

United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

April 29, 2020

The Honorable Christopher
Tague New York Assembly
Member 45 Five Mile Woods
Road Suite 2 Catskill, New York
12414

Dear Assemblyman Tague:

Thank you for your letter of April 5, 2020, proposing the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) use its authority to assist in developing the No Farms No Food Act of 2020 to reimburse our farmers at current market price to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak. Your comments and recommendations are appreciated.

We recognize these are uncertain times for all Americans and share your concerns about the effects of the coronavirus on your health and that of your family, as well as the effects on our work in agriculture and, specifically, the fresh fruit and vegetable industries. Rest assured, USDA is working around the clock to support our customers and the industries impacted by COVID-19.

On April 17, 2020, I announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Using the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and utilizing USDA's existing authorities, CFAP will use direct payments, commodity purchases, and food distribution to provide certainty to farmers and consumers. CFAP will provide direct support based on actual losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

Also, USDA will partner with regional and local distributors to purchase and distribute up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat products. USDA estimates purchases of \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and \$100 million per month in meat products. The commodities will be delivered to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

We will be quickly implementing the programs above. That said, I stand ready to work with you

to implement solutions, as appropriate, that will help ensure the health and safety of American agriculture. Please visit <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus> for additional resources.

We also encourage the dairy industry to utilize USDA's commodity purchase programs. These programs, such as the Section 32 Program and The Emergency Food Distribution Program (TEFAP), are partnerships between the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) and the Food and

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Nutrition Service (FNS) that facilitate purchases of 100% domestically produced and processed commodities from America's farmers and ranchers that feed the vulnerable communities across the Nation. USDA continues to assist TEFAP state agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations as they work to supply food needs in their communities.

Suppliers seeking to become vendors for USDA are encouraged to work with AMS. More information about commodity procurement, such as how to become a vendor and current solicitations, is available on AMS's website at <https://www.ams.usda.gov/selling-food>. If a vendor is interested in adding a product to the FNS's regular purchases, please visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/usda-fis/usda-foods-schools-how-get-your-product-considered>. We encourage the partnership of stakeholders, farmers, and ranchers in our continued effort to do right and feed everyone.

Thank you for your continued support of American agriculture. If you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 720-7095.

Sincerely,

Sonny Perdue, Secretary