



# Off the Shelf

Spring 2025



**Pam Molitoris**  
*Executive Director*

April showers bring May flowers ... When I think of this saying it reminds me that spring is a time of rebirth/reawakening.

What does this mean in our work to feed our neighbors? Often, we think about setting goals at the end of a fiscal year, however, we believe it is important to be prepared to adapt to whatever changes come our way, whether

they come in the spring, summer or fall.

This spring we are faced with a number of opportunities. How do we secure additional nutritious food for our neighbors as we navigate a changing landscape? Who

do we work with to ensure families have food on their tables? Where can we have the greatest impact?

Two goals top of mind are - increasing the percentage of nutritious food as a whole and understanding where the greatest impact can be made. We can accomplish these goals through careful planning, stretch goals on nutrition, and data collection throughout our 21-county service area.

You can help by giving your time, your resources and your influence. From the bottom of my heart, thank you for all you do. Please don't be a stranger!

*Pam Molitoris*

# Community Partnerships

## Bland Family Farm Partners with Central Illinois Foodbank to Fight Hunger

JACKSONVILLE, Ill. – What started as Clint Bland’s personal quest for self-sustainability has turned into a source of locally grown food for central and southern Illinois. Established in 2016, Bland Family Farm has expanded from a small, personal venture into a 91-acre operation, now partnering with Central Illinois Foodbank to provide fresh food to neighbors.

Bland, initially inspired by his fascination with self-sufficiency, grew food for himself before the farm took off. “I wanted to grow as much of my own food as I could,” Bland said.

The farm’s expansion began when Bland sold surplus produce at farmers markets, quickly gaining traction and leading him to leave his corporate job to focus on farming full-time.

In 2023, Bland Family Farm partnered with Central Illinois Foodbank through the IL-EATS program, which connects local farmers with food banks. This partnership provided the farm with resources to reach more communities while helping neighbors access fresh produce, eggs, meat and milk.

“It’s helped prop up farms like ours and helped us expand,” Bland said. One of the farm’s standout products, milk from Buckhorn Dairy, has even generated phone calls from neighbors praising its quality.

“We’ve had people call food banks to track down my number and tell me how much they love the milk,” Bland said.

As Bland Family Farm continues to grow, it remains committed to making nutritious, local food more accessible to more communities.



## Central Illinois Foodbank Supplies Local Pantries with Fresh Protein



SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – When trucks from Central Illinois Foodbank arrived at local food pantries and meal programs throughout February, they didn’t just bring food – they brought hope. A purchase of fresh pork, sourced from a local Springfield butcher, filled shelves and kitchens across the city, offering much-needed protein to neighbors.

The Foodbank worked in partnership with Feeding Illinois and Turasky Meats – a longtime partner – to secure ground pork for the community. This partnership allows the Foodbank to not only provide nutritious food but also support local businesses.

One of the many organizations to receive the pork was Helping Hands of Springfield, which provides meals to unhoused individuals. Blaine Tavender, the kitchen manager, shared how valuable the delivery was for their operations.

“It impacts us a great deal. It’s going to go a long way,” Tavender said. “Our cooler, it’s pretty bare, we’ve got some stuff, but feeding 120 to 130 people three times a day, it goes pretty fast. We gratefully appreciate it (the pork), that’s for sure.”



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