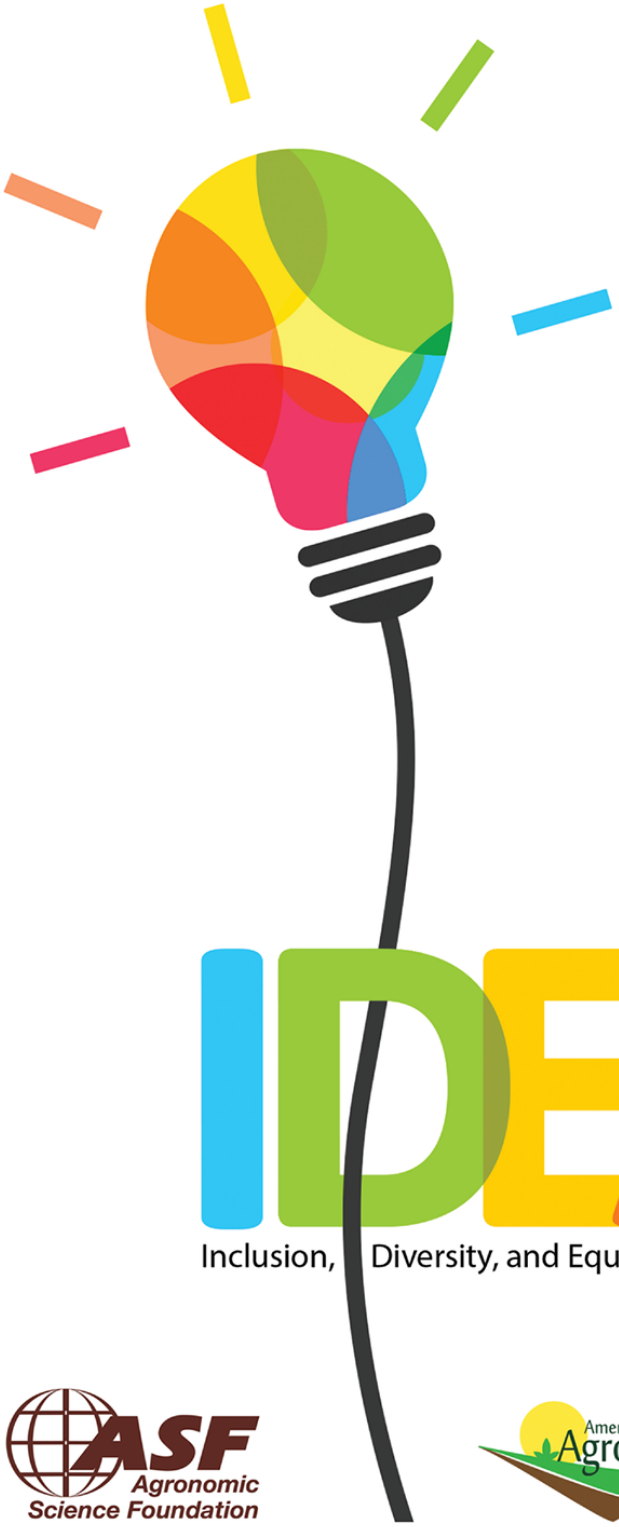
Science Societies

Agronomic Science Foundation launches diversity initiative to advance underrepresented groups

November 19, 2020



IDEAS

Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Agricultural Sciences

ASF Agronomic Science Foundation

American Society of Agronomy

Crop Science Society of America

Soil Science Society of America

As society grapples with deep concerns over racial inequities and other social justice issues, members of the Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) have embarked on a mission to foster change from within. The foundation has created a fund to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in agricultural and environmental science communities.

Dubbed the ASF-IDEAS Fund, the $250,000 seed project's name stands for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Agricultural Sciences. The foundation is a partnership of ASA, CSSA, and SSSA in addition to the Certified Crop Adviser (CCA) program.

"As our nation reckons with social justice and institutional racism, we recognize our profession can create positive change on issues that have gone inadequately addressed for too long," says Stella Salvo, chair of the ASF development advisory committee and Bayer's head of breeding partnerships for smallholder farming. "With this effort, we join the increased momentum, both internally and externally, to accelerate social change. We can affect change by guiding our own organizations in positive and productive paths forward and encouraging others to participate with us."

Actions taken under the ASF-IDEAS Fund will include the following:

- Increase recruitment, representation, and retention of women and underrepresented communities in the Societies' membership, leadership positions, and awards by 25% in three years.
- Increase programs supported by ASF and the Societies in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion fivefold by 2025. Forging new programs and collaborations with external partners to match or partner on initiatives that support the core objective will support this effort.

Just the Beginning

The ASF committee members say they hope this initial fund is just the beginning, and partnerships will develop with public and private entities to increase professional advancement of minorities and marginalized communities in the agricultural and environmental sciences field.

Underscoring a deep commitment, the ASF-IDEAS Fund marks the second diversity initiative of the Societies this fall. In October, the associations partnered with Bayer CropScience and Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences (MANRRS) to fund 200 students and early career professionals from underrepresented groups to attend the virtual 2020 ASA, CSSA, and SSSA Annual Meeting.

“Recent events have shone a light on the need to rectify unjust economic divisions [as well as] unfounded rejection of science and technology,” says Seth Murray, ASF committee chair and professor/Eugene Butler endowed chair at Texas A&M University. “We want to harmonize science and society in ways that will reduce unfounded bias and divisions and broaden the perspectives at all levels—an idea we can all get behind.”

Read the full ASF-IDEAS Fund Proposal at **www.a-s-f.org/asf-ideasfund**.

The Agronomic Science Foundation (ASF) was founded in 1968. The numerous and generous contributions from donors have been used to fund student programs, scholarships, lectureships, conferences, awards, international travel, and other programs not covered by Society membership dues. It is aligned with ASA, CSSA, SSSA, and the CCA program. To learn more, visit **www.a-s-f.org.**

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Back to issue

Back to home

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