



South Carolina DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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New Charitable Effort Will Feed South Carolinians, Help SC Farmers

COLUMBIA – The nonprofit South Carolina Advocates for Agriculture will buy food from South Carolina farmers and distribute it to local food banks as part of a new charitable effort to ease COVID-19 strains on the food system.

Certified South Carolina and South Carolina Advocates for Agriculture are partnering on Farmers to Food Banks, an initiative to support farmers and needy South Carolinians. They aim to raise \$500,000, with several generous donors already having made commitments.

As schools, restaurants, and other businesses and institutions closed earlier this year in an attempt to curb the pandemic, many farmers scrambled to find markets for their products. And with unemployment soaring, many South Carolinians have had to seek food assistance.

“Farmers to Food Banks solves two problems with one charitable effort: helping the needy while supporting the South Carolina farmers who work hard to feed us all,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers, who serves as an advisor to South Carolina Advocates for Agriculture. “People want to lend a hand during these difficult times, and this is one simple way they can do so.”

The South Carolina program will complement the federal Farmers to Families Food Box program, a COVID-19 response effort to use tax dollars to buy and distribute commodities. With a quick launch and brief fundraising period, South Carolina’s Farmers to Food Banks program aims to rapidly address local needs by buying food and distributing it to Feeding America food banks, potentially filling gaps in the federal effort. The program will accept applications from distributors, 15 of which have formally expressed their interest already.

Launched in 2006, Certified South Carolina is the South Carolina Department of Agriculture’s branding program to promote South Carolina-grown food to consumers.

South Carolina Advocates for Agriculture is a 501(c)3 created in 2005 to help promote agriculture in the Palmetto State. Previous successful partnerships between Certified and Advocates include the 2015 flood relief effort Plant It Forward SC and fundraising campaigns to provide scholarships for the South Carolina Commissioner’s School for Agriculture.

Those who wish to donate to or participate in Farmers to Food Banks can contact Cristina Key at ckey@scda.sc.gov or 803-734-2190 for more information.

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