

ATTENTION SHOPPERS: *A Message From*

CROP'S

— Fresh —

MARKETPLACE

August 2020



To Our Customers and Community:

We won't begin to tell you how much things have changed. You already know. But what we do want to share with you as summer comes to a close is how much we appreciate your support, and proud we are to be part of our community. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly challenged and deeply touched us all, and has made us an even more resilient community. Since our customers have placed their trust and confidence in us, we wanted to update you on what we've been doing to serve the community, and also, briefly, give a status report on that seemingly endless (and costly) legal battle that continues to cast a cloud over our future.

CROP'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19:

The list gets longer by the week, so we'll share just some of the highlights of how your local independent market has responded to this unprecedented public health crisis:

- **In The Face of Food Insecurity** – We've partnered with area food pantries and agencies in Coatesville (which includes the VA facility there), Downingtown, and Honey Brook to arrange direct donations and also offer for their distribution store-assembled specially-priced, customer-purchased Food Bank Donation Bags that contain assorted shelf-stable items. Popular staples are also regularly sold by us to pantries at cost.

We commend all the food banks and their tireless volunteers for their efforts!

- **Helping Stop the Spread** - We'd all probably like to forget how, starting in March, it was so hard for everyone to get most basic personal hygiene items. Working with our suppliers, we were able to donate products such as antibacterial wipes and face masks, to first responders East Brandywine and West Brandywine police departments and the local fire company. Despite the incredible supply squeeze, we also donated hand sanitizer and bleach to the Chester County and Brandywine Hospitals. We do not go looking for compliments, but we're proud to share some of their testimonials on our website. And we applaud the efforts of all those frontline employees and volunteers!

- **Upping In-Store Safety Measures** – We've recognized from our founding that safety- of our customers and co-workers - is our first priority; every day but particularly during a public health emergency.

Yes, you can say we've been obsessive about our attention to COVID precautions such as sanitizing, face-mask protocols, co-worker temperature checks, and physical distancing. Thanks to your cooperation, and that of our wonderful team, we've been able to stay open continuously through the pandemic, keep shelves stocked as best we can, and do it safely. Our Crop's family of associates have gone above and beyond and everyone is a hero in our book!

- **Ensuring Uninterrupted Supply Chain**– We tip our Crop's cap to another legacy family-operated business, Merchants Distributors, Inc. (MDI), that throughout the pandemic has performed above and beyond, enabling us to serve you and your families. Even when high-demand staples such as fresh ground beef was in scarce supply at even big-box national chains, they successfully leveraged their long standing vendor relationships. (Supply-chain management also helped us keep toilet paper on the shelf, even if it wasn't always the most familiar brand names.) And a well-earned shout out to our Independent Grocers Alliance (IGA) partners for their outstanding collaboration at the local level, the hallmark of their brand since its founding in 1926. These key relationships will only get stronger over time!





LEGAL BATTLE UPDATE

As you can see, we've had our hands full fighting the coronavirus – like everyone – so we'll make this litigation update brief (knowing our lawyers are in the thick of it representing us, the shopping center owners, and our many supporters). Bottom line: nothing has been conclusively resolved in our lawsuits challenging the Township's 2014 controversial (and we believe illegal) sweetheart agreement with Carlino East Brandywine Development (CEBD). That's the unprecedented and well-publicized deal that saw the Township use eminent domain to condemn part of the privately-owned Brandywine Shopping Center so CEBD could build a cut-through road, for its Dutch-owned client, Royal Ahold-GIANT, to enable enhanced access to a new GIANT store that would be located directly next door to us and the other local merchants in the center. We welcome competition, but this is outrageous, and we think illegal. We are facing off in both state ((Brandywine Village Associates, L&R Partnership v.



East Brandywine Township Board of Supervisors and Carlino East Brandywine Development, L.P., NO. 2019-05874-ZB, Chester County Court of Common Pleas) and federal courts (where an anti-trust complaint was filed), looking forward to the day when our arguments can be presented to a jury along with all the facts. Sadly, as this dispute drags on, the costs to township taxpayers (in the hundreds of thousands of dollars) continue to – needlessly, we argue – skyrocket. If you'd like to learn more, contact your elected officials, including the Board of Supervisors which continue to meet virtually on this and other matters of vital interest.

We will continue to keep you posted. Above all, we wish you and your loved ones good health. And please never hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns info@cropsmarketplace.com

Thank you again for your support,

Sincerely,

John, Connie, Chad, Melissa, and Amanda Cropper

