

## ERS Peer Review Plan

Preliminary Title: Overview of the Farmers to Families Food Box Program

Type of Report  
(ERR, EIB, EB) EIB

Agency: Economic Research Service [X] Influential Scientific Information  
USDA [ ] Highly Influential Scientific Assessment

Agency Contact: Kelly Maguire, kelly.b.maguire@usda.gov

Subject of Review: The economic recession induced by the onset of the pandemic created hardships for many businesses and families. In the agricultural sector, many farmers, ranchers, and dairy producers, and their distributors, saw reduced demand for their products and services as food service entities closed or operated at a reduced capacity. Simultaneously, rising unemployment contributed to an increase in food hardship for millions of families. As a result, many turned to Federal food and nutrition assistance programs and/or charitable food assistance (e.g., food banks and pantries) to meet their food needs. To help support farmers, ranchers, dairy producers, and their distributors, and families, the Federal government passed legislation in late March 2020 authorizing the USDA to create the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program). Through this program, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)—the agency that administered the program—contracted with food producers, processors, and distributors (i.e., “contractors”) to package domestically produced agricultural commodities and deliver them to non-profit organizations (e.g., food banks and food pantries) for distribution to families in need. The latter may have been particularly important during the pandemic as evidence suggests that private, charitable food assistance may help to fill gaps in Federal food and nutrition assistance programs. This report presents an overview of the Food Box Program and examines the distribution of food boxes across counties in the United States and whether counties with greater need were more likely to received food boxes through the program.

Purpose of Review: The purpose of the review is to ensure the high-quality of the economic analysis, transparent explanation of methods, objective interpretation of results, and effective communication to the intended audience.

Type of Review: [ ] Panel Review [X] Individual Reviewers

[ ] Alternative Process (Briefly Explain):

Timing of Review (Est.): Start: 2/1/2024 Completed: 8/19/2024

Number of Reviewers: [ ] 3 or fewer [X] 4 to 10 [ ] More than 10

Primary Disciplines/Types of Expertise Needed for Review: Economists

Reviewers selected by:  Agency  Designated Outside Organization

Opportunities for Public Comment?  Yes  No

If yes, briefly state how and when these opportunities will be provided:

How:

When:

Peer Reviewers Provided with Public Comments?  Yes  No

Public Nominations Requested for Review Panel?  Yes  No