BACKGROUND

Since 1993, Farm Aid has activated its Family Farm Disaster Fund to help farm families recover and rebuild in the wake of natural disasters and navigate the physical, emotional and economic burdens of disaster recovery. Over our three decades of disaster response, we have learned that moments of crisis become critical inflection points in the food system, where we risk losing vast swaths of independent farms and ranches. Farm Aid employs the following strategies in its approach to crisis recovery:

• Quickly deploy relief grants to family farmers and ranchers in need;
• Offer support to farmers under stress through the 1-800-FARM-AID hotline and connect farmers to the legal and financial resources they need to recover;
• Support local and state farm service providers working tirelessly on-the-ground to help farmers navigate recovery options; and
• Advocate for needed recovery funds and resources from state and federal governments for long-term resilience to emergencies and disasters.

Today, farmers and ranchers face a crisis unlike any they have ever seen, encountering new threats to their production and markets sparked by the COVID-19 crisis at a time when they were already enduring a multi-year slump in prices for their goods, volatile trade disputes, frequent natural disasters and climate disruption. To date, federal responses to these threats have flowed to the most well-resourced farms and powerful corporate interests, leaving the vast majority of farmers high and dry. Without aggressive action, we risk losing thousands of farms and ranches to this crisis, sending ripple effects across our food system that further drain rural economies, impoverish food and farm workers across the supply chain and consolidate land and markets into even fewer hands.

FARM AID COVID-19 FARMER RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Farm Aid has launched a national COVID-19 farmer resilience initiative, working with local, state and regional organizations across the country to bridge immediate relief efforts with longer-term resilience strategies. Alongside more than 80 partners, we are distributing funds across four U.S. regions, using a multifaceted approach built upon our three decades of disaster response: Leveraging immediate relief to build resilience.

Farmers experience significant lag time between the moment a crisis strikes and when federal and state resources actually begin to flow to community levels. Farm Aid works with local partners to quickly distribute funds in the amount of $500 to farm families before larger sources of money become available. Grants are paired with guides developed by Farm Aid and our national partners to help farmers access and navigate federal and state emergency programs.
Grassroots at its core.
We believe that who distributes relief money matters, which is why Farm Aid funds are administered by local organizations and service providers that are positioned to build relationships with them over the course of their recovery and beyond. This approach has the benefit of sharing power between the grantor (Farm Aid) and grantee, and handing major decision-making authority over to the local and regional organizations that work most directly with farmers.

Farm Aid has reached out to partners to assess the impact of COVID-19 and collaboratively develop a strategy for supporting farm communities during this time. Together, our partners have:

- Identified leads on grants administration;
- Defined fund eligibility and priorities for their respective states and created application materials;
- Established review and outreach committees representing the diverse farm communities in their area; and
- Created outreach strategies that expand the reach of funds.

Convening leaders to build capacity, increase knowledge, and spark model-sharing.
Throughout the duration of the crisis, Farm Aid is hosting regular calls with the partners coordinating fund distribution locally, as well as national partners who are experts in immediate and long-term disaster recovery. These calls have become a space for groups to share status updates on the crisis, to learn from each other, share response models and identify areas for further collaboration. By bringing local groups together with our national partners, leaders can learn about evolving federal and state programming so that they can provide the most up-to-date and effective technical assistance to farmers they support.

Connecting the dots between crisis intervention and lasting structural change.
Time and again, we find that what we learn when trying to save one farm informs the policies and interventions that help all farms. Those lessons also help build a more resilient food and agricultural system. Farm Aid coordinates farm service providers and policy advocacy networks so that on-the-ground lessons can be translated into important policies, which we champion through our communications and grassroots advocacy efforts.

