



306 West Haywood St.
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 236-1282
www.asapconnections.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

MEDIA CONTACTS: Sarah Hart, (828) 236-1282 ext. 119, sarah@asapconnections.org

ASAP to Open Farmers Market Saturday at A-B Tech

The new market will comply with strict public health restrictions and operate until further notice.

ASHEVILLE, NC (March 19, 2020)—In response to farmers market closures due to the COVID-19 emergency, ASAP has organized an interim farmers market on the campus of A-B Tech in Asheville. The ASAP Farmers Market has been approved to open this Saturday, March 21, from 9 a.m. to noon. The market will be located outdoors in A-B Tech parking lots A2, A3, and A7 with limited access from the end of Persistence Dr. off Victoria Rd. This new market is designed to protect shoppers and vendors by maintaining social distances and mitigating potential virus transmission points.

“We know this is a challenging and uncertain time for farmers and for the community. ASAP has been working to try to establish new systems for farmers and local food vendors to sell their products that comply with public health requirements,” said ASAP Executive Director Charlie Jackson. “Now more than ever we need to come together over food and take care of ourselves and our community.”

In order to have the highest health standards, the market will enforce several new procedures. The number of shoppers in the market area at one time will be tightly controlled. Staff will direct shoppers to queue inside their vehicles until they are instructed to move into the market. Vendors will remain at least six feet from shoppers and other vendors at all times. Customers will select pre-packaged or bunched items and will not handle other product on vendor tables. No vendor or shopper who is experiencing illness or exhibiting flu-like symptoms of any kind will be allowed to enter the market.

To minimize potential virus transmission points, no payments will be transacted at the market. Purchases will be paid online at asapconnections.org after shopping, based on an honor system. All pre-bagged or bunched products will have prices clearly marked. SNAP/EBT will be accepted via voucher forms, available at the market. Double SNAP will not be offered at this time. ASAP will cover the risk for honor system payments, and farmers will be paid in full for all product sold. “We’re relying on the honesty and generosity of shoppers to make this work,” said Jackson. Customers will have the option to provide a donation to help cover operational costs and shortages.

“We’ve got hundreds of farmers and vendors and thousands of community members that rely on these markets for livelihood and healthy fresh food,” said Jackson. “We’ve got to be able to continue to produce food here and farmers have to get paid. This market creates the new model that will let us continue to have a robust and sustaining food system even in the most trying of times.”

The market will operate for as long as necessary, possibly expanding to other locations and days of the week as opportunity and demand allows. Farmers interested in participating may apply via ASAP’s website. ASAP continues to advocate for relief and assistance to farmers, and will announce additional programs and resources as they are available.

ABOUT ASAP (APPALACHIAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT)

ASAP’s mission is to help local farms thrive, link farmers to markets and supporters, and build healthy communities through connections to local food. To learn more, visit asapconnections.org.

###