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**For Immediate Release**  Contact: Liz Harder, 217-590-2114

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**ILLINOIS FOOD BANKS HARVEST**

**$100,000 GIVING TUESDAY GIFT**

**FROM FARMER COOPERATIVE**

A person standing in front of a sign

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On the eve of Giving Tuesday, Farm Credit Illinois (FCI) announced a $100,000 donation to the Feeding Illinois food banks serving central and southern Illinois. This second $100,000 gift in 2020 from Farm Credit Illinois to food banks continues supporting families in need as the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic linger throughout the state.

The $100,000 gift is allocated equally among four Feeding Illinois food banks including Eastern Illinois Foodbank based in Urbana, Central Illinois Foodbank based in Springfield, St. Louis Area Foodbank based in Bridgeton, Mo., which serves the Metro East and surrounding Illinois counties, and Tri-State Food Bank based in Evansville, Ind., which serves southern Illinois.

Jim Hires, Feeding Illinois Board Member (left) and Aaron Johnson, FCI President & CEO (right)

Three food banks are leveraging their $25,000 portion of the overall gift towards local year-end matching gift challenges to encourage others to provide financial donations. The Tri-State Food Bank is directing their portion towards securing a satellite cold storage facility to allow more fresh fruit and vegetables options for their southern Illinois consumers.

Every $1 donated provides 4-7 meals to families in need through these Feeding Illinois food banks – meaning $100,000 of support provides more than one-half million meals to families. Those meals – and more – are needed as an estimated 350,000 people are facing food insecurity in FCI’s central and southern Illinois 60-county service area. During the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity has increased overall by an estimated 35% – and food insecurity among children increased by 46%.”

"The demand for mobile food distributions has never been higher,” says Glenn Roberts, Tri-State Food Bank Executive Director. “Food banks are challenged to maintain the frequency of mobile distributions and the capacity to target all of the food deserts to fully meet the need."

“Farm Credit recognizes there is a family behind every statistic,” notes Eric Mosbey, FCI Board chair and Crawford County farmer. “With growing numbers of neighbors in need this holiday season, FCI is giving families access to the very food our cooperative’s farmer-members grow and raise.”

"The need in our communities remains high; we are so inspired by the way people are coming together to help each other during these challenging times,” says Pam Molitoris, Central Illinois Foodbank Executive Director. “Farm Credit Illinois’ generous donation gives us the opportunity to secure and distribute much needed nutritious items such as protein and dairy. Their partnership is truly making a difference in the lives of those we serve."

“During these challenging times, we are so grateful to incredible companies like Farm Credit Illinois for their continued partnership to help our neighbors in need,” says Derek May, St. Louis Area Foodbank Director of Philanthropy. “This generous donation from Farm Credit Illinois will provide 100,000 meals to families across southern Illinois during a time when so many are struggling to keep their families nourished. The kindness and generosity of Farm Credit Illinois provides hope as together we look to serve and strengthen the communities served by the St. Louis Area Foodbank”.

“FCI is committed to helping our rural communities thrive today and tomorrow,” notes Aaron Johnson, FCI President & CEO. “We are grateful to the Feeding Illinois food banks focused on eliminating food insecurity in our backyards. Working together, we can bring positive change while benefitting those who we were created to serve.”

“Many in our community are facing hunger for the first time, and this gift from Farm Credit Illinois could not come at a better time,” notes Jim Hires, Eastern Illinois Foodbank President & CEO. “Their support ensures we will continue to be a vital resource in eastern Illinois for our neighbors experiencing food insecurity.”

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Farm Credit Illinois is a farmer-owned and directed agricultural cooperative serving the southern 60 counties of Illinois with competitive and flexible financing, crop insurance expertise, and Rural 1st® lending for rural life. Farm Credit Illinois manages a $4.5 billion loan portfolio, sells 1.36 million acres of crop insurance coverage, and employs 230 staff based in the Mahomet headquarters and 14 regional office locations. The U.S. Farm Credit System supports rural communities, farm families, and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services today and tomorrow.

Food Bank Media Contacts:

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