

Empty Shelves, But Farms Put Food to Waste

Milk, Eggs and Produce Buried and Dumped

By **DAVID YAFFE-BELLANY**
and **MICHAEL CORKERY**

In Wisconsin and Ohio, farmers are dumping thousands of gallons of fresh milk into lagoons and manure pits. An Idaho farmer has dug huge ditches to bury 1 million pounds of onions. And in South Florida, a region that supplies much of the Eastern half of the United States with produce, tractors are crisscrossing bean and cabbage fields, plowing perfectly ripe vegetables back into the soil.

After weeks of concern about shortages in grocery stores and mad scrambles to find the last box of pasta or toilet paper roll, many of the nation's largest farms are struggling with another ghastly effect of the pandemic. They are being forced to destroy tens of millions of pounds of fresh food that they can no longer sell.

The closing of restaurants, hotels and schools has left some farmers with no buyers for more than half their crops. And even as retailers see spikes in food sales to Americans who are now eating nearly every meal at home, the increases are not enough to absorb all of the perishable food that was planted weeks ago and intended for schools and businesses.

The amount of waste is staggering. The nation's largest dairy cooperative, Dairy Farmers of America, estimates that farmers are dumping as many as 3.7 million gallons of milk each day. A single chicken processor is smashing 750,000 unhatched eggs every week.

Many farmers say they have donated part of the surplus to food banks and Meals on Wheels programs, which have been overwhelmed with demand. But there is only so much perishable food that charities with limited numbers of refrigerators and volunteers can absorb.

And the costs of harvesting, processing and then transporting produce and milk to food banks or

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Despite Timely Alerts, Trump Was Slow to Act



Alex Saldana playing taps at the Paramus Veterans Memorial Home in New Jersey, where 13 people have died of the coronavirus.

In Region’s Nursing Homes, ‘Residents Are Sitting Ducks’

This article is by **Amy Julia Harris**, **John Leland** and **Tracey Tully**.

At Crown Heights Center for Nursing and Rehabilitation in Brooklyn, workers said they had to convert a room into a makeshift morgue after more than 15 residents died of the coronavirus and funeral homes could not handle all the bodies.

At Elizabeth Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in New Jersey, 19 deaths have been linked to the virus; of the 54 residents who remain, 44 are sick.

After 13 people died in an outbreak at the New Jersey Veterans Home in Paramus, the governor called in 40 combat medics from

the National Guard.

In Manhattan, two women who met during visits to the Upper East Side Rehabilitation and Nursing Center felt helpless while their mothers died of the virus within minutes of each other. Neither had been able to see her mother for weeks.

“The last day I went there, I told a supervisor, ‘I’m thinking of taking my mother out before something terrible happens,’” one of the women, Lynda Walsh-Clifford, said. “He said, ‘Don’t worry, everything will be fine.’”

In New York State, the U.S. epicenter of the outbreak, the virus has snatched lives in every part of society, the daily death toll near 800 for a third straight day on Fri-

SCHOOL CLOSING EXTENDED

The city’s 1,800 public schools will not reopen this academic year, Mayor Bill de Blasio said. Page 16.

gear and constant physical contact between workers and residents — has hastened its spread.

In all, nearly 2,000 residents of nursing homes in the region have died in the outbreak, and thousands of other residents are sick.

As of Friday, more than half of New York’s 613 licensed nursing homes had reported coronavirus infections, with 4,630 total positive cases and 1,439 deaths, officials said.

In New Jersey, nursing homes had been linked to 252 virus-related deaths, more than 90 of them in the past two days. The outbreak has now affected at least 70 percent of the state’s long-term care

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Bending Rules, Priests in Italy Aid the Sick at Their Own Peril

By **JASON HOROWITZ** and **ELISABETTA POVOLEDO**

ROME — On the Sunday before Easter, the priest’s phone rang.

The Rev. Claudio Del Monte carried the phone, given to him by staff in the Bergamo hospital, along with a small cross and some homemade sanitizer. Instead of his usual cleric’s collar, he wore disposable scrubs, a surgical mask covered with another mask, protective eyewear and a cap over his head. On his chest he had drawn a black cross with a felt pen.

He excused himself from two coronavirus patients he was visiting in the hospital and answered the call. But he already knew what it meant. Minutes later, he arrived at the bedside of an older man he had met days earlier. An oxygen mask now obscured the man’s face, and intensive care staff huddled around his bed.

“I blessed him and absolved him from sins, he squeezed my hand tightly and I stayed there with him until his eyes closed,” Father Del Monte, 53, said. “And then I said the prayer for the dead, and then I changed my gloves and continued my round.”

Italy’s coronavirus outbreak is one of the world’s deadliest, and while the doctors and nurses on the northern Italian front line have become symbols of sacrifice against an invisible enemy, priests and nuns have also joined the fight. Especially in deeply infected areas like Bergamo, they are risking, and sometimes giving, their lives to attend to the spiritual needs of the often older and devout Italians hardest hit by the virus.

Across Italy, the virus has killed

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The Rev. Claudio Del Monte in the Church of Santa Croce in Bergamo, Italy, which lost 24 priests to the coronavirus in 20 days. Across Italy, nearly 100 priests, many retired, have died in the outbreak.

Late Edition
Today, clouds, milder, high 63. Tonight, rain becoming heavy, areas of flooding, low 54. Tomorrow, thunderstorms, locally heavy, high 68. Details, SportsSunday, Page 8.

Pandemic Warnings Early and Often

This article is by **Eric Lipton**, **David E. Sanger**, **Maggie Haberman**, **Michael D. Shear**, **Mark Mazzetti** and **Julian E. Barnes**.

