Farmers’ Market Federation of New York

109 Twin Oaks Drive

Syracuse, NY 13206

315-400-1447

[www.nyfarmersmarket.com](http://www.nyfarmersmarket.com)

One of the silver linings of the COVID pandemic is an increased appreciation for local food. Farmers markets have seen a rise in customer participation and sales as people react to a need for healthy, nutritious food and the growing concern over empty supermarket shelves.

Farmers markets are now looking at a way to give back to our communities for their support of local food from local farmers by celebrating National Farmers Market Week with **Give Back NY**, a week-long celebration of farmers markets that will emphasize food donations to local pantries and emergency feeding programs. We will be encouraging consumers and farmers to offer donations at farmers markets during Farmers Market Week, August 2 – 8. Donations could include shelf stable products consumers bring to the market, fresh foods consumers can purchase from market vendors and donate, end of the market day donated product from farmers and vendors, cash/funds contributed directly to the food pantry or emergency feeding program.

Our goal is to have food pantries and farmers markets make connections to invite food pantries to participate in farmers markets during the National Farmers Market Week’s **Give Back NY** celebration. Your participation in **Give Back NY** will allow you to accept donations and share your mission and work with marketgoers during the weeklong farmers market celebration. We will share lists of food pantries and emergency food programs with market managers, as well as lists of farmers markets with pantries and EFPs to facilitate those connections.

In addition, the Farmers Market Federation of NY will be developing and sharing a toolkit to build awareness of **Give Back NY**. The toolkit will include a series of social media templates, market signage and press releases to be used to showcase Give Back NY and the opportunity to support local food, local farmers and local communities by sharing the bounty!

**Your Participation in the Market Is Critical**

Having a presence at the market to speak directly with farmers and the community about the important work your program does will enhance the success of Give Bank NY and maximize donations. Here are some guidelines that may help you prepare for your time participating in the market:

* Connect with the market manager about the best way for setting up at the market. Have a table at the market with at least 1 – 2 people to man the table. A tent over your table, along with chairs, will make the time more comfortable for you.
* Follow market guidelines, including face masks and social distancing.
* Have pamphlets, flyers or other materials to share with market goers, as well as spend time talking with people about your organization’s mission, programs and services
* Be prepared to accept donations: shelf stable products, fresh foods from consumers and farmers/vendors, and cash donations
* Don’t turn down any donations! If you receive more than you can use, or products that you cannot use, please share them with other local pantries, soup kitchens and emergency food programs. Or pass them to your regional food bank to support the Nourish NY effort.
* If your pantry has protocols to be followed to accept food donations from the public due to COVID 19, be sure to communicate those protocols to your partnering market so they can let their farmers, vendors and customers know how to prepare donations.

**Talk to your clientele about the value of farmers markets and the Give Back NY celebration**

We are also asking you to share in the promotion of this program with your clients and pantry visitors. The individual markets will be promoting Give Back NY through their own advertising mediums, including social media. The Farmers Market Federation of NY will create and share a series of messages and social media post templates to help everyone build awareness and encourage participation in Give Back NY. Some messages you may want to use in talking to your clientele about farmers markets and Give Back NY might include:

* Shopping at farmers markets is one of the safest ways you can food shop during the COVID crisis. Markets are outdoors in the fresh, open air. They also operate under very strict guidelines that promote the health and safety of everyone.
* While farmers markets are typically community weekly events, including social programs, children’s programs and nutrition education, they are very different this year. During our current health crisis, farmers markets have set aside the social aspects of the market and are focusing on food and commerce. We all miss the social part of markets, but it’s important right now to ensure the health of our farmers, vendors and consumers, as well as to support the financial well-being of our local farmers.
* Many of our farmers markets accept SNAP benefits. Customers can use their SNAP card at the market managers’ tent and receive SNAP tokens to purchase food from farmers and vendors within the market. Those markets that accept SNAP benefits will also give SNAP customers an incentive coupon or token that will increase the customer’s buying power, stretching food dollars by as much as 40% to 100%.
* Because the supply chain goes directly from the grower/producer to the consumer without a middleman, the food at markets is fresher, more nutrient dense, picked at the peak of ripeness which means greater flavor and will last longer in the consumer’s home.

We hope that you will join the Farmers Market Federation of NY and our community of farmers markets as we celebrate National Farmers Market Week with **Give Back NY**, a week of showing our appreciation of our markets’ consumers by collecting and sharing food donations with local food pantries and other emergency feeding programs.

Sincerely,

Diane Eggert

Executive Director

Farmers Market Federation of NY

