

# INFAS Participation Application Process

Key INFAS documents (a-e) follow the process outline

1. Prospective participant reviews key INFAS documents to determine appropriateness of fit:
  - a. *INFAS Mission Statement*
  - b. *INFAS Vision Statement*
  - c. *INFAS Statement on Equity in the Food System*
  - d. *INFAS Preamble to Vision, Mission, Equity in the Food System Statements*
  - e. *INFAS Responsibilities and Expectations of Participants*
2. Please review the INFAS mission, vision, statement, preamble, commitment to food system equity, and member responsibilities carefully. By joining INFAS, you will be making a public statement that you support the first 5 documents; and INFAS activities in which you engage will be oriented to moving the mission, vision and commitment to equity forward. If you do support these, then please send the following materials to Joanna Friesner (INFAS Coordinator: [jdfriesner@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jdfriesner@ucdavis.edu)), parts of which will be posted on the INFAS website:
  - a. Information to provide to Joanna:
    - i. *Note that items will appear as provided on the INFAS web-page, if approved to participate:*
      1. Name
      2. Institution (or other) affiliation
      3. Webpage (personal, departmental, institutional, organizational). If none, indicate: n/a
      4. Title (optional)
      5. Department, center, etc. (optional)
    - ii. Email address for INFAS contact, including for list-serv.
    - iii. 3-6 short project descriptions or ongoing activities that demonstrate your alignment with INFAS mission, vision, and commitment to food system equity (no more than 150 words maximum).
3. Joanna will confirm receipt of requested information via email (if necessary, asking for any additional information or clarification)
4. Once information gathering is completed, Joanna will forward prospective participant's information to the INFAS Executive Committee for review.
5. INFAS Executive Committee affirms or denies the request and notifies Joanna.
6. Joanna conveys response to prospective participant and, if affirmed, adds participant to the INFAS list-serv and INFAS webpage.

### **(a) INFAS Mission Statement**

The Inter-institutional Network for Food, Agriculture and Sustainability (INFAS) is a national network of university and college educators, researchers, and activists, who collaborate in analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving with practitioners to increase U.S. food-system resilience; to illuminate critical trends and common stewardship of public goods essential for food systems, such as water, biodiversity, ecosystem services, and public institutions; and to reduce inequity and vulnerability in the U.S. food system.

### **(b) INFAS Vision Statement**

We envision a US food system that is environmentally sustainable and socially just. This requires structural equality such that race, class, and gender no longer determine health outcomes, social status, or economic opportunity and that healthy, restored agroecosystems and fisheries are achievable.

### **(c) INFAS Statement on Equity in the Food System**

1. INFAS is a network of educators and researchers who are dedicated to all aspects of food system sustainability and committed to supporting, learning from and partnering with activists in our communities. We recognize that our food system is profoundly inequitable and institutions of higher education hold power and privilege that can be used for good or harm. Equity in opportunity, food access and health outcomes is a non-negotiable foundational principle of a sustainable food system and a core value and commitment for us.
2. To help build equity in the food system, we are focusing on the barrier of structural racism. We recognize multiple forms of oppression; so we also will focus on gender and class oppression, and the intersections among race, class, and gender that shape barriers and opportunities to equity.
3. We make a commitment to collaborate with communities of practice and place through our research, education and convening capabilities to better understand, communicate and find solutions to how food system disparities affect the experiences of those most affected by systemic inequities. We will strive to work with and respect community members as leaders, co-creators of knowledge, co-formulators of questions and co-facilitators in building solutions as we endeavor to create a more just food system for all people.

### **(d) Preamble to INFAS Equity and Vision Statements\***

1. As participants in the Inter-institutional Network on Food, Agriculture & Sustainability (INFAS), we see that food and agriculture are part of a diverse set of interconnected systems. We recognize the value of systemic analysis to identify full impacts of policies and practices, how components of the food system function, and gaps in our understanding. We recognize that the food system has effects on, and is affected by, almost every other sphere of human activity and well-being. Therefore, we value transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to solving problems, in

addition to contributions that are made within single disciplines.

