

# Texas Department of Agriculture

## Food and Nutrition Industry Task Force Minutes August 5, 2020

1. Distributor Ordering Trends/Update
  - a. Opening orders are in.
  - b. Frequent changes make it hard to report on trends. Orders are being placed, but these orders change frequently (product need, cancellations, dates, etc.)
  - c. Distributors previously utilized forecasts from schools and set up automatic orders. Is this still in place?
    - i. Distributors have previously relied heavily on historical data (6-7 weeks of inventory) to prepare for and stock up for back-to-school orders. They did not take that approach this year.
    - ii. Distributor forecasting this PY is macro (full picture) focused and based on majority need instead of individual ISD need.
  - d. ISDs don't appear to be picky in terms of product choices.
  - e. Communication has begun from vendors regarding increased (6-8 weeks) lead time, IW product unavailability, product shortages, etc.
    1. Manufacturers recommend encouraging CEs to utilize bulk.
      - a. IW demand is very high.
        - i. Plants will be unable to keep up with sheer number of orders (thaw and serve sandwiches)
    2. Manufacturers producing lidded and hinged packaging products (none to very few trays) to address need.
      - a. There is concern that this may not be enough.
  - f. Coops may have to come together as group to create necessary volume.
    - i. Emphasis on buying in full truck quantities (not all coops have space for that volume of food).
  - g. School success will rely on the ability to stay flexible.
    - i. Meal service may look different daily.
2. CFAP New Food Box Solicitation
  - a. Some stakeholders upset about language in the new solicitation.
    - i. Requires that combination food box be provided.
      1. Some distributors report challenges – do not have resources for combination box packaging.
        - a. TDA suggests a potential subcontractor/partner role to assist distributors.
          - i. Some manufacturers report utilization of different manufacturers for each component.
      2. Jose reports difficulty with incredibly specific requirements.
3. Update on Texas Virtual Food Show
  - a. Keri reports that they plan to announce the show to ISDs this week and to send out invites next Monday.
    - i. August registration is only open to Texas ISDs. Registration opens to outside ISDs in September.
      1. Allowing outside districts to attend to support a community mindset. Other states may not be offering any sort of virtual show.
  - b. 150-160 vendors. 5,000 attendee max.

- c. TDA will present an update.
  - d. Limited sponsor positions with a 30-minute presentations for gold sponsors.
  - e. 9 coops are participating.
  - f. Flexibility with exhibitor booths
    - i. Format, items highlighted, etc.
      - 1. Keri will be careful to follow USDA and TDA procurement guidelines. She will use feedback from virtual show to inform bids.
4. TDA Ordering Update
- a. TDA will not be initiating cancellation of trucks at this time.
    - i. TDA will, however, continue to work with entities who request cancellations.
      - 1. TDA recognizes financial impact of excess inventory on processors.
        - a. Let TDA know if facing challenges.
    - ii. TDA will not survey schools as TDA is not initiating truck cancellations.
5. Q&A
- a. Q: Do we know anything about the bill on universal lunch?
    - i. A: No, but SNA is keeping information regarding this topic on their website.
  - b. Q: How many entries are on repository?
    - i. A: TDA is timid in promoting bulk based on occurrences (sending raw products) in other programs.
      - 1. No raw items (chicken/eggs) will be sent home.
      - 2. There will be more specific statistics in next week's meeting.
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