



**March 2, 2022**

### **Waldo County Bounty PFAS Statement**

Like many of you, Waldo County Bounty is reacting to the heartbreaking and frightening news that some of the farmland in our region is contaminated with PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances. This news has hit close to home for many of our farms, friends, and neighbors here in Waldo County and across the state.

We have prepared this statement to be transparent with our hunger relief partners and supporters in regard to how we source farm produce and the steps our suppliers are taking to ensure a healthy and safe food supply. It is also our aim to foster informed action and advocacy, and use our platform and network to support relief for impacted farms in our community and beyond.

A family of man-made chemicals, PFAS are commonly called “forever chemicals” because they do not degrade in the environment. They are bioaccumulative, toxic at low concentrations, and easily transferred to groundwater and other media. They are linked to severe health issues.

The scope and scale of this PFAS contamination crisis are just starting to be understood. PFAS are present in a wide range of consumer goods, from waterproofing to food packaging and paints. They can end up in a wastewater treatment plant’s residue (called sludge or biosolids) and paper mill waste (due to the manufacturing of specialty papers), and both waste streams have been used by farms as an approved source of fertility for forage crops. In Maine, it is likely that many types of farms will be impacted as testing expands because a sizable quantity of land formerly used for forage crops has transitioned into vegetable and related production in our region.

As our mission states and our work exemplifies, Waldo County Bounty is committed to relieving hunger, supporting farms, and fostering an equitable food system. We are working toward a food secure community that nurtures all of us. PFAS contamination of farmland threatens the health and safety of our communities, our food supplies, farmer health, and farm viability, as well as our vision of a nurturing and healthy food system.

To respond to this rapidly emerging crisis, Waldo County Bounty is doing the following:

- The **Farm-to-Pantry Program**, which provides locally grown food to Waldo County food pantries, is managed by Daybreak Growers Alliance (DGA). We are confident in DGA’s agility and transparency to track developments among farms whose products they distribute to us and other consumers. Their protocols include ensuring that all of their farm suppliers in Tier 1 locations (towns with known history of licensed biosolid/sludge spreading) are testing for PFAS, that PFAS-impacted farms will notify DGA immediately, and all products with known PFAS issues are removed from circulation. Because DGA works with so many farms, we do not anticipate significant changes in the quantity or variety of produce we are able to buy for pantries in our community.
- Our **Gleaning Program, Veggies For All**, will only glean and accept product donations from farms that are not located near known sites of previous sludge spreading, as based in part on the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's [PFAS Data Map](#), unless PFAS testing or other information proves product safety. For 2022, we anticipate that by the time our gleaning season gets rolling in late-summer, more testing will be completed so we can properly evaluate which farms may be included, as we will always err on the side of caution. We currently anticipate similar gleaning yields to 2021.
- **Farmer Emergency Relief:** We will work with the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), Maine Farmland Trust (MFT), and state agencies to ensure that farmers whose livelihoods or health are impacted by PFAS will receive needed assistance. Funds are needed to offset income losses, to undertake testing, and for long-term health monitoring. We will support and promote emergency relief funds being established by partner organizations, including MOFGA and MFT, for these purposes. You can make a donation to MOFGA or MFT, which are working together and accepting donations for the same fund. Donate to MOFGA [here](#). Donate to MFT [here](#).
- **Advocacy on PFAS to “turn off the tap”:** We will work with partner organizations to advocate for state policies to address this crisis. Several legislative bills are currently under consideration and increased funding for farm testing and emergency relief are being welcomed. We will use our network to educate and inform community members about how they can take action. We also support accelerated research on farmland remediation practices. We join the call for federal funding to address the crisis and to strengthen regulatory processes that currently allow toxic chemicals to be released into the marketplace without adequate testing.

As we navigate present and future challenges, we are lucky to work with farmers who are committed to community wellness and clear communication in the case of both our Farm-to-Pantry and Gleaning Programs. As an organization, we commit to staying abreast of this issue, adjusting protocols where needed, communicating clearly with all people in our network, and improving security and accessibility of our local food system for all. If you have any questions about this, please do not hesitate to email us at [waldocountybounty@gmail.com](mailto:waldocountybounty@gmail.com).

If you would like to know learn more or learn how to advocate on this issue, please utilize the following resources:

[MOFGA PFAS Resources](#)

[Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry \(DACF\) PFAS Overview](#)

[U.S. Food & Drug Administration PFAS Page](#)

[University of Maine Cooperative Extension Guide to Investigating PFAS Risk on Your Farm](#)

Take action to support legislature and other efforts to contain PFAS:

[Help to Protect Maine Soil and Water From PFAS](#) (MOFGA)

[Take Action on PFAS](#) (MFT)

[Ending Sludge Dumping on Farms](#) (Defend Our Health)

Learn from and support the farms who are bravely leading the way in exposing and addressing PFAS:

[Ironwood Farm](#)

[New Beat Farm](#)

[Misty Brook Farm](#)

[McCormick Family Farm](#)

[Songbird Farm](#)

### **About Waldo County Bounty**

A nonprofit hunger relief organization, Waldo County Bounty is committed to improving access to locally-grown foods for people experiencing food insecurity in Waldo County, Maine. Waldo County Bounty fosters a countywide network of organizations with a shared goal of equitable access to fresh, locally grown food and orchestrates cross-sector planning, collaboration, and fundraising initiatives. In 2021, Waldo County Bounty distributed over 70,000 pounds of farm-grown produce to hunger relief agencies through farm purchases and gleaning. For more information, visit [waldocountybounty.me](http://waldocountybounty.me) and like and follow Waldo County Bounty on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).