Texas Farms Veggie Box Program Report
Emergency COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Executive Summary

The Texas Center for Local Food (TCLF), along with committed partners and volunteers, created the “Texas Farms Veggie Box” program in Elgin, TX as an immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Texas Farms Veggie Box program was created to ensure that everyone who wanted healthy, local vegetables had them, and the program’s swiftness proved invaluable for many families in the early days of the crisis.

Beginning on March 24, 2020 the 11-week program provided 1,665 boxes of Texas-grown fresh vegetables to 486 families in Elgin; a rural town of 10,000 where 19% of children under 18 live in poverty. Most Elgin workers drive to nearby Austin for their jobs, and households earn a median household income of $50,000/year, half of which is spent on housing and transportation.

The following report aims to demonstrate to other communities and funders what is possible when communities have the basics of a local food infrastructure, including an engaged community - and the willingness to come together, pooling their talents and resources to achieve a shared goal.

The program was initiated by the Elgin Local Food Action Team, a group of residents who came together in 2019 to advocate for a shared use commercial kitchen and healthy food access center in downtown Elgin, the Elgin Local Food Center (ELF). City leaders did not fund the ELF project but the Elgin Local Food Action Team stayed together, refocusing on private sector partnerships. When COVID-19 began to hit Elgin in mid-March, the team convened to answer the question posed by lifelong resident and farmer Charlotte Swenson “What can we do to ensure that everyone in Elgin has enough healthy local food to eat?”

While TCLF managed the Texas Farms Veggie Box program, its success is directly attributable to the commitment of the Elgin Local Food Action Team, dozens of partners and volunteers, and the people of Elgin. TCLF purchased family-size weekly boxes of fresh vegetables grown by Texas family farms from The Common Market, a values-based distributor in Houston. TCLF and partners distributed veggie boxes through sales and donations to (i) families with children in Elgin ISD schools, (ii) children with diet-related illness via the local health clinic, (iii) homeless youth and needy families, and (iv) the general public.

The project resulted in deep community engagement in Texas local food systems. The program’s success was multi-faceted:

- High K-12 family engagement, cooking together and learning about fresh, healthy local food
- Student self-directed, peer-to-peer learning through Elgin after-school program using Facebook
- Reliable income for Texas farmers who had lost wholesale sales just as harvest was beginning
- Fresh vegetables for Elgin families who have children with diet-related illness
- Fresh vegetables for food insecure families and homeless youth
- Families with the means to buy fresh local vegetables could get them in a COVID-safe setting
- Contributed $36,742 directly into the Texas local food economy

The program ended when TCLF and others could no longer afford to work as volunteers. TCLF has applied for funding to continue and expand the program through the America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) and the USDA Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP).
Texas Farms Veggie Box Program Report
Emergency COVID-19 Pandemic Response
March 24 - July 9, 2020 (11 weeks)

The Texas Center for Local Food (TCLF) and partners launched the Texas Farms Veggie Box program on March 23, 2020 in response to food shortages and food access barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program was implemented in Elgin, Texas (pop. 10,000). This report provides a summary of the project, the critical success factors and operational and financial details to support replication.

This report contains pertinent information for potential funders and those who would replicate the program. The narrative flows from general to more specific program components, in hopes that this report will be more understandable and interesting to readers. This small project proved invaluable for many people in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope that by providing this detailed report, other small towns and funders will see what’s possible when communities have the basics of a local food infrastructure in place - and the willingness to come together, pooling their talents and resources to achieve a shared goal. In the case of Elgin, this shared goal was to ensure that everyone who wanted healthy local vegetables had them.

The program ran from March 23 through June 3 (11 weeks) and distributed 1,665 family size boxes of fresh Texas grown vegetables to 486 families and individuals through sales to the public, donations to food insecure families, and for direct family engagement of Elgin school children and their families. The program contributed $36,742 to our Texas local food economy (see Financial Report in Appendix).

