



## USDA Farmers to Families Food Box

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The USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program began in May of 2020 and ended in May of 2021 having distributed more than 173 million food boxes of fresh produce, milk, dairy, cooked meats and seafood worth over \$5 billion to Americans across the country. The program was designed and implemented as a temporary, emergency relief effort to respond to severe market disruption caused by a global pandemic.

As part of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program [announced on April 17, 2020](#), USDA began exercising its authority under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to purchase and distribute agricultural products to those in need by partnering with national, regional and local distributors, whose workforces have been significantly impacted by the closure of restaurants, hotels and other food service businesses, to purchase up to \$6 billion in fresh produce, dairy and meat products from American producers of all sizes. Distributors then packaged these products into family-sized boxes and transported them to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits serving Americans in need.

The [first round](#) of purchases occurred from May 15 through June 30, 2020 and saw more than 35.5 million boxes delivered in the first 45 days. In the [second round](#) of purchasing and distribution, which began July 1 and concluded Sep. 18, 2020, USDA purchased more than \$1.781 billion of food through extended contracts of select vendors from the first round of the program as well as new contracts focused on Opportunity Zones in order to direct food to reach underserved areas, places where either no boxes have yet been delivered, or where boxes are being delivered but where there is additional need.

The third round of the program was [announced](#) July 24, 2020, and the [President announced](#) on Aug. 24, 2020, that up to an additional \$1 billion was being made available for deliveries through Oct. 31, 2020. USDA announced contracts for the third round on Sept. 17, 2020. By the end of the third round on Oct. 31, USDA purchased more than \$3.566 billion worth of food. The fourth round of the program was [announced](#) on Oct. 23, 2020, and purchased a total of \$463 million worth of food delivered between Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, 2020. The fourth round was funded by an additional \$500 million made available through supplemental appropriations provided to the Secretary in the CARES Act.

In the fifth and final round of purchases, from Jan. 19 - May 31, 2021, USDA purchased up to \$1.5 billion worth of food for delivery through the end of May. The additional funding for the program was included in the COVID-19 relief package as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed December 21, 2020. Fresh produce, dairy products, fluid milk and meat products, and seafood products were included in this round.

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