

The Mississippi Delta Southern Rural Black Women in Agriculture

Association (MDWA) is an agricultural production and marketing cooperative incorporated in March 2010. MDWA has submitted a simplified application (under \$50,000) through NRCS requesting Reserved, Working Capital funds to produce, brand and develop emerging markets local “Nyami” value added sweet potato products including:

- Oven able/Bake able Sweet Potato Fries marketed to local schools/institutional buyers
- Sweet Potato Greens marketed to high end restaurant and specialty grocers
- Sustainably, locally grown Beauregard sweet potatoes, organic heirloom purple sweet potato varieties to specialty food grocers and national retail chains promoting “buy local.”

The project will develop and expand emerging local sweet potato markets through market specialization, diversification and

differentiation, value added processing, and enhanced distribution capacity through regional value chain participation. The “Nyami” brand (West African for yam) will be marketed under the tag-line **“with roots as deep as ours, flavor is assured,”** emphasizing local identity, product quality, ancestral origins and agricultural, cultural and environmental sustainability. In addition to the locally, sustainably grown Beauregard sweet potato, the Nyami Brand will include organic heirloom purple sweet potato varieties, enhancing the brand's overall identification in the marketplace as representing “specialty” food products. Since this article, The Mississippi Delta Southern Rural Black Women in Agriculture Association (MDWA) has been awarded a “Value Added Produce Grant” through Rural Development

As the first Black, women's cooperative ever in the state of Mississippi (incorporated in 2010), we fall under the **Small Farms/Socially Disadvantaged/Beginning Farm Priority category.**



Dr. Homer Wilkes, STC NRCS MS center, Kurt Readus, ASTC, Programs, far left Oleta Garrett Fitzgerald, Sou Regl Dir, CDF, 2nd L



MS Delta Southern Rural Black Women's Initiative (SRBWI) women In Agriculture, AAL/

NRCS Farm Demonstration Grant Announcement.

Bonita Conwell, President, Mississippi Delta SRBWI Women in Agriculture, AAL, 1st on right

Oleta Garrett Fitzgerald, Southern Regional Director, Childrens Defense Fund, 1st back row left