TCLF purchased family-size weekly boxes of fresh vegetables grown by Texas family farms from The Common Market, a values-based distributor. TCLF and partners distributed veggie boxes to:

- families with children in Elgin ISD schools,
- children with diet-related illness via the local health clinic,
- homeless youth and needy families,
- and the general public.

Successes: A Win-Win-Win-Win-Win-Win

- High K-12 family engagement, cooking together and learning about fresh, healthy local food
- Student self-directed, peer-to-peer learning and celebration using Facebook
- Reliable income for Texas farmers who had lost wholesale sales just as harvest was beginning
- Fresh vegetables for Elgin families who have children with diet-related illness
- Fresh vegetables for food insecure families and homeless youth
- Families with the means to buy fresh local vegetables could get them in a COVID-safe setting
This program was made possible by a team of amazing partners and the commitment of Elgin citizens to support local farms and our Texas local food economy. This commitment cannot be understated. Purchases of $32 Texas Farms Veggie Boxes by 325 people, from Elgin to Dripping Springs (40 miles away), made this project successful. Their purchases enabled us to get off the ground in a few days, expand to local schools, and demonstrate that by working together we can support farmers, build a local food economy, ensure everyone has access to healthy food and feed our own families from the bounty of our Texas harvest.

Partners: Our team of partners was essential to the success of this program. Everyone stepped up immediately in mid-March and worked together to get the program up and running in just a few days.

- Elgin Independent School District (Elgin ISD) ACE after school program,
- Elgin ISD Food Service staff,
- Family Health Center at Elgin ISD,
- Elgin Local Food Action Team,
- The Common Market Texas,
- Firewild Catering and Events,
- The Elgin Owl & Home Goods Store,
- Taylor Farm,
- Advocacy Outreach,
- and the citizens of Elgin, Texas.

Funding was provided by members and supporters of the Texas Center for Local Food.

Keys to Success:

- School leadership: Elgin ISD after school program staff, school food service staff, and top-level leadership actively support local farms and local economies and have been committed since 2013.
- The Common Market Texas food distributor immediately pivoted from bulk wholesale to food safe family size boxes of fresh local vegetables.
- Contract already in place: Texas Center for Local Food (TCLF) already had a contract with Elgin ISD for TCLF Farm-to-Kids Texas after school program.
- Volunteers: Elgin Local Food Action Team, a small group of farmers and supporters working to make Elgin a center of local food economic activity provided volunteers for distribution, Facebook encouragement to families, monitoring Next Door for community feedback, graphic design for flyers and signage.
- Local restaurant support: Firewild Catering and Events provided indoor operations space, walk-in cooler space, staging, distribution areas.

- Texas Center for Local Food had cash on hand to manage the cash flow and staff expertise in logistics, project management and education.

Overview of the crisis from our Elgin, Texas vantage point

**Food shortages** - By March 20, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic was causing food shortages. With Elgin schools closed, families with K-12 children suddenly needed to provide breakfast and lunch. Elgin Independent School District (Elgin ISD) leadership jumped into high gear and established curbside meal pickup for all 4,000 Elgin ISD students plus bus meal delivery to many rural areas. This saved many kids from going hungry; 80% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch.

**Help needed for dinners and weekend meals** - But breakfast and lunch alone weren’t enough to feed families who were now out of work, many with no income coming in. Families needed help with dinners and weekend meals. Elgin is high poverty town of 10,000 just outside Austin, Texas. 19% of children under age 18 live in poverty. Most workers drive to Austin for their jobs and households earn a median household income of $50,000/year, half of which is spent on housing and transportation.

**Farmers’ wholesale orders evaporated overnight** - Texas farmers who had been selling to restaurants, hospitals and schools suddenly saw their orders plummet. Wholesale orders for fresh vegetables went to nearly zero just as the Texas vegetable harvest was beginning.

**Sick children were at higher risk** - Families with children who had diet-related illness were at risk of not having foods they require. Families to receive boxes were identified by the doctors and health care providers at the Elgin Family Health Center at Elgin ISD.

