

Good for families, good for farmers

For the last ten years, growers and shippers across California have generously provided fresh produce to food banks and people in need throughout the state and beyond through California Association of Food Banks' Farm to Family program. Along the way, many have found that participation in the program not only helps to feed hungry people, but also *positively impacts their bottom line*.



How it works

There are two ways to participate in the Farm to Family program. Many growers and shippers simply donate surplus product by calling or e-mailing CAFB. Once accepted, CAFB provides transportation that is assured to be reliable and on-time. Others find that outright donation is not possible, and in those instances CAFB may be able to provide funding to cover value-added processing costs such as harvesting and packaging, which is typically negotiated as a price per pound of product.

Here are some of the benefits that farmers have found

◆ Cash flow

While participating with Farm to Family does not necessarily generate a profit, CAFB is committed to ensuring rapid payment for any expenses associated with its donations. Many program participants have cited this as having a positive impact on working capital.

◆ Economies of scale

One large grower has made Farm to Family an integral part of his business model by increasing his block size. The ability to recoup costs for a portion of the additional product, particularly culls, reduces the overall cost per pound for production. Even if a grower does not plant bigger blocks, recouping costs for culls can be a new or increased source of income for these products.

◆ Flexibility of harvest time.

Growers and shippers who work with Farm to Family on a consistent basis receive orders a week ahead of shipment date. This additional time allows for growers to add flexibility to their harvesting schedule to maximize crew efficiency.

◆ Happier workers

For some growers that participate with Farm to Family, harvesting culls as well as #1's and/or planting bigger blocks results in more employment opportunities for workers. For example, some growers of row crops do a second or concurrent pick of culls that would have been left in the field, producing more hours of work for employees. Others have found that planting larger blocks means that pickers have a longer day, moving them from an hourly rate to a piece rate and thereby producing more income for workers.



◆ Quick disposal of surplus product can equal fewer costs

CAFB is noted for rapid response to available product. Once a donated load is accepted, CAFB will provide reliable, on-time pick up from a professional carrier. This can reduce costs, for example by eliminating dumping fees or allowing coolers to be emptied and turned off, saving energy costs. Some program participants have found that when market prices fluctuate unfavorably, moving excess inventory through Farm to Family can help maintain pricing.

◆ Tax deductions.

Donations to the Farm to Family program may be tax deductible. Interested growers and shippers should consult their tax advisor.

◆ Feed your community first

Donations to Farm to Family are first offered to the food bank serving the local community, so that growers can be assured that their gifts are providing for the needs of their workers, friends, and neighbors. Product in excess of what the local community can accommodate is then made available to other food banks statewide.

◆ Recognition

Sadly, growers often receive national media attention only when a negative event occurs. CAFB is committed to helping the general public develop a better understanding of the role generous growers play in feeding people in need in our country. In the last year, Farm to Family has been featured in media outlets such as the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *California Country*, and *CBS Sunday Morning*.

About California Food Banks

California's efficient food bank network distributes over **200 million pounds** of food each year to people in need. Statewide, 43 food banks provide about **5,000 non-profit agencies** with food. These agencies in turn distribute food directly to over 2 million hungry families and individuals. More than **25,000 volunteers** support the food bank network.

The mission of California Association of Food Banks is to provide a unified voice among food banks to maximize their ability to build a well nourished California.



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The California Association of Food Banks (CAFB) represents 43 community food banks working to build a well-nourished California.