



News Release

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Southeast Missouri Food Bank Hosts First 'Field Rows to Food Bank' Program for Area Farmers

SIKESTON, Mo. (Aug. 2, 2023) – Southeast Missouri Food Bank will host its first-ever “Field Rows to Food Bank” program to provide local farmers an update on the 2023 Farm Bill and how it relates to not only them, but hunger-relief efforts.

The farm bill is the single largest piece of federal legislation for food and farming. It impacts access to nutritious food for the millions of people in the United States facing hunger.

“Farmers are vital to southeast Missouri’s economy,” said Joey Keys, chief executive officer of SEMO Food Bank. “We think its important they are informed about legislation that has such a direct impact on their livelihood. But we also want them to see how critical the farm bill is to our work and making sure neighbors facing hunger have access to nutritious food.”

The farm bill, renewed every five years, governs the nation’s largest nutrition programs, including SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) and CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program).

“These nutrition programs are essential to fighting hunger, and SEMO Food Bank is connected to them all in some way,” Keys said. “We distribute 5,550 CSFP boxes each month to seniors, and our staff helps individuals navigate the SNAP application process. We also distribute TEFAP items to neighbors facing hunger through our 16-county service area. We’re hopeful Congress will see the importance of these programs and bolster them with the 2023 Farm Bill.”

In 2022, SEMO Food Bank received 1 million pounds less of TEFAP products, while serving an average of 10,000 more individuals each month than in 2021.

At “Field Rows to Food Bank,” local farmers and others in the agriculture industry will receive updates on the farm bill’s progress from Matt Bain, district director for Sen. Josh Hawley (R-Mo.), and Heath Robins, southeast district director for Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-Mo.). Missouri Sen. Holly Thompson Rehder will also share her lived experience with food insecurity growing up in southeast Missouri. Additionally, Brian Menz, CPA, of Menz & Menz will provide insight on tax credits available to Missouri farmers.

“Field Rows to Food Bank” will be at 3 p.m., Tues., Aug. 22 at Southeast Missouri Food Bank, 600 State Hwy. H in Sikeston. An optional tour of the food bank as well as time for networking will follow the presentations. To RSVP, please email hcollier@semofoodbank.org or call 573-475-7573.

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About Southeast Missouri Food Bank

The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build healthy communities. The food bank provides food to 140 charitable and disaster relief programs in Southeast Missouri. These member agencies include food pantries, soup kitchens, domestic violence and homeless shelters. Southeast Missouri Food Bank also holds regular mobile food distributions and provides monthly boxes of food to 5,500 senior citizens and weekend backpacks of food during the school year to nearly 1,200 students in 30 school districts. The food bank’s 16-county coverage area includes Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard and Wayne counties. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or scheduling a time to volunteer. Visit semofoodbank.org for more information.