**Food insecurity worsened** - Food insecure families and homeless youth were having more than the usual trouble accessing food. Families who had never used a food bank before were lining up for basic needs.

**Concern over COVID-safety in grocery stores.** Elderly people living in very rural areas were afraid to leave their homes and go to the grocery store. Many people of all incomes were hesitant to go to the grocery store. Elgin and Bastrop County governments did not have a mask requirement in place.

**Who is the Texas Center for Local Food and why Elgin, Texas?**

TCLF is a statewide non-profit created by Texas farmers to increase consumption of locally grown foods in Texas. TCLF provides education, research, and technical assistance to create regional food systems in Texas that support prosperous family farms, healthy Texans and vibrant rural economies. Our values are centered on justice and the health of all Texans.
Elgin is a high poverty town. Elgin ISD has about 4,000 students, 80% of whom qualify for free or reduced lunch. Elgin is 25 miles east of Austin on highway 290. Child poverty rate is 19%.

With significant infrastructure in place to create robust local food systems, Elgin is in many ways a model in Texas for local food as a driver of economic activity that includes jobs with dignity at enterprises providing healthy food for all Texans and operating in ways that are healthy for the environment. Elgin is the home of Coyote Creek Organic Feed Mill (founded in 2007 as the first commercial organic feed mill in all of Texas), World’s Best Eggs (certified organic pastured egg farm with 25,000 hens on pasture), Sustainable Agriculture program of Austin Community College at the Elgin campus, and many local farms. TCLF’s office is in Elgin.

The Elgin ISD leadership is deeply committed to access to healthy local food for all students and their families. Elgin ISD was awarded a USDA Farm-to-School grant and in tandem with the after-school program (ACE) engages students and families with locally grown food and farms.

The Elgin Local Food Action Team is a group of a dozen citizens committed to creating a strong local food economy in Elgin. The group got together in 2019 to support the Elgin Local Food Center, a planned shared use commercial kitchen and food access center in downtown Elgin. Unfortunately, the project was not funded by City leaders and economic development funding was shifted to highway retail development. The Local Food Action Team stayed together and continues to work with the private sector to develop new enterprise to meet the goals of local jobs with dignity and healthy food access for everyone in this high poverty community.

Phases of the TCLF Team Pandemic Responsive Operations

Phase I: Selling boxes to the public (March 23-June 3). We distributed our first 100 boxes on March 25. Working in tandem with our partners The Common Market Texas, the Family Health Center of Elgin Independent School District (ISD) and the Elgin Local Food Action Team, we began by selling Texas Farms Veggie Boxes to the general public for $32 and donating about 10% of boxes to children with diet-related illness. TCLF bought the veggie boxes for $22 and marked them up by $5 to cover online store and credit card processing fees, supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE). We added another $5 to cover the cost of donated and volunteer boxes.

The Common Market Texas (CMT) was essential to program success. CMT Director Margaret Smith was continuously available for program design and implementation. She kept the TCLF team informed of box contents ahead of delivery so we could publicize on social media to
boost sales. The Common Market Texas is value-based food distributor out of Houston that provides only Texas-grown food. CMT already had relationships in place with farmers, full packing and distribution capacity and existing buyers in Austin that brought them past Elgin on highway 290. Margaret sent flyers with information about farms growing our veggies so everyone receiving a box could know the farmer who grew their food. Customers commented frequently how much they enjoyed learning about the farmers.

Phase II: Elgin ISD after school program K-5 students’ family engagement (April 7 - June 3) -- Pivoting the Texas Center for Local Food Farms-to-Kids Texas after school program. Beginning on April 7, led by Caroline Johnston, Director of the Elgin ISD after school program (ACE: After school Centers for Education), we expanded the program to engage families in home cooking with fresh local vegetables. By June 3, the Elgin ISD ACE team had engaged 66 families per week distributed a total of 285 fresh veggie boxes to school families. Each week, students prepared a meal with their family and posted videos and pictures of their creations on Facebook. We saw an amazingly high level of student and family engagement. Visit the Elgin ISD ACE Facebook page to see the videos and pictures. [https://www.facebook.com/pg/ELGINISDACE/community/?ref=page_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/ELGINISDACE/community/?ref=page_internal)

