



Mayor's Office

March 19th, 2020

Dear friends and partners,

In Ramat HaNegev, like elsewhere in the world, we are taking severe steps coping with the Corona Virus.


As of to date, 120 residents of Ramat HaNegev, including myself, are under home quarantine, but no one is yet diagnosed with the virus.

The new precaution steps announced and taken recently by the PM are significantly influencing the daily life routine in Ramat HaNegev. Schools and kindergartens are closed, communal activities are forbidden, and the Council is constantly working on giving quality solutions to the residents.

With this new reality, in which the possibilities of import to Israel are expected to be limited (or even worse), Ramat HaNegev is proving to be a significant pillar in the self-sufficient nutritional abilities of the State of Israel. Ramat HaNegev's farmers, together with the Regional Council and its relevant branches such as our Water Supply Company and our Hi-Tech R&D Agro Station, is proving that our vision to keep developing and practicing agriculture in the desert lands, is not only the realization of the Zionist Vision but, indeed, a meaningful-major component in the perseverance abilities and strengths of the State of Israel.

It is quite an astonishing fact, especially with nowadays crisis, that despite the difficulties our farmers are facing, they continue to grow and supply fresh and nutritious food products of the desert soil.

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The Council has it engraved on its flag that Ramat HaNegev will be the food barn of Israel, and we keep working vigorously to realize this vision. We continue to work and make sure that the Israeli Agriculture will keep flourishing despite the many challenges, such as shortage of water, scarce and costly workforce, challenging dry soil, small government milk production quotas, etc. **All of Ramat HaNegev farmers have a high spirit and great confidence and belief in their way of making agriculture in the desert and are of great inspiration to all of us in the region.**

At the Nitzana region, which is located directly on the border with Egypt, there are three communities whose livelihood is based on agriculture produce, providing most of the region's fresh vegetable needs. **The current crisis demonstrates how important it is that Israel will be able to produce and provide its foods – allowing the State of Israel to be independent and strong, both in routine and emergency times.** For this reason and not only, I am determined to continue and lead the **National Acceleration Plan** to Strengthen the Nitzana region, a leading region in agriculture, based on brackish water.

At the same time, I do not doubt that as the current crisis continues, the damage to small businesses and farmers whose business is export-based will increase. It is so unfortunate that it was exactly when the great efforts we made to make the "Friendly Desert" brand prosperous; there was a complete halt to the tourism market. The economic reality of many entrepreneurs in our region is changing, and we are committed to helping them stand on their feet. I have told the farmers

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and business owners that we will not wait for this global crisis to end, and start thinking of solutions and aid now.

I wish to thank you for your continued strong partnership with us. You are all in my thought, and I am sure that you will stand strong facing the upcoming challenges in your communities. I am asking you to take the needed precaution measures to keep yours, and your dear ones, in good health.

Daphna and I will be in touch with you to keep you updated and engaged.

Sincerely yours,
Eran Doron,
Mayor.

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