



LOCAL FOOD MATTERS

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COVID-19 Food System Resource List

Dear Community,

We live in unprecedented times.

While the Coronavirus pandemic has set the entire world on hold, it is our global responsibility to slow down and keep physically to ourselves. We feel so grateful for the grocery store workers, farmers, restaurant workers, healthcare workers, and delivery service drivers who are continuing to serve their communities and put their lives on the line for all of us.

The effects of coronavirus have already caused disruption in our food system. From mass restaurant closures to rising unemployment, many of us are deeply concerned about the health and wellbeing of our families and community. Many of us are feeling the heightened stress of uncertainty and economic turmoil, especially while farmers are gearing up for the growing season.

These are challenging times that call for community action and solidarity. We have already seen tremendous community innovation and spirit emerge. Farmers and restaurants are offering **direct-to-consumer sales through delivery and curbside pickup**. Farmers' markets and grocers are employing social distancing measures while working 'round the clock to keep us fed and safe. We've seen farmers organize phone calls and webinars, share resources, and shift how they market to better reach our communities.

The link above is a collection of resources related to the impact of COVID-19 on the food system. Some highlights include information about CSA's to support during this, links to economic recovery grant opportunities, and some home-delivery and pickup options from local farms and businesses. Please share it widely! This list will be updated as we continue forward into the great unknown.

In community,

The Rogue Valley Food System Network

Read on the RVFSN Website



Rogue Flavor Guide 2020 Available Now!

It is more important than ever to support our local food purveyors: the restaurants, farmers, ranchers and artisanal food folks who keep us well fed. [Check out our 2020 Rogue Flavor Guide](#) to find out who in your area is providing nutritious local food.

[READ the 2020 ROGUE FLAVOR GUIDE NOW](#)



Check it Out! Upcoming USDA Grants to support our Local Food System

[Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program](#) deadline has been extended to **April 2nd**. This program supports education, mentoring, and technical assistance initiatives for beginning farmers and ranchers.

Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP)

Formerly known as the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (FINI), this program supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase. **Deadline to apply: May 18, 2020**

[Regional Food Systems Partnership Program](#) supports partnerships that connect public and private resources to plan and develop local or regional food systems. Effort is focused on building and strengthening local or regional food economy viability and resilience by alleviating unnecessary administrative and technical barriers for participating partners. **NEW Deadline to apply: May 26, 2020**

[Farmers Market Promotion Program](#) Funds projects that develop, coordinate and expand direct producer-to-consumer markets to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products by developing, coordinating, expanding, and providing outreach, training, and technical assistance to domestic farmers markets, roadside stands, community-supported agriculture programs, agritourism activities, online sales or other direct producer-to-consumer (including direct producer-to-retail, direct producer-to-restaurant, and direct producer-to-institutional marketing) market opportunities. A 25% match is required. **EW Deadline to apply: May 26, 2020**

Local Food Promotion Program funds projects that develop, coordinate and expand local and regional food business enterprises that engage as intermediaries in indirect producer to consumer marketing to help increase access to and availability of locally and regionally produced agricultural products. **EW Deadline to apply: May 26, 2020**

From Farm to Fork... How COVID-19 is impacting our Local Food System



Over the last 10 days, we've seen hundreds of restaurants pivot from dine-in to take out to closing their doors. Necessary measures to contain the spread of the disease have resulted in unprecedented closures and the loss of important revenue from wholesale accounts. **Over 3.3 million people have filed for unemployment** as the crisis compounds the vulnerabilities endured by our nation's farmworkers and food service workers. Food banks are struggling to organize enough volunteers to match growing demand, and school closures are limiting free meal options for children that rely on them. For many small and independent farms, closing down is not financially feasible.

There are things that each and every one of us can do to support one another through major disruptions in the food system. Here are some ideas and resources:

Supporting local restaurants:

Most restaurants don't have two to three months of capital in the bank to weather this storm. It is an industry that is always paying last month's invoices today. It employs more than 16 million people. Those jobs and those businesses are at serious risk. **At this time, there is no evidence that food is a source or transmission route for the virus,** so consider ordering delivery or takeout. Restaurants need people to give big tips to to-go staff, **buy dining bonds,** and gift certificates, and donate to employee relief funds.