Phase III: Farm to School at Home Elgin ISD after school program K-12 students’ family engagement (June 30 and July 9). We expanded our after-school family engagement beyond K-5 to include all K-12 Elgin ISD student and their families. Working with Elgin ISD food service and after school program staff, we ran a short, 2-week pilot and distributed 200 veggie boxes to 100 families. Families were invited to engage on Facebook, sharing their recipes and meals with their peers.

Phase IV and Next Steps: The Texas Center for Local Food has applied for funding through the America’s Healthy Food Financing Initiative to restructure the Texas Farms Veggie Box program as a social enterprise with Firewild Catering and Events. If funded, this restructuring will begin in Fall 2020. The resulting enterprise will:

- Integrate SNAP for veggie box purchase
- Increase hours of operation easing pickup time constraints for customers
- Create jobs rather than rely exclusively on volunteers
- Increase consumer and community engagement

TCLF has also applied for funding from the USDA Food and Agriculture Service Learning Program (FASLP) to continue and expand our Farm to School at Home program. This funding would amplify the impact of the Farm to School program by supporting peer-to-peer service learning engagement through September, 2022.

Operational Details

The Elgin Local Food Action Team, a small group of local farmers and food advocates convened in mid-March and asked the question “What can we do to help our community during this emergency?”. The group wanted to be sure all Elgin residents had enough food and that they all could access that food safely. Sue Beckwith of TCLF and a member of the Local Food Action Team, shared that the Common Market might have weekly veggie boxes available. The group decided to move forward with The Common Market and agreed that TCLF would run the program.
In the early stages of the pandemic, philanthropic grants were being given to larger non-profit organizations and area food banks. TCLF had enough cash on hand (from members) to manage the cash flow without grant funding and staff willing to address this emergency as volunteers.

A few days later the agreement with The Common Market was in place and the first delivery was scheduled for March 25. The Elgin Local Food Action team set up curbside delivery procedures, coordinated donated veggie boxes to the Family Medical Center, and promoted box sales on Facebook and NextDoor. TCLF staff created an online store using Shopify. The store opened on March 23 and by March 25, all 87 boxes were sold out. Firewild Catering and Events set up their cooler and facility to handle cold storage and distribution at curbside. Weekly distribution continued through June 3, with 1,117 boxes being sold to 400 distinct customers who placed 608 orders.

Throughout the project, Margaret Smith from the Common Market was constantly available to support our project. She made sure we got our orders delivered on time and shared profiles of the Texas farmers who were growing our food. These profiles created an important and valuable connection between people with veggie boxes and the farmers who grew the food. This project would not have been possible without The Common Market Texas in Houston; they had a food safe facility, agreements with farmers, distribution capacity, and perhaps above all, a deep commitment to feed the people of Texas with home grown fresh food.

Local TV news reporter Jenni Lee did an excellent piece on our program on Austin TV KVUE, “The Impact of COVID-19 on Texas Farmers”. It was our good fortune that the camera crew approached Jarred Maxwell from Foodshed Investors who was there picking up samples for replication in Austin. In early April, Caroline Johnston, Director of the Elgin ISD ACE after school program, approached Sue Beckwith of TCLF about expanding the program as a pivot of TCLF’s Farm-to-Kids Texas after school program. The Elgin ISD ACE staff and TCLF Farm-to-Kids staff agreed that they could create a family engagement center on Facebook. The program took shape quickly and by April 22, the first veggie boxes were delivered to staff who then made meals, created videos and pictures and posted them to Facebook to encourage family participation.

ACE program staff made flyers in English and Spanish and posted to Facebook and by April 29, had 22 families signed up. Participation and engagement continued to increase until the program ended on June 3. Two additional distributions took place in summer 2020 as family engagement activities with the Elgin ISD Farm-to-School program.

