



CENTER FOR FOOD SYSTEMS
AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Fulfilling the Needs

Insight on ensuring a community's needs are met and a story of caring for one's own—this short vignette is part of our “Virginia Food Systems and COVID-19 Story Collection Project” that aims to highlight, collect, and share stories of hope and resilience in our food system amidst the pandemic. Find out more about this project and view our entire series on [our website](#).

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The vast changes resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic have required adaptations within every facet of marketing and sales—especially with food. The Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown Marketplace was created in the middle of April to serve the needs of the Loudoun County-area community. The Marketplace was established as an e-commerce platform to connect producers and consumers alike, and it simultaneously eliminated the need for intermediaries within the traditional supply chain. Further, payments for goods from the Marketplace were made “immediately from the customer to the business owner” (Loudoun Economic Development, 2020).

As times became more difficult in the midst of the pandemic, some food items became scarce. “At a time of global supply chain interruptions and product scarcity, we want Loudouners to know they have a reliable source of food that’s right down the road,” said Buddy Rizer, the Loudoun Economic Development Executive Director (Loudoun Economic Development, 2020).

The ability to access the Marketplace and its offerings became more crucial as the pandemic progressed. The increased need sparked a link between the Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown Marketplace and The National Conference Center in Leesburg; the Marketplace utilized the facilities at The Conference Center to set up a drive-thru for pickup.



Photo courtesy of Loudoun Economic Development

Generously, The National Conference Center did not set fees nor sales-based premiums for the Marketplace's use of The Conference Center. Instead, The National Conference Center only requested donations of food items to distribute to their own employees that were furloughed due to the pandemic. The Marketplace's merchants responded to the request well, as "each of the vendors has contributed generously towards our employee food drive", said The Center's Food and Beverage Director, Todd Goldian (Loudoun Economic Development, 2020).

In addition to The National Conference Center's location for the Loudoun Made, Loudoun, Grown Marketplace's drive-thru, other locations like Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum, Chrysalis Vineyards, and Locksley Cheese offered pickup. Delivery was made an option for select locations. With more than 200 food and farm businesses involved in Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown, something that meets the liking of everyone should be in ready supply.

Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown Marketplace is open to all Loudoun farms and rural businesses. For more information about shopping at the Marketplace and a list of frequently asked questions, [visit this site](#). Also, you can visit the [Facebook page for Loudoun Farms](#) for more information. Loudoun County's response and continued updates on the Coronavirus outbreak can be [viewed here](#). This vignette was written on the basis of an original Loudoun Economic Development piece from May 7, 2020.

References

Loudoun Economic Development. (2020, May 7). *Loudoun's New Online Farm Marketplace Adds Two Pick-Up Locations*. Retrieved from: <https://biz.loudoun.gov/2020/05/07/loudoun-marketplace-pick-up-locations/>