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## SEPC reduces food waste while helping others

April 1, 2020



In an effort to help alleviate the backlog of foodservice produce inventory as well as the strain on local retailers and community members, the Southeast Produce Council distributed free produce on

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Friday, March 27, to those within the Jenkins County area in Georgia.

SEPC members packed, shipped, unloaded, re-packed and distributed over 15,000 pounds of fresh produce via drive-thru format in order to maintain social distancing and serve as many as possible — almost 600 families. The Southeast Produce Council is truly grateful to US Foods, Nickey Gregory Co. and Shuman Farms for their generous donations as well as to Millen Baptist Church, Millen community leaders and community volunteers for their selfless donation of time, energy and resources in order to distribute this abundance of fresh produce safely and effectively.

SEPC President and CEO David Sherrod said, "There is an industry estimate of at least \$1 billion of perishable commodities without a dedicated destination as a result of the unanticipated closure of foodservice establishments, including restaurants, hotels, schools and universities. Through the SEPC Cares initiative that the council has in place, we felt that this would be an ideal time to give back to our own community. We know that families are hurting right outside our office door, and in working with our produce partners and our local community leaders, we were able to create a quick turnaround to get this product into consumers' hands in a timely manner. Not only are we able to reduce food waste from the effects of the situation we're in, but we are also able to extend a helping hand to people in need."

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