

**North Office**

3328 U.S. Hwy 51 N  
Janesville, WI 53545-0772  
Mailing Address:  
PO Box 1088  
Janesville, WI 53547-1088

608-757-5440  
608-758-8423 (fax)



Public Health

[www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth](http://www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth)

**South Office**

61 Eclipse Center  
Beloit, WI 53511

608-364-2010  
608-364-2011 (fax)

**NEWS RELEASE**

To: Local Media  
From: Marie-Noel Sandoval, MPH, Health Officer  
Date: April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**COVID-19 Weekday Update**

As of today at 2:00pm, there have been 5,356 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 in the State of Wisconsin. Statewide, 262 individuals have died due to complications related to COVID-19. In Rock County, there have been a total of 120 confirmed positive cases and four deaths. There have been a minimum of 1,441 negative tests results reported in our county.

Please visit our website, [www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth](http://www.co.rock.wi.us/publichealth) for additional local COVID-19 information updated daily.

Hormel Foods Beloit Plant

Hormel Foods, in close collaboration with the Rock County Public Health Department, would like to release the following statement:

We understand that there has been a lot of interest around meat packing plants - especially those mentioned in the press. It's important to note that Hormel Foods is a global branded food company that produces brands including SKIPPY® peanut butter, Justin's® nut butters, Wholly® guacamole dips, Herdez® salsas, Applegate® products, Dinty Moore® beef stew and Hormel® chili along with a wide variety of other well-known brands. Out of our more than 30 Hormel Foods manufacturing facilities only one is a hog harvest (meat packing) location and it is leased and operated by a third party who supplies to Hormel Foods. All other Hormel Foods plants are value-added food manufacturing locations making our branded products.

We can confirm that we have had two employees who have tested positive for coronavirus at the Beloit plant.

At Hormel Foods, the health and well-being of our team members is our highest priority. As the global pandemic continues to evolve, we know it is top of mind for our team members, customers, consumers, partners and communities. Since 1973, Beloit has been known as the Chili Capital of the World because of our facility. We are a great local employer and a good neighbor in the community. During this COVID-19 outbreak, we continue to work closely with local health officials to ensure they are informed of everything we are doing.

As team members are impacted by COVID-19, we are doing what's right and that includes quarantining and ensuring all close contacts are identified and also quarantined, as well as communicating transparently with our team members, including translating communications into approximately 10 languages. All impacted team members continue to receive 100 percent of base pay and benefits while they are away from work.

We are also being transparent and reporting any closures of facilities due to deep cleaning or staffing issues caused by COVID-19. We are not reporting individual cases as we have found that the situations in our communities are changing daily. To date, out of our more than 30 production facilities, we have voluntarily paused operations at three locations. The temporary pauses are out of an abundance of caution for the safety of our team members.

We continue to have the highest sanitation and food safety standards in all our production facilities. In addition, we have implemented enhanced operating protocols including education for team members on the COVID-19 virus, taking team members' temperatures daily, using masks or personal protective face coverings, having on-site nurses who are available to answer questions and advise team members as well as helping them get access to local testing for COVID-19, increasing sanitization frequency, updating policies and restrictions for visitors and business travel, and expanding remote work options for team members where applicable.

The vast majority of our production facilities continue to operate with minimal disruption to our supply chain. The company's team of inspired people is working to ensure a consistent and steady food supply during this crisis.

The Rock County Public Health Department sincerely appreciates this collaborative approach and working hand-in-hand with Hormel Foods to contain the spread of this virus and keep our community safe.

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