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January 22, 2019

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## West Virginia to Receive an Additional \$6 Million For Hunger Relief

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**Charleston W.Va.** -- The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is anticipating over \$6 million in additional food commodities from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) for FY 2019. The extra commodities come as a result of the trade mitigation efforts by the federal government. TEFAP is a federal program that provides food commodities at no cost to Americans in need of short-term hunger relief. In FY 2018, West Virginia received \$4 million in total commodities. This year, the WVDA expects to receive a total of \$10 million.

“We were able to secure additional commodities with a new philosophy, as well as relaying a better understanding of our state’s needs to our federal partners. Working together, we will be able to serve more people than ever before,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “No one should go hungry.”

The USDA, through the TEFAP program, makes food commodities available for distribution to low-income families through emergency food providers like foodbanks or soup kitchens. In addition, the USDA, through the WVDA, provides funding to offset the costs to store and distribute the TEFAP commodities. The amount of food and funds available to states is based on a formula which considers state poverty and unemployment rates.

“We are always willing to take more assistance to help West Virginians in distress. The next step is to work with our foodbanks, as well as other partners,

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to figure out how to manage the additional volume,” said Food Distribution Program Manager Lora Hammack. “This is a good problem to have.”

The two foodbanks who receive TEFAP commodities are the Mountaineer Food Bank in Braxton County and the Facing Hunger Foodbank in Cabell County. The WVDA provides technical assistance to these entities to help with the distribution of these products. The department has asked for \$300,000 in additional monies from Governor Jim Justice and the West Virginia Legislature to manage these extra commodities.

For more information, contact Crescent Gallagher at [cgallagher@wvda.us](mailto:cgallagher@wvda.us) or 304-558-5050.

*The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.*

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