COVID-19 Vaccine (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine/find-vaccine/locations/index.jsp) – Find out when, where, and how to get your shot.

Vaccine Rewards (https://mn.gov/covid19/vaccine-rewards/index.jsp) – Your shot to a safe summer. Claim your reward by June 30.

Newsroom

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On Southern Minnesota Farm Tour, Governor Walz Announces Relief for Farmers, Producers Impacted by COVID-19

October 19, 2020

Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan today announced a $7.7 million plan to support agricultural producers, meat processors, and farmers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, the financial support will help farmers who have experienced market disruptions recover from and purchase equipment and supplies necessary for COVID-19.

"Market instability and unprecedented weather conditions put farmers in a tough place even before COVID-19. The work they've done to continue to feed Minnesotans and our nation throughout this challenging time is remarkable," said Governor Walz. **"As someone who grew up on a family farm, I stand with our farmers and am proud to allocate this much-needed support ."**

In making today's announcement, the Governor will tour farms in Southern Minnesota, visiting farmers and industry leaders in Northfield, Austin, and Albert Lea to hear about how they've been impacted by COVID-19 and to discuss the future of their operations.

“Agriculture is the backbone of Minnesota’s economy,” said Lieutenant Governor Flanagan. **“And like many other industries, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically changed the way farmers and agricultural businesses must operate. As the Governor and I visit with farmers across the state and hear their stories firsthand, we are committed to working in partnership to tackle these challenges and making sure Minnesota can keep feeding the region and the world.”**

“Thanks to Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan, this funding will be a great boost to Minnesota farmers during this particularly challenging time,” said Minnesota Department of Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. **“Additional funding for meat processing, local food systems, direct payments, and other programs will help many Minnesota farm and food businesses recover from the negative impacts of COVID-19.”**

The funding includes:

1. $1,000,000 for cost share aid to companies or individuals looking to expand or open a meat processing facility. A further investment in meat processing capabilities will help alleviate the back up of animals caused by supply-chain impacts of COVID-19.

2. $500,000 for local food systems, many of which have shifted their businesses to stay afloat, while others faced losses as wholesale markets closed.

3. $250,000 for Farm Business Management Scholarships. These scholarships, offered by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, help farmers manage their finances and learn how to navigate the complicated financial systems of farming, which have been impacted significantly by COVID-19.

4. $5,750,000 for direct payments to turkey and pork producers to compensate for market disruptions and associated costs due to COVID-19.

5. $200,000 for farmer and food security support to reimburse the Minnesota Department of Agriculture for grants that provided Minnesota-grown food in school summer meal programs. This funding would also support a new cost-share program to help on-farm direct marketers and farmers markets purchase equipment and supplies necessary for staff and customer health.

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