

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
March 24, 2020

ON NATIONAL AG DAY, OHIO FARMERS REINFORCE THEIR COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT TO KEEPING GROCERY STORE SHELVES STOCKED

Ohio's farm community joins in promise to keep producing safe, healthy foods to help feed Americans

COLUMBUS—On National Agriculture Day, as Ohioans are under an order to shelter in place, the state's farmers remain dedicated to working tirelessly to ensure an abundant supply of nutritious food for families near and far. Commodity organizations representing Ohio's farmers, including the Ohio Poultry Association, American Dairy Association Mideast, Ohio Pork Producers Council, Ohio Beef Council, the Ohio Corn & Wheat Grower's Association and Ohio Soybean Association, have joined the Ohio Farm Bureau and Ohio AgriBusiness Association to continue their united, ongoing and unrelenting commitment to help feed the nation.

"It is our obligation to assure that the public continues to have a steady supply of wholesome and nutritious food—and that responsibility does not stop, even in a public health crisis," said Frank Burkett III, president of the Ohio Farm Bureau. "We know that families have seen shortages in some foods and products at grocery stores, and we understand and empathize with their concerns, but Ohioans can be confident that our farm community will keep a steady supply of food available."

National Agriculture Day, recognized on March 24, is a time to recognize and celebrate the contributions of America's agriculture community and how food brings everyone to the table.

Agriculture is the No. 1 contributor to Ohio's economy. The state has more than 77,800 farms, and farming also provides one out of eight jobs in Ohio. Farm workers play a critical role in assuring a consistent food supply and are considered essential workers in Ohio, which means they have permission from the state and from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to go to work during the current shelter-in-place order.

"We are firmly committed to caring for and supporting our teams, who are on the front line of this response," said Jim Chakeres, executive vice president of the Ohio Poultry Association, which represents more than 600 egg, chicken and turkey farmers in the state. "Our farmer-members have put additional measures in place to provide a safe and healthy working environment. Disinfection and disease prevention are inherent in all food production, and our farms have expanded many of those protocols."

Ohio is a leading producer of many nutrient-rich foods that help nourish Americans every day. It's one of the largest egg farming states in the nation, producing 8.9 billion eggs each year, it ranks 7th nationally in pork production and 9th in turkey, and is in the top 20 for beef and chicken production. The top Swiss cheese-producing state in the country, Ohio cows produce 628 million gallons of milk a year. Soybeans and corn are the top crops in the state.

"Ohio farmers are proud to help feed the nation, and they will continue to do so during these uncertain and unprecedented times," said Chakeres. "Farmers will provide the same level of excellent animal care that they always do and will keep using sustainable farming practices to ensure safe, healthy foods."

Ohio farmers will continue to support their local food banks, too, through regular donations to ensure that families have access to a safe and steady food supply.

“We have been through tough situations before, and we know that, when we work together, we survive and thrive,” said Burkett. “Ohio farmers are unwavering in their promise to work together to help ensure a plentiful supply of nourishing food.”