conversations with other black farmers, we have noticed the disparities in how they're funded and all that stuff, we hosted the first Black Farmers Conference in this state in 2019. We did another one, a virtual one this past year, and now this coming Saturday, we will host our second Black Farmer Coalition meeting. So, instead of just one person that goes through the city with complaints or policy suggestions, its a collective of voting age folks. That changes everything.

[40:09]

Maggie: Yeah, something we've done in New Orleans too, is to partner up with our food Policy Advisory Council, I'm not sure if your cities have those, to get other people working in the food system on board with changes that need to happen for urban farming to be more viable and sustainable. We're going to do a round table with every Department that affects it, so codes, land bank, and economic development. We are basically trying to reach every single person and put them all in the same meeting because that's the biggest problem also is that if you don't know how to navigate the government and you want to do anything, there's going to be one or another that's not communicating to each other, so we want to streamline that, get them all in the same room and say, hey, you're making it really difficult for people to be able to produce food and create their own economic value and to better their communities because of these hang ups. So, hopefully we can do that in the next year. That's the goal. Y'all, I'm really loving this conversation. One, I love hearing about all your farms and I'm in an urban space too so it's also applicable to my life. I also just wanted to say that if any of you ever have any, especially produce safety questions that come up after this focus group. I am available and always willing to do one on one consultations. I've done a few of them, in light of COVID, over the phone or we could set up a zoom. Whatever works for you essentially. So, I just want to put that out there and you can reach out to me directly. Yeah, I want to say thank you a million times, thank you for taking an hour of your day to be here with all of us, and especially to you Jermaine, for going into so much depth around Fresh Future Farm. You're really doing amazing work and I'm so grateful to hear about it.

[42:06]

Everyone: Thank you!

[music]

[42:12]

Thanks for listening to our produce safety Focus Group series. For visuals from the presentations, more information on this series, and other produce safety resources, visit [youngfarmers.org/focusgroups](https://youngfarmers.org/focusgroups). This podcast was edited by Hannah Beal and recorded in partnership with the National Farmers Union Foundation over the summer of 2020 as part of our FSOP produce safety programming.

[42:44]

*Transcription by Mackenzie Jeter, National Farmers Union*