We had several requests from folks who wanted to buy boxes and have us donate them. We offered donation options on our Shopify store for $5, $10, and $20; our cash donations totaled $1,205. TCLF also received cash donations through our main website and generous checks by mail. However, when folks asked to buy a box that we would donate for them, we told them no. We explained that we wanted to build community and would prefer (if they were local) that they buy the box, pick it up and donate it themselves to a neighbor who needs healthy food. Part of TCLF’s work is to support community.
development around food and we felt that encouraging direct donation would support community. We know of at least six (6) people who did this and many did it every week. One couple bought a box and delivered it to their rural neighbor, another bought a box for her dog sitter and still others arranged with local partner Advocacy Outreach to pick up boxes in their names. Until their own harvest was ready, Jill and Ward Taylor of Taylor Farm bought discounted boxes to resell to rural elderly who feared going to the grocery in town. TCLF believes these one-on-one connections create bonds that may endure beyond this pandemic.

The program ended when TCLF no longer had sufficient funding to pay staff to continue the program and staff were unable to continue working as volunteers. Coordination of the many incredible volunteers and partners requires staff time to ensure activities flow on schedule, budgets are adhered to, and customers and partners are all delighted.

**Partners!**

**The Common Market**
Margaret Smith, general manager worked with us with expediency, compassion and skill to design a program that worked for farmers and our customer and school families; Jon the delivery driver always arrived with a big hello and a smile and always offered to help even though our volunteers unloaded the truck easily.

**Advocacy Outreach**
Distributed veggie boxes to homeless youth and needy families in Elgin. Worked with veggie box donors to distributed additional donated boxes.

**Taylor Farm**
Bought boxes to resell to elderly rural residents who were afraid to go to the grocery store until their own farm harvest was ready to provide veggies.

**Elgin ISD ACE**
Caroline Johnston, Nancy Smith, Arianna Ozuna, Eileen O’Connor and Kacey Christiansen-Jones; these EISD staff were the strength behind family engagement; created fantastic meals with the veggies, made videos and posted for families to share on Elgin ISD ACE Facebook; went out of their way to pick up and deliver boxes directly to families who couldn't pick them up themselves.

**Elgin ISD Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent**
Behind every successful project are committed champions; Superintendent Dr. Jodi Duron and Deputy Superintendent Dr. Peter Perez were there every single time we needed approval from the higher ups, we got it - in minutes.

**Elgin ISD Food Service**
Elizabeth Guajardo, Guadalupe Martin even though they were incredibly busy creating meals for thousands of families always took our calls and answered our questions.

**Elgin Owl and Home Goods Store**
Molly Alexander promoted our boxes to her entire email list, generating sell out for us the first few weeks until the program caught on.

**Firewild Catering and Events**
Amy Miley & Travis Miller were a dream to work with; let us use their walk-in cooler even when we could only pay them sometimes; their partnership was a cornerstone to our success.

**Key Figures**
Helped Sue Beckwith of the Texas Center for Local Food set up bookkeeping so we could report expenses and income easily and correctly.

**Family Health Center at Elgin ISD**
Jennifer Lopez and her crew came every Wednesday right on time to pick up box donated to children with diet-related illness.

**Methodist Healthcare Ministries**
Deb Laurents the Elgin Wesley Nurse, shared informant about the program and offered encouragement on the days when the going was hard. She was available anytime.

