



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Ingles Day at N.C. Mountain State Fair offers free gate admission**

*Canned goods collected benefit MANNA FoodBank*

FLETCHER – Visitors of the 2022 N.C. Mountain State Fair can earn free admission in exchange for five cans of Laura Lynn brand foods on Wednesday, Sept. 14. The Laura Lynn brand can be found at more than 200 locations of Ingles Markets.

MANNA FoodBank, which has seen an uptick in demand, will use the collected food to feed people in the 16 Western-most counties of North Carolina.

“The free admission makes Ingles Day one of the highest attendance days at the fair each year,” said fair general manager Sean McKeon. “We know it’s a vital way to help MANNA, which now serves an average of 109,000 people each month. We couldn’t do that without the support of fairgoers and our partners at Ingles Markets.”

That current monthly average reflects an ongoing increase in people seeking a helping hand in western North Carolina. It is 68 percent more than MANNA FoodBank’s pre-pandemic monthly average for people served.

“MANNA is deeply grateful for our partnership with Ingles Markets and the Mountain State Fair for this annual action to support food security for thousands of people across Western North Carolina,” said MANNA FoodBank chief executive officer Claire Neal. “With food chain supply challenges still affecting our daily work, this food drive is more important than ever for us to keep our shelves, and our partners’ shelves, stocked with stable goods for our neighbors.”

As a sign of how important the day is for the food bank, MANNA plans to have close to 40 volunteers on hand. The record for Ingles Day is 22,000 pounds of food collected in 2019.

“Ingles, MANNA and the Mountain State Fair have a long tradition of helping those in need,” said Melissa Leavell, advertising director for Ingles Markets. “We are thrilled to continue our partnership with MANNA FoodBank and the tradition of Ingles Day at the Mountain State Fair. For over 20 years this special day is a way to enjoy this incredible fair and help those who need it right here at home.”