

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECOND HARVEST FOODBANKS

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TWELVE OHIO FOODBANKS RECEIVE EASTER MEALS FROM STATE'S EGG INDUSTRY

One million egg contribution continues long partnership between foodbanks and egg industry

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Poultry Association and Ohio's egg producers are filling the tables and Easter baskets of 90,000 Ohio families, located in all 88 counties, this spring. Six Ohio egg producers will donate more than one million eggs, to charities and hunger relief providers that are supported by the 12 Second Harvest Foodbanks in Ohio that are part of America's Second Harvest. Eggs will start being delivered on March 6, and many will be delivered the week of March 10.

The contribution of 90,000 dozen eggs, or 1,080,000 eggs in all with an estimated retail value of more than \$157,000, is one of several joint efforts that the foodbanks and Ohio's egg industry have partnered on in the past seven years. This particular contribution also is part of a national donation campaign by United Egg Producers, representing egg farmers across the U.S., which has generated donations across the country during March that exceed 12 million eggs.

“Ohio eggs are a critical item for Ohio's hunger relief provider, because they are a versatile, high-protein item that is a staple among Ohio's needy families,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF), whose members are the state's 12 Second Harvest foodbanks. “This unprecedented donation by the state's egg producers is greatly appreciated as it is occurring at a time when many Ohio foodbanks are struggling to keep food on their shelves due to many external economic factors.”

Some of these factors include a severe shortage of government surplus commodities, a sharp decrease in food donated by food manufacturers, decline in federal bonus commodities, high fuel and utility costs, rising costs of food, and growing unemployment and job losses. The situation for foodbanks is so challenging that many agencies are reducing the amount of food they distribute to the needy in an effort to ration the modest supplies they have. Others are reducing their hours of operation and some have temporarily closed their doors until they get sufficient food on the shelves to meet demand.

“Ohio's egg producers are honored and humbled to help Ohioans in need,” said Jim Chakeres, executive vice president, Ohio Poultry Association. “This contribution is just one example of our commitment to being a good neighbor in the communities where we live and work.” Chakeres said Ohio ranks second in the nation for egg production, and produces eight billion eggs each year with a value of more than \$600 million.

Ohio's egg producers participating in the donation program include Hillandale Farms/Ohio Fresh Eggs of Akron and Croton, OH; Ft. Recovery Equity of Fort Recovery, OH; Cal-Maine Farms of Rossburg, OH; Hemmelgarn & Sons, Inc. of Coldwater, OH; Hertzfeld Poultry Farms of Grand Rapids, OH; and Weaver Brothers, Inc. of Versailles, OH.

OASHF also has been working with Ohio's egg industry since 2001 to provide eggs to foodbanks as part of the Ohio Agricultural Surplus Clearance Program. The program is a joint venture between OASHF, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Ohio's agriculture producers to provide low-income Ohioans with the food they and their families need. Since the surplus program partnership

began, Ohio's egg producers have supplied more than three million dozen eggs to the foodbank network.

OASHF and its network of providers serve more than 1.2 million Ohioans each year, distributing more than 92 million pounds of food and grocery items. Of those clients served, more than 150,000 are seniors, and nearly 422,000 are children.

For more information regarding Ohio foodbanks and Ohio's hunger relief programs, please visit www.oashf.org or call 614/221-4336.

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Representatives of the Ohio Poultry Association recently joined the staff of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank and U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown at a news conference to advocate for increased federal funding of nutrition programs and to acknowledge the association's recent contribution of one million eggs to the state's Second Harvest foodbank network.

L-R: Matt Habash, executive director, Mid-Ohio Foodbank; Tom Hertzfeld II, Hertzfeld Poultry Farm; Jim Clark, Hillandale Farms; Jerry Knapke, Fort Recovery Equity; U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown; Jim Chakeres, executive vice president, Ohio Poultry Association.