

# PRODUCERS DIRECT

BY FARMERS  
FOR FARMERS

2020



# Response to Covid-19

# Producers Direct's Response to Covid-19

## Covid-19 & Global Food Systems

Looking beyond the immediate global health crisis presented by Covid-19, attention is increasingly focused on the devastating impacts of the global pandemic on the sustainability of global food systems. Rural communities have historically been hardest-hit by similar pandemics. Under-resourced health systems will struggle to respond. Social distancing and lockdowns, effective in the global North, will struggle in the global South to protect the most vulnerable, who don't have the luxury of working from home or stocking their homes with food for 14+ days.

Smallholder farmers produce 70% of food globally. Most smallholders are >60 years, placing them in the highest risk category for Covid-19. The consequences on the sustainability of the world's food supply will be severe. Key challenges range from significant health issues facing rural smallholder communities to potential reversals on gains made toward achieving Zero Hunger. Impacts will reverberate well beyond smallholder communities, as global food supply chains will be affected by protectionism and recession. Further, we anticipate the employment crisis currently facing rural youth worldwide will be exacerbated.



## We are Ready to Respond Now:

Safeguarding the world's food systems is now an immediate priority. In order to do this, we must look to the experts - smallholder farmers - who produce 70% of our food. Producers Direct works with a network of 1 million smallholder farmers. For the last decade, we've pioneered a model committed to building resilience for smallholders, promoting sustainable food systems and powerful market linkages, and empowering farmers to manage sustainable and diverse farming systems.

Our farmer-led model works in direct partnership with an international network of smallholder-owned farming cooperatives, women's groups and youth groups producing a variety of crops including maize, rice, sorghum, fruits, vegetables, honey, coffee, tea, and cocoa. Our model provides end-to-end support services from farm-to-market, blending in-person and digital solutions, all designed by farmers, for farmers.

## What we will do in the next 6 months:



**Provision of Training to support sustainable production of nutritious food**

- Digitise and disperse farmer-friendly training while in-person training is unsafe (radio, WhatsApp, podcasts, farmer-friendly print materials, video, Wefarm).
- Mobilise our network of Lead/Promoter Farmers to prepare their demonstration sites/farms for farmer-to-farmer training post-pandemic.

We will ensure smallholders continue to have access to the resources and information needed to continue to produce a variety of nutritious foods. Training will focus on crop productivity and quality across diverse food crops, climate change adaptation and mitigation, on-farm diversification, and micro-enterprise development.





**Mobilise our international network of 500 Youth Leaders to:**

- Digital aggregation, distribution and sale of nutritious foods to build food security in rural communities.
- Scale-out digital tools to respond, learn and adapt to the evolving crisis.
- Support peers and smallholders to access digital training needed to improve farming practices.
- Keep smallholder communities abreast of evolving information.

Producers Direct has received support from the GHR Foundation / OpenIDEO, the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP) and Pret to empower youth within farming communities as the next generation of farmers. Through our partnerships with like-minded International NGOs, such as Restless Development, we will leverage the power of youth to address this international food crisis.






**Strengthen our international network of farming cooperatives:**

- Support farming cooperatives to maintain connection with and respond to concerns from key supply chain actors.
- Mobilising supply chain actors to provide the market insights and analysis that cooperatives need to respond.
- Utilise digital tools and youth networks to share information across smallholder cooperative members.

Working with our network of farming cooperatives, we are in a position to support in safeguarding food value chains for cash and non-cash crops at the local, national and international (export) level. We will work closely with Cafedirect and Pret in the UK to liaise and support coffee cooperatives.

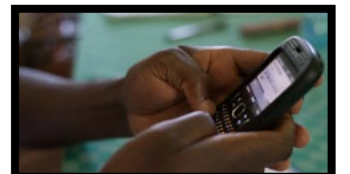




**Scale-out FarmDirect digital tool:**

- Facilitate digital market access & strengthen market linkages.
- Digitise food systems, benefitting producers, buyers and consumers.
- Providing digital training for on-farm management when in-person training is not feasible.
- Promote sharing & learning across farmer networks.
- Improved decision making at multiple levels across food value chains.

With support from the World Bank and GRP, we've built FarmDirect to improve market linkages and strengthen food systems digitally. At a time when in-person trading is limited, FarmDirect will play a vital role in supporting smallholders to sell their products. Youth Leaders have been trained in utilising and scaling out FarmDirect and have relationships with our network of smallholder producers.





**Invest in farmer-led data systems to improve decision making**

- Proactive risk management to minimise food production impacts.
- Mapping of food production systems, including areas of food demand & surplus.
- Impact tracking of direct investments in farming communities to support food production, nutrition and health.

Producers Direct, in partnership with cutting edge technology partners including Cervest and Climate Edge, is supporting farmers and farming cooperatives to use data to manage their risks - including financial risks, production and supply chain risks, and longer-term responsiveness to changing climates. Innovation in predictive modelling and pioneering technology systems, including on-farm sensors, AI and machine learning and blockchain-based traceability systems strongly positions us to leverage the power of data to support smallholder farmer livelihoods and demonstrate impact from funds invested.

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## Investing Now For the Future of Food:

We are proposing a 6-month action plan that responds to the urgent global food priorities presented by the global pandemic. Although we are focused on the next 6-months, this plan is embedded in our longer-term strategy and future vision of a food secure future that harnesses the power and knowledge in smallholder communities globally. We are ready to take action now, and are looking for partners to support this. Together we will make a critical investment in the long-term sustainability of smallholder livelihoods, global food systems and global supply chains - one that is essential if we are going to feed 10 billion people by 2050. Together we can shift market systems and make them work for smallholders and for the planet, building a sustainable, resilient and future-proofed food system.



## Join Us:

**Funding:** We are targeting to raise \$450,000 to support the delivery of our initial 6-month plan across smallholder communities in East Africa and Latin America - including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Peru and Haiti. Funding will support:

1. Mobilising our network Youth Leaders and Promoter Farmers;
2. Supporting Farming Cooperatives to strengthen & protect food supply chains for cash & non-cash crops;
3. Scaling-out our digital tool, FarmDirect, to facilitate digital market linkages and the provision of digital training for smallholders; &
4. Investing in farmer-led data systems to facilitate smarter decision making and proactive risk management.

**Strategic Partnerships:** We are seeking strategic partnerships with:

- Like-minded NGOs and social enterprises to harness the power of youth, smallholders & women to address this international health and food crisis.
- Financing partners looking to channel funding directly to producer organisations to support them address this crisis through locally-driven solutions.

For more information, please contact;

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