



Meat Talking Points * 4.29.20

Q: Should consumers be concerned about the meat supply?

A: Currently there is enough retail supply. Per FDA and USDA, and current meat sales data from IRI, there is no food shortage or scarcity of meat in this country.

Q: Is the meat supply safe?

A: Yes, food is safe. The CDC [says](#) there is no evidence that transmission of COVID-19 is foodborne, including meat.

Q: Why am I hearing that the meat supply might soon be depleted?

A: Individual meat companies dealing with temporary processing plant closures will experience supply disruption and may choose to announce that fact publicly. The retailers that these companies serve may briefly suffer limited meat supply, but these are regional shortages, often limited to one or two commodities. Other protein sources are readily available in the supermarket to provide for your family's nutritional needs.

Q: Why don't I see products I'm used to buying in my grocery store?

A: For context, there are well over 3,700 red meat processing plants and nearly 3,000 poultry processing plants [ref: [NAMI](#)], but several have experienced temporary closures or reduced production. These instances are sporadic and could affect a certain region, depending on which store or chain is being supplied by that company. We understand from IRI that meat sales are up more than 30-40 percent in recent weeks, so the demand for product also makes it difficult to keep the stores stocked as they were at pre-pandemic levels.

Q: What meat plants have been affected by COVID-19?

A: A few media organizations are tracking this data; however, these sources should be verified. [MeatingPlace](#) * [FERN](#) * [Food Dive](#)

Q: Will my store soon have the meat products I want to buy?

A: Fortunately, the U.S. is a nation of abundance and choice. If you don't see the exact cut of pork, chicken or beef you want for your family, you will likely be able to readily identify an alternative protein option.

Q: What happens with meat that was originally destined for restaurants?

A: Due to the closure of restaurants, a significant portion of restaurant-quality beef is being ground at retail, ultimately serving consumers' unprecedented demand.



Q: What is FMI doing to alleviate supply stresses?

A: The industry has taken three important actions:

- 1. Guidance from FDA:** As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, restaurants and food manufacturers may have food not labeled for retail sale that they wish to sell at retail. The FDA has released a [guidance document to provide restaurants and other businesses with flexibility regarding nutrition labeling](#) so that they can sell certain packaged food during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2. FMI's foodservice partnership:** Through this crisis we have also seen new alliances being forged. FMI and International Food Distributors Association started working together to bring food, labor, and equipment resources to grocery retail which was then expanded to other industry associations representing seafood and produce.
- 3. Labor solutions:** More recently, FMI partnered with Eightfold.ai to launch a talent exchange which assist people from industries who have been shut down find work in the grocery supply chain.

Q: What does interim guidance from CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) say about meat and poultry processing workers and employees?

A: Read the latest guidance [here](#).

Q: What is the President's Executive Order on Meat and Poultry Plants?

A: The President noted in a White House Fact Sheet, "Under the order, the Department of Agriculture is directed to ensure America's meat and poultry processors continue operations uninterrupted to the maximum extent possible." Read the executive order [here](#).

