

Dear colleagues,

USAIN is beginning its new operational year in unprecedented times. We have spent the past months responding to the COVID-19 pandemic by changing the way we live and work. In the midst of this upheaval, it has been horrifying to witness the continued systemic racism built into our society. That the inequality Black and African Americans experience is lethal has never been more clear to so many, from the higher risk of death and complications from the COVID-19 virus that African American people experience, to the brutal murder of George Floyd by police officers.

As both peaceful protests and opportunistic destruction are met by violent police response in many of our communities, **USAIN stands with those working for justice and against racism.**

What can we do as an organization and as individuals? What can you do to amplify the voices of those, in our communities, who are marginalized and oppressed?

- Those of us who are white can read and listen to the words of African Americans and other people of color to help us expand our understanding of [different lived experiences](#) than our own, and of [how to be a good ally](#) in the fight against racism.
- As land grant institutions, many of our employers are engaged in conversations about privilege, power, and structural injustice. We can join in with our colleagues to work for real structural change in our own institutions and communities, while acknowledging the history of land grant institutions in [dispossessing Native Americans](#) of the [land they inhabited](#).
- We can recognize that environmental, food, social and racial justice are inextricably linked, and [support organizations](#) working toward justice that are meaningful to us as librarians working in the agricultural field.
- We can continue to work toward increased equity, inclusion and diversity in USAIN and in the field of agricultural librarianship.

In the coming year, I hope we can have deliberate conversations about the role of race and racism in our food systems, higher education, and the health of our people and planet. We will also look for opportunities to expand USAIN's value to and [additional material support](#) for librarians at 1890 land grant universities and other Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Wishing everyone safety and a better year to come,

Jessica Page

USAIN President, 2020-2021