

# More people buying food directly from farms during virus

By SIERRA DAWN MCCLAIN  
Capital Press

VENETA — New unemployment claims in Oregon catapulted nearly 1,500% the last week of March, according to the Oregon Employment Department. But for Brandon Huff and his wife, Phaedra, owners of Ambrosia Farm in Veneta, this is their busiest season yet.

Industry leaders say more people are buying directly from farms to avoid grocery store crowds, shorten the supply chain and secure a reliable food source at a time when store shelves are often empty.

“Everyone’s getting laid off and talking on social media about chillin’,” said Brandon Huff. “And over here, I’m busier than ever. It seems like agriculture is full speed ahead.”

Experts say subscriptions to CSA — Community Supported Agriculture — have spiked the past few weeks. CSA is a partnership between a farmer and customer in which a customer pays for a membership share in exchange for a weekly box of fresh produce, meat or other farm goods.

Ambrosia Farm runs a CSA program. Members pay a share price at the start of the growing season and receive



Produce from a CSA box at Ambrosia Farm in Veneta.

Photo courtesy of Ambrosia Farm

weekly boxes of colorful cabbage, peppers, strawberries, spinach and more. The farm offers both delivery and pickup options.

“We’re seeing a major uptick in CSA memberships,” said Holly Hutchason, executive director of the Portland Area Community Supported Agriculture Coalition, or PACSAC.

In the past two weeks, RJ Ewing, operations manager for Deck Family Farm in

Junction City, said the farm’s number of CSA members has leapt from 80 to 125.

Kelly Crane, executive director of the Oregon Farmers Markets Association and former owner of a 50-member CSA, said people may be seeking farm-direct food for a sense of stability.

“People are feeling a little food insecure,” said Crane. “Having a relationship with a farmer committed to delivering food every week

is reassuring.”

Hutchason and Crane said people may also be choosing CSAs to sidestep grocery stores and distribution chains.

“I you’re concerned about how many people are handling your food,” said Crane, “buying direct from the farm is the shortest imaginable supply chain.”

Heidi Noordjik, Oregon State University’s small farms coordinator, said she

thinks CSAs are also gaining traction because more people are cooking at home and thinking about how they can support local businesses and producers.

CSA is unfamiliar to many consumers, said Hutchason, but it’s also new to many farms.

Before the virus outbreak, said Hutchason, many small farms relied heavily on restaurant sales. With so many restaurants now closed or limited to takeout and delivery, Hutchason called the change a “huge loss for farmers.”

Many of these farms, she said, have been forced to adapt by expanding or creating CSAs.

Laura Masterson, owner of 47th Avenue Farm in Portland, has run a CSA for 24 years and also sells to restaurants. Masterson said the farm has about twice as many CSA signups now as this time last year, and after restaurants shut down, over 50 current members signed up for an extra weekly box of vegetables.

Aaron Nichols, co-owner of Stoneboat Farm in Hillsboro, said about 60% of sales are typically to restaurants — including about 300 pounds per week of salad greens. With restaurants closed, Nichols plans to double the number of available

CSA shares. He predicts CSA crops won’t be as profitable as restaurant crops, but said he’s “incredibly grateful” for the community support.

“Farms are responding to this crisis really creatively,” said Crane of OSU. “It’s early enough in the season that they’re trying to shift their models in advance of harvest.”

Crane said across the state, numerous small farms have set up online ordering systems, such as Barn2Door and Farmigo, coordinated home and curbside delivery options and created pickup sites.

Many farms are also strategizing how to make CSA more affordable.

One common criticism of CSA is that payment is often required up front. For example, a payment for six months of produce may be due this spring to cover farmers’ planting and other expenses.

In the midst of a pandemic, said PACSAC’s Hutchason, more farms are creating payment options, such as smaller shares or payments by the week or month, for consumers who can’t afford to pay up front.

