

## **700,000 Masks Being Distributed to Agricultural Community**

The Ventura County Office of Emergency Services, and the California Departments of Food and Agriculture, and Pesticide Regulations together have provided over 700,000 facemasks to help provide protection to farmworkers and other agricultural operations. The Agricultural Commissioner's Office has been reaching out to growers, farm labor contractors, packer/shippers and pest control businesses to make arrangement to distribute masks from the Commissioner's offices in Camarillo and Santa Paula.

"I want to say how grateful I am to all of the hardworking farmers, farmworkers, pest control workers, fresh food packers and all those who bring high quality food from our fields and ranches to our communities near and far. Our food system is critical to our County and Nation's collective health. Our Farmworkers are critical in keeping the system strong and healthy. These masks combined with the protection measures in the [Agricultural Advisory](#) will help protect this important workforce," said Ed Williams, County of Ventura Agricultural Commissioner.

The County of Ventura, in a collaboration with the County Executive Office, the Farmworker Resource Program, Farm Bureau of Ventura County, Ventura County Agricultural Association, Reiter Affiliated Companies, Good Farms, Brokaw Ranch and the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has been working together during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the agricultural community.

"Our farmworkers are essential to providing food," said Talia Barrera, County of Ventura Farmworker Resource Program Manager. "During this time, we have been working to provide more than 43,000 farmworkers with important information so they are informed about the situation and where they can get needed resources. This outreach is important during this time and has been very important throughout the year in meeting the needs of this important population."

The Farmworker Resource Program coordinators assist in facilitating prompt resolutions to workplace concerns such as payroll issues and working conditions, navigating services available from public agencies, and leveraging existing resources. The program is staffed by two trilingual employees who are knowledgeable about the agricultural industry and serve as outreach resources to farmworkers and their employers. The partnerships developed through this program have been helpful in the COVID-19 response and outreach. Educational outreach materials have been provided with Farmworker paychecks, information has been provided through WhatsApp which helps community members who do not read or write, videos have been created in multiple languages and new platforms have been developed on social media to share the message.

For additional information about the Farmworker Resource Program, call (805) 385-1899, email [HSAAGFRP@ventura.org](mailto:HSAAGFRP@ventura.org) or visit [www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/farmworker-resources/](http://www.ventura.org/human-services-agency/farmworker-resources/). For more information about the Agricultural Worker Protection Advisory please contact the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at (805) 388-4222, or online at <https://www.ventura.org/agricultural-commissioner/>