The nation’s top agricultural officials unanimously vote to approve new diversity and inclusion policy

ARLINGTON, VA-- Today, the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture adopted new diversity and inclusion policy during the 2020 NASDA Annual Meeting. The new policy formally incorporates NASDA’s commitment to racial justice into its policymaking framework.

“We acknowledge that in order to combat systemic racism, we must consider diverse audiences from the start of our policymaking process,” NASDA CEO Dr. Barb Glenn said. “We believe that the future of agriculture is best served when all of those in the agriculture community are empowered regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation and/or religious creed.”

NASDA’s policy asserts that diversity and inclusion are fundamental principles of a sustainable agricultural community and necessary to advance the agricultural industry in the U.S. The policy also recommends supporting programs consistent with the new guiding principle and encourages all levels of government to do the same.

Other actions following NASDA’s racial justice statement include the recently formed five-year partnership with MANRRS and the NASDA Foundation. The partnership will serve to increase racial diversity in agricultural leadership, provide a deep dive into agriculture policy for MANRRS students, and advise diversity training for NASDA members and staff. While efforts to develop the partnership started in 2019, NASDA’s racial justice statement will guide work through the organizations’ MOU.

“With the passage of our new policy today, we’re intentionally applying our racial justice statement to all components of our work including our policy, education, outreach and internal endeavors,” Glenn said. “If we are to advance agriculture in the states to the best of our abilities, we must ensure all who are impacted by agriculture can contribute their voices and talents.”

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NASDA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit association which represents the elected and appointed commissioners, secretaries, and directors of the departments of agriculture in all fifty states and four U.S. territories. NASDA grows and enhances American agriculture through policy, partnerships and public engagement. Learn more about NASDA at www.nasda.org.