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Statement from Tom Stenzel Regarding USDA Response

WASHINGTON, D.C. (May 21, 2020) – We greatly appreciate the serious commitment to oversight that [USDA has shared in response](#) to our letter of May 11 regarding the Farmers to Families Food Box program. This innovative program was set up in record time to provide a win-win-win opportunity for farmers, produce distributors who were devastated by the collapse of the foodservice business, and most importantly, those in most need in our communities across the country.

In recent days, some have attacked the program using our request for strong oversight and transparency as a basis for their actions. This is unfounded. United Fresh worked with many of our members to understand their needs and opportunities in serving their communities. We urged USDA to set up a program like this to meet those needs, and we applaud the rapid action taken to implement such a wide-ranging program. Our goal has been, and will always be, to see that this program works as intended and get healthy fresh produce efficiently and safely to people in need.

USDA's response to our questions is clear and provides a level of transparency that is important. And, the actions taken by USDA to date provide confidence in the ability of the Department to provide oversight of all contracts and their execution to achieve our mutual goals.

We should all now focus on [how wonderfully the program is proceeding](#) in many cities and rural areas of the country. Produce companies and their partners are bringing fresh fruits and vegetables to those in need and making a difference in people's lives.

I personally am looking forward to joining in a major event tomorrow, Friday May 22, with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, our produce distributor member Paragon Wholesale Foods, and Dawson Orchards as we distribute 1,000 boxes of fresh produce outside of PPG Arena in Pittsburgh.

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About United Fresh Produce Association

Founded in 1904, the United Fresh Produce Association brings together companies across every segment of the fresh produce supply chain, including growers, shippers, fresh cut processors, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, foodservice operators, industry suppliers and allied associations. We empower industry leaders to shape sound government policy. We deliver the resources and expertise companies need to succeed in managing complex business and technical issues. We provide the training and development individuals need to advance their careers in produce. Through these endeavors, we unite our industry with a common purpose – to build long-term value for our members and grow produce consumption.