MOSES stands in solidarity with all of the farmers, partner organizations, and community members who are working toward equity and racial justice.

The MOSES mission is to “educate, inspire, and empower farmers to thrive in an organic and sustainable system of agriculture.” As a predominantly white agriculture-based educational organization, this may seem like an unnecessary statement to some people. However, we know that in an unjust food system, not all farmers are given the same opportunity to thrive. We further understand that staying silent in the face of injustice is the same as condoning that injustice. As Leah Penniman (farmer at Soul Fire Farm and author of Farming While Black) said during her keynote at the 2020 MOSES Conference, “It’s not just about how individuals treat each other, it’s a systemic issue.”

We do not have the mission or experience to speak with authority about the generational and ongoing trauma that Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in this country must bear. However, from our position within agriculture and food system work, we can easily recognize some of the ways in which racism and systemic oppression have impacted these members of our community. From the initial genocide and theft of land from indigenous communities to the discriminatory USDA lending practices and continuing through today’s disparities in land tenure, farming systems in this country have favored white farmers and added barriers to farmers of color. America’s history of labor in the food system is also plagued with injustice. Rooted in the practices of slavery, this history extends through sharecropping, tenant farming, farmworker abuse, and the exploitation of generations of immigrants. Our fields, slaughterhouses, and processing plants have not valued the labor or health of the people of color that keep our nation fed.

In the midst of all this crisis, we are heartened to see positive community action. Urban and rural farmers across the country are donating, collecting, and distributing food for communities in crisis. Organizations are connecting people through voluntary reparation initiatives. Most importantly, people are finding the courage to speak about injustice. A lot of people are recognizing that nothing changes with silence. We encourage everyone to follow the guidance of people of color to better understand the structural changes needed.

The food and farming community is incredibly diverse and our organization is working to better reflect that diversity in our programs and leadership structures. We have been building partnerships, expanding our confidence in addressing race and justice within agriculture, and learning to listen. We acknowledge that there is still a lot to be done and we pledge ourselves to that work. We will continue to broaden our own understanding of the systemic issues that need to be addressed, work to grow our own cultural competency, and look for ways to improve how we serve our community.

Organic, sustainable, and regenerative farmers understand the value of diverse ecosystems. We know that diversity creates resiliency. It provides a foundation for every plant, animal, and person to offer their own best piece toward an even greater whole. We also know that when one part of the system is broken, it threatens the health of the entire system.

In this spirit, we invite everyone in our community to engage in the movement for racial justice in every way that they can. Whether it’s learning, donating, connecting, marching, creating, listening, teaching, feeding, or offering one’s own unique skills, there is a place in this movement for everyone to contribute.

Good Courage,

Lauren Langworthy