

Fresh and Local News

SPRING 2021



We've Made Great Strides, Despite a Pandemic!

Farm Food Safety Training: April 20

Are you a grower, farmer, or gardener looking to produce safe, high-quality food for distribution? If so, the 3-day virtual Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Food Safety training is for you. Learn from certified instructors how good agricultural practices impact food safety and what is needed for a GAP audit. Attendees will begin writing a farm food safety plan that complies with USDA GAP audit requirements. Participants receive a certificate of completion.

Since October of 2019, RFSA has trained over **65 growers** in food safety. Not only is this training free, the process for the GAP Audit is streamlined and FREE! Why is being GAP certified important? It allows growers to sell to institutions like the Riverside Unified School District's Food Hub.



The next training opportunity starts **April 20**. For more info or to register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/3-day-free-virtual-good-agricultural-practices-and-food-safety-training-tickets-145358496175?aff=ebdssbeac>

Food Boxes: 98,000!

Nearly 98,000 boxes of food were distributed to those in need through the *Farmers to Families* program by the Food Hub of the Riverside Unified School District. The Food Hub purchased \$860,000 of locally grown produce with \$3M of funding from USDA and the City of Riverside (CARES). Find out more about the Food Hub at: <https://riversidefoods.org/farming/>



Food Rescue

About **300,000 pounds** of food were rescued or gleaned in 2020! The food was taken to local food pantries to fill lots of bags for people in need. Donations included meat, milk, fresh produce, frozen foods, citrus, avocados, sandwiches, lunch meals, and much more. The food rescue project was funded by a grant from CalRecycle to the City of Riverside and coordinated by our partner, the Riverside Food Co-op. For upcoming gleaning activities, follow the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/RivFoodRescueAmbProgram/> More information at <https://riversidefoods.org/food-rescue/>,



RFSA's mission is to cultivate local food and agriculture for a healthier community.

www.RiversideFoods.org • Facebook: [RiversideFoodSystemsAlliance](https://www.facebook.com/RiversideFoodSystemsAlliance)

Project Open House: Thursday, June 24, 5-7 PM

Join us to help launch the Northside Heritage Meadows (NHM) project! It will be outdoors and socially distanced, of course.

We want to hear from you if you have growing or other skills to share about food, sustainability and community. Once the Project is built, we will have a community space for growing and learning, but we can't do it without community!

If you're not involved, but would like to be, please contact RFSA at RiversideFoodSystems@gmail.com, or call (951) 312-4031.

What is NHM?

The California Natural Resources Agency awarded the City of Riverside a nearly \$3M Urban Greening Grant to purchase over 7 acres and create the Northside Heritage Meadows (NHM) Project at 900 and 895 Clark Street. **Watch this short video of the site:** [Introduction to Northside Heritage Meadows - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4itDhwYID8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4itDhwYID8)



The Project will include:

- the planting of over 450 trees and shrubs that will capture and store carbon and pollutants
- farming areas for food production and a beginning farmer training program,
- a community garden and demonstration orchards
- a composting area to recycle green waste which will be used to improve soil health
- a farm stand that will provide fresh produce in an area that has been identified as a food desert
- two trails and a bike lane that will reduce vehicle-miles-traveled and the related pollutants.

The NHM project will improve air and water quality, increase wildlife habitat, and provide healthy, locally grown food for an area that is currently considered a “food desert”, with no close by grocery store.

The Project is a collaboration of the City of Riverside, the Northside community, the Riverside Food Systems Alliance (RFSA), plus local groups, agencies, and individuals like yourself.

If you are interested in getting involved with this important project, please join us for the **first site visit on June 24, 2021. Drop in between 5 and 7 PM.**

Please park along Clark Street and wear a mask.

Follow the project's progress at the RFSA's Facebook page at Northside Heritage Meadows Community or <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2519277775049264>.

To help support this important project, please visit our NEW website to donate: <https://riversidefoodS.org/>.



We're just starting to plan the community garden, so please join us! If you would like to help plan, develop, or use the future garden, contact Scott Andrews at riversidegardencouncil@gmail.com or (951) 235-6278.

Market Match

Market Match is a USDA funded program to double Cal Fresh and SNAP benefits at participating farmers' markets. The program is available at Banning, San Jacinto, and the Sunday Market at the Tyler Galleria. Market Match allows customers to redeem up to \$10 of their benefit for fresh fruits and vegetables and receive twice the value. The extra purchases help our farms and farmers.

RFSA is seeking to add two additional farmers' markets: Canyon Lake and a new market in Eastvale.

Learn more about the local Market Match program:

<https://riversidefoods.org/projects/> or

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHkh674sKAs>

On a statewide level, consumers spent over \$7.3 million in Market Match and Cal Fresh combined at participating locations during 2020. This represented a 41% increase in total spent and a 42% increase in customers served compared to 2019, showing us that this program helped to address a growing need during the pandemic. We estimate that the program led to the purchase of 14.6 million servings of fresh fruits and vegetables.



