Press Release

New Friends of the Farm Agreement Brings Economic Boost for Southern Arizona Growers

[Tucson, AZ – June 23, 2020] Watermelon, cantaloupe, and potatoes grown in Cochise County will make their way throughout the state benefiting members of a small farmers’ cooperative and making locally grown, organic, healthy food available to the Arizona Food Bank Network, under Governor Ducey’s new Friends of the Farm program.

Friends of the Farm is a pilot program allowing Arizona growers to expand their market reach and support food banks who can distribute the fresh produce to people in need. The new agreement with Cochise County growers means they will provide 110,000 pounds of produce to The Arizona Food Bank Network for about $65,000 from August thru October of this year.

“This is great news for everyone,” said Michael McDonald, CEO of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. “Healthy, nutritious food comes from the farms in Cochise County, and this kind of economic boost for southern Arizona growers is sorely needed right now.”

“We are thrilled to be able to purchase healthy food grown right here in Arizona for Arizonans who struggle to put food on the table,” said Angie Rodgers, President and CEO of the Arizona Food Bank Network. “This is a win for growers and a win for consumers.”

The agreement comes as part of the work by the Community Food Bank to build local food pathways, working with local growers who provide produce not only for the Santa Cruz River Farmer’s Market, but

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also for larger buyers including Tucson Medical Center, the U of A Student Union, and schools in both Tucson Unified School District and Sunnyside Unified School District.

Five Cochise County growers who make up the C2ToTable Farmer’s Cooperative will grow the produce for the Arizona Food Bank Network, which is made up of five food banks that serve the state. Cochise County is home to abundant fertile soils where traditionally watermelon, cantaloupe, canary melon, chile, winter squash, and other crops have flourished.

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