

# COVID-19 UPDATE



## USDA ANNOUNCES CONTINUATION OF FARMERS TO FAMILIES FOOD BOX PROGRAM

USDA will purchase an additional \$1.5 billion worth of food for nationwide distribution through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. In total, USDA has distributed more than 132 million food boxes in support of American farmers and families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"This new round of Farmers to Families Food Boxes will go a long way in helping American families access nutritious and healthy meals as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to President Trump's leadership, we have helped tons of millions of families and countless farmers with this program" said Secretary Purdue.

[Click Here to access the full Press Release.](#)

## CALIFORNIA COVID-19 VACCINE PLAN

California has prioritized individuals to receive the vaccine in the following three phases:

- Phase 1A (about 3 million people) : Healthcare workers and Long-term care residents
- Phase 1B:
  - 1B Tier One: Individuals 75 and older. **Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors: education, childcare, emergency services, and food and agriculture.**
  - 1B Tier Two: Individuals 65-74 years of age. Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors: transportation and logistics; industrial, commercial and residential, and sheltering facilities and services; critical manufacturing. Congregate settings with outbreak risk including the incarcerated and homeless.
- Phase 1C: Individuals 50-64 years of age. People 16-64 years of age and have an underlying healthy condition or disability which increases their risk of severe COVID-19. Those at risk of exposure at work in the following sectors: water and wastewater; defense; energy; chemical and hazardous materials; communications and IT; financial services; government operations/ community -based essential functions.

# **PRESIDENT TRUMP SIGNS COVID RELIEF, FEDERAL FUNDING PACKAGE**

On Sunday, President Trump signed a year-end spending bill that included \$900 billion in COVID-19 relief, some of which is earmarked for agriculture. This legislation provides \$26 billion in funding to agriculture-related programs, including the following:

- \$1.5 billion to purchase food and agriculture products for distribution, especially fresh produce, dairy, and meat, to those in need.
- \$225 million in supplemental payments to producers of specialty crops if they lost their crop in 2019.
- \$100 million as part of a specialty crop block grant program.
- Additional \$100 million for specialty crop state block grants to mitigate challenges related to COVID at the state level.
- \$100 million for the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP), originally established in the 2018 Farm Bill designed to target small and medium sized producers for a broad range of eligible support, to mitigate COVID-19 impacts.
- \$75 million in increased funding for retail SNAP fruit and vegetable incentive projects.
- \$5 million to expand SNAP online purchasing program.
- Additional \$300 billion in funding for a second round of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, which were used widely by produce companies.

In addition, there are other aspects of the COVID-19 economic stimulus and government funding package that will be helpful for farmers in California:

- Reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and authorization of funding for California water projects, including \$206 million for the Friant-Kern Canal, \$13.7 million for Sites Reservoir, and additional funding for the Delta-Mendota Canal and the Del Puerto Canyon Project.
- \$7 billion to expand broadband access, including \$300 million for rural broadband and \$250 million for telehealth, and \$635 million in FY 2021 for USDA's ReConnect broadband program.