



# ANNUAL REPORT



**CDFA OFFICE OF  
FARM TO FORK**

*2020 - 2021*



# LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY

The California Department of Food and Agriculture Office of Farm to Fork (CDFA-F2F) expanded in new ways this year as staff worked to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and its related recession that disrupted food and supply chains for consumers, farmers, and schools.

The California Nutrition Incentive Program promoted California-grown agriculture while reducing food insecurity through distributing over \$4 million in nutrition benefit incentives and investing nearly \$1 million additional state dollars to meet rising demand. The Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program provided grantees nearly \$2 million to install refrigeration units in corner stores and small businesses in low-income and low-food access areas of the state.

I am excited to see our Farm to School Program efforts expand with a \$10 million investment through the state budget and creation of the new Farm to School Incubator Grant Program, which awarded \$8.5 million to 60 statewide projects. Ongoing network and stakeholder engagement in step with the First Partner of California promises to create transformational change to the school food system over the long term.

Collaboration with the California Departments of Education, California Department of Social Services, and State Nutrition Action Council strengthened a coordinated state response to the increased hunger and supply shortages. The work of CDFA-F2F is proving more critical than ever in supporting California's agricultural marketplaces, consumers, and institutions.

Yours truly,



Karen Ross  
Secretary of the California Department of Food and Agriculture



# MISSION & GOALS



The mission of the Office of Farm to Fork is to promote and protect California agriculture, lessen the impact of food insecurity, foster healthy environments, and improve market access – through coordination, education, and outreach.

## REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY



Lessen the impact of food insecurity through increasing access points

## ADVANCE FARM TO SCHOOL



Foster healthy school environments and increase market access for institutional buyers and sellers

## COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION



Inform communities of the benefits and opportunities within a dynamic food system



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY



## CALIFORNIA NUTRITION INCENTIVE PROGRAM (CNIP)

CNIP encourages the purchase and consumption of healthy, California-grown fresh fruits and vegetables by nutrition benefit clients. CNIP funds community-based organizations, small businesses, and farmers' markets to provide nutrition incentives to low-income shoppers using federal nutrition benefits. CNIP also funds associated nutrition education, outreach, and program administration.

### This Year:

- CNIP promoted California agriculture through distributing **\$4.27 million** in incentives available for California-grown fresh produce.
- At the **290 CNIP grantee locations** throughout the state, shoppers who utilized CalFresh and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers' Market Nutrition Program incentives received a dollar-for-dollar match of CNIP funding for California-grown fruits and vegetables.



CNIP saw greatly increased demand for incentives due to the rising hunger caused by the pandemic. Consequently sites distributed incentives at a higher than anticipated rate and were on track to run out of incentives ahead of schedule.

CDFA-F2F made an additional state investment of nearly **\$1 million** to help meet the increased demand



CDFA-F2F also applied for a USDA COVID Relief and Response grant in the amount of over **\$6.3 million**.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

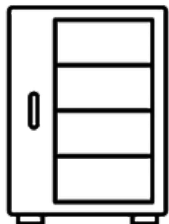
REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY



## HEALTHY REFRIGERATION GRANT PROGRAM (HRGP)

HRGP funds energy-efficient refrigeration equipment with low global warming potential in corner stores and small businesses in low-income or low-food access, underserved neighborhoods. This year, HRGP grantees continued implementation of the pilot project.

CDFA provided \$1.76 million to 37 grantees which funded:



137 refrigeration units



8 refrigerated trucks



The refrigerated trucks facilitated produce procurement solutions and made it possible for new mobile markets to meet low-income shoppers where they are.

*After installation at QS Market in Oakland – Saba Grocers Initiative provided technical assistance*



*After installation at La Perla de Occidente in Orland, CA – CSU Chico Center for Healthy Communities provided technical assistance*

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

ADVANCING FARM  
TO SCHOOL



## CALIFORNIA FARM TO SCHOOL NETWORK

In 2020-21, CDFA-F2F received \$10 million through the state budget to expand support of the California Farm to School Network (CFSN). This funding opportunity allowed the CFSN to:

### Implement the Farm to School Incubator Grant Program,

awarding \$8.5 million to 60 local and regional farm to school projects in CA that promote nutrition education, sustainable food production and procurement, and high-quality student engagement through experiential learning.

