

Response of Food Cooperatives in New England & New York State to the Covid-19 Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

The Neighboring Food Co-op Association (NFCA) is a cooperative who along with its 38 member co-ops strive to uplift the food cooperative industry across New England and New York State.

When Covid-19 was declared a National State of Emergency in 2020 , all these co-operatives were asked to limit operations and follow strict state policies of social distancing which impacted their revenue and sales drastically.

IMPACT

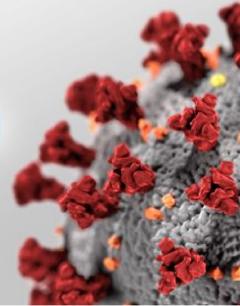
Most Co-operatives shut in person purchasing at their stores and limited consumer contact to only curbside pick-up. Some stores which continued to be open had to limit the number of consumers which they could allow in the premises at a point of time.

AIM

Aim is to understand the response of the cooperatives to this pandemic and how they continued to serve the community in these difficult times .



Our response to COVID-19



RESPONSE

- At a lot of store operational co-ops including the Portland Food Co-op in Maine , the first hour of the day has been reserved for special need groups such as elderly and disabled shoppers..

THANK YOU FOR PRACTICING SOCIAL DISTANCING



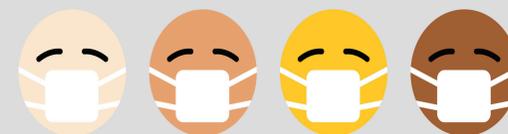
PLEASE KEEP SIX FEET FROM THE GUEST IN FRONT OF YOU.

Signs at Co-operatives to maintain social distancing

- At the Brattleboro food co-op shoppers eligible for WIC's(special supplemental nutritional program for women, infants , and children) receive an additional discount to make sure that even marginalized and isolated people can have access to healthy food.

Continued..

- The Common Share food co-op in Amherst, MA has also set up a volunteer network where they are connecting people in need to people who can help.
- Co-operatives such as the Willimantic food co-op are also paying their employees something called 'hero pay' which is (+\$2/hr.) for their service during these difficult times. Extra PTO is also being offered to employees who cannot be at work due to the pandemic.
- Co-operatives are using their social media accounts to update consumers about store hours and updated store policies.



CONCLUSION

To put it all together , it is clearer than ever that co-operatives are setting the path for a more sustainable economy and we need them to flourish for consumers to benefit. While most of the world shut down , co-operatives made sure that no one went hungry and everyone had access to food and basic supplies.

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