AND…. Everyone who liked and shared our posts on Facebook and Instagram and everyone who bought Texas Farms Veggie Boxes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteers!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ada Castle and the women of First Presbyterian</td>
<td>Sewed masks for our volunteers and staff - and also for anyone in Elgin who wanted one including school maintenance staff &amp; social service workers; by July they had made 1,000 masks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church of Elgin</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Kimmel</td>
<td>Wrote, edited online store explanatory content so customer information would be clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley Wiechek</td>
<td>Distribution team distributed boxes every Wednesday for 11 weeks for 5 hours in the heat, rain; painted beautiful sign to direct traffic; Created fantastic meals with veggies, made instructional videos for families to share on Elgin ISD ACE Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayla Ricci</td>
<td>Distribution team distributed boxes every Wednesday for 11 weeks for 5 hours in heat, rain; carried multiple boxes from the cooler 50 times each Wednesday; Created fantastic meals with veggies and posted for families to share on Elgin ISD ACE Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bailey Braden</td>
<td>Distributed boxes to hundreds of families at Elgin Middle School in 104-degree sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Bogart</td>
<td>Distribution team distributor; Distribution team distributed boxes every Wednesday for 11 weeks for 5 hours in the heat, rain; provided morale boost every time we needed it; unflinching in the face of barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cara Farnswroth-Gaines</td>
<td>Distributed boxes to hundreds of families at Elgin Middle School in 104-degree sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caroline Krejci</td>
<td>Provided useful editorial feedback on this report; it’s a better read for her input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte Swenson</td>
<td>Unloaded the veggie box delivery truck a bunch of times; amplified Facebook posts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Clark</td>
<td>Created beautiful flyers for us to hand out with boxes; wonderful graphic designs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jake Carter</td>
<td>Unloaded the veggie box delivery truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica Janssen</td>
<td>Distributed boxes to hundreds of families at Elgin Middle School in 104-degree sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy Casnovsky</td>
<td>Monitored NextDoor &amp; Facebook for community feedback; unloaded the delivery truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Assata</td>
<td>Advised us on setting up our distribution systems; helped distribute on our first day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Tritsch</td>
<td>Our amazing volunteer editor cleaned up this report improving it significantly from drafts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krissy Voutas</td>
<td>Distribution team order checker; every Wednesday for 10 weeks; in the heat, rain for 5 hours; helped create weekly order lists; brought weights for our market tent; returned cones to their storage place at the of many long days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Menchen</td>
<td>Picked up the traffic cones and set them up every Wednesday at 8am for 10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patti Lou Ryland</td>
<td>Distribution team distributor; handed out boxes every Wednesday for 10 weeks; in the heat, rain for 5 hours; sat in her truck for 4 hours on the street to direct customers to our alternate location the day it stormed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tave Lawhorn</td>
<td>Helped unload the truck; used his gifts of strength &amp; height to setup our distribution tent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany Finley</td>
<td>Took pictures of veggies and posted on Facebook; amplified promotions on Facebook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiger, Erin, Bryce, and Aidan Flores</td>
<td>Unloaded the veggie box delivery truck in record time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Fender</td>
<td>Unloaded the veggie box delivery truck a bunch of times, sometimes on short notice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travis Singley</td>
<td>Facebook, Instagram posts; took pictures and posted; amplified Facebook posts; responded to all inquiries on TCLF Facebook page; drove from 20 miles Pflugerville each Wednesday morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yadira Lira</td>
<td>Translated information into Spanish so we could better serve everyone</td>
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</table>
Volunteers!

Customer reactions

Customers were overwhelmingly pleased with the purchase process, pickup experience and veggie box contents. There were a few boxes (less than 10) that didn’t include enough produce and any customer who asked got a full refund if they were not satisfied.

We surveyed only the buyers who paid for boxes and not the school families. We didn’t have contact information for the school families to protect their privacy. We did, however see significant positive feedback from Elgin ISD school families on the Elgin ISD ACE Facebook page.

Customer survey results from those who bought boxes are posted here.

Example Responses from Buyers and Families

Please tell us the things you would most like to improve in the Texas Farms Veggie Box or in your purchasing or pickup experience with us?

- I honestly can't think of anything that needs to change
- I would like to be able to customize orders and bulk order certain items. Also would like to see zero plastic in the orders
- It's great to know the farms from which the produce comes. There may be a way to incentivize folks to buy a certain number of boxes over several weeks, if that's of interest. Like a 'punchcard' for loyal shoppers?
- Everything was fine
- I think the program is great just as it is.
- I don't have any suggestions. I'm very happy with what has been in the boxes.
- I would love more fruit.