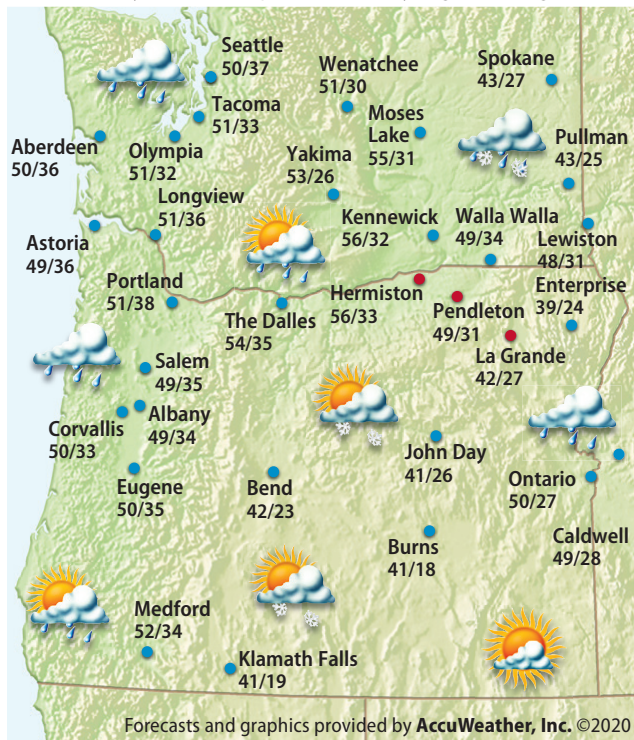
“It’s a huge stretch for farmers not to ask for the capital at the front of the season,” said Hutchason. “It’s a sacrifice. It shows their commitment to feeding their communities.”

## Forecast for Pendleton Area

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
A snow squall this morning	A morning rain or snow shower	Cool with clouds and sun	Cloudy	Cloudy with a shower or two
PENDLETON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
49° 31°	51° 33°	52° 29°	54° 35°	51° 36°
HERMISTON TEMPERATURE FORECAST				
56° 33°	57° 36°	57° 30°	57° 37°	55° 36°

## OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today’s weather. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.



## ALMANAC

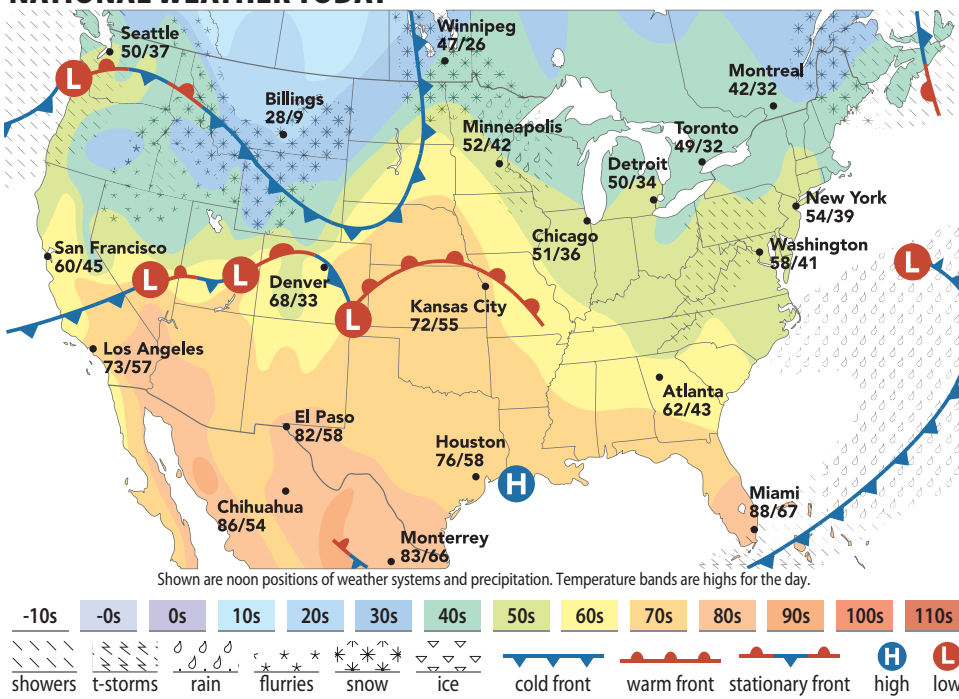
PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	51°	37°	
Normals	58°	37°	
Records	82° (1923)	21° (1936)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	0.06"		
Month to date	0.89"		
Normal month to date	1.45"		
Year to date	4.95"		
Last year to date	6.08"		
Normal year to date	4.00"		
HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.			
TEMP.	HIGH	LOW	
Yesterday	55°	38°	
Normals	61°	37°	
Records	77° (1964)	24° (1930)	
PRECIPITATION			
24 hours ending 3 p.m.	Trace		
Month to date	0.12"		
Normal month to date	0.87"		
Year to date	0.48"		
Last year to date	3.59"		
Normal year to date	3.14"		
WINDS (in mph)			
Today	WSW 7-14	Thu. SSE 4-8	
Pendleton	W 7-14	W 6-12	
SUN AND MOON			
Sunrise today	6:35 a.m.		
Sunset tonight	7:24 p.m.		
Moonrise today	11:41 a.m.		
Moonset today	2:53 a.m.		
First	Full	Last	New
Apr 1	Apr 7	Apr 14	Apr 22

## NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)

High 97° in Zapata, Texas Low 6° in Daniel, Wyo.

## NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



# Here’s how to get a small business loan under the \$349 billion aid bill

By AARON GREGG  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — A network of community banks and financial institutions across the country is gearing up to implement one of the most ambitious economic relief programs in United States history as small businesses across the country weather coronavirus and its economic fallout.

The \$2 trillion coronavirus relief package signed last week, officially known as the CARES Act, includes nearly \$350 billion for a new federal small-business loan program called the Paycheck Protection Program. The program is designed to get cash in the hands of suffering small businesses quickly, with less red tape and fewer guardrails than the SBA’s existing loan programs. It is designed to incentivize business owners to keep employees on payroll by offering them loan forgiveness.

The new loan program is separate from existing federal loan programs, including the Small Business

Administration’s disaster relief loans. To learn about the SBA’s other relief programs, please visit the SBA’s COVID-19 resource center.

**Q: How do I apply for a small-business loan through the Paycheck Protection Program?**

A: The Small Business Administration has a network of 1,800 approved lenders that process small-business loans. You should first contact your bank to see if it is an SBA-approved lender. If your bank is not an SBA-approved lender, you can contact the SBA to find one.

**Q: When will the new funding be made available?**

A: Detailed instructions on how to apply for them were expected to be added to the Small Business Administration’s website on Monday, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said.

**Q: How much money can my business receive through the new loan program?**

A: The Paycheck Protection Program provides small-business loans of

up to \$10 million to cover payroll and certain other expenses. Other SBA loan programs, including the federal disaster relief program, offer much smaller loans.

**Q: Can the loan eventually be forgiven?**

A: Yes. The act includes loan forgiveness for companies that are able to keep employees on payroll or continue paying bills throughout the crisis.

**Q: It looks like there are a lot of different federal loan programs. Can my business receive funding through more than one?**

A: Yes. Businesses that have pending or existing SBA disaster assistance loans can still receive funding through the Paycheck Protection Program as long as the loans are being applied to different cost centers.

For more information, visit the U.S. Small Business Administration or an SBA-qualified financial institution. You can reach the SBA by email at [answersdesk@sba.gov](mailto:answersdesk@sba.gov) or by phone at 1-800-827-5722.

## BRIEFLY

### 1 dies in shooting in Portland shopping complex

PORTLAND — One person was shot and killed in the parking lot of a Southeast Portland shopping complex on Monday afternoon, police said.

Portland police responded to a parking lot shared by WinCo Foods, Papa Murphy’s Pizza and other businesses, around 3 p.m., *The Oregonian/OregonLive* reported.

Officers found a person believed to be an adult male dead at the scene, police said. The shooter ran away before officers arrived at the scene, police said. Authorities are investigating.

David Shepherd told the newspaper he

was parked near WinCo when he heard a gunshot.

“I just ran,” he said. He came toward USA Pawn and Jewelry, where the victim was on the ground on his back. Shepherd said he noticed the man had gunshot wounds.

Shepherd said he and others in the area tried to help the man — using a sweater to stanch the blood flow, performing chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. He said the man briefly started breathing again for a moment before stopping.

Police have not released information about the circumstances of the shooting.

— Associated Press

**CORRECTIONS:** The *East Oregonian* works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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