



By Carl Collen

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# Driscoll's raises US\$4m in funding

## Berry giant to deploy more than US\$4m in charitable funds in response to the Covid-19 pandemic



Joseph Miles Reiter

**D**riscoll's has announced that it will deploy more than US\$4m in global charitable funds across health clinics, food banks, fresh berry donations and other community resources in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

The berry leader said that it was "compelled during these challenging times" to support the communities working tirelessly to bring fresh, healthy berries to families.

Funds are being distributed across diverse geographical growing regions, including US\$2.5m for the US and Canada, US\$1m for central Mexico and Baja, and US\$500,000 for Europe and Morocco.

In addition, US\$500,000 in fresh berry donations will be delivered to the first responders and hospitals in New York City for their efforts working on the frontlines.

In an open letter to the community, Joseph Miles Reiter, Chairman and CEO

of Driscoll's, outlined the company's commitment to protecting the health and safety of employees, upholding food safety commitments, and assessing and responding on how best to support growing regions around the world.

As part of the US\$4m in charitable funds, the first US\$1m in cash donations were deployed in mid-March to augment health care services in California, one of Driscoll's largest growing regions.

"We believe it's our responsibility during these challenging times to support communities who are working tirelessly to bring fresh, healthy berries to families," said Reiter. "Agriculture is an impactful kind of business that relies on human and environmental resources. We are responsible for what we do and how we do it, and are moving quickly to deploy donated resources for the largest community impact."

Beyond the immediate needs of health services in California, food distribution was identified as the next critical community need.

California's shelter-in-place orders have left food banks and pantries with few volunteers and thousands of families in need of food delivery to their homes. To continue serving food to these families, US\$600,000 in cash donations and US\$100,000 in product donations have been released to several California organisations.

"While our hope is that our donated resources positively impact communities in which our berries are grown and harvested, it's going to take a commitment from the entire agriculture industry in order to properly support growers, farmworkers and their families and ensure families have access to fresh produce," Reiter added. "We're pleased that members of the produce industry have been committing resources during this time of need to support local food banks, healthcare providers and workers across the entire food supply chain."

Driscoll's is matching donations up to US\$200,000 for its employees and independent growers to "further ignite the spirit of giving".

<http://www.fruitnet.com/americafruit/article/1474/parts-of-san-diego-quarantined-as-psyllid-count-mounts>

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