



NEWSLETTER

Informing Nova Scotia dairy producers on matters affecting their industry.

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Key Messages

The COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in unforeseen fluctuations in demand for many key products including dairy products. In particular, the near shutdown of the restaurant industry and changing grocery shopping patterns have had impacts on the demand for key dairy products. The industry needs time to adjust to so many Canadians being home. We are aware of some delays in the supply chain as processors and retailers adjust to the new normal and we understand this means consumers may continue to see some fluctuations in offerings on store shelves in the short term. Because of these sudden changes in the marketplace, some raw milk that could not find a home to be processed needed to be disposed of.

Dairy farmers continue to produce milk to meet normal demand. With demand changing so suddenly in an uncertain market, the supply chain needs to make several adjustments for the time of the COVID-19 crisis. Consumer demand was up a few weeks ago as consumers stocked up to be able to stay home as advised by the Public Health authorities. There now appears to be a reduced demand for some products due to the decrease of demand in the food service industry; however, demand is fluctuating. Farmers and everyone in the supply chain are doing the best they can in this ever-changing situation.

Across Canada, dairy farmers are taking steps to increase our donations to food banks, but there too, there are issues of capacity. Notwithstanding these donations, some milk doesn't find a home to be processed. This is not a situation that is unique to Canada. Around the world, farmers are seeing the impact of changing demand as consumers are isolating at home, and restaurants are closed or have limited business.

Processors and retailers are responsible for producing product and providing them to consumers, and they are making effort to anticipate and identify where consumer demand will be as normal consumption patterns are disrupted because of COVID-19. Dairy farmers understand that, in order to combat the propagation of the virus, harsh measures have to be put in place.

proAction Services Suspended

The Atlantic Boards made the following decisions regarding proAction activities:

- proAction validation activities and Holstein Canada's animal assessments are suspended until further notice;
- Self-declarations that have already been sent out are to be completed to the best of the producers ability;
- proAction penalties for not completing activities that have been postponed, will not be applied during the suspension of services;
- Suspended validation visits will be rescheduled within 6 months after validations resume; and
- Any producer who was previously validated and needed to submit three months of records is still obligated to collect those records and submit them to the proAction Coordinator. However, if any of those corrective actions require outside farm assistance, the producer will be permitted to submit those records up to 3 months after validation services resume.

Please contact your provincial proAction Coordinator directly if you have any questions regarding proAction@.

Feed NS Donation

DFNS, on behalf of our 200 family dairy farm members, donated \$20,000 to Feed Nova Scotia for the purchase and distribution of milk and dairy products. The funds came from repurposed promotion and advertising dollars after some provincial events were cancelled. DFNS is pursuing partnership opportunities with processors for enhancing these donations to support Nova Scotians during these difficult times.

Feed NS is the province's umbrella organization distributing almost 2 million kilograms of donated food to their member network of 144 food banks and meal programs across the province.

NATIONAL COVID-19 ON-FARM PROTOCOL

Developed Collaboratively with Provincial Milk Boards and DFC

PREVENT:

- Follow the [Public Health Agency of Canada's guidance](#) for how to stay healthy and prevent the spread of the COVID-19 (e.g. frequent hand-washing, social distancing, proper hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces).
- Implement heightened biosecurity protocols, as per the tips below, on the farm to prevent the introduction of the disease.

Biosecurity Tips:

Only allow essential service providers on your farm (e.g. vets, milk truck drivers, feed delivery, etc.).

Do not shake hands, stay at a distance of 2 metres when you speak to them, or opt to communicate by phone before, during or after a visit.

Wash your hands frequently and reinforce general hygiene practices with your staff and workers.

Post biosecurity signs at every entrance to your farm and barn instructing your suppliers to call you before entering the barn or moving around the property.

Do not be in the milk house during milk pick-up.

Ensure the milk house is disinfected shortly before the expected arrival of the milk truck driver, ideally 30 minutes beforehand.

In the barn and milk house, clean in particular these surfaces: door handles, taps, hoses, ladder, bulk tank openings and valves, milking equipment, etc.

Ensure you clean milk house surfaces before and after visits of milk truck drivers, veterinarians, and any other service providers.

Milk truck drivers may also be instructed to follow heightened biosecurity protocols including wearing disposable booties, gloves, etc. to ensure the safety of the milk supply chain. Supply garbage container for disposables to be left on farm

You can support milk truck drivers by having cleaning materials ready for their use in and outside the milk house (e.g. a hand washing station with soap or hand sanitizer).

General Tips:

Practice recommended good hygiene (hand washing, sneezing in elbow, etc.)

Disinfect surfaces more regularly, especially the high-touch surfaces.

Clean high-touch surfaces with [recommended products](#).

Clean often any bathrooms, lunchrooms, offices or other places you share with staff. Ensure there is soap or sanitizer is available 24-hours a day!

PLAN:

- Develop a contingency plan: identify and train alternative sources of help in the event that you or a farm worker become sick.
- Tell your employees they should not come to work if they have the symptoms of COVID. Review your sick days policy if necessary. Note that you may need to review and adjust employee sick days and provide record of employment for them to access government assistance, such as EI, as it relates to COVID-19 sickness.

COVID-19 ON-FARM PROTOCOL – 3 Levels

DFNS has adopted this tiered response protocol for farms, as designed nationally by the milk marketing boards and DFC. Producers must read and follow this protocol based on the situation level on their farm. In all cases, please follow the [Public Health Agency of Canada's guidance](#) which indicates that anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should go home, be in isolation as required, and call the local public health authority. We recommend the farmer also contact and inform DFNS of the situation.

These levels set out what needs to be done on farms where the producer, a worker or family member has potentially been exposed to Covid-19.

Level 1 Response: Outside Labor Available

Implement your contingency plan to activate alternative sources of help to keep your cattle cared for and milked.

Review, and improve if necessary, your cleaning and sanitation efforts. Look at these tips from [Public Health Canada](#).

Pay particular attention to all surfaces that milk truck driver or other supplier may come in contact with.

Level 2 Response: No Outside Labor Available

In the event that all your alternative sources of help are no longer available, or inadequate to keep the farm running, contact DFNS. DFNS may be able to help with urgent needs and to identify new sources of farm workers for you and help you determine next steps.

Farm workers, who are the only option to continue milking your animals, wear a face mask and gloves at all times, and follow rigorous glove sanitation procedures.

Someone independent of the milking process, and not infected, must disinfect the equipment and milk house after milking – using a mask and gloves;

Any exposed person must not enter the milk house following disinfection and prior to milk-pickup;

Level 3 Response: No Outside Labor available and someone Covid positive on farm

If you or your farm workers are the only option to continue milking your animals and to disinfect the milk house: wear a face mask and gloves at all times and follow rigorous glove sanitation procedures.

Disinfect the equipment and milk house before and after milking – using a mask and gloves;

Any isolated person must not enter the milk house following disinfection and prior to milk-pickup

Having already contacted DFNS, they will advise you on any additional next steps and managing your milk production

If absolutely no labor available, consider applying to DFNS for catastrophe relief.

REMINDER: If producers receive media calls, please feel free to direct them to a DFNS Director or General Manager Brian Cameron. The key messages on page one can be used as a guideline for conversations with friends, family and neighbors.