



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

May 5, 2020

Mr. Michael Dykes, D.V.M.
President & Chief Executive Officer
International Dairy Foods Association
1250 H Street, NW, #900
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Dr. Dykes:

Thank you for your letter on April 10, 2020, regarding your concerns about food banks' ability to keep up with the increased demand in light of the coronavirus (COVID-19). We also appreciate your expressed support for strengthening existing partnerships to provide U.S. producers and for more nutritious dairy products.

We recognize these are uncertain times for all Americans and share your concerns about the effects of the coronavirus on your health and that of your family, as well as the effects on our work in the agriculture industry and the food supply. That is why USDA has approved more than 1,500 program flexibilities to states across our 15 nutrition programs, while increasing the purchasing power of our participants and increasing access to our programs to ensure families have access to the food they need.

As conditions evolve, the latest information about who we are partnering with, guidance and waivers, and additional resources is publicly available for you and your constituents to review at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/coronavirus>. We encourage you to reference our online resources with frequency as USDA continues to respond in real-time.

Also, on April 17, 2020, I announced the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). Using the funding and authorities provided in the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and utilizing USDA's existing authorities, CFAP will use direct payments, commodity purchases, and food distribution to provide certainty to farmers and consumers. CFAP will provide direct support based on actual losses for agriculture producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted and will assist producers with additional adjustment and marketing costs resulting from lost demand and short-term oversupply for the 2020 marketing year caused by COVID-19.

Regarding purchases, USDA will partner with regional and local distributors whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities to purchase and distribute up to \$3 billion in fresh produce, dairy, and meat product. USDA estimates purchases of \$100 million per month in fresh fruits and vegetables, \$100 million per month in a variety of dairy products, and \$100 million per month in meat products. The distributors and wholesalers will then provide a pre-approved box of fresh

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produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other nonprofits serving Americans in need.

In addition to the above CFAP implementation, USDA's commodity purchase programs, such as the Section 32 program and The Emergency Food Distribution Program (TEFAP) will continue to make purchases of 100% domestically produced and processed commodities from America's farmers and ranchers that feed the vulnerable communities across the Nation. USDA continues to assist TEFAP state agencies and Indian Tribal Organizations as they work to supply food needs in their communities.

USDA is working expeditiously to fully implement the CFAP provisions and is actively engaged in working to mitigate the immediate and long-term impacts the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the agricultural sector and the food supply chain. USDA stands ready to work with you to implement solutions that will help ensure the health and safety of American agriculture.

Again, thank you for your support as USDA continues our commitment to *"do right and feed everyone."* If you need further assistance, please contact the Office of External and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 720-7095.

Sincerely,



Sonny Perdue
Secretary