Please tell us the things you like most about the Texas Farms Veggie Box?

- I did love the option to obtain fresh veggies without going to the store.
- Freshly picked produce easily available
- Huge, delicious surprises. Sweet, tasty melon. Delicious cauliflower, kale, chard,
mushrooms, carrots, sweet potatoes, zucchini, tomatoes, corn......all delicious! Different each time. Always new surprises.

- The incredible freshness. And today's watermelons were the best I have ever had.
- The produce is great and I like being able to help folks out with what I buy.
- The surprise, and the thought of some farmer person putting that food in the box.
- I wanted to let you know we love the veg boxes very much! We usually make a drive to Sprouts in round rock just to get better produce (we don’t like buying from HEB/Wal-Mart in Elgin...) I hope y’all keep doing this for a long time, it’s very fresh and we appreciate having this option very much.
- I simply love the option to eat local and the challenge of using the box items. maybe a recipe card or two featuring items from each week’s box would be helpful?

Sample posts from Elgin ISD families in the TCLF Farm-to-Kids-Texas ACE after school program on the Elgin ISD ACE Facebook page.

- Zina: Soaked the cucumbers in dill pickle juice for an awesome snack and made caldo de res (beef/vegetable soup) for dinner. Thanks Elgin ISD ACE.
- Anottia made a stew with her veggie box. She had fun. Thank you Elgin ISD ACE.
- Beau made zucchini for the family and it was DELICIOUS!
- We made zucchini pancakes from our veggie box yesterday.
- Watermelon-cucumber salad with feta cheese by Janelle.
- Janelle made stir-fry cabbage and mushrooms
- Janelle made Baked Parmesan Yellow Squash
- Cucumber salad with red onions! And sautéed mushrooms in spinach
- We love our Farm to table box of food! Salad and carrot sticks! Baked sweet potato Grapefruit for dessert!
- Low carb Shrimp and Sausage skillet
- Yummy watermelon from our veggie box this week! — with Meaghan
- We had fun with this week’s box. Made some more zucchini /squash pasta. Made some sweet potato fries, used the lettuce for some chicken tacos. And the whole family enjoyed the delicious watermelon
- With last week’s box I made a salad with the lettuce and cucumbers. My son made a pineapple and kale smoothie!
- This should be interesting. We got this free veggie box from the Elgin ISD ACE program today and this kid swears she’s part of the Food Network now. She's doing really good so far.
• Tonight the kids and I prepared sautéed veggies from our #TCLFveggiebox They helped me slice, measure, ingredients and serve the food.
• This week box we made a chicken salad with purple onion and sauté mushrooms and green melon on the side.
• Easy lunch with today’s box! Cilantro Lime Chicken Avocado Salad with the green and red lettuce.

Building Texas Local Food Economies
Increases the resilience of our local food supply,
Provides jobs with dignity in rural communities,
Increases access to healthy food for all Texans, and can
Keep our soil, water and air healthy mitigating the effects of climate change.

This report was prepared by Sue Beckwith of the Texas Center for Local Food with input from partners. Any errors or omissions are her own.
July 28, 2020
Please contact the Texas Center for Local Food for more information or feedback:
SueB@TexasLocalFood.org
APPENDIX

Financial Report

The Texas Center for Local Food and our partners launched this program with no philanthropic funding. We hope to secure grant to continue this program in the Fall of 2020.

Texas Center for Local Food
Emergency Pandemic Response
Texas Farms Veggie Box Program - Spring 2020
Financial Report - Final¹

Income
- Veggie Box Sales 1,865 boxes $38,998
- Less discounts/refunds ($26)
- Donations $1,205
Total Income $40,177

Costs
- Cost of Goods Sold $36,742
- Expenses $2,166
Total Costs $38,908

Net income to cover TCLF staff & admin expenses $1,269

¹ Note that TCLF staff salaries are not included; staff worked as volunteers for 15-20 hours per week during the 11 weeks of the program.