



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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[www.vdacs.virginia.gov](http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov)

*Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D.*  
*Commissioner*

TO: Grocery Retail Stores

FROM: Jewel H. Bronaugh, Ph.D., Commissioner  
Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jewel H. Bronaugh'.

DATE: April 6, 2020

SUBJECT: Purchase limits of fluid milk products

COVID-19 brought significant changes to the businesses and citizens of Virginia in March. As societal changes were implemented to reduce the spread of this virus, we all made adjustments to our routines and policies to best serve our communities, customers, families and friends.

Grocery retailers are at the forefront of societal adjustments as an essential business. In particular, March brought unprecedented challenges in dealing with an uneasy customer base, ensuring that employees remain safe and healthy while maintaining adequate inventory. In some instances, purchase limits on certain high demand products were instituted to allow customers adequate access. Milk was one such product.

April is upon us, and the dramatic increase in March's milk sales has created a precipitous decrease in demand. Dairy farmers across the U.S. are dumping milk because supply far outweighs demand as social distancing limits restaurant outings, school attendance, and demand for dairy exports. Changes in school schedules has meant a lot more fluid milk needs to be diverted to other channels, so there is not a supply issue. In fact, it provides opportunities for excess milk supply to be donated to food banks that often struggle to keep milk on hand for those who need it. Purchase limits on fluid milk no longer make sense, as supply far exceeds demand and processing capacity, and may have the harmful result of requiring customers to make more frequent trips away from their homes to provide their families with this grocery staple.

It is my understanding that in many instances, limiting quantities per purchase is not a corporate policy, but is left at the discretion of individual locations. There may be some geographical regions throughout the state that still require limits to allow all customers an opportunity to purchase grocery staples. However, based on feedback received from consumers, dairy industry representatives, and grocery retailers throughout Virginia, purchase limits on milk will have more detrimental effects on communities in the immediate future. The best thing retailers can do for both customers and the dairy industry is to allow consumers to purchase as much milk as they desire. Therefore, the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and the Milk Commission in Virginia requests that such practices cease unless absolutely necessary.