
New Hampshire
*Department of Agriculture,
Markets & Food*

Immediate Release

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Farm Field Gleaning to Help Feed the Hungry

Staff from the NH Food Bank and the NH Dept. of Agriculture, Markets & Food met recently to discuss how the NH agriculture industry might assist in filling voids on thinning food bank shelves. According to Melanie Gosselin, Executive Director of the Food Bank, "The demand for emergency food has increased 42% from this same time last year." The need is great for nutritious food.

Where agriculture could potentially offer significant contributions is field "gleaning." This is where edible, but unsalable foods are collected from the fields after the main harvest. The NH Food Bank has offered to help coordinate field gleaning to collect these foods for distribution at the NH Food Bank or partner agencies throughout the state. Items suitable for gleaning would be those with cosmetic blemishes, or may be slightly past prime time for commercial harvest. These items will be distributed, as is, to food distribution centers around the state, or used to make prepared foods in the new kitchen facilities at the NH Food Bank headquarters in Manchester which are then distributed to centers statewide.

The NH Food Bank will either arrange for a group of volunteers to drive to the farm and glean available fields (they will bring their own containers and vehicles for collection), or they will help local agencies to collect and use this food. Farmers that offer fields for gleaning activities at their farm will be given a receipt acknowledging the value of their donation which can be claimed as a tax deduction.

No donations will be declined by the NH Food Bank, but products best suited for gleaning include squashes (summer and winter), root crops, broccoli, head lettuce, apples, etc. The Food Bank staff needs at least one week notice to arrange for volunteers to glean, and the more notice the better.

If you would like to explore gleaning on your farm, please contact Helen Costello, Recipe for Success Program Manager, NH Food Bank, tel. 669-9725, email hcostello@nhfoodbank.org.