



**The Fresh Choice - The Proof is in the Bag!**

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the food supply chain and essential the marketing infrastructure. Disruption at the local level raised concerns about food supply chains, farmer income, food security for consumers, and overall food safety. CE&O specialists Bob Barber, Jesse Bamba, and Kuan-Ju Chen collaborated with the Farmers' Cooperative Association of Guam (FCAG) to start a curbside program to replace lost market outlets (such as tourism) with existing local customers. The Curbside Farms initiative is an emergency relief program for small-scale local farmers to produce, package, and distribute fresh local produce to customers. Customers pay a fixed price for the weekly mixed produce bag. Bags also contained printed materials on other Extension programs to address family needs during emergencies, vegetable and herb planting materials and guidance on growing the plants. By focusing on the local level produce demand and marketing, Curbside Farms created micro-markets for farmers, increased consumer awareness, and provided a COVID safe supply of fruits and vegetables to island families. The first weekly distribution of Curbside Farms bags were 100 in May 2020 and averaged 100 \$20 or \$25 bags every week through December 2020. These \$2,000 a week in sales during the COVID-19 pandemic represents gross sales in-excess of \$50,000 from this program alone. The popularity of these bags also inspired Guam Department of Health and Social Services, Seniors' Programs to issue a \$21,000 contract with FCAG to provide every senior in their home based and congregate meals program an \$8 mixed produce bag over a six-week period, an impressive programmatic spinoff.



Mike Augon, Guam Farmer, Farmers Coop Board member, and Chair, Southern Soil & Water Board and Kathrina Reyes, FCAG Board Member.

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