PACIFIC COAST FARMERS' MARKET ASSOCIATION

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FALL AGRITOURISM

Farmers and the farmers' markets they attend have been quite resilient for the last six months, despite the restrictions that the coronavirus pandemic has forced upon them.

But fall is here, winter is coming, and many farmers' markets are beginning to close for the season. There are still many farmers' markets that remain open year-round, and other sources for them to sell their product, so all is not lost. These small local farms are undeniably important to the economy and to local food systems. That's why we ask that you support these small farms and shop local farmers' markets as much as you can.

There's a bright side to the slowdown of fall which is when families visit farms that offer pumpkin patches, hayrides, U-pick apples, and corn mazes. This time of year, along with roadside farm stands and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) subscription boxes, many local farms enjoy a fairly lucrative agribusiness with these activities. Many times this can help sustain a farm until spring. Even with COVID-19 restrictions, many farms will still open for these fall activities.

The way we go about participating in these fall activities will undoubtedly change this year. A pumpkin patch or corn maze can be safe if you wear a mask and observe social distancing. Being outdoors can be safer than being indoors, too. Swank Family Farms, located in Hollister, is famous for its fall activities and they are going ahead with all of their usual events with a long list of safety measures. Check with your local farm to

ensure they are open during the pandemic and are following safety guidelines, and then enjoy one of your favorite fall activities.