Science Societies

Farmer Seed Liaison Established

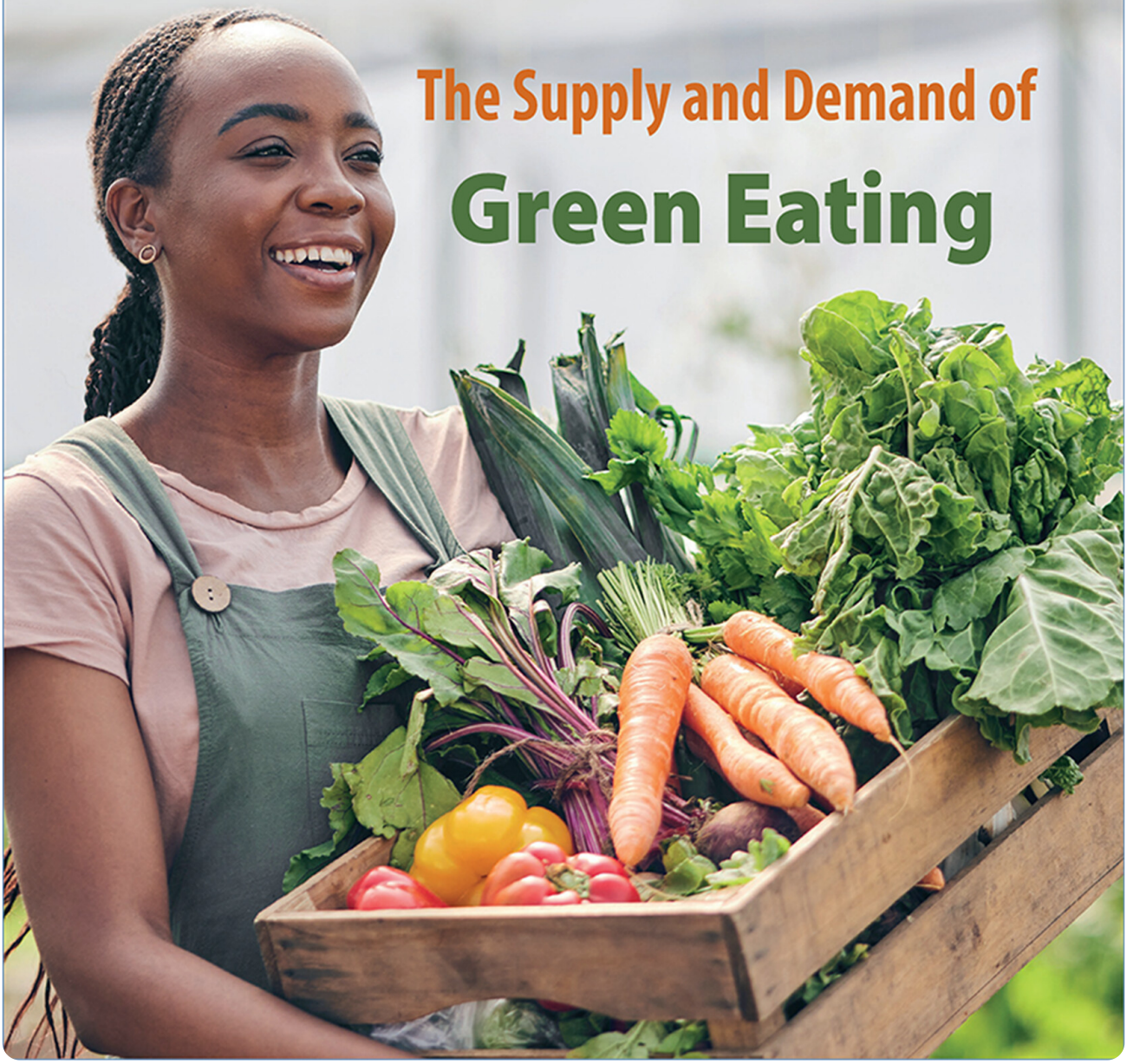
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CROP SCIENCE, SOIL SCIENCE, AGRONOMY

csa news

The Supply and Demand of Green Eating



In March 2022, USDA published *More and Better Choices for Farmers*, a report responding to the Biden Administration's Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy. The report underscored challenges farmers face when sourcing seed, including restrictive contract language and a lack of varieties that meet their production needs at a fair price. USDA moved quickly to execute the report's top recommendation: to establish a "Farmer Seed Liaison" within the Agricultural Marketing Service.

The Farmer Seed Liaison (FSL) initiative provides a point of contact within the USDA that can help those who work with seeds navigate a complex system. It connects seed growers with intellectual property administrators, antitrust regulators, licensing and labeling enforcers, and other federal partners to ensure that farmers have the choices they need to be successful. The goals of the initiative are to enhance transparency in the seed marketplace; amplify the voices of growers, seed producers, and others in the seed system; and promote broader access to seeds for research and plant breeding.

The recently launched FSL website organizes resources on plant breeding, intellectual property, and competition in one place. A new tool allows users to search the U.S. patent database of pending and granted applications by crop type and provides resources on how to submit relevant third party prior art to patent examiners during the patent examination process. The FSL is also working with the agency partners, including USDA's Seed and Regulatory Testing Division, the Federal Trade Commission,

and the Department of Justice, to increase transparency in seed labeling and to challenge unfair contracts in licensing agreements.

A regular newsletter, *Seed Sower*, will alert subscribers to pending patents on seed-related innovations as well as new FSL initiative resources and opportunities for feedback as they are developed. Subscribe to the newsletter at https://bit.ly/48spYDL. For more information on the FSL initiative, please visit ams.usda.gov/rules-regulations/seed-liaison or email seedliaison@usda.gov.

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