FARMING SUPPORT TO STATES
SUPPORTING RURAL AMERICA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The impacts of COVID-19 have placed unprecedented strains on our food supply system. Surging grocery sales, a precipitous drop in food service demand, and soaring food assistance needs have created challenges for producers and consumers alike.

More resources and smart policies are needed to guard against an uneven COVID-19 recovery that harms our food system and rural America. State departments of agriculture have proven their ability to effectively respond to the unique needs of food and agriculture producers in their communities.

Farming support to states will provide state departments of agriculture with the flexibility to respond to the variable, and largely still unknown, food supply issues in their state. As the COVID-19 response continues, expanding the capacity of states to work in partnership with their local stakeholders will ensure unique regional and local needs are met.

POTENTIAL USES OF COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING BY STATE DEPARTMENTS OF AG:

Keeping Workers & Food Safe: Enhanced access to PPE and COVID-19 testing for food and agriculture workers. Maintain appropriate staffing levels and critical operational functions for: food safety inspections, plant pest surveys, laboratory diagnoses, animal health inspections, etc.

Local & Regional Food Systems: Craft relief programs with the specific needs of small/micro agricultural producers in mind. Support market development efforts to expand sales opportunities for small producers. Ensure charitable food organizations have access to agricultural products to meet community need.

Expansion of Food Processing and Distribution: Investments in local processing infrastructure. Defraying transportation costs of commodities that must be re-routed to other processing/distribution facilities. Provide incentives to fund capital equipment investments, such as automated systems, or conversion of product lines for new marketing outlets (e.g., wholesale packaging to retail packaging).

Support for Rural Recovery Efforts: Collaborate with extension and other state agencies to provide economic assistance to farmers, ranchers, and rural communities. Develop tools to address farmer stress and expand farmer mental health services. Fund agriculture workforce development and job creation workshops.

Learn more about the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) and our COVID-19 response at www.nasda.org/coronavirus.