WASHINGTON — “Any way you cut it, this is going to be bad,” a senior medical adviser at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Dr. Carter Mecher, wrote on the night of Jan. 28, in an email to a group of public health experts scattered around the government and universities. “The projected size of the outbreak already seems hard to believe.”

A week after the first coronavirus case had been identified in the United States, and six long weeks before President Trump finally took aggressive action to confront the danger the nation was facing — a pandemic that is now forecast to take tens of thousands of American lives — Dr. Mecher was urging the upper ranks of the nation’s public health bureaucracy to wake up and prepare for the possibility of far more drastic action.

“You guys made fun of me screaming to close the schools,” he wrote to the group, which called itself “Red Dawn,” an inside joke based on the 1984 movie about a band of Americans trying to save the country after a foreign invasion. “Now I’m screaming, close the colleges and universities.”

His was hardly a lone voice. Throughout January, as Mr. Trump repeatedly played down the seriousness of the virus and focused on other issues, an array of figures inside his government — from top White House advisers to experts deep in the cabinet departments and intelligence agencies — identified the threat, sounded alarms and made clear the need for aggressive action.

The president, though, was slow to absorb the scale of the risk and to act accordingly, focusing instead on controlling the message, protecting gains in the economy and batting away warnings from senior officials.

Even after Mr. Trump took his first concrete action at the end of January — limiting travel from China — public health often had to compete with economic and political considerations in internal debates, slowing the path toward be-

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Pivotal Moment Arises for Biden And for Cuomo

By **ALEXANDER BURNS**

In late July 2015, Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. traversed the state of New York with Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, ending the day in Queens, where they announced plans to rebuild La Guardia Airport. On a flight with Mr. Cuomo aboard Air Force Two, Mr. Biden broached a delicate subject: his own interest in the presidency.

Like most Democratic Party leaders, Mr. Cuomo was supporting Hillary Clinton, who had a wide lead in the polls. But unlike other top Democrats — including former President Barack Obama — Mr. Cuomo did not try to dissuade Mr. Biden from running. Instead, over what associates to both men described as months of conversations, the governor offered a sympathetic ear to an indecisive older statesman.

Mr. Biden later recounted in a memoir that Mr. Cuomo urged him to make a decision he could be at peace with, alluding to the similarly anguished deliberations of his father, former Gov. Mario Cuomo, decades earlier. “You’ll live with it the rest of your life,”

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Gratitude, and Immunity, as the First U.S. Survivors Tiptoe Into a New World

By **AMY HARMON**

Christy Karras and her husband received a tantalizing text the other day from friends they had not seen since February, when all four were among the first people in the United States to be sickened by the new coronavirus. “Dinner at our place?”

It had been a week and a half

since any of them had experienced symptoms, past the point when Covid-19 patients are thought to be contagious. And, assuming conventional virology wisdom applies, they were not at risk of immediate re-infection. Ms. Karras had been told she was probably “one of the safest people in the country” by a researcher she asked. She and her husband, Bill Harper, who had each endured a weeklong headache as well as the disease’s hallmark fever and dry cough, longed for social interaction.

“Let me check our calendars,” Ms. Karras typed back. “Oh, who are we kidding? Nothing on the calendar.”

So it was that the two Seattle couples entered a phase of pandemic life that most of America can still only dream of. As recently

as mid-March, fewer than 5,000 people in the United States had tested positive for the new coronavirus. Some are still coughing, or tethered to oxygen tanks. Many have died.

But the first large wave of Covid-19 survivors, likely to be endowed with a power known to infectious disease specialists as adaptive immunity, is emerging. They linger in grocery store aisles and touch doorknobs without flinching. They undertake not entirely essential travel. They have friends over. They hug.

With most Americans still desperate to avoid contracting the virus, and the number of known cases nearing half a million, several dozen spoke to The New York Times about what it was like to recover.

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INTERNATIONAL 18-19

A Melting Pot’s Slow Demise

The decline of Malacca, Malaysia, a diverse port that linked East and West centuries ago, reflects the promise and perils of globalization. PAGE 18

Wildfires Near Chernobyl

Several blazes are stirring up radiation in the Zone of Alienation created after the nuclear disaster in Ukraine. PAGE 19

NATIONAL 20-22

The Dairyland Divide

Keeping polls open in a pandemic was just one example of the partisanship that’s tearing Wisconsin apart. PAGE 20



ARTS & LEISURE

Pandemic Pop

Dua Lipa spent years preparing the release of her second LP, the upbeat, disco-tinged “Future Nostalgia.” Never did she expect for the feel-good album to coincide with a global crisis. PAGE 8

SUNDAY REVIEW

Nicholas Kristof

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SPECIAL SECTION

Solidarity

Finding ways to help, feel togetherness and say thank you to the heroes in a time of social distancing.

SUNDAY STYLES

Tips From ‘Aunt Sandy’

Sandra Lee, New York’s former first girlfriend, shares her secrets on how to subsist on affordable staples at a time when many are homebound. PAGE 1

Influencers Go Hollywood

The big talent agencies have realigned their businesses to focus on a new generation. PAGE 2

SUNDAY BUSINESS

Nationalism’s New Front

With every country in need of the same lifesaving tools, national rivalries are jeopardizing access for all. PAGE 1

A Virus-Proof Job

Professional video game streamers are used to spending their days in isolation. And a huge new audience is now at home to watch them play. PAGE 1

BOOK REVIEW

Ideas That Shaped the Right

“American Conservatism,” an anthology of scholarly writings, explores the deep roots of anxiety over modernity. PAGE 1



TRAVEL

Lessons From the Caribou

A traveler disappeared into the Arctic wilderness, finding an uplifting display of community and discovering that there is always a way forward. PAGE 4