Farmers Markets:

Our local markets are, for now, remaining open as an essential service. Check out these recommendations from the Rogue Valley Growers and Crafters Market to learn best practices that you can employ while visiting your farmers market to ensure that you are maximizing social distancing. Some include:

1. Try and have the exact change available, or pay with a card if possible. This will help

vendors keep money-touching to a minimum, as [concerns have arisen that Coronavirus can be transmitted through cash](#).

2. Do not engage in panic buying. While the CDC recommends leaving your home no more than once a week to grocery shop, please don't purchase more than you need. Save some food for friends and neighbors so that everyone has enough food.

3. If you are sick, please STAY home.

Food Banks:

As unemployment rates rise, food banks are being stretched to their limit. If you can, consider volunteering at a local food bank That might mean donating their time if they are in a low-risk group, given that many food pantries are staffed by the elderly.

Oregon Food Bank will be keeping its [Find Food page updated as pantries' emergency hours and operations change](#). [Keep checking the page for up-to-date information about the closest food pantry in your area.](#)

CSA Shares:

Purchasing a local CSA share remains a great option to help support local farmers. Farmers are ramping up to begin their CSA seasons in a few week's time and will need all the support they can get. [Check out this year's edition of the Rogue Flavor Guide](#) to find a CSA share that excites you!

Buying local food (yes, including vegetables):

While rice and beans are flying off shelves, grocery stores and farm stands are likely to still have an array of local foods, including fresh vegetables. Now more than ever is the time to shop and eat smart. You can reduce waste and reduce shopping trips by planning ahead and considering what foods will go bad first. Want to stock up on local vegetables but are afraid of them going bad? There are COUNTLESS ways to preserve vegetables. Try blanching and freezing. Now might be the perfect time to [experiment with fermentation or dehydration](#).

Many farmers are pivoting from the restaurant and institutional sales to sell directly to customers who are holed up at home, either through curbside pickup or delivery. Check out our [Rogue Valley COVID-19 Resources Guide](#) (link at the top of the newsletter) to see some of the farms and businesses offering delivery.

Even if there's no reason to think that your lettuce is covered in coronavirus, [there's also no reason not to be extra careful washing what you bring home](#).

FARMER RELIEF FUND

[American Farmland Trust is launching the Farmer Relief Fund](#)

The coronavirus pandemic is impacting businesses that rely on direct contact with their customers, including farmers and ranchers that primarily sell their products through farmers markets and to restaurants, schools, and other institutions.

AFT's Farmer Relief Fund will award farmers with cash grants of up to \$1,000 each to help them weather the current storm of market disruptions caused by the coronavirus crisis.

Initially, eligible applicants include any small and mid-size direct-market producers. These are defined as producers with annual gross revenue of between \$10,000 and \$1 million

from sales at farmers markets and/or direct sales to restaurants, caterers, schools, stores, or makers who use farm products as inputs.

The application will be simple and easy to complete but will include sufficient detail to ensure AFT is awarding producers that have the greatest needs. Applicants will be asked to estimate their financial loss.

AFT envisions an **initial application round extending until April 23, with grants beginning to be made by May 1.**

[Download Application Here](#)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES

FMC is hiring for two Associate level positions to assist with their GUSNIP Training and Technical Assistance Project. Because FMC is a remote organization, team members are based throughout the country, collaborating through video chat software and phone meetings often. Staff may be located anywhere that they have sufficient access to internet and phone service, and must be self-motivated and comfortable working independently.

[GusNIP Research & Resource Associate Description:](#)

This position is responsible for researching and compiling documents and resources as it relates to FMC's GusNIP Training and Technical Assistance project. Click the link for more details and to apply. Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

[GusNIP Logistics & Communications Associate Description:](#)

This position is responsible for coordinating logistics and communications as it relates to FMC's GusNIP Training and Technical Assistance project. Click the link for more details and to apply. Applications accepted on a rolling basis.

[Learn more about the positions and how to apply here](#), and please share with your networks!

COMMUNITY NEWS & UPCOMING EVENTS

While all in-person events have been canceled for the foreseeable future, there is an abundance of virtual events happening, including content that has been newly made freely available! Stay tuned to the Rogue Valley Food System Network Instagram and Facebook pages for more upcoming events.

