

SPOTLIGHT - Singing Hills Dairy/ Grow a Black Farmer⁵

Lynne Reeck has stewarded Singing Hills Goat Dairy in Minnesota for 27 years. Her niece, Lizzy Bryant, grew up in small-town Minnesota, and has apprenticed with her since 2020 in preparation to take over the business and land. Bryant also intends to create an agricultural and artistic retreat space for Black Minnesotans at the farm.

She reflects, “So many Black folks and other people of color who are drawn to farming don’t even have the access to explore it that I did. I want to create a more accessible path.” In Minnesota, 84% of the population and 99% of the farmers are white, while 7% of the population and just 3% of farmers are Black.^{2,3} In the uprisings following the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis in May 2020, Bryant connected with the Midwest Farmers of Color Collective, whose members are pursuing ideas of a safe farming space for Black Minnesotans.



Credit: Yasmin Yassin

Reeck, in her late 60s, had planned to leave farming in 2019. But, Bryant says, “like for many small farmers, there’s not a cushion of wealth,” for a farm transfer, so Reeck is continuing to work, holding the land, and training Bryant until they can complete the transfer.

“It’s a challenge and it’s an exciting moment,” says Bryant. “There’s an incredible energy among Black emerging farmers and farmers of color, and there is opportunity as baby-boomer farmers are retiring, many without children who want to take over the farm. The bridge is equitable land access. This is the moment to harness all these calls for reparations, for equitable redistribution, and for addressing our weak food systems.”