

The outbreak of COVID-19 has impacted all aspects of our lives from schools to retail services to farming. Like our farmers that continue to produce nutritious and healthy food for all consumers, educators across the Southeast are working tirelessly to provide nutritious meals for children and low-income individuals during the ongoing health crisis.

Southeast dairy farmers applaud the efforts of our educators and for including milk as an integral part of the school meal program. Milk is the number-one food source of nine essential nutrients in the diets of America's children and adolescents; our farmers would like to see the amount of milk distributed to each family increase during this time of need.

In an effort to support schools, farmers, and families during this public health crisis, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) is taking swift action to ease the process of providing meals during COVID-19 related school closures. These actions include:

- Granting nationwide waivers allowing parents to pick-up meals for their kids in all states;
- Allowing states to operate meal sites that are open to all children, in all areas, including those that are not low-income (i.e. where less than 50% of children receive free or reduced-price meal following the summer feeding regulation);
- Delaying administrative deadlines associated with the [Community Eligibility Provision](#) and other monitoring and reporting requirements to ease burdens on schools that are currently closed due to COVID-19;
- Making it easier for sites to provide multiple meals at once by waiving [meal times requirements](#); and
- Waiving requirement that [afterschool meals and snacks](#) served through certain programs include educational activities, in order to minimize exposure to the coronavirus
- Allowing states to waive meal pattern requirements so they can create meals with foods they have on hand.
- All fat varieties of milk are allowable.

USDA has also launched an online tool – the “*Meals for Kids*” Site Finder – to help families find meals for children while schools are closed. The [“Meals for Kids” interactive map](#) directs people to local sites where kids can get free meals. The site finder currently lists more than 20,000 meal sites from 23 states, and more sites will be added as states submit data each week. The map is available in both English and Spanish at www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids.

If your school would like to provide additional milk to each child/family or if your county is experiencing milk distribution issues, please contact:

North/Central GA: Nicole Duvall email: accmclassroom@gmail.com or phone: (706) 474-0264
South GA: Candice Moody Rice email: cmrice@atc.cc or phone: (912) 286-4726

Our farmers are working at the grassroots level to resolve these issues quickly and want to ensure that each child/family receives the nutrition they need during this health crisis.