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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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ASAP Announces Appalachian Farms Feeding Families

New program facilitates direct connections between farmers and food relief efforts

ASHEVILLE, NC (May 22, 2020)—ASAP's Appalachian Farms Feeding Families program gets fresh, healthy food to people who need it—while also fairly compensating farmers. Through this new initiative, ASAP is facilitating direct connections between farms and relief efforts that might not otherwise be logistically feasible and helping to offset costs. The first phase of the project will focus on rural communities, which are further away from centralized food resources, and the intent of the project is to reach every county in Western North Carolina.

“Our communities are facing unprecedented challenges right now, with many families struggling to access fresh foods,” said ASAP Executive Director Charlie Jackson. “Farms are entering the time of year where production is high, but many have lost market outlets with closures or reduction of service in restaurants, schools, and other institutions. This is a neighbor-helping-neighbor effort that can benefit everyone in the community.”

ASAP will partner with food relief efforts, including food banks, charitable prepared food services, and child and adult care feeding sites across the region. After assessing food relief sites' needs, ASAP will contract with a farm or farms to supply food. This contract will cover the costs needed by the farmer and can be customized to fit different sizes and types of farms as well as relief efforts.

“Farmers are generous and many are able to give to relief efforts,” said Jackson. “We want to support and celebrate that. Some farms need help with packaging. We can help with that. Some need more support, up to paying full cost. We will make sure this works for the farm and the food relief sites. The goal of the program is to help as many farms and communities as we can.”

One relief organization participating in the Appalachian Farms Feeding Families program is Hendersonville Spanish Church, which provides food boxes. “The impacts of COVID-19 have been felt in all socioeconomic levels,” said Pastor Rubi E. Pimentel. “Fresh produce will allow us to help bring some hope to our communities and also help stabilize our economy with local farmers.”

Farms and relief agencies who would like to participate should start by filling out interest forms on asapconnections.org. Support for the Appalachian Farms Feeding Families comes from the Appalachian Grown Farmer Relief Fund. Donations may be made at asapconnections.org.

[High-resolution photos available. Contact Sarah Hart at sarah@asapconnections.org.]

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.

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