



State of Wisconsin
Governor Tony Evers

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

May 21, 2020

VIA EMAIL

Bruce Summers
Administrator, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
Bruce.Summers@ams.usda.gov

Dear Mr. Summers:

As you know, COVID-19 has created unprecedented challenges for Wisconsin's agriculture industry. In an effort to provide some relief for farmers and those experiencing food insecurity, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced \$1.2 billion in contracts for the Farmers to Families Food Box program.

When I first contacted USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue on April 1st urging him to plan and implement a major commodity purchase, I envisioned that Wisconsin's vast array of producers, processors, and food distribution network would have an opportunity to play a leading role in preventing the waste of the commodities they produce and feed those in need. I also emphasized those points shortly thereafter in my conversation with Undersecretary Greg Ibach.

Therefore, I was disappointed to see that despite robust interest from trusted Wisconsin organizations, our state was underrepresented among contract awardees. Additionally, USDA's announcement has raised many questions about CFAP more generally. I am seeking more information to understand how benefit distribution, particularly to Wisconsin, was determined. I would greatly appreciate answers to the following inquiries:

Overall Farmers to Families Food Box Program Design:

- USDA's website currently provides limited identifying information for contract awardees. When can we expect complete contact information for all awardees including the organizations' legal name, physical address, phone number and email address? What were the selection criteria used to select those vendors? How did USDA determine the awardees ability to deliver food to the food insecure?
- Has USDA/AMS provided feedback as to why unsuccessful applicants were not selected?
 - If not, what are USDA/AMS's plans to provide that feedback?
- A recent [press release](#) announced \$1.2 billion in contracts for the Farmers to Families Food Box program. How will the remainder of the \$3 billion for the program be spent?
 - If AMS plans to evaluate the program at the end of the base option period (June 30, 2020), what considerations will be made for new contracts? What will be done to ensure more balance in how the awards are issued and funding and food is distributed?
- Will USDA release full proposal details for all awardees, per regular solicitation/award policy?
 - If 'No', what is the justification for not providing this information?

While we are interested in understanding the full scope of the AMS Food Box program, we are particularly interested with the way in which Wisconsin's agricultural community will be allowed to participate, and how their products can help to feed our country's hungry. Our initial review of the available information raises the following questions:

- Some contracts were awarded to companies that do not appear to be incorporated in the Midwest region. Why did those businesses get contracts while others in the Midwest region were not awarded contracts?

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- Of the program's dairy purchases, ~\$320.5 million in awards were made for dairy products and fluid milk. Wisconsin (a.k.a. America's Dairyland) companies represented \$1.96 million, *less than 1%*, of awards made for dairy products and fluid milk. How will you ensure that Wisconsin-based companies get their fair share of relief through this program?
- Who is providing the food that will be distributed to Wisconsin's residents?
 - Where are the entities that are distributing the boxes based?
 - Where are the producers/processors providing the food for Wisconsin boxes based?
- How many offers were received by organizations based in Wisconsin?
 - To distribute food?
 - To provide food for distribution in boxes?
- What is the process for Wisconsin hunger assistance groups to receive boxes? Please explain in detail.
- Which Wisconsin hunger assistance groups were identified by offerors in the Midwest and Multi-regional regions?

Thank you in advance for your prompt responses to these questions. I appreciate your commitment to our shared goal of ensuring that all agricultural producers and food distributors, including those in Wisconsin, get their fair share of relief as we work together to feed those in need.

Sincerely,



Randy Romanski
Interim Secretary
Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

cc:
USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue

Hilary Cole
Contracting Officer, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)

David Tuckwiller
Director, USDA AMS Commodity Procurement