



South Carolina  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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Hugh E. Weathers, Commissioner

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**Commissioner Weathers Urges Calm on Food Supply**

**COLUMBIA** — As South Carolinians come together to help stop the spread of COVID-19, Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers wants people to know that there is plenty of food to weather the crisis.

“As we monitor the coronavirus outbreak, we’ve reached out to farmers, grocery stores and other industry partners, and we have no concerns about their ability to continue supplying food to us all,” Weathers said.

From peach growers to poultry producers, South Carolina farmers continue to grow and raise food; and the domestic transportation and retail infrastructure is well adapted to handle increased demand.

Nonetheless, Commissioner Weathers urged people to be prepared, but not hoard food or other supplies. South Carolinians may see some empty shelves, but retailers are quickly restocking as new deliveries come in.

“The American food supply chain is stable and robust,” Weathers said.

While the retail supply chain is in good shape, the restaurant industry is seeing a dramatic drop in business, and schools statewide have closed. As a result, SCDA is hearing reports of business lost for wholesalers, food hubs, and small farms. We’ve had fruitful discussions about how some of those businesses plan to adapt in the near future, and will continue those discussions.

As for food safety, SCDA is not aware of any evidence suggesting COVID-19 can be transmitted by food or food packaging. However, it is always important to follow good hygiene practices when handling or preparing foods: wash hands and surfaces often, separate raw meat from other foods, cook to the right temperature, and refrigerate foods promptly.

Above all, Weathers emphasizes that South Carolina and its farmers and food producers will weather the crisis.

“In times of emergency, we must remember that we are part of a strong community,” Weathers said. “We’ve seen the resilience and generosity of South Carolinians during hurricanes, floods and tragedies, and we’ll see it as we fight the spread of the coronavirus.”

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