



COVID-19: keep the milk & dairy supply lines open

On Saturday 14th March 2020, EDA issued a letter to Director General Anne Bucher, (DG SANTE) and Director General Maria-Angeles Benitez-Salas (DG AGRI) to underline that we do appreciate the efforts of the EU Commission and EU Member States to restrict and delay the spread of COVID-19. EDA highlighted that when drafting and establishing COVID-19 restriction plans, the vital importance of functioning milk & dairy supply lines across Europe and across borders must be taken into account:

1. The smooth and **constant supply of milk and dairy products for the population across the Union is of vital importance** in all stages of the COVID-19 management-plans and in all parts of the Union, at whatever level affected by the virus.
2. **Milk and dairy are not a virus transmission vector:** the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) repeated on 09 March 2020 that transmission of the virus through food does not occur → see: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/news/coronavirus-no-evidence-food-source-or-transmission-route>
3. **Raw milk is a highly perishable product** that requires processing within 48 hours. **Milk collection operations** must be maintained without any interruption across the Union
4. The **dairy sector supply chains are completely interlinked across regions** and borders in terms of raw milk collection, dairy ingredient flows and milk and dairy products logistics.
5. Over the past days, we have seen a **significant increase in milk and dairy demand** in basically all EU Member States as COVID19 restriction plans are ramped up.





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6. This makes it even more critical that **supply lines across borders are kept open** to manage product flows to ensure the industry can keep the shelves and fridges stocked.
7. Food business operators (dairies and logistic service provider) have established – in addition to the existing hygiene rules, especially Regulation EU 853/2004 - **specific rules for milk collection and milk and dairy logistics** (notably for the personnel within the logistic chain: personal hygiene, personal distance / no physical contacts, wearing a sanitary mask and gloves during milk collection or delivery operations).
8. Increasing milk production within the Union up to the seasonal peak (around end of April) will even sharpen the challenge for the dairy sector in terms of milk logistics (from milk collection to milk and dairy products deliveries) and milk processing. **Any additional barrier will inevitably lead to a situation in which failing milk collection and shortages in milk and dairy supply cannot be excluded.**

We therefore urge the European Commission and the competent authorities of all EU Member States and the United Kingdom to establish specific protocols to:

- **guarantee a frictionless continuity for all milk collection operations across the Union, including across borders** and to...
- **ensure all supply lines are kept open across the Union, including across borders, to manage product flows to ensure the dairy industry can keep the shelves and fridges stocked.**

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN DAIRY ASSOCIATION

The European Dairy Association is the voice of dairy processors in the European Union. The membership of EDA consists of the associations of dairy processors in EU Member States.

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