NATIONAL PARTNERS
Our national partners serve as critical links that connect national and local crisis recovery efforts. Farm Aid has funded the creation of The Farmers’ Guide to COVID-19 Relief, a comprehensive guide authored by the Farmers’ Legal Action Group in coordination Rural Advancement Foundation International-USA, Indigenous Food and Agriculture Initiative, Intertribal Agriculture Council, and National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition. This guide outlines key provisions in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and other emerging policies related to farmers, as well as recommendations on avoiding scams and mitigating discrimination in program implementation. We are briefing farm service provider networks on this guide through webinars.
Great Lakes Response (WI, IL, IN, MI, OH)
Application: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FarmAidCOVIDGreatLakes

LEADS
Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Ohio Ecological Food & Farm Association
Ohio Farmers Union

PARTNERS (not final)
Wisconsin Farmers Union
Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS)
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Illinois Farmers Union
Indiana Farmers Union
Michigan Farmers Union
Hoosier Young Farmers Coalition
The Land Connection
Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service

Iowa
LEAD
Iowa Farmers Union

PARTNERS
Practical Farmers of Iowa (PFI)
Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN)
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Center for Rural Affairs

Minnesota
LEAD
Land Stewardship Project

PARTNERS (not final)
Minnesota Farmers Union

Nebraska
Call the Rural Response Hotline at 800-464-0258 for more information or to apply
LEADS
Nebraska Farmers Union Foundation
Rural Response Hotline

PARTNERS
Women Involved in Farm Economics
Legal Aid of Nebraska Farm & Ranch Project
Nebraska State Grange
Nebraska Department of Agriculture
**Kansas & Missouri**

**LEADS**  
Kansas Farmers Union Foundation  
Missouri Farmers Union

**PARTNERS**  
Kansas Black Farmers Association  
Kansas Rural Center  
Common Ground  
Cultivate KC

**North Dakota & South Dakota**

**LEAD**  
Dakota Rural Action

**PARTNERS**  
Dakota Rural Action  
Dakota Resource Council

**NORTHEAST REGIONAL PARTNERS**

**LEADS**  
Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture  
NESAWG  
Northeast Farmers of Color (NEFOC)  
Black Farmer Fund

**PARTNERS (not final)**  
The Carrot Project  
Farm Fresh Rhode Island  
NOFA VT  
NOFA-NH  
NOFA-NY  
Maine Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association  
NOFA-NJ  
Black Urban Gardeners & Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-Op  
Just Food  
Farm Alliance of Baltimore
Central Appalachia (KY, WV, Appalachian OH, Appalachian VA, Appalachian TN)

Application:
LEADS
Community Farm Alliance
West Virginia Food & Farm Coalition
Appalachian Center for Economic Networks

PARTNERS
Appalachian Sustainable Development
Community Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky
Central Appalachian Network Institute
Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky

North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Florida

LEAD
RAFI-USA

PARTNERS (not final)
Local Food Hub
Carolina Farm Stewardship Project
Land Loss Prevention Project

Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi

LEAD
Federation of Southern Cooperatives

PARTNERS (not final)
Alabama Sustainable Agriculture Network
Mississippi Association of Cooperatives

Louisiana

LEAD
Louisiana Interchurch Conference

PARTNERS (not final)

Oklahoma, Arkansas, Texas

LEADS
Oklahoma Farmers Union
Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project

PARTNERS (not final)
Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Association (TOFGA)
Farm & Ranch Freedom Alliance
La Semilla (El Paso)
HOPE for Small Farm Sustainability
UT Rio Grande Valley
Intermountain West Partnership (MT, WY, ID, CO, UT, NM, AZ)

LEADS
Rocky Mountain Farmers Union Foundation

PARTNERS (not final)
Idaho Organization of Resource Councils
Quivira Coalition
Northern Plains Resource Councils
New Mexico Farmers Marketing Association
Western Organization of Resource Councils
National Young Farmers Coalition
Western Colorado Alliance
Montana Farmers Union
Powder River Resource Council
Utah Farmers Union

Pacific Northwest (WA, OR, AK)

LEADS
Friends of Family Farmers
Northwest Farmers Union

PARTNERS (not final)
National Young Farmers Coalition
Oregon Rural Action
Alaska Village Initiatives
Alaska Farmland Trust

California & Nevada

LEADS
California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)
Community Alliance with Family Farmers (CAFF)

PARTNERS (not final)
NevadaGrown
Fallon Food Hub

Hawaii

LEAD
Hawaii Farmers Union Foundation

PARTNERS (not final)