



September 14, 2021

NWIESC Member Superintendents:

The supply chain challenges have been debilitating to food service programs across the country. There are hundreds of businesses involved in the process of getting food from the field to your loading dock and each one of them is experiencing severe labor shortages due to the Covid pandemic. For example, today we learned that Trix Yogurt will be unavailable for an unspecified time due to a lack of cups for the product. That shortage will in turn place an unbearable strain on the substitute product. How long will that manufacturer be able to sustain the increase in volume?

This situation happens to many products every day. Several food service distributors have gotten out of the K12 business, mostly due to the specialized products required for K12 service. Warehouse strikes have shut down other distributors. Manufacturers are evaluating their product lines to maximize their retail lines which decreases the available products that you would normally use. Distributors are seeing the worst manufacturer and carrier fill rates that have ever been recorded due to the loss of workers in the supply chain. That means that if 1000 cases of your favorite entree is ordered, the distributor may only get 60% of the order. Carriers and the trucking companies that bring products from manufacturers to the distributor average that 1 out of 15 loads has a driver. Many deliveries are not going out at all and most are not going on time.

Distribution and warehousing across the country are very concerned how the new vaccine mandate will affect their ability to get people to work.

We do not feel we've seen the bottom of this slide, it will continue well into 2022. The supply chain disruption is not a local or state issue, it's happening across the country. The experts are projecting that we will see some improvement beginning the second quarter of 2022.

What can we do??? Contact your local, elected official(s) and ask them to push the USDA to enact an emergency declaration to waive the stringent, nutritional guidelines, and procurement regulations on school food. Even if just temporarily so we can continue to feed children. ***For some, this is the only meal they get in their day.***

Sincerely,

Lisa

Lisa Abell
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