



Basis Points – May 7, 2020

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Above the Fold

America's New Meat Conundrum

With consumers at home cooking more, protein consumption is way up. Meat sales at supermarkets were up 41% year-over-year, according to Nielsen Research. This would seem like good news for meat producers and processors, but coronavirus outbreaks have forced the **closure** of numerous (around 20) large processing plants across the nation and are straining producers to get product to market. Due to the shutdowns, beef and pork production are down 35% compared to the same period last year.

And while some supermarket chains are limiting purchases and/or raising prices, experts say that meats should be available everywhere — selection may, of course, be limited. The jump in prices may help drive consumers to plant-based meat alternatives as consumers seek out variety and like-priced options. Some supermarket chains will begin selling or increasing plant-based meat products to help fill the void left by traditional proteins.

Three Things

1. *Will Workers Sacrifice Privacy for Pay?* – Building owners, factory managers and large companies are gearing up to bring workers back, but it won't be business as usual in some cases. Employees may be asked to download tracking apps, separate themselves by perceived health risks, or share personal information about themselves or family members in order to return to the workplace.
2. *Unusual Partnerships* – Ecommerce giants have partnered with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and product manufacturers to stop the flood of counterfeit goods on its site. ICE's National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center identified more than 19,000 suspect COVID-19-related domain names that could be linked to shady operators.
3. *Gaming Companies Immune to Pandemic* – Several video game makers reported strong earnings as consumers around the world sought entertainment, escape and social interaction during the unprecedented lockdowns. Football emulator Madden NFL20 saw the highest engagement levels in its history during the last quarter.

Did You Know?

The Latest (Fact-Checked) COVID-19 Positives

- On Monday, Florida Governor Ron DeSantis [reported](#) a record 24,000 COVID-19 tests administered in a day, with a positive rate of around just 2.5%, sending new-case rates to a record low.
- German officials gave the [go-ahead](#) for all shops in the country to open systematically. Some sporting events will resume immediately and schools are expected to gradually reopen for the summer term.

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