



Big Picture Report: April 2020
Bernadette Wiltz, SUSTA

Monitoring COVID19 and Looking Ahead

I wanted to take this opportunity to again reiterate the message that I send to all of our valued SUSTA companies by email back on March 17.

First and foremost, we hope you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

Second, we fully appreciate the pressures and difficulties of navigating your small business through this situation. Rest assured, however, we here at SUSTA remain committed to serving you the best we can.

Again, the entire staff is available to answer your questions and address your concerns. As of now, all shows, activities and missions through May have been cancelled. All on-line resources remain accessible, and we are adding to them as I write this. Soon, we let you know about coming events like webinars and virtual consultations designed to support your marketing strategies during this down time from travel and face to face meetings at shows.

We are keeping current a list of all the scheduled events that have been cancelled or postponed and rescheduled. You can find that on our [Monitoring COVID 19](#) page on the SUSTA website.

With the schedule updates, we've also provided links to two important resources which you may find helpful, including the most current information about the U.S. Small Business Administration's COVID19 related Disaster Assistance loan programs and to the U.S. Department of State's updates regarding travel advisories.

In the meantime, we remain in regular contact with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and our member State Departments of Agriculture and we continue to focus on planning and preparing a full range of activities and strategies to resume as soon as feasible. In that regard, we're also working with our in-country representatives in order to keep up-to-date on the situation in SUSTA's top markets. As might be expected, the situation the world over is much the same as it is here in the U.S.

Indeed, our Canadian market consultant, Argyle Public Relations, recently shared the results of a survey they conducted about retail food purchases in Canada. Like here, food service sales have been hit by social distancing, but retail sales have spiked with consumers stockpiling groceries for at home consumption.

Here are some of the topline results among those surveyed in the latter half of March:

- More than two-thirds (68 percent) of the respondents spent more than normal at the grocery store, with a nearly a quarter (24 percent) spending an extra CDN\$100 or more at the store; just 30 percent spent their regular amount on groceries
- With stay-at-home orders in place, it doesn't appear that consumers will slow down their shopping trips to the store. According to a survey by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies (ACS), 74 percent of Canadians polled planned a weekly trip to the store to purchase as much (64 percent) or more (10 percent) than they did on their last trip.
- Among the most purchased items were of course the staples, dairy, eggs, meat and seafood, but also fresh produce, canned goods and other prepared shelf stable items.
- Among the respondents, 15 percent wished they'd have purchased more condiments and spices during their last shopping trip, and 7 percent wished they'd have purchased more snacks and cookies on their most recent trip to the store.



As things return to normal, we expect demand for quality SUSTA products to rebound. 'Made in USA' is an imprimatur of quality, particularly in the international marketplace. American food products will be well-positioned.

Please stay safe, don't hesitate to reach out to SUSTA, and keep informed via the SUSTA website.