



On nourrit le monde
Fédération Thomas Hesse,

UFCW Local 401

Dear Sir,

I am pleased to answer your letter received on Friday, March 20, on behalf of the UFCW Local 401 union regarding the unprecedented situation we are currently in due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus. For Olymel management, it is clear that in order to manage this crisis properly, we will need close collaboration between everyone working in our facilities, from employees and their union representatives to supervisors, management and suppliers of goods and services.

Olymel is an important link in the Canadian farm-to-table food supply chain. In our current unprecedented circumstances, we are taking steps to maintain the supply chain that feeds the population, with the help of experts and by following the instructions of federal and provincial public health services and other government authorities.

We are aware of the pressure the fight against COVID-19 puts on our employees across Canada, and we appreciate each of them making the effort to be at their post and comply with the exceptional measures that have been implemented. We are also working to ensure that government authorities recognize the vital importance of the agri-food industry in meeting citizens' need for food.

We are also aware that our employees may be worried about their health and the health of their family members. We are doing our best to stand beside them and ensure that they are reassured and protected.

Due to the gravity of the situation, Olymel announced on March 24, specific measures that will apply to its facilities in Quebec and the rest of Canada in order to support the efforts of its employees and continue to supply food to the citizens affected by the current health crisis. Starting March 23 and until further notice, the company will be paying a fixed bonus of two dollars per hour to all employees who are paid by the hour working in pork production, slaughtering operations, processing, further processing, transportation, maintenance, and warehousing, whether or not they have a collective agreement, in both the pork and poultry sectors. The vast majority of Olymel employees across Canada will benefit from this bonus, which may be as much as 80 dollars extra a week.

On the same date, the company has announced that all administrative support service employees whose physical presence is not essential will be able to work from home.





Measures in place to fight the spread of COVID-19

It has already been several weeks since Olymel implemented multiple measures to fight the spread of the virus, because we prioritize the health and safety of our employees. Here is a non-exhaustive list:

- The recruitment of two medical experts to advise us on the COVID-19 situation and ways to apply the directives of public health authorities in the company's various settings;
- The distribution of 5 internal communiqués on the subject of COVID-19 since March 6, and an information guide containing questions and answers;
- The creation and implementation of action plans to optimize common areas in our establishments and modify scheduled breaks and lunchtimes in order to maximize precautionary distancing measures;
- The adoption of additional disinfection measures for common areas such as locker rooms, bathrooms, cafeterias, transportation vehicles, etc.;
- The required 14-day self-isolation of all temporary foreign workers arriving after government directives on that subject;
- The automatic acceptance of all requests for time off from employees aged 70 and over, and information about the various compensation plans, including government programs;
- The cancellation of business trips and visits to our processing and production establishments;
- The use of our facilities' internal communication systems, continuous reminders about the hygiene measures recommended by public health authorities, and contact details for public services made available to the population for the purposes of information.

We would like to point out that our establishment and department managers and our local human resources personnel are being very proactive in terms of listening to employees and managing the COVID-19 crisis.



We are trying to respond to this crisis effectively with everyone's collaboration while respecting the provisions of the collective agreements, which can vary from one establishment to another. However, the measures and directives to contain the spread of COVID-19 are mostly similar from one province to the next and one establishment to the next, and protecting oneself and others is important for everyone.

Olymel considers good relationships with its employees and the unions that represent them to be of the utmost importance. In the current public health crisis, the company will be acting in partnership with the various unions more than ever.

Though we will not suspend all grievance and arbitration periods laid out in the collective agreements, we will comply with public health directives and judicial guidelines that govern labour in Canada. Any hearings that need to be postponed will be. We will only be moving forward where possible, with cases that we and the union have agreed are urgent.

Our intention is to hold daily meetings with union representatives in order to ensure that we are adequately responding to their concerns about the health of our employees and the continuity of operations. We would like to resolve disputes as quickly as possible. Even though we have reduced the number of people visiting the company as much as possible, our establishments remain open to union representatives if necessary.

On a daily basis, Olymel management is evaluating the impact of this crisis on the company's operations and trying to adapt to the disruption it is causing in the markets. All management and department members are being mobilized to face this crisis, and we are adapting our response every day. Our primary concern is the health of our employees, and as a result, our ability to maintain our operations in order to meet the demand for food.

I am hoping that the clarifications in this letter meet your expectations, and I would like to reiterate that Olymel management remains fully available for constructive discussions in this difficult time.

Rob Ackerblade
Plant Manager
Olymel L.P. Red Deer





Answers to the questions posed by UFCW Local 401

Question 1. As demonstrated by this letter, Olymel has already taken many steps to face this crisis. Our decisions are based on existing internal programs and collective agreements, as well as on various government assistance programs. All other requests will be considered based on their feasibility and their impact on the viability of the company.

Question 2 and 3. Every day, Olymel is trying to adapt its production and operations to the needs of its clients and to the changes caused by the effects of the current health crisis. In the event of major slowdowns or the inability to continue our operations, the affected establishments, their employees and union representatives will be the first to be informed of the situation and the resulting decisions.

Question 4. In the event that someone at one of our establishments is found to be infected with COVID-19, Olymel will need to ask the appropriate public health services for advice and will follow their recommendations in order to protect its employees.

Question 5. Olymel is already a member of national associations representing our industry that are speaking to various governments in order to raise awareness regarding the important role of the agri-food industry in the current circumstances. All Canadian union initiatives to protect the health of our employees and highlight the important role they play in this difficult period will be evaluated on merit and supported by Olymel management as long as they do not compromise the future or viability

