APRIL 13, 2020 | ALBANY, NY

New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Takes Several Actions to Assist the Agricultural Industry During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Sends Joint Letter to the USDA Urging Emergency Relief Funding for New York's Dairy Farmers, Works to Ease Limit Restrictions on Agricultural Products in Stores, Connect Processors and Producers to Food Banks

Institutes Guidelines to Help Farmers' Markets, Fisheries, Retail Food Stores, and Animal Care Operations Maintain Business

Issues Approval for Restaurants to Sell Grocery Items and for Fisheries to Sell Directly to Consumers

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball today outlined several actions the Department of Agriculture and Markets has taken to assist the agricultural industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many sectors of the

industry, including New York's dairy farmers, have faced extreme economic difficulties with the loss of wholesale markets, such as schools and restaurants, and uncertain consumer demand. The Commissioner, in a joint letter with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, last week urged the United States Department of Agriculture to support New York's farmers with immediate emergency relief funding. Read the letter (/dairy-letter-covid-19) .

Commissioner Ball said, "The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our agricultural community, as it has all of us, in so many ways. The challenges and disruptions our farmers are facing are like nothing we have seen before and our farmers are experiencing extreme economic difficulties. The Department is working, with all its partners, to seek relief for New York producers, and find new avenues for New York products while providing guidance and resources that allow many of our vital agricultural businesses to continue their operations."

The Department has convened members of the Milk Marketing Advisory Council (/milk-marketing-advisory-council) and continues discussions with food banks across the state, in coordination with the NYS Department of Health's Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program, to identify ways to alleviate the surplus challenges that are impacting New York's dairy, specialty crop farmers, and seafood producers. The Department is also working closely with the New York Farm Bureau to address industry concerns and provide critical updates.

In addition, the Department is working to address limits being placed on the sale of dairy and other agricultural products in grocery stores, in coordination with the Food Industry Alliance, the Retail Council of New York State, the Business Council of New York State, New York Farm Bureau, and the state's retail grocery stores.

Guidance to Maintain Businesses

To keep the agricultural community informed on the most recent Executive Orders as they relate to COVID-19, the Department has issued guidance documents for its farmers' markets, retail food and food manufacturing firms, fisheries, and animal care operations to help them maintain business safely.

It has also granted restaurants approval to sell grocery items, allowing additional revenue for restaurants and an additional market outlet for farmers and food businesses. In addition, fisheries have been permitted to temporarily sell and/or process seafood directly to the end consumer. A list of guidance provided to the industry is below:

- Guidance for the Operation of Farmers' Markets (/interim-guidance-operation-farmers-markets)
- For Restaurants: Interim Guidance to Sell Grocery Items (/interim-guidance-restaurants)
- Guidance for Fish Processors and Retail (/food-safety/interim-guidance-fish-processors-retail)
- Guidance for Animal Care Operations (/interim-guidance-animal-care-operations)
- Guidance for Food Manufacturing Facilities (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/interim-guidance-food-manufacturing-facilities-or-food-retail-stores)

All guidance documents and additional details are located on the Department's website at agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus (http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus) , which is updated on a regular basis and as new information becomes available. The Department has also compiled and published a general resource guide for the agricultural community, which includes information on important actions and resources to help New York's agricultural businesses, and information on other areas, such as food safety, companion animals, mental health, and more. The resource guide is available at agriculture.ny.gov/covid-19-resource-guide (https://agriculture.ny.gov/covid-19-resource-guide) .

In addition, New York State has set up a COVID-19 hotline at 1-888-364-3065 and a space to submit questions online (https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/form/ask-us-a-question)

Dairy Letter COVID-19
(/system/files/documents/2020/04/dairyletter_covid19.pdf)

(/system/files/documents/2020/04/dairyletter_covid19.pdf)

Contact the Press Office

Contact us by phone:

Albany Press Office (518) 457-0752 (tel:(518) 457-0752)
State Fair Press Office (315) 487-7711 (tel:(315) 487-7711)

Contact us by email:

Jola.Szubielski@agriculture.ny.gov
(mailto:Jola.Szubielski@agriculture.ny.
Hanna.Birkhead@agriculture.ny.gc
(mailto:Hanna.Birkhead@agriculture.n
Dave.Bullard@agriculture.ny.gov
(mailto:Dave.Bullard@agriculture.ny.gc

Mailing Address:

The New York State
Department of Agriculture
and Markets
10B Airline Drive
Albany, New York 12235

The Great New York State
Fair
581 State Fair Boulevard
Syracuse, New York 13209

CONNECT WITH US