

Office of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OARA)



Rod Snyder, Senior Advisor for Agriculture
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Office of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OARA)

- The Office of Agriculture and Rural affairs serves as the primary liaison between rural & agricultural stakeholders and EPA
- Maintains close contact with EPA's program offices and regions on issues of relevance to ag and rural communities
- Facilitates close coordination with federal and state partners such as USDA, FDA, and state departments of agriculture



EPA OARA | Leadership



- **Rod Snyder**, Senior Ag Advisor to the Administrator / Director (*pictured left*)
- **Venus Welch-White**, Acting Deputy Director (*pictured right*)
- **Felipe Afanador**, Special Assistant

OARA | Roles & Responsibilities

- Increase coordination with the network of existing [agriculture policy advisors](#) located in all 10 regions
- OARA houses EPA's existing [Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Advisory Committee \(FRRCC\)](#), which provides independent policy recommendations to the agency on environmental issues important to ag and rural communities
- OARA, along with OW, also oversees the newly created [Animal Agriculture and Water Quality \(AAWQ\)](#) Subcommittee that will inform the Agency's decisions on EPA's efforts reduce nutrients and water pollutants from CAFO/AFOs
- Work with relevant federal and state partners, including the [Rural Partners Network](#), to collaborate with small, underserved towns and rural communities seeking federal investments in infrastructure upgrades and other community improvement opportunities





OARA | Policy engagement examples

- Pesticide policy
- Endangered Species Act & FIFRA intersection
- Farmworker safety
- Renewable Fuel Standard & biofuels policy
- Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS)
- Nutrient pollution / CWA nonpoint source programs
- Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)
- Emissions from animal agriculture (NAEMS, EPCRA, etc.)
- Meat and poultry processing ELG
- PFAS impacts on food and agriculture
- Food loss and waste
- Climate mitigation and adaptation programs
- Rural infrastructure funding



Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)

- EPA established the Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Committee (FRRCC) in 2007 to provide independent policy advice, information, and recommendations to the Administrator on a range of environmental issues and policies that are of importance to agriculture and rural communities
- Committee members include representatives from academia, industry (e.g., agriculture and allied industries), non-governmental organizations, and state, local, and tribal governments
- **Current Charge (2022-2024):** The nexus of agriculture and climate change





Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)

Meetings & Work of Committee

- ***Current Charge:*** The nexus of climate change and agriculture
- ***Ad Hoc Work Groups :*** There are three ad hoc work groups
 - 1) Climate Adaption and Mitigation***
 - 2) Water, Energy and Climate***
 - 3) Climate Finance, Social Inclusion and Technical Assistance***
- ***Meetings:*** The FRRCC held three public meetings which included internal (EPA) external speakers as well as tours which support the current charge of nexus of climate and agriculture. The recommendations were voted and approved by the committee and were sent to the administrator.



Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)

2024 Recommendations and Response

- FRRCC Recommendations were submitted to the Administrator in Feb 2024.

- *Preamble Language*

The FRRCC recognizes that EPA is committed to continue to improve access to outreach, training, funding, and support for underserved and disadvantaged populations, rural communities and those defined by EO 13985 Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government (“populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life...”).

- EPA’s LGAC and FRRCC collaborate on a joint guidance document for improving local government participation and local-state-federal coordination of climate resilience and adaptation initiatives. This recommendation allows local governments better access to funding opportunities, ensuring local knowledge is integrated into program design and guidance, and benefits to rural communities and agriculture are maximized.

The Administrator provided a response letter, which corresponded with National Ag Day on March 19, 2024.



Farm, Ranch and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee (FRRCC)

Next Steps

- On May 30-31, the Animal Agriculture and Water Quality (AAWQ) Subcommittee will host its first public meeting in Washington, D.C.
- On August 6-7, the AAWQ Subcommittee will have its next meeting, to coincide with the FRRCC's next in-person meeting on August 7-8 in Eastern Pennsylvania
- Between August-October 2024, the FRRCC will issue its final recommendations under the current charge



Possible Collaborations for the FRRCC

- Environmental Financial Advisory Board (**EFAB**) – *Current*
- Develop a relationship with the Local Government Advisory Committee (**LGAC**) on communicating about climate change with local and rural municipal authorities
- Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee (**CHPAC**)