

March 23, 2020

Dear Vermont Farmer and/or Milk Cooperative,

Inspections of your dairy farm must continue despite the COVID-19 situation as the sanitation of your farm is critical to the health and general welfare of our nation's consumers of dairy products. Your work to produce high quality milk on a daily basis nourishes those who consume the dairy products that your milk becomes. Vermont's economy is strengthened and empowered by your effort to produce milk. Maintaining our dairy industry during this time is of utmost importance.

Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets dairy inspectors will continue to conduct essential inspections and federal ratings that are required by Vermont law and the federal Pasteurized Milk Ordinance (PMO). If you refuse inspection, your farm will fall out of compliance with the PMO and the Agency will be required by law to suspend your permit. Suspension of your permit will result in your milk not being able to be shipped.

The Agency is taking precautions to prevent COVID-19's spread. Inspectors take every day preventive measures such as proper hand washing and not working when sick. Inspectors use hand sanitizer and wear disposable gloves that are disposed of at each farm. Signatures are not collected from farmers so that the 6 feet of distance recommendation can be maintained and so that only the inspector touches their tablet. Inspectors follow a state employee ban on out-of-state work travel. If an inspector travels out of state on their personal time, a review must take place prior to the inspector being able to return to work. For traceability, inspectors report daily to their supervisor every place they get out of their state-owned vehicle.

Inspectors are required to follow Vermont Agency of Administration COVID-19 Guidance for State Employees, Vermont Department of Health COVID-19 Guidance for Food and Lodging Businesses, and U.S. Centers for Disease Control COVID-19 Guidance. These documents can be found here:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/about-us/disaster-planning/covid-19-guidance-vermont-businesses>

<https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/EH-COVID-19-Food-Lodging-Business-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

If you do not have internet access, you can call Dairy Section Chief E.B. Flory at 802-828-3836 for a copy or ask your inspector at the time of their next visit.

The Agency appreciates your cooperation in this trying time.

Sincerely,



Anson Tebbetts
Secretary of Agriculture, Food and Markets