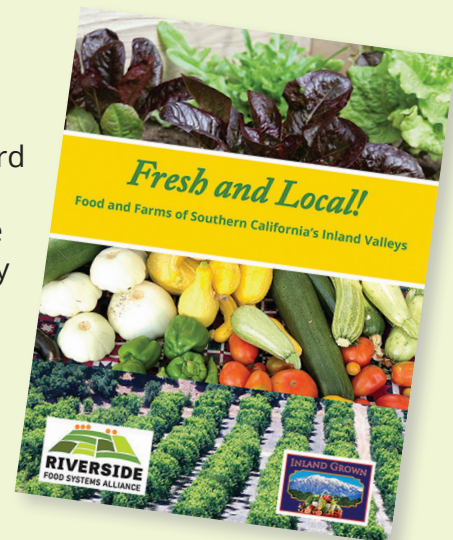
Find Food and Ag Listings on our New Website!

Are you interested in purchasing locally grown foods, but are having a hard time finding where? Now you can find locations and listings on the **NEW** RFSA website: <https://riversidefoods.org/find-food/>. Find locations on the interactive map to locate farm stands, farmers' markets, CSAs, community gardens, restaurants, and stores.

Looking for agricultural resources? Find farm listings, ag programs, farm services, and ag resources here: <https://riversidefoods.org/farming/>

Locate community and educational resources for the greater Riverside and San Bernardino areas here: <https://riversidefoods.org/community-resources/>. Find gardening, healthy-living, food processing, and agritourism information.

You can also download a copy of the entire, award-winning, 48-page *Fresh and Local* Guide on our website.



Farm Planning Resources

If you are looking to start a farm, begin your planning at the LandUse Learning Center. The Agricultural Area demonstrates crops that thrive in our local climate. Take a tour, pick up plant lists, and see the labeled tree crops. Interpretive signs depict sustainable agricultural practices, including irrigation water management, methods to build soil health, and integrated pest management using a variety of biological controls. **Please check for new hours: www.RCRC.org or (951) 683-7691. The 3-acre LandUse Learning Center is at 4500 Glenwood Dr., Riverside, CA 92501.**

More at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fNjFD2e0GM4&t=14s>



Local Ag Feeds You - Local Ag Needs You!

During this crisis, we have immediate need for funding to help feed those in need, reduce food waste, support local farmers, and create healthier communities and the environment.

Please donate:

- at our NEW website: <https://riversidefoodS.org/>
- mail to: Riverside Food Systems Alliance, PO Box 324, Riverside, CA 92502. Please make checks payable to "Community Partners", the fiscal sponsor for RFSA.



If you are interested in volunteering for one of our projects, please contact the working group lead listed below:

WORKING GROUPS

Northside Heritage Meadows Project	Diana Ruiz	ruiz@rcrcd.org	(909) 238-8338
Beginning Farmer Training Program	Patrick Mitchell	patrickm@fivekeys.org	(951) 905-8808
Food Rescue & Recycling	Olivia Sanchez	osanchez@rivco.org	(951) 486-3282
Food Hub, Soil Health, Owl Boxes	Scott Berndt	berndtsplants@gmail.com	(951) 452-6840
Market Match, Food Co-op	Sue Struthers	sstruthers@att.net	(951) 662-9556
GAP Training	Sandy Ramirez	sandy_ramirez@att.net	(951) 312-4031
GrowRIVERSIDE	Sandy Ramirez	sandy_ramirez@att.net	(951) 312-4031
Growers Guild	Patrick Mitchell	patrickm@fivekeys.org	(951) 905-8808
Board Membership	Cecilia Arias	Cecilia.X.Arias@kp.org	(951) 602-4193
Fundraising	Sandy Ramirez	sandy_ramirez@att.net	(951) 312-4031
Communication-Outreach	Diana Ruiz	ruiz@rcrcd.org	(909) 238-8338
Community Gardens	Scott Andrews	scott.andrews@yahoo.com	(951) 235-6278
Inland Valley Farm & Food Consortium	Joyce Jong	Jjong@riversideca.gov	(951) 826-5265
Internships	Arthur Levine	artmaxlev@gmail.com	(917) 734-8108
Economic Study	Joyce Jong	Jjong@riversideca.gov	(951) 826-5265

Thank You!

This newsletter and *Fresh and Local* were developed by the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD), one of the many RFSA partners. Both projects were funded with an Urban Agriculture Conservation grant from the National Association of Conservation Districts and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Many thanks to our COVID-relief funders. Mosaic with Pisces organizations provided immediate assistance which helped RFSA to continue to operate remotely, including the creation of new project videos. CARES Act funds, administered through the Inland Empire Community Foundation, provided support for the RFSA website and technology needs. We greatly appreciate the support of all of our partners and grantors. Please take a look at our funders' logos at "About Us" on the RFSA website: <https://riversidefoods.org/about-us/>