



FarmsSHARE Nourishes 2,500 Laid-Off Service Workers in NC with Local Food

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pittsboro, NC, May 4, 2020 – In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Carolina Farm Stewardship Association](#) (CFSA) is piloting a project that will provide a free box of locally-grown produce from small, sustainable farms for eight weeks to 2,500 out-of-work restaurant and hospitality workers. The project is called Farms Serving Hospitality and Restaurant Employees (FarmsSHARE).

CFSA obtained key funding to launch the project from [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina](#) (Blue Cross NC) and the [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation](#) (Blue Cross NC Foundation).

“While North Carolina has a vibrant local food culture, COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to this sector of the state’s economy,” says Roland McReynolds, CFSA Executive Director.

Restaurants and food service companies that buy from local farmers have laid off thousands of workers since social distancing measures stopped in-person dining. Many small farms lost income from restaurant sales that help keep their farms viable.

“Thanks to Blue Cross NC and Blue Cross NC Foundation’s funding, FarmsSHARE will help to keep farms in business while also nourishing the hospitality workers who cook and serve farm-fresh foods,” says McReynolds.

To connect farms and hospitality workers, and to ensure everyone along the supply chain gets paid fairly, CFSA has developed a network of participating food hubs, farmers, and farmer cooperatives to aggregate in-season, locally-produced foods to distribute the 20,000 boxes to laid-off restaurant and hospitality employees, starting on May 18.

CFSA is partnering with [Piedmont Culinary Guild](#) and regional food hubs to enroll food service workers in the program. Once enrolled, laid-off workers can pick up a share from their former employers once a week for eight weeks. Recipients will also have the option to receive farm-fresh proteins, such as eggs and meat.

FarmsSHARE will launch in Charlotte and the Triangle region, as well as Boone, Wilmington, and Richmond County.

Additional financial support for FarmsSHARE comes from [Carolina Farm Credit](#) and [Xylem Watermark](#), Xylem’s Corporate Social Responsibility Program.

Currently capped at 2,500 participants, CFSA and its partners are seeking additional funding to grow the program to 5,000 households.

Contact: Mary Beth Miller, FarmsSHARE Project Coordinator
marybeth@carolinafarmstewards.org • 919.542.2402



About Carolina Farm Stewardship Association

The [Carolina Farm Stewardship Association](#) is on a mission to bring local, organic food to your table from a farmer who shares your values. After 40 years, we continue to have a vision of a vibrant, sustainable food system that is good for consumers, farmers, and the land.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

[Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina](#) (Blue Cross NC) is committed to making health care better, simpler and more affordable. We have been driving better health in North Carolina since 1933, working to tackle our communities' greatest health challenges. Blue Cross NC serves its customers and communities of more than 3.8 million members, including approximately 1.1 million on behalf of other Blue Plans. Blue Cross NC is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. All other marks are the property of their respective owners.

About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation

The [Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina Foundation](#) is an independent, charitable foundation with the mission of improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians. Since our founding in 2000, we have invested \$143 million in North Carolina communities through more than 1,000 grants.