



CAFS Event Explores Structural Racism in American Agriculture

In early September the [Center for Agriculture and Food Systems](#) hosted "Rooting Out Racism in American Agriculture," an installment in Vermont Law School's virtual "Embedded Racism in the Law" panel series. The event brought together lawyers fighting structural racism in agricultural law and policy: [Monica Armster Rainge](#), Esq., Director of Land Retention and Advocacy at the [Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund](#); [Stephen Carpenter](#), Deputy Director and Senior Staff Attorney at [Farmers' Legal Action Group](#); and [Sherri White-Williamson](#), Environmental Justice Policy Director at [North Carolina Conservation Network](#).



Moderated by CAFS Assistant Professor [Emily Spiegel](#), panelists discussed Black land loss, the connection between agriculture and environmental justice, and the role of law and policy professionals in rooting out racism in the food system. Follow the link below for a recording of the event, and [visit the Vermont Law School blog](#) for a list of related resources.

[View the recording »](#)



New Farm and Energy Initiative Website

CAFS teamed up with colleagues in Vermont Law School's [Institute for Energy and the Environment](#) to launch the Farm and Energy Initiative (FEI) [website](#), a new open-access resource that helps farmers, researchers, and policymakers promote sustainable energy use in agriculture. Directed by Assistant Professor [Genevieve Byrne](#), the initiative includes online policy toolkits, FAQs, a podcast mini-series, and much more.

[View the resource »](#)



Policy Resource Helps Communities Build Food Sovereignty

On September 1 the Sustainable Development Code (SDC)—a resource that helps communities amend development codes to build more sustainability, resilience, and equity—launched its new Food Security and Sovereignty chapter. The new chapter is a collaborative effort between SDC Director and Vermont Law School Professor [Jonathan Rosenbloom](#); CAFS's [Laurie Beyranevand](#), [Lihlani Nelson](#), and [Claire Child](#); and an interdisciplinary team of planners, lawyers, architects, city staff, and professors and students from throughout the country. It includes nearly 40 recommendations to enhance access to nutritious food, supported by dozens of case studies that focus exclusively on zoning code challenges.

[Learn more »](#)



Alumni Spotlight: Esther Akwii LLM'20 Heads to Harvard

[Esther Akwii LLM'20](#) worked with smallholder farmers and held a position at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations before coming to Vermont Law School. As an LLM Fellow at CAFS, she helped pilot a range of projects in partnership with organizations across the U.S. over two years while earning her LLM.

Earlier this month, Esther started a new position as Clinical Fellow at Harvard Law School's [Food Law and Policy Clinic](#). CAFS partners with the Harvard clinic on projects including the [Blueprint for a National Food Strategy](#) and the [Farm Bill Law Enterprise](#). Akwii will be involved in those projects in her new position, and the CAFS team is thrilled to continue working with her. Read more about Esther on the VLS blog via the link below.

[Read more »](#)



Cydnee Bence Joins CAFS

We are thrilled to welcome Cydnee Bence JD'20 (left) as our new [LLM Fellow](#). A 2020 graduate of Vermont Law School, Cydnee spent a semester working in our Food and Agriculture Clinic and co-authored [A Bread Apart](#), a guide to defensive publication for plant breeders, alongside Professor Emily Spiegel. During the next two years she will earn her [LLM in Food and Agricultural Law](#) part-time while working with CAFS.

Cydnee wants to explore how law regulates animals in agriculture, including the animals we use for food, fur, fiber, and labor. "I'm interested in stronger protections for these animals and continuing to address how CAFOs perpetuate injustices in the food system," she said. "I'm also very interested in protecting and securing agricultural workers' rights and protections. I believe that engaging with these issues is necessary if we want to build a truly just and equitable food system."

Food and Agriculture Clinic Update

This semester, students in our [Food and Agriculture Clinic](#) are working on a range of projects with CAFS partners across the country, including:

- Examining issues related to ADA compliance and state COVID-19 requirements for our [Farmers Market Legal Toolkit](#) (with partners NOFA-VT and Farmers Market Coalition);
- Working with the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Policy Research Center at Alcorn State University to build heirs' property resources for our [Farmland Access Legal Toolkit](#);
- Providing research, analysis, and recommendations for a Payment for Ecosystem Services program in Vermont alongside Rural Vermont and White River Natural Resources Conservation District;
- Developing policy priorities for the next Administration related to seeds and plant breeding alongside the Organic Seed Alliance;
- Helping The Land Institute create an integrated organizational structure for the Kernza® grain supply chain; and more.

Welcome to all of our fall clinicians!



Interested in pursuing a master's or JD degree with a food system focus?

We offer a [Master of Food and Agricultural Law and Policy](#) (MFALP); an [LLM in Food and Agricultural Law](#); and JD and joint degrees with a [concentration in food and agriculture](#). View Vermont Law School's latest environmental law brochure for all the details.

[Learn more »](#)



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