### Host a virtual California Farm to School Conference,

enabling farm to school practitioners from California and beyond to discuss how farm to school programs can connect classrooms, cafeterias, and communities through expanding food access, increasing equity, lifting student voices, opening school markets for California specialty crop producers and more.

### Engage stakeholders to develop a Farm to School Roadmap

for transformational change in the school food system that supports California farmers, expands food access, and helps achieve the state vision of a California for all.

### Coordinate Farm Tours

with California First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom and CDFA Secretary Karen Ross to learn about and promote schools purchasing from local farms throughout the state.



*Student field trip at Mt. Diablo Unified School District - Riverview Middle School's school garden*



*First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom (middle) and Secretary Karen Ross (right) visit Three Sisters Gardens*



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION



### FRUIT & VEGETABLE EBT PILOT PROJECT

CDFA-F2F staff continued to collaborate with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), advising on aspects of the California Fruit and Vegetable EBT (electronic benefit transfer) Pilot Project to develop technology for incorporating supplemental nutrition benefits directly into shoppers' EBT cards.

### CALIFORNIA STATE EMPLOYEES FOOD DRIVE



The California State Employees Food Drive looked different this year, as the state pivoted to respond to the increased hunger due to the recession, even as state employees were unable to gather or collect food items in person. The food drive expanded to serve communities throughout the entire state and focused on encouraging monetary donations to food banks.

CDFA-F2F collaborated with ~100 state agencies to raise awareness through monthly newsletters, provide resources, and encourage employees to volunteer and donate to food banks in their local communities. Newsletters profiled the heroic efforts of several food banks throughout the state taking innovative measures to meet the rising needs.

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## SNAC SUMMER FARMERS' MARKET INITIATIVE

CDFA-F2F worked with the State Nutrition Action Council (SNAC) on responding to pandemic needs, including shifting support of the Farmers' Market Initiative (FMI) to include remote and virtual promotional activities, and updating the FMI guide with COVID-19 safety precautions posted on the CalFresh Healthy Living website for 54 counties in multiple languages.

- 22 farmers' markets in six counties implemented FMI. Fewer sites could host Navigators, who explain food benefits to low-income shoppers in person, due to the pandemic.
- SNAC also surveyed members and brainstormed a new initiative in response to COVID-19, to implement common messaging across SNAC agencies.
- Informational interviews were conducted with agencies and community-based partner organizations and common messaging began to be created.

## COORDINATION & COMMUNICATION



## COLLABORATION ON PANDEMIC FOOD RESOURCES



COVID-19 significantly impacted California and the nation's food supply. School districts, day care homes, childcare homes, At-Risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care homes began suffering from food shortages. At the same time, school and restaurant closures resulted in food surpluses for local farmers and food vendors.

To help bridge the gap between need and supply, the California Department of Food and Agriculture and the California Department of Education issued a [resource document](#) to provide methods for finding local foods, purchasing them, and preparing them. It included relevant USDA waivers and state level guidance.



# SUPPORT & REACH



CDFA-F2F is funded through a combination of programmatic contracts, grants, and a general fund appropriation.

In 2020-21, CDFA-F2F received \$10 million to fund:

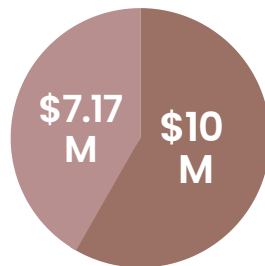
California Farm to School Network



State of CA General Fund

Previous funding sources were also carried over into 2020-21 to continue the following programs:

California Nutrition Incentive Program



USDA Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program Grant

State of CA General Fund

Healthy Refrigeration Grant Program



State of CA General Fund

California Farm to School Program



USDA Specialty Crop Block Grant

## CDFA-F2F Program Impacts



**14.5 MILLION**  
DOLLARS GRANTED THROUGH F2F PROGRAMS



GRANTEES AWARDED **387**



## PROGRAM HISTORY & SUPPORT

The Office of Farm to Fork was initially an objective of the Health in All Policies (HiAP) Task Force's Farm to Fork Implementation Plan, endorsed by the Strategic Growth Council in January of 2012. With HiAP's help, CDFA collaborated with the California Department of Education and California Department of Public Health to form the Office of Farm to Fork.

The Office of Farm to Fork was permanently established within CDFA in 2014 when Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2413, authored by Assembly Speaker John Pérez. As part of CDFA's Inspection Services Division, CDFA-F2F is charged with increasing access to healthy foods for underserved communities and schools in the state of California.



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