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Ohio Association of Foodbanks Statement on USDA Investment to Support Farmers, Deliver Nutrition Assistance, and Bolster Rural Economies

Media Statement from Joree Novotny, executive director, Ohio Association of Foodbanks

“Today, USDA announced \$1 billion toward a national investment in proven initiatives that respond to the needs of people facing hunger and invest in resilient local food supply chains and farmers.

“The USDA will allocate \$500 million nationally for additional food purchases for emergency food providers through the federal Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). Commodities available through TEFAP have made up a declining share of the overall food our network is able to source to prevent hunger and hardship. This additional allocation will be critical to supplementing the continued support that foodbanks receive from retailers and manufacturers, generous local donors, farmers and food producers, and our partners at the State of Ohio.

“Additionally, the USDA will invest \$500 million nationally for the continuation of the Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) Cooperative Agreement Program. This program, known locally as Ohio CAN (Community + Agriculture + Nutrition), has connected 180 farmers, growers, and producers and Ohio’s statewide and regional food hubs with opportunities to maintain and scale their distribution channels, while directing nourishing, culturally responsive foods to Ohioans facing hunger. As we await the passage of a permanent farm bill, we are grateful for this one-time, stop-gap measure to continue the success of Ohio CAN seamlessly.

“The number of people visiting local food pantries across Ohio has surged, reflecting a growing and urgent need for support in our communities. We served 35% more children, 39% more adults, and 58% more older adults in 2023 than in 2019. Fortunately, foodbanks are trusted providers that not only alleviate hunger today but also contribute to long-term economic security and improved health. We will continue to partner with Congress to pass a Farm Bill that secures funding, strengthens nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and TEFAP and propels us forward on a path to a more food secure state and nation.”

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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 3,600 member charities including food pantries, hot meals, and other hunger relief programs. In SFY 2023, the association and its member foodbanks were able to acquire and distribute more than 256 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow the association on Twitter, stay connected on Facebook and visit them on the web at www.ohiofoodbanks.org.

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