



Full Service Trade Association Representing Dairy Processors, Manufacturers and Distributors Since 1928

427 S. Main St.
N. Syracuse, NY
13212
Phone 315-452-6455
Fax 315-452-1643
www.nedairyfoods.org

Press Release

For Release: Immediately, January 14, 2021

Contact: Alex Walsh, Associate Vice President of Regulatory Affairs
Northeast Dairy Foods Association, Inc.
aw@nedairyfoods.org

AGRICULTURE, FOOD PROCESSING ORGANIZATIONS URGE GOVERNOR CUOMO TO REINCLUDE AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING EMPLOYEES INTO PHASE 1B OF THE VACCINATION SCHEDULE

North Syracuse, NY – A coalition of organizations representing various agriculture sectors from New York have signed a letter urging New York Governor Andrew Cuomo to include agriculture and food processing employees back into Phase 1B of the state’s vaccination schedule as soon as possible.

New York State developed a schedule to administer the vaccine based on type of industry and employee, age, health status and other criteria. The state had followed the guidance from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) that was provided and defined essential workers based upon occupation. Frontline healthcare workers were the first to be eligible to receive the vaccine when it was available under Phase 1A. Under Phase 1B includes; first responders, transit workers, educational and childcare employees, individuals living and working in homeless shelters, front facing grocery store employees, and anyone over 75. Originally included in Phase 1B were agriculture workers and food processing and manufacturing employees, however, due to less than expected quantities of the vaccine that were made available to New York State, those workers were removed from the eligibility list at the last minute prior to the opening of Phase 1B on Monday, January 11, 2021.

A group of seventeen organizations in New York have signed onto a letter that was sent to Governor Cuomo on January 14 requesting that the state include agriculture and food processing employees back into Phase 1B as soon as more vaccines become available. The organizations that signed on to the letter include; Northeast Dairy Foods Association, Inc., Northeast Dairy Suppliers Association, Inc., New York Farm Bureau, New York Apple Association, New York State Brewers Association, New York Wine & Grape Foundation, Long Island Wine Country, New York Cannabis Growers and Processors Association, Robbiehill Dairy Farm, LLC, New York State Agri-Business Association, New York State Cheese Manufacturers Association, Northeast Dairy Producers Association, Seneca Lake Winery Association, New York State Grange, Farm Credit East, American Farmland Trust, and New York Wine Industry Association.

“Throughout the entirety of the pandemic, it has been proven that agriculture and food processing and manufacturing employees are essential to ensuring the continuity of a safe and efficient food supply system,” states Ozzie Orsillo, Executive Vice President of Northeast Dairy Foods Association. “We understand this is a fluid and evolving situation and unexpected circumstances occur, but we are asking that these employees be first in line when expanding Phase 1B to other populations.”

President

Daniel Lausch

Vice President

Kevin Ellis

Secretary

Ryan Elliott

Treasurer

Melissa Altif

Executive Vice President

Ozzie Orsillo

Honorary Directors

Arthur Berger
Richard P. Boice

Board of Directors

Kimberly Bukowski

Timothy Cronin

Brian Froebel

Ray Gerwitz

Matt Hendricks

Thomas Herbick

Lewis P. Miller

Brian Perry

Nathan Pistner

Adam Seybolt

Jodi Smith Krzysiak

Michael Suever

Jennifer Turgeon

Organizations that signed on to the letter also requested that state agencies and local health departments work with specific industries and individual facilities to overcome logistical challenges to inoculating agriculture and food processing employees. In particular, farm workers may have difficulties with transportation or accessing a vaccination site due to their rural location. Additionally, food processing and manufacturing facilities may have hundreds or even thousands of employees at one facility that would be eligible to receive the vaccination. These facilities may also be ideal locations to host a site to administer the vaccines to large amounts of people at once.

The agriculture and food processing industries in New York are one of the largest economic sectors and represent thousands of employees that provide products and food to local communities, the northeast region, nationally and internationally.

###