



PRESS RELEASE

USDA Names 2023 Agricultural Outlook Forum Future Leaders in Agriculture Program Winners

PUBLISHED: January 20, 2023

SHARE:



WASHINGTON, Jan. 20, 2023 — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has selected 30 university students who will attend USDA’s 2023 Agricultural Outlook Forum (AOF) as winners of the USDA Future Leaders in Agriculture program. These undergraduate and graduate students from land-grant, non-land-grant colleges of agriculture and Hispanic-serving institutions will receive a weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., and attend the 99th annual Agricultural Outlook Forum, USDA’s largest annual meeting. This year’s forum convenes on February 23–24, 2023 at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia.

“These young people are the next generation of agriculture, and it is important for USDA to support their training,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Through the Future Leaders Program, USDA is expanding career opportunities in USDA-related fields and building an agriculture workforce that reflects the diversity of the American people.”

Now in its 16th year, the USDA Future Leaders in Agriculture Program introduces undergraduate and graduate students to the work of USDA and partner organizations. The program also provides real-world learning opportunities in contemporary agribusiness, scientific research, and agricultural policy to 21 undergraduates and 9 graduate students who are majoring in agriculture-related subjects, including business, economics, communications, nutrition, food science and veterinary studies. Applicants submit essays on agricultural careers and challenges. During their visit to Washington, D.C., students will participate in a USDA briefing and discuss career development with agriculture leaders in academia, government, and industry. They will tour the nation’s capital and attend the forum, where Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack will present their awards.

“I am very pleased to see such a group of promising young students showing a strong interest in the agriculture sector and USDA’s work, and I am looking forward to meeting them in person at our annual Agricultural Outlook Forum next month,” said USDA Chief Economist Seth Meyer.

Among the winners, Megan Cherry is an Agricultural Communications major at the University of Georgia. In her essay on “Agriculture as a Career,” she wrote “Being a first-generation college student, I can faithfully say I would not be where I am today if it were not for agriculture and all the career agriculturalists who choose to invest in me. Agriculture as a career is a complex statement but ultimately, I could not imagine a more rewarding career path.”

Undergraduate Winners



Name	University	University Type
T’Liyah Bigelow	Virginia State University	1890
Kortni Blalock	North Carolina A&T State University	1890
Charles Carpenter, III	Prairie View A&M University	1890
Megan Cherry	University of Georgia	1862
Keshauna Davis	South Carolina State University	1890
Kenneth Frazier, III	Alcorn State University	1890
Cameron Geddie	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	1890
Sophia Goins	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	1890
Makaila Holston Smith	Pennsylvania State University	1862
Amahry Jackson	Southern University	1890

Name	University	University Type
Christian Jacobs	Southern University	1890
Tahirah Jones	North Carolina A&T State University	1890
Ellie McGowan	Murray State University	NLGCA*
Isaiah McKenzie	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	1890
Amir McKinstry	Tuskegee University	1890
Olivia Phillips	University of Georgia	1862
Kamryn Poole	Tennessee State University	1890
Abigail Putnam	University of Florida	1862
Elizabeth Putnam	University of Florida	1862
Robert Thomas	Prairie View A&M University	1890
Kailyn Wrighten	South Carolina State University	1890



Graduate Winners

Name	University	University Type
Montana Altman	University of California – Davis	1862
CheKenna Fletcher	Tennessee State University	1890

Name	University	University Type
Grace Greene	University of Minnesota	1862
Caleb Hale	Montana State University	1862
Merideth Harvey	Texas A&M University – Kingsville	HSI
Karina Hissen	Texas A&M University	1862
Jerry Kennedy	Murray State University	NLGCA*
Trevor Palone	Montana State University	1862
Allison Watts	Texas A&M University – Kingsville	HSI



*Non-Land-Grant College of Agriculture

The Future Leaders in Agriculture Program is supported by academic institutions, corporations, and government institutions dedicated to promoting the education of the next generation of agriculturalists. This year's sponsoring organizations include the University of Maryland Eastern Shore and Farm Credit. USDA sponsors include the Agricultural Research Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Economic Research Service, Foreign Agricultural Service, National Agricultural Statistics Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Office of the Chief Economist, and the Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement.

The [Agricultural Outlook Forum](#) is the USDA's largest annual meeting, attracting as many as 2,000 attendees from the U.S. and abroad. The forum highlights key issues and topics within the agricultural community, offering a platform for conversation among producers, processors, policymakers, government officials, and non-governmental organizations, both foreign and domestic. Follow the conversation at #AgOutlook23 on USDA's [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#).

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on

more resilient local and regional food production, fairer markets for all producers, ensuring access to safe, healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

#

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

PRESS RELEASE

Release No.:
0009.23

CONTACT:
USDA Press

EMAIL:
press@usda.gov



U.S. Department of Agriculture