

PA Milk Marketing Board
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Myths and Facts: COVID-19 and Milk in Pennsylvania

Over the past few weeks there have been enough rumors floated on social media and elsewhere to hold up the Titanic! PMMB has been dealing with those related to milk in Pennsylvania on a regular basis. Here is a sampling along with the truth:

The government (in Pennsylvania) is limiting the amount of milk that can be shipped to stores. I can promise you that this is not true. Our milk processors have their own unique arrangements with stores they service, and the government does not interfere with that beyond truth-in-advertising, health and pricing regulations.

All Pennsylvania government agencies are working almost around-the-clock to ensure that the food supply, including dairy products, is available to everyone. The disruption of the supply chain in the beginning of the pandemic created confusion on every level from consumer on. Retailers are working hard to keep their shelves stocked and milk processors are trying to adjust their production lines to meet the changing needs.

Milk is being dumped on purpose to drive up prices in the stores. This is also not true. Some farmers have been asked to dump milk because processors and manufacturers either have no place to store it or don't have any customers for their products due to closings of schools, restaurants and institutions. If anything, PMMB has been asked to consider price decreases to deal with the problems created by COVID-19.

If I am a participant in the WIC program, I can only buy skim and 1% milk. This used to be a true statement, but the federal government and Pennsylvania have relaxed the rules at this time so that WIC recipients can purchase milk with any fat level at the store. That includes whole milk and 2% milk, which were previously not allowed.

Schools can now offer whole milk and 2% flavored milk as part of their feeding programs. This is true. As with the WIC program, these items were previously not allowed as part of the school nutrition programs. With the onset of the pandemic, the federal and state governments have relaxed the guidelines to allow whole and 2% milk.

A store in my area was selling milk for 59 cents a gallon. I don't know if this is true or not, but if that store is in Pennsylvania, it is violating the law! The person reporting this is located close to the border with another state, so the store could be in that other state and is losing a lot of money on the sale. PMMB minimum retail pricing helps stabilize the market and protects all levels of the milk distribution chain.

Support your Pennsylvania dairy industry by buying 42- milk code. You will be buying milk processed in Pennsylvania and most likely using milk from Pennsylvania cows!

PMMB is always available to respond to questions and concerns. I can be reached at 717-210-8244 or by email at chardbarga@pa.gov.