



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

May 1, 2020

Garry Douglas
North County Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 310
7061 Route 9
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Dear Mr. Douglas:

Thank you for your letter of April 6, 2020 requesting the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) include New York's dairy industry under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. On April 17, 2020, President Trump announced USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), which will provide critical support to our farmers, maintain the integrity of our food supply chain, and ensure every American continues to receive and have access to the food they need during this national crisis.

Using the funding and authorities provided in the CARES Act, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, and existing USDA authorities, CFAP will facilitate direct payments to qualified producers and include additional commodity purchases to provide certainty to farmers and consumers.

The program will provide \$16 billion in direct support based on actual losses for producers where prices and market supply chains have been significantly impacted. The program will also 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.

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

We recognize these are uncertain times for all Americans and share your concerns about the effects of COVID-19 on New York's dairy industry. 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.

Thank you for and continued support of America's farmers and ranchers. Please visit <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus> for additional resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue".

Sonny Perdue
Secretary