



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Wolf Administration Highlights Investments in Charitable Food System for Improved Food Security, Economy**

**Harleysville, PA** – Deputy Secretary Cheryl Cook was joined by Feeding Pennsylvania at Garden of Health Inc. Food Bank today to highlight the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System's (PASS) success in strengthening food security and Pennsylvania's economy. Under the Wolf Administration, PASS has distributed more than 22 million pounds of surplus food from farmers to Pennsylvanians in need, while simultaneously generating more than \$39 million in economic output.

Garden of Health Inc. Food Bank is one of more than 175 farms which would benefit from Governor Tom Wolf's proposed \$4.5 million investment into PASS for the [2022-23 budget](#) year, an increase of \$2 million.

"We cannot have a charitable food system without a food system that is charitable," said Cook. "Gov. Wolf's commitment to PASS ensures farmers can share their excess harvest with Pennsylvanians in need at no cost. In return, these investments are strengthening the economy by supporting businesses and jobs associated with food harvest, transportation and processing. PASS is a great example of how strategic investments are facilitating charitable donation, feeding hungry Pennsylvanians, strengthening public-private partnerships and stimulating economic growth across the commonwealth."

PASS connects the nonprofit sector to farms and food processors to help solve problems of hunger and food waste. The program funds the harvest, transport, processing and packaging of surplus food from Pennsylvania farms that is either intentionally planted for donation or would otherwise go to waste. The food is then distributed to families in 67 counties through a contract with [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) and a network of thirteen regional, charitable food distributors.

The Economic Impact of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System reports that for every \$1 million dollars invested into PASS, the program generates more than \$2 million in additional economic impact. Since 2015, Wolf Administration PASS investments have generated more than \$39 million in economic output. With an additional \$2 million in funding proposed for the 2022-23 budget year, Gov. Wolf's \$4.5 million investment would equate to nearly \$9 million in economic output over the next year, supporting the farm economy and jobs while ensuring fresh, locally produced foods reach Pennsylvanians in need.

"PASS is a critical program that supports farmers and processors while getting nutritious Pennsylvania-produced food to the tables of food-insecure families. But with 53,000 farms in

Pennsylvania, we can and should do more,” said Jane Clements, Chief Executive Officer of Feeding Pennsylvania. “We are grateful for the additional support from the administration, and we will continue to utilize PASS funding to combat hunger in the Commonwealth and strengthen relationships with Pennsylvania producers, like Garden of Health.”

More than 80 different Pennsylvania-produced foods have been sourced from 175 farmers, processors, and growers across the state. The foods include fresh fruits and vegetables, milk, cheese, eggs, and other items that are often difficult for food pantries to obtain.

According to [Feeding America's annual Map the Meal Gap report](#), in 2019, more than 1.35 million Pennsylvanians – 10.6% of all state residents – didn't always know where their next meal was coming from. In 2021, as a result of the pandemic, Feeding America estimates that 1.54 million Pennsylvanians are facing food insecurity, an estimated 12%, diminishing some of the gains made in previous years.

Established in 2015, [Garden of Health](#) is a non-profit food bank and community garden that educates and empowers low-income families through food. The food bank serves Montgomery and Bucks counties and has more than 25 food pantry partners. Over the past 18 months, Garden of Health has donated 6,500 pounds of produce into PASS for local distribution.

“As a nonprofit that grows to donate, finding out about PASS has been a game changer for us,” said Carol Bauer, Garden of Health Founder. “It helps us cover our costs for growing and distributing the produce we grow to our 30 plus partners! Coordinating with the PASS program is easy, and staff are always there to answer questions.”

For more information about the Wolf Administration’s efforts to address food insecurity in the commonwealth and resources for Pennsylvanians in need, visit [agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity](https://agriculture.pa.gov/foodsecurity).

For more on the PASS program, including a map of distributors, visit [agriculture.pa.gov](https://agriculture.pa.gov).

Note: Photo and video of the event available at [PACast.com](https://pacast.com).

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