



April 22, 2020

Dear Agriculture Industry Leaders and Representatives:

As our nation works diligently to slow the spread of COVID-19, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture remains focused on our mission to safeguard Tennessee's food, fuel, and fiber. Although the food supply is plentiful, this pandemic has led to significant and rapid changes in how our food is sourced and sold. For agricultural producers, the restaurant and institutional food markets nearly disappeared overnight, while food banks are experiencing a surge in demand.

No one wants to see safe, wholesome, high-quality food products wasted. **The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is working to connect producers with community food banks to more efficiently redirect food products to people in need.**

There are five regional food banks that distribute to all county food pantries in Tennessee:

***Mid-South Food Bank***

Cathy Pope

[cpope@midsouthfoodbank.org](mailto:cpope@midsouthfoodbank.org)

901-405-0072

***Second Harvest of East Tennessee***

Elaine Streno

[elaine@secondharvestetn.org](mailto:elaine@secondharvestetn.org)

865-850-4284

***Second Harvest of Middle Tennessee***

Nancy Keil

[nancy.keil@secondharvestmidtn.org](mailto:nancy.keil@secondharvestmidtn.org)

816-914-8901

***Chattanooga Area Food Bank***

Mark Hilling

[mhillling@chattfoodbank.org](mailto:mhillling@chattfoodbank.org)

423-316-4405

***Second Harvest of Northeast Tennessee***

Rhonda Chafin

[executivedirector@netfoodbank.org](mailto:executivedirector@netfoodbank.org)

423-341-9300

If you are a farmer, food processor, or food business with additional supply to sell or donate, we encourage you to reach out to these food bank representatives. Please be prepared to provide details on price (even if it is a donation), shelf life, how the food product is packaged, and quantity available in weight or other measurement.

USDA recently announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). The program includes \$3 billion to purchase fresh produce, dairy, and meat for food banks, community



and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need. We await more details from USDA to determine how this program may affect Tennessee.

We hope this small step helps fill gaps within the shifting supply chain. We look forward to announcing additional resources through our Pick Tennessee Products Program soon.

Even during these uncertain times, the agriculture industry remains resilient. We know that we are uniquely prepared to weather this storm. Thank you for all you do to support agriculture in Tennessee.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Charlie Hatcher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Commissioner Charlie Hatcher, D.V.M.