



AMERICAN MUSHROOM INSTITUTE

1284 Gap Newport Pike, Avondale, PA 19311 • P: 610/268-7483 • F: 610/268-8015

STATEMENT FROM AMERICAN MUSHROOM INSTITUTE PRESIDENT RACHEL ROBERTS ON U.S. MUSHROOM AVAILABILITY

Avondale, PA, May 8, 2020 – “Some retailers are facing a shortage of mushrooms, as many growers in the U.S. continue to experience the impacts of the Coronavirus. Unlike other continually fruiting produce, mushrooms grow in a 6- to 12-week cycle. This includes a period for producing compost for the planting beds and a period of two to three growth cycles that support a maximum of three harvests. After those harvests, beds are emptied and refilled with another batch of carefully-produced compost to begin the growing cycle again. The COVID-19 conditions that growers were responsibly adapting their cycles to in mid-March continue to impact mushroom availability today.

“When the Coronavirus hit, no one could have foreseen the markets’ unpredictability. Mushroom growers made rapid decisions to sustain the health of their businesses and to protect the industry’s workforce in unprecedented and uncertain circumstances.

- “In mid-March, when many parts of the country issued stay-at-home orders and restaurants and foodservice closures, many farms in the mushroom industry saw an immediate and significant—as much as a 90%—decline in mushroom orders. Numerous mushroom growers had coolers full of mushrooms with nowhere for them to go and were forced to donate them or throw them out. Others, under advisements to limit worker time on-site, had to cut back or delay future plantings in order to right-size their operations and align with market predictions at that time.
- “After the initial shock to retail supply chains, mushroom demand from retailers increased, as consumers were adhering to stay-at-home orders and doing more cooking at home.
- “Mushroom growers with retail customers have risen to the occasion of responsibly continuing to grow and harvest mushrooms, despite reduced square footage from having right-scaled operations in mid-March.
- “Mushroom farms sometimes source from other growers to fill shortages; but because some were forced to reduce or delay the growing cycle, and because many farms with a majority of restaurant and foodservice customers had either shut down completely or scaled back to a negligible amount, it is still proving difficult to source mushrooms to fill shortages today.

“Retailers can expect shortages of mushrooms to some degree for the next 6 to 10 weeks. However, growers are working diligently to fill retail customer demand, and we expect more farms to come online and ramp up production as stay-at-home orders are lifted, and as more restaurants and foodservice businesses begin to open and increase capacity.”

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About AMI

The American Mushroom Institute (AMI), headquartered in Avondale, Pennsylvania, is a national voluntary trade association representing the growers, processors and marketers of cultivated mushrooms in the United States and industry suppliers worldwide. For more information, visit www.americanmushroom.org.