

Subject: SAAFON, Southeastern African American Farmers Organic Network Names new Executive Director

June 22, 2020

Dear SAAFON Supporter,

We hope you had a joyous Juneteenth! We wanted to reach out to let you know that Dr. M. Jahi Chappell has been named Executive Director of SAAFON. We have included the full announcement below and wanted to share this news with you personally as soon as we could. We have greatly valued your participation in this search and look forward to following your continued success positively impacting the lives and livelihoods of Black farmers, organizers and food advocates.

Thank you for your support of our search for an Executive Director for SAAFON. We received significant response from leaders and farmers working in the deep south to advance land sovereignty and food access and security for Black Americans. As a successful search depends on engaged networking contacts and outstanding candidates, we want to express our sincere appreciation for your interest and assistance.

We are pleased to announce that SAAFON has named Dr. M. Jahi Chappell the new Executive Director. He will start on July 13, 2020. Based in Atlanta, SAAFON works with farmers who are committed to culturally relevant, ancestrally guided, and ecologically sustainable agricultural-based living. With a farmer-centered, farmer-led approach rooted in deep commitment to sustainable agroecological practice, SAAFON's goal is to raise the visibility of Black farmers' practices and enterprises both nationally and internationally.

M. Jahi Chappell is an activist, researcher, organizer, son of social workers, and grandson of farmers. He has researched food sovereignty, agroecology, and farming and food security policy in the United States and Brazil, and has training in engineering, ecology, and political science. He has worked for over 18 years to build participatory, socially just, and ecologically sustainable agri-food systems that center the voices and needs of farmers and eaters rather than corporations and capital.

Jahi has previously served as the Executive Director of the 45-year old think tank Food First, as Senior Scientist and Director of Agroecology and Agricultural Policy at the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (where he met SAAFON's co-founder, Mrs. Cynthia Hayes), and held professorships in the United States and the United Kingdom. He holds a bachelor's degree in Chemical Engineering and a Ph.D. in Agroecology, both from the University of Michigan. Jahi has consulted for the Agroecology Fund, the international small farmers' movement La Vía Campesina, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the World Future Council. His award-winning book, *Beginning to End Hunger: Food and the Environment in Belo Horizonte, Brazil and Beyond*, was published January 2018 by the University of California Press. *Beginning to End Hunger* highlights breakthroughs in radically reducing hunger and supporting small-scale farmers in southeastern Brazil, and informs readers on how activists, farmers, researchers, and eaters can learn from this example to change food systems everywhere.

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Again, many thanks for your valuable contributions to this search, and best wishes for continued success in your important work!

Wishing you safety, health and justice,

Tamar Datan, Senior Advisor and Erica Nicole Griffin, Senior Associate