

Colorado Farm & Food Systems Response Team

WHO WE ARE

The Colorado Farmers Market Association, FrontLine Farming, Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council, LiveWell Colorado, CSU Extension, the National Western Center, City and County of Denver-Good Food Purchasing Program, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Colorado Food Pantry Network, The Good Food Collective, Mile High Farmers, Colorado Department of Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Local Food, and National Young Farmers Coalition (and YOU!) have joined together to create a state project team to support farmers and ranchers in responding to changing market opportunities in the midst of COVID-19.

We understand that the current situation is changing market access and performance of farmers and ranchers. As this team works to support Colorado farmers and ranchers as they respond to the new ways in which households and institutions are acquiring and purchasing food, we want to make sure that all Colorado producers are equitably connected to resources and market connections. Our team is focused on supporting producers that utilize non-commodity markets, given that other resources exist that are specifically targeted to specific commodities. Further, though our team works to support all producers, we are making an effort to account for the specific needs of small- and mid- size growers, direct market farms, beginning farmers and ranchers, veteran farmers, farmers of color, and female farmers.

We will mobilize with an eye toward the future, and to addressing immediate needs while contributing to the longer-term resiliency of our local and regional food systems. We are also committed to identifying and supporting market channels for producers that help move healthy foods to those who need it most in their communities.

To Do This We Will:

- 1. Listen & Learn** what's happening in local & regional food systems right now:
 - a. Develop a system for aggregating the many value-chain oriented surveys and listening session happening across the state
- 2. Assess & Understand** themes in the struggles/challenges and assets/resources of our partners:
 - a. Analyze various surveys collected and develop direction about common assets, needs, and gaps in information (who have we not heard from?)
- 3. Make Connections** between each other, advocacy groups, local emergency response teams, state agencies, and from growers to buyers:
 - a. Host platforms for connecting across the state (see below)
 - b. Develop a web-based tool to match growers to buyers
 - c. Aggregate and provide easy access to the many emerging resources for local and regional food systems
- 4. Act & Mobilize** around these themes through policy advocacy and other actions
 - a. Educate and mobilize around relevant Federal policy actions
 - b. Capture critical needs and make recommendations to the state via the Colorado Food Systems Advisory Council
- 5. Link to Financial Resources** through three primary means:
 - a. Develop a rapid-response mini-grant fund
 - b. Connect local food systems stakeholders to existing USDA programs and other funding
 - c. Assess and mobilize around relevant stimulus opportunities for food systems to ensure these dollars are effectively utilized

Ways to Communicate & Connect:

- **Weekly CO Food System Call** **Join us** every Thursday at 11am through July for a one-hour conversation around local & regional food topics and to coordinate around COVID-19 with Q&A sessions and guest speakers. Meeting & call info:
 - [Join Zoom Meeting](#) | **Meeting ID:** 658 840 028 | **Call-in #:** 346.248.7799
 - To be added to the call invitations and receive the call password, please enter your email [here](#).
 - **Online CO Food System Forum & Digest** **Join in** the conversation and get support on our online forum created as a space to coordinate around COVID-19, ask questions, share information, and support one another. [Join the Slack Forum](#)
 - **Free Video Conferencing Access** **Use and share** our zoom account created for our partners to host online video meetings & conference calls at no cost. Login info:
 - **Web:** zoom.us | **User:** FoodSystems@LiveWellColorado.org | **PW:** LiveWellFS2020!
 - **Connections & Resources** [View our list of available resources.](#)
 - **Reach out!** Please contact: amberclemetson@livewellcolorado.org for general project & team info | corespondrebuild@gmail.com (Helen Katich) for RFA and fund info | cofarmandfoodsystemspolicy@gmail.com (Blake Angelo) for policy info & to submit updates. We are in this together!
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