

# #BlackLivesMatter

## **We Stand in Solidarity**

SEE-LA exists to connect all people in Los Angeles to fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally-appropriate, and locally grown food. We believe that is a human right. We have focused on expanding food access since the founding of the Hollywood Farmers' Market in 1991. Today, we operate six community-based farmers' markets including three in South Los Angeles, which is where most of our staff do their work.

This work is food justice, and it is inherently woven into the wider movement for social justice. Ending the plague of racism is at the heart of this work. In the words of professor, author, and activist Marc Lamont Hill, "Food justice is racial justice."

Our nearly 30-year-old organization's stakeholders range from independent farms and farm laborers across 16 California counties to hundreds of chefs and food entrepreneurs to market customers and nutrition program participants of all ages. With you, we share a reflection on the events that have rightfully gripped the nation for the last two weeks.

Quite simply, we believe there is racism and there is anti-racism. There is no in between. That's never been more true than right now, 18 days after the horrific murder of George Floyd, 6 years after the founding of #BlackLivesMatter, 5 decades after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, and a century and a half after the abolition of chattel slavery.

Enough has been enough for literally centuries. The only way to bring an end to the racial oppression and Black death that are baked into our culture is to consciously, collectively dismantle the systems that perpetuate them. That's what we understand the flourishing movement in the streets to be about. It belongs to the unbroken chain of struggle toward equality and justice that has also always been.

SEE-LA stands in solidarity with that history and with this movement. Black Lives Matter.

Beyond our verbal support for fundamental change, we seek to help build the systems that will at last ensure equity and freedom for all. That of course starts with us. Like many food system organizations, we have ongoing work to align our internal practices with our external declarations. And like many farmers' market operators, there is much more we can do to make all of our markets more inclusive, safe, and welcoming.

At this defining moment in human history, we pledge SEE-LA to be part of the change we want to see. We invite you on that journey and in this struggle beside us. There will be much more from us about that work in the weeks, months, and years to come.

Until then, continue to raise your voices, and be well.