



8/16/21

Dear EPC Members:

While the school experience may look more normal this year with students in school and eating in cafeterias, the impacts of COVID continue to wreak havoc on nearly all industries globally, including school food service. Farmers, truckers, packers, manufacturers, distributors, and ultimately many schools will struggle with short staffing. Combined with a litany of other COVID-related issues, there will be intense pressure on all levels of the supply chain nationwide. Through no fault of their own, your school food service staff will experience significant product availability issues. The EPC has been in talks with all segments of the supply chain and across all sectors, the feedback has been that product availability issues will not resolve this school year. Food service directors demonstrated an admirable ability to handle adversity last year, and it will once again be required of them this year. What has historically been put on the menu may not be available nor may it be available in sufficient quantities to serve the entire student population.

Understanding and flexibility will be a key factor in schools operating successfully, so we are hoping that by communicating this to you at a cooperative level, district personnel and parents/guardians will be prepared for frequent meal and snack changes and can be supportive of the tough position food service personnel are in. The following is a link to a Dropbox full of documents from manufacturers and vendors explaining product availability issues. This collection of documents is intended to provide further evidence of the pervasive nature of the issues at hand and help clarify why your cafeterias may be experiencing school-year long issues.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/twnkje9wph36jsg/AADM7HWR1EuiIQQ6HTqGFNBna?dl=0>

Thank you for your understanding. The EPC is committed to helping in any way possible. If you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks,

Ken S. Swink
EPC Director