Webinar: Food Safety in the Time of Coronavirus: Post-Harvest Handling Thursday, Friday, March 27, 2020 12:30 - 2:00 pm

Webinar: Strengthening Our Food System Together in a Time of Crisis on Friday, March 27th from 12noon-1:30pm. This farminar will center women's and gender-oppressed voices and welcomes all sectors of the food system. The organizers welcome participation from outside of PA. To participate, please register here.

Webinar with Carolyn Steel: Sitopia: Rethinking our lives through food

Carolyn will present her perspective on rural-urban linkages, sustainable food systems, and COVID-19's new and ever-evolving contributions to the dialogue. A moderated question and answer session will follow the presentation. 2 April at 13.30 CET. It will be recorded and shared on the Rural-Urban Europe and **Informed Cities** websites. To participate, please **register here**.

Oregon State University Master Gardener Program Vegetable Gardening Short Course available online for FREE. It's spring, and the interest in growing more of your own food may have increased recently.

Cornell Small Farms is offering free courses for the next 6 weeks. Register by Friday, March 27th.

Join the Growing Agripreneurs Course and learn how to start and manage a small produce farm

Starts April 2nd - Final call to apply and now open to the public!

This weekly, season-long course instructs students in the various aspects of starting and running a small farm including soil preparation, planting, weed control, irrigation and more. The course includes classroom instruction (25%), a field practicum (58%) and field trips (16%). During the field practicum, participants will grow and manage a 1/2 acre garden at the OSU farm in Central Point.

Instructors include Sebastian Aguilar of Chickadee Farm, Katie Birkhauser and various local farmers as guest instructors.

Location: Southern Oregon Research and Extension Center, Central Point, OR

*(*because of coronavirus, field activities are temporarily postponed and classes will be held online)*

Schedule: Thursdays from 5:30 to 8:30 pm from April 2 through October 15.

Cost: \$50

For more information: visit the class website: <https://growingagripreneurs.com>

To apply: Complete the application on the course website.

Questions? Contact course instructor Sebastian Aguilar at chickadeefarmer@gmail.com

EQUITY Webinar: Racial Equity in the Food System: Perceptions, Reality, and

the Road Ahead

April 15 // 3-4pm EST

In this webinar sponsored by the Racial Equity in the Food System (REFS) workgroup, you'll learn provocative findings from a national survey of REFS webinar registrants that will ground a thoughtful discussion on if food system educators are making progress in reaching equity goals and how to overcome limitations in utilizing an equity lens in your work. [Register here](#).

EQUITY Join the 21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge

March 30-April 19

Sign up for Food Solutions New England's (FSNE) annual 21-Day Racial Equity Habit-Building Challenge starting on March 30th! In its sixth year, the Challenge is a great way to learn about the history and impacts of racism on our current food system while inspiring participants with resources and tools to build racial equity in their work and lives. People from all over the country participate in the Challenge with the goal of raising awareness, shifting attitudes and changing outcomes. This year a Discussion Guide will be available for groups who want to do the Challenge together. [Visit the FSNE Challenge website to learn more and register](#).

Changing Hands Conversations: The Future of Intergenerational Farm Transfers in Oregon is Non-Traditional

We are excited to share a new report that looks at the challenges and opportunities of farmland access and succession in Oregon.

“Changing Hands Conversations: The Future of Intergenerational Farm Transfers in Oregon is Non-Traditional” is a unique holistic, intergenerational look into how we build better bridges to make sure our farms and food system successfully transfer to the next generation.

This report is a result of conversations with over fifty people engaged in farming and farm transfers across Oregon, including farm transfer experts in other states. At the core, interviewees said loud and clear that we need to: 1) better hold up farming as a possible, and valued, vocation and find ways of making farming more financially viable. And, 2) we must create a future food system that is more equitable and just.

THANK YOU to all who contributed to this report, sharing your own stories and connecting me to others to talk with. The farm and food system community is strong in Oregon, and we're going to need all of us working together more collaboratively and creatively to face the challenges ahead.

Questions about the report? You can contact the author at: aroodprojectdelta@gmail.com.

READ THE REPORT

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You are receiving this email because you indicated interest in the Rogue Valley Food System Network or were a previous supporter of The Rogue Initiative for a Vital Economy.

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