



April 29, 2020

To: All Domestic Employees

From: Pandemic Working Group

Re: **COVID-19: Sweden ~ Herd Immunity ~ Newport Beach ~ Farm to Food Banks in CA**

Sweden: A Case Study. As reported by CNN.com Wire Service and Boston.com, Sweden has stood virtually alone among its counterparts in the EU in desisting from imposing strict limits on its citizens' lives in light of the pandemic. Schools for the young have continued, and service businesses (e.g., diners and salons) have remained open, although many other workers have



been encouraged to work remotely. Public health officials have been operating under the belief that Swedish people can be trusted to take prudent measures without mandatory orders. Under this comparatively laissez faire approach (as depicted in this Stockholm restaurant, courtesy of the New York Times), Sweden has risen above many other comparable EU nations with 23 deaths per 100,000 (as compared to countries that had imposed strict restrictions, such as Denmark (7.5 per

100,000) and both Norway and Finland (4 per 100,000)(these figures from Johns Hopkins University). According to Jan Albert, a professor at the Karolinska Institutet, stricter lockdowns “only serve to flatten the curve and flattening the curve doesn’t mean that cases disappear – they are just moved in time.” Dr. Albert does concede, however, that his country has failed to prevent the disease from spreading into elder care facilities, which account for half of the mortalities. In the face of criticism that that nation is seeking to attain herd immunity through natural means, authorities in Sweden neither defend nor condemn their approach, but are adopting more of a wait-and-see outlook.

Are We Immune Yet? And speaking of herd immunity, the Washington Post reports that preliminary results from antibody tests in various regions are leading to the conclusion that a far higher number of persons have contracted the coronavirus than had been thought to be the case just a few weeks ago. Researchers have concluded that 2.5 to 4 percent of the population in Santa Clara County, California; 3 to 6 percent of the population in Los Angeles County; 6 percent in Miami-Dade County and 14 percent across the state of New York may have already been infected. How are we to interpret these results? First, many of them have not undergone rigorous scientific review, nor has the reliability of their testing been ascertained. Second, even if we accept the results, herd immunity is not deemed to have been realized until, conservatively, 60 percent

or more of the population has been infected. Thus, we are far from reaching the point at which transmission rates would drop significantly solely due to this phenomenon.

Closer to Home. As reported by Fox News and the Washington Examiner, an estimated 40,000 people flocked to the beaches of Newport Beach in the face of record-high temperatures over the weekend, thereby drawing a rebuke from California Governor Gavin Newsom, who described this conduct as an example of “what not to do” in light of statewide stay-at-home orders. In response to the governor’s comments, the Newport Beach City Council met and voted 5-to-2 against a measure to close public beaches for the next three weeks, opting instead to enforce social distancing more closely. Interestingly, public beaches have been open in Newport for weeks, but authorities have been blocking public parking lots which, in turn, has led many non-residents to park in private neighborhoods and flood small strips of nearby beaches. The photo to the right (courtesy of AP) presents a contrast to the spirit of the governor’s COVID orders and is indicative of the tensions we are seeing between state and local governments.



Farm to Food Bank – California Style. Following up on yesterday’s story about the efforts of a private citizen in Westchester County to buy, donate and ship food from farms to food banks in New York, we have this story just in from KCRA 3. Today, Governor Gavin Newsom announced that California is launching an initiative to get food from farmers and ranchers to food banks in need. Noting a sharp drop in demand for food from restaurants and schools and a concomitant increase in need at area food banks, the governor stated that he wanted “to address that mismatch.” Under the program, 21 million pounds of fresh produce and other commodities will go to food banks on a monthly basis, and the farmers will get a tax credit in the process.

If you have any questions or comments on this advisory, please contact either kellyw@amvac.com or timd@amvac.com .