



**PACIFIC COAST
FARMERS' MARKET
ASSOCIATION**

PCFMA.ORG

AUGUST IS FARMERS' MARKET MONTH



The first week of the month, August 1st thru 7th is Farmers' Market Week and we are taking the whole month to celebrate and thank the farmers and the community who have supported their local farmers' market through this last year. The resilience of small farmers during this past year of pandemic, drought, and farmers' market closures has been truly remarkable. Their commitment to bringing fresh wholesome produce to their local community, their inherent love of farming, and their can-do spirit have been inspiring.

During the pandemic, it has been made clear that local food systems with short supply chains are a necessity and can adapt to change. Throughout the pandemic, local small farmers continued to grow and harvest crops, altering their methods or growing patterns as they adjusted to the "new normal." Corporate food systems were not nearly as flexible when it came to supplying the public with their products because of a lack of transportation and product availability. Farmers' markets provide one of the few direct-to-consumer entry points for new farmers, ranchers, and other local products allowing them to start small and grow their businesses. Growers who sell locally and directly were able to hire more workers and grow their crops more sustainably this past year, according to the American Farm Bureau Federation.

This past year farmers' markets saw a large increase in the use of EBT benefits and Market Match programs. With the loss of many jobs due to pandemic closures, the need for fresh produce increased exponentially.

For example, in 2019, PCFMA member markets used \$1,000,000 in EBT/Market Match funds. In 2020, that number increased to \$9,000,000 in EBT/Market Match funds.

Last year, over \$1,000,000 in benefits were distributed at PCFVIA markets with over \$900,000 in EBT/Market Match/WIC benefits to over 6,800 participants. The Market Match program doubles the value of your EBT purchases so your budget stretches further. The need for these programs is evident.

As the state of California opens up and farmers' markets back in business, farmers are planting crops, delivering their produce to farmers' markets, and welcoming customers. Customers have returned in greater numbers than before as they rediscover the importance of their local farmers' market to the community and their health. Throughout the Bay Area, communities have strengthened their relationships with farmers and farmers' markets, now making them a more essential part of their community than ever. We have our dedicated farmers and their ability to grow quality produce to thank for that. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in California!

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