

For Immediate Release

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FRESHFARM

HUGO MOGOLLON JOINS FRESHFARM AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks to merge into largest farmers market organization in the Mid-Atlantic region

(WASHINGTON, DC, October 29, 2019) -- FRESHFARM is pleased to announce that Hugo Mogollon, Executive Director of Community Foodworks, has accepted the position of Executive Director of FRESHFARM, effective October 28. With this leadership transition, FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks are merging into a single organization under Mogollon's leadership and the FRESHFARM brand.

Mogollon is widely recognized in the regional food movement as a visionary leader. He is one of three recipients of the 2019 Excellence in Chief Executive Leadership (EXCEL) Award from the Center for Nonprofit Advancement, which recognizes and spotlights outstanding chief executives among nonprofits in the Washington region. He brings extensive leadership in food systems work to FRESHFARM, having served as the Executive Director of Community Foodworks for the past five years, and a deep commitment to building community. Mogollon's innovation, passion, and leadership has transformed Community Foodworks into a key regional player, and will empower FRESHFARM to deepen and broaden its established food systems work in a new era for the organization.

"I've worked with Hugo at Community Foodworks for many years and am constantly inspired by his leadership and strategic vision. He will bring the same energy and unwavering commitment to building an equitable, resilient food system to our combined organization," said Mary Rose Conroy, Chair of the Community Foodworks Board of Directors. "I look forward to continuing to collaborate with him, as well as the integrated board and staff of the new FRESHFARM, to scale up our positive impact for consumers, farmers, and producers throughout the Mid-Atlantic region."

FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks have long worked together as two of the leading nonprofit farmers market organizations in the region and share a commitment to building an

equitable food system, promoting sustainable agriculture, improving food access and education in the community, and enhancing market opportunities for farmers and producers in the Mid-Atlantic. Leadership and staff in both organizations look forward to the opportunities for growth this merger will bring. “We’re excited about bringing Hugo aboard and merging the two organizations under his direction,” said Charlotte Young, Chair of FRESHFARM’s Board of Directors. “The merger will strengthen our mission of building a sustainable food system in the Mid-Atlantic region, through our focus on farmers, equity, food access, and education.”

As a single organization, FRESHFARM will become the largest market organization in the Mid-Atlantic, and the third largest farmers market organization in the country. The newly combined organization will employ a total of 60 staff and oversee 33 markets across the Washington, DC metro area, representing a network of 240 local farmers and producers who earn a combined \$15 million in market revenue annually. This merger presents a unique opportunity to make market operations more efficient and better serve the needs of small farmers and communities. It will also ensure enhanced organizational capacity to strengthen current and future partnerships.

“We are excited for the merger—collaboration instead of competition is always a good thing in our eyes,” said Jude Hess, owner of Franklin County, Pennsylvania-based Cheese Goatees. “I sell in two Community Foodworks markets and five FRESHFARM markets. Currently 80% of our revenue comes from farmers markets, with the other 20% from wholesale, and it will stay that way for the foreseeable future. We keep all of the retail dollar when we sell at markets.”

The two organizations’ shared mission and complementary program areas makes a merger a natural strategic step in their joint efforts to scale positive impact for farmers, producers, and the community. “FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks are joining forces to accelerate change in the food system in the Mid-Atlantic region,” said Mogollon. “Farmers markets are still the best way to connect local farmers with direct consumers and to help communities access healthy, local, and sustainable food. The stronger the organization is that is supporting those markets, the better opportunities we will have to make those connections happen.” The merger will significantly increase the organization’s capacity and budget to pursue major funders and compete for larger grants, and FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks have collaborated on several projects in the past. Currently, they are part of a coalition, along with Arcadia, that was the recipient of a \$250,000 grant from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture’s Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program in 2017 to expand the Fresh Match Program, which matches what low-income shoppers spend at the market with nutrition assistance benefits.

The merger unites the strengths of both organizations to better serve the local community. FRESHFARM has a long history in the DC food movement and has been a well-established force in expanding access to local food for over 20 years. The organization is dedicated to promoting small farmers and sustainable agriculture in the Mid-Atlantic region. FoodPrints, FRESHFARM’s highly regarded food education program, brings gardening, cooking, and

nutrition education to 5,700 students in 15 partner DC Public Schools. Community Foodworks is an innovative disruptor in the local food system with a deep commitment to community empowerment and increasing food access. Their signature Pop Up Food Hub has grown from an initial pilot in 2016 to now delivering weekly produce to 52 organizations reaching more than 1,250 toddlers, 250 seniors, and 100 low-income families.

"I'm really excited to see these two awesome organizations come together," said Astrid Pleitez, farmer and owner of Pleitez Produce in the Northern Neck of Virginia. "I've been with both for years. The food distribution programs have been good for me, and mixing those with strong markets will really help my business grow. I love bringing food to where there's need. I love to grow the food."

The founders of FRESHFARM were enthusiastic about the next stage in the organization's future. "Merging FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks under the leadership of Hugo Mogollon will strengthen the Mid-Atlantic's farmers market network while addressing community food security needs and expanding educational programs like FoodPrints," said Bernadine (Bernie) Prince, Co-Founder of FRESHFARM. "I congratulate Hugo and both organizations on this historic merger." FRESHFARM Co-Founder Ann Yonkers added, "I welcome Hugo and his innovative vision for an expanded role for farmers markets and local food in the future, and for his great energy for making it happen."

Over the next several months, Mogollon, with the support of both FRESHFARM and Community Foodworks board members and staff, will lead the process of merging Community Foodworks' staff and programs into FRESHFARM. Both organizations look forward to continuing and expanding this work to benefit communities across the DC area.