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**PARTNERSHIPS PROVIDED 35.6 MILLION MEALS FOR OHIOANS IN NEED,
RETURNED \$30.1 MILLION TO OHIO ECONOMY**

Ohio Association of Foodbanks' programs in FY15 generated \$11.65 million in income, created 351 jobs

COLUMBUS, Ohio (March 15, 2016) – 41.6 million pounds of food was purchased in State Fiscal Year 2015 (SFY 2015), providing more than 35.6 million meals to needy Ohioans, by the Ohio Association of Foodbanks (the association). The purchases were made possible through highly effective food purchase programs established by the State of Ohio, and through partnerships with Ohio's farmers that provide fresh, nutritious produce and protein foods for those served by the association and its 12 member Feeding America foodbanks.

"On National Agriculture Day, March 15, and every day, we are thankful for our partners who make it possible to fuel our fight against hunger in Ohio," said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director, Ohio Association of Foodbanks. "These critical state-funded programs, which are a national model and have been replicated in other states, play a vital role in providing much-needed support to Ohio families struggling with the impact of poverty and the continued slow recovery from the recession."

In SFY 2015, state funding was provided for a series of programs to enhance the availability of fresh fruits, vegetables, protein items and shelf-stable items to Ohio's foodbanks. More than one in six Ohioans, or 2 million people, stand in the state's emergency food lines each year. The emergency hunger relief network can respond due to successful, demonstrated programs, that include the:

- Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program, which directs agricultural surplus items from Ohio farmers and growers to the foodbanks;
- Ohio Food Program, which focuses on protein and shelf-stable items; and
- Governor's Summer Meals Programs, which provide food to Ohio children during the summer months when they don't have access to school meals.

Combined, these three programs were funded at \$16.646 million during SFY 2015; funds that made a direct impact on Ohio's economy.

"We are so fortunate for the significant support of our partners in ending hunger in Ohio, and we are thankful for their compassion," said Hamler-Fugitt. She noted the continued collaboration with Ohio Governor John R. Kasich, members of the Ohio General Assembly, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Department of Education and a number of farms and commodity organizations.

As a result of these programs, farmers, food suppliers, growers and producers were able to have an indirect economic impact across the state, adding \$30.1 million in output across Ohio and generating \$11.65 million in income. The programs also led to the creation of 351 jobs.

Data for the results of the foodbank programs was obtained from the association's annual economic impact study, performed by recognized Ohio economist Howard Fleeter. Key measurements of the programs' combined success include:

- The Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program added \$11.6 million in output across Ohio, generated \$4.4 million in income, and led to the creation of 137 jobs.
- The Ohio Food Program added \$14.25 million in output across Ohio, generated \$5.5 million in income, and led to the creation of 165 jobs.
- The Governor's Summer Meals Programs added a total of \$4.3 million in output across Ohio, generated \$1.7 million in income, and led to the creation of 49 jobs.

The Ohio Agricultural Clearance Program is funded through Ohio's state budget as approved by the Ohio General Assembly. There is no other system in place in Ohio that can leverage surplus agriculture products, while effectively and efficiently directing high-protein food to hungry Ohio families.

"Ohio's egg farmers have partnered with the association for nearly two decades and we're committed to supporting local communities – especially our neighbors in need," said Jim Chakeres, executive vice president, Ohio Poultry Association. "Our contributions, like other farmers, growers, and producers in Ohio, means a great deal to us because we are able to help those in need to have nutritious, wholesome meals."

The Ohio Food Program is a cooperation between the association and the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. It provides nutritious, shelf-stable foods and protein items to Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks.

Public-private partnerships like these programs are needed in Ohio because hunger in the state is increasing. The association's programs ensure Ohioans are provided with safe, nutritious, wholesome food from the most efficient, cost-effective delivery system.

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About the Ohio Association of Foodbanks

The Ohio Association of Foodbanks is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2015, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute over 197 million pounds of food and grocery items. The association also serves as the home of The Ohio Benefit Bank and operates the state's largest navigator program for the Affordable Care Act. Follow the [association](#) on [Twitter](#), stay connected on [Facebook](#) and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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