



BUILDING A HEALTHY AND HUNGER-FREE TULARE COUNTY

July 6, 2020

Re: Mutual Support for Farmers & Community Members

As Tulare County's only independent food bank, FoodLink has been responding to the emergency food needs of our community for over 40 years. In partnership with California Association of Food Banks(CAFB), the USDA, and other entities, we do our best to procure the necessary goods to help feed the families of Tulare County, and we do so with the help and generosity of individuals, organizations, and companies who are committed to supporting our mission.

The recent pandemic has created a huge increase in need and food insecurity, and FoodLink has done its best to respond and adapt quickly. While it has been difficult to find both the necessary monetary and food resources, we are also keenly aware of the ways that the pandemic is affecting local farmers, agriculture workers, and food producers. We believe that local, mutual support is one way that we can mitigate some of these negative effects, and FoodLink looks forward to creating closer relationships with our Tulare County farmers in order to establish a network in which we can receive donations and purchase food commodities and fresh produce directly from the companies and farms. The need to go through a middle agency like CAFB and the USDA increases cost and keeps us from being more closely in tune with the needs of farmers and food producers.

We believe that, in a county that is one of the top producers of food for the nation and the globe, our local population can better support each other through relationships and connections like these. FoodLink would like to be a resource that supports all residents of Tulare County, and the importance of this has only grown considering the current situation.

To reiterate, our immediate goal is to create relationships with Tulare County farmers and food producers in order to receive donations and/or purchase food resources directly from them. FoodLink can receive up to 1 full truckload of food every two weeks, and all food must be in alignment with our Nutrition Policy and organizational value of Food with Dignity, which does not allow for foods with high sugar content, expired goods, or rotting produce. Quality, nutritious food is our priority and we hope to be able to provide for those in need while also supporting the food producers of Tulare County.

I hope to continue this conversation to see how we can best support each other during these difficult times. Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss options.

Thank you for your time,
Nicole Celaya
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FoodLink is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization, federal tax ID 94-2558802