2. We recognize that the global food system is profoundly inequitable along lines of gender, class, and race. In the US, racial inequity is expressed in the still-living legacies of slavery, racism, and theft of resources from indigenous peoples, all of which continue to prevent equal opportunity for many individuals and groups. Inequity is also expressed structurally in the leadership, infrastructure, and decision-making mechanisms of our food system, which continues to favor the small subset of the population (usually white, male and coming from backgrounds of relative affluence) that has held power in the US from its founding as a country.
3. We recognize multiple converging trends in US food systems that are leading us further away from sustainability, resilience and social equity and more toward irreversible thresholds at which we could enter a drastically transformed and impoverished world. We know that we live in a time of increasing uncertainty that demands new coping mechanisms. Global environmental change (e.g. climate change, nutrient cycle disruption, loss of biodiversity, and ocean acidification) constitutes a cluster of potentially severe thresholds to which food systems contribute; strikingly, the loss of human diversity, as indigenous peoples and their languages continue to be decimated, also is irreversible.
4. We value the cultural diversity of the US food system embodied in the many foodways and cultural practices of all our peoples. We understand that specific foods people eat, food production, and food consumption have spiritual, cultural, and social significance that goes far beyond food's nutritional and economic value.
5. We see that public policies and practices sometimes push food system actors away from sustainability, resilience and social equity. We understand that these policies and practices have global impacts, affecting the food system choices of people across the world as well as within our own borders and leading to limits on opportunities for all, but especially women, poor people, and people of color. We know that policies and practices can be changed with sufficient motivation, knowledge and mobilization of political power.
6. We seek to meet our responsibilities as food citizens from our positions within, or working with, institutions of higher education. We understand that the goal of "sustainability" is a call to action that requires much more of us than what is found in our formal job descriptions, and we come together to learn and act in more effective ways to promote racial equity, economic equity, and environmental restoration and health. The means by which we anticipate achieving these goals are through 1) creating a deeply engaged, interactive, and diverse INFAS network; 2) cultivating a new generation of leaders in administration, institutions, and society with education that responds to their needs and the changes that are happening in food systems; and 3) transforming food system knowledge generation, use of knowledge, policy, economic concentration, and distribution of profits to facilitate the first two goals.

*\*This preamble was developed to simultaneously acknowledge the multi-dimensionality of the food system and reinforce that INFAS values systemic analyses and transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and single discipline approaches to solving problems. It further articulates that*

*there are diverse sustainability challenges including environmental (e.g., climate change, loss of biodiversity, ocean acidification); economic (e.g., low wages and limited food system access, especially for women, poor people, and people of color); and social (e.g., legacies of slavery, theft of resources, and leadership in the food system that has historically favored white affluent males) that lead us further away from food system sustainability, resilience and equity.*

**(e) Responsibilities and Expectations of INFAS Participants**

1. Support the INFAS Vision and Equity in the Food System Statements.
2. Incorporate the INFAS Mission statement and principles into your work
3. Commit to connecting your work with others to effect change and share knowledge at local, regional, national, or international levels including with communities outside academia.
4. Share resources from your place-based work into INFAS and take resources and share back to place-based community work. 'Resources' could be information, ideas, publications, or collaboration opportunities including for funding or other relevant activities.
5. Commit time and resources (based on capacity) to participate in INFAS activities including convenings and related activities.
6. Commit to honest Network communication and engagement, e.g. participating in discussions, contributing to activities etc. (based on capacity)
7. Model and share best practices in campus:community relationships
8. Be an ambassador for INFAS: cultivate relationships within INFAS and also connect this Network with other networks. Be willing to talk with new people about INFAS, invite more people to participate and share the Network's commitments to equity in the food system and the pillars of sustainable agriculture and sustainable food systems: economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability.