Texas Livestock Markets:

We are providing the attached guidance documents and support letters to you because the food supply and livestock industry need livestock auction markets to continue functioning, now more than ever. Given rapidly changing and developing government responses to COVID-19, we want to underscore the importance of agriculture and livestock auctions being declared an “essential business” in the State of Texas.

**Livestock auctions are exempt from the Texas executive order requiring crowds to be limited to be less than 10 in number. However, we want to limit crowd numbers as much as possible to be able to continue to operate.**

The attached documents are being provided to help aid in your discussions with city and county officials if questions arise about the ability for your marketing businesses to continue to operate.

The first attachment is a letter from Texas Animal Health Commission Executive Director, Dr. Andy Schwartz, that supports the DHS guidance on critical infrastructure and recognizes the importance of keeping livestock markets open for business. Also included is a memo from the Department of Homeland Security the outlines the identification of essential critical infrastructure during the COVID-19 response. The last page of the document addresses Food & Agriculture functions and business that are considered exempt.

Finally, I’ve included an LMA alert from earlier this week with some ideas on how you can adjust your business in order to continue to operate.

If you have any questions or having issues continuing operations, contact me at 816-442-9028 or jcarver@lmaweb.com.

Jesse Carver
Livestock Marketing Association
March 20, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
State Insurance Building, 1100 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

RE: Supporting Critical Agriculture Infrastructure

Dear Governor Abbott:

The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) recognizes that agricultural inputs for animal and crop production are deemed essential services and are vital to public health and welfare by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and described in CISA’s Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response.

The labor force and inputs needed to care for, feed, treat, produce, process, slaughter, manufacture, package, distribute, deliver, transport, market and sale or otherwise provide meat, milk, eggs and crops to Texans are essential services. The Texas Animal Health Commission is committed to serving the public by helping ensure these critical services and animal agriculture products are available through safe, reliable and consistent market and slaughter chains.

As the TAHC State Veterinarian and Executive Director, I recognize it is critical that agricultural inputs, outputs, and associated services continue to move freely within the State of Texas. My staff and I are committed to providing essential inspections to ensure the livestock and poultry markets and supply chains remain open to the public.

I want to express my appreciation for Texas’ rapid state and local response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Whereas this particular virus has not been shown to impact the health of animals, the TAHC remains steadfast in its regular operations and inspections ensuring the health and marketability of Texas livestock and poultry, while standing ready to support the state as necessary to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andy Schwartz
Executive Director and State Veterinarian

An Equal Opportunity Employer
MEMORANDUM ON IDENTIFICATION OF ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS DURING COVID-19 RESPONSE

FROM: Christopher C. Krebs
Director
Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)

As the Nation comes together to slow the spread of COVID-19, on March 16th, the President issued updated Coronavirus Guidance for America. This guidance states that:

"If you work in a critical infrastructure industry, as defined by the Department of Homeland Security, such as healthcare services and pharmaceutical and food supply, you have a special responsibility to maintain your normal work schedule."

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) executes the Secretary of Homeland Security’s responsibilities as assigned under the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to provide strategic guidance, promote a national unity of effort, and coordinate the overall federal effort to ensure the security and resilience of the Nation’s critical infrastructure. CISA uses trusted partnerships with both the public and private sectors to deliver infrastructure resilience assistance and guidance to a broad range of partners.

In accordance with this mandate, and in collaboration with other federal agencies and the private sector, CISA developed an initial list of “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers” to help State and local officials as they work to protect their communities, while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security. The list can also inform critical infrastructure community decision-making to determine the sectors, sub-sectors, segments, or critical functions that should continue normal operations, appropriately modified to account for Centers for Disease Control (CDC) workforce and customer protection guidance.

The attached list identifies workers who conduct a range of operations and services that are essential to continued critical infrastructure viability, including staffing operations centers, maintaining and repairing critical infrastructure, operating call centers, working construction, and performing management functions, among others. The industries they support represent, but are not necessarily limited to, medical and healthcare, telecommunications, information technology systems, defense, food and agriculture, transportation and logistics, energy, water and wastewater, law enforcement, and public works.
We recognize that State, local, tribal, and territorial governments are ultimately in charge of implementing and executing response activities in communities under their jurisdiction, while the Federal Government is in a supporting role. As State and local communities consider COVID-19-related restrictions, CISA is offering this list to assist prioritizing activities related to continuity of operations and incident response, including the appropriate movement of critical infrastructure workers within and between jurisdictions.

**Accordingly, this list is advisory in nature. It is not, nor should it be considered to be, a federal directive or standard in and of itself.**

In addition, these identified sectors and workers are not intended to be the authoritative or exhaustive list of critical infrastructure sectors and functions that should continue during the COVID-19 response. Instead, State and local officials should use their own judgment in using their authorities and issuing implementation directives and guidance. Similarly, critical infrastructure industry partners will use their own judgment, informed by this list, to ensure continued operations of critical infrastructure services and functions. All decisions should appropriately balance public safety while ensuring the continued delivery of critical infrastructure services and functions.

CISA will continue to work with you and our partners in the critical infrastructure community to update this list as the Nation’s response to COVID-19 evolves. We also encourage you to submit how you might use this list so that we can develop a repository of use cases for broad sharing across the country.

Should you have questions about this list, please contact CISA at CISA.CAT@cisa.dhs.gov.

**Attachment:** “Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce: Ensuring Community and National Resilience in COVID-19 Response”

Version 1.0 (March 19, 2020)

THE IMPORTANCE OF ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS

Functioning critical infrastructure is imperative during the response to the COVID-19 emergency for both public health and safety as well as community well-being. Certain critical infrastructure industries have a special responsibility in these times to continue operations.

This guidance and accompanying list are intended to support State, Local, and industry partners in identifying the critical infrastructure sectors and the essential workers needed to maintain the services and functions Americans depend on daily and that need to be able to operate resiliently during the COVID-19 pandemic response.

This document gives guidance to State, local, tribal, and territorial jurisdictions and the private sector on defining essential critical infrastructure workers. Promoting the ability of such workers to continue to work during periods of community restriction, access management, social distancing, or closure orders/directives is crucial to community resilience and continuity of essential functions.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS

This list was developed in consultation with federal agency partners, industry experts, and State and local officials, and is based on several key principles:

1. Response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic are locally executed, State managed, and federally supported.

2. Everyone should follow guidance from the CDC, as well as State and local government officials, regarding strategies to limit disease spread.

3. Workers should be encouraged to work remotely when possible and focus on core business activities. In-person, non-mandatory activities should be delayed until the resumption of normal operations.

4. When continuous remote work is not possible, businesses should enlist strategies to reduce the likelihood of spreading the disease. This includes, but is not necessarily limited to, separating staff by off-setting shift hours or days and/or social distancing. These steps can preserve the workforce and allow operations to continue.
5. All organizations should implement their business continuity and pandemic plans, or put plans in place if they do not exist. Delaying implementation is not advised and puts at risk the viability of the business and the health and safety of the employees.

6. In the modern economy, reliance on technology and just-in-time supply chains means that certain workers must be able to access certain sites, facilities, and assets to ensure continuity of functions.

7. Government employees, such as emergency managers, and the business community need to establish and maintain lines of communication.

8. When government and businesses engage in discussions about critical infrastructure workers, they need to consider the implications of business operations beyond the jurisdiction where the asset or facility is located. Businesses can have sizeable economic and societal impacts as well as supply chain dependencies that are geographically distributed.

9. Whenever possible, jurisdictions should align access and movement control policies related to critical infrastructure workers to lower the burden of workers crossing jurisdictional boundaries.

IDENTIFYING ESSENTIAL CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKERS

The following list of sectors and identified essential critical infrastructure workers are an initial recommended set and are intended to be overly inclusive reflecting the diversity of industries across the United States. CISA will continually solicit and accept feedback on the list (both sectors/sub sectors and identified essential workers) and will evolve the list in response to stakeholder feedback. We will also use our various stakeholder engagement mechanisms to work with partners on how they are using this list and share those lessons learned and best practices broadly. We ask that you share your feedback, both positive and negative on this list so we can provide the most useful guidance to our critical infrastructure partners. Feedback can be sent to CISA.CAT@cisa.dhs.gov.
LAW ENFORCEMENT, PUBLIC SAFETY, FIRST RESPONDERS

- Personnel in emergency management, law enforcement, Emergency Management Systems, fire, and corrections, including front line and management
- Emergency Medical Technicians
- 911 call center employees
- Fusion Center employees
- Hazardous material responders from government and the private sector.
- Workers – including contracted vendors – who maintain digital systems infrastructure supporting law enforcement and emergency service operations.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

- Workers supporting groceries, pharmacies and other retail that sells food and beverage products
- Restaurant carry-out and quick serve food operations - Carry-out and delivery food employees
- Food manufacturer employees and their supplier employees—to include those employed in food processing (packers, meat processing, cheese plants, milk plants, produce, etc.) facilities; livestock, poultry, seafood slaughter facilities; pet and animal feed processing facilities; human food facilities producing by-products for animal food; beverage production facilities; and the production of food packaging
- Farm workers to include those employed in animal food, feed, and ingredient production, packaging, and distribution; manufacturing, packaging, and distribution of veterinary drugs; truck delivery and transport; farm and fishery labor needed to produce our food supply domestically
- Farm workers and support service workers to include those who field crops; commodity inspection; fuel ethanol facilities; storage facilities; and other agricultural inputs
- Employees and firms supporting food, feed, and beverage distribution, including warehouse workers, vendor-managed inventory controllers and blockchain managers
- Workers supporting the sanitation of all food manufacturing processes and operations from wholesale to retail
- Company cafeterias - in-plant cafeterias used to feed employees
- Workers in food testing labs in private industries and in institutions of higher education
- Workers essential for assistance programs and government payments
- Employees of companies engaged in the production of chemicals, medicines, vaccines, and other substances used by the food and agriculture industry, including pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, minerals, enrichments, and other agricultural production aids
- Animal agriculture workers to include those employed in veterinary health; manufacturing and distribution of animal medical materials, animal vaccines, animal drugs, feed ingredients, feed, and bedding, etc.; transportation of live animals, animal medical materials; transportation of deceased animals for disposal; raising of animals for food; animal production operations; slaughter and packing plants and associated regulatory and government workforce
- Workers who support the manufacture and distribution of forest products, including, but not limited to timber, paper, and other wood products
- Employees engaged in the manufacture and maintenance of equipment and other infrastructure necessary to agricultural production and distribution
Attention Members,

LMA is doing everything in our power to keep markets open and operating. Auctions are critical to the food supply and provide income to farmers and ranchers who are particularly impacted by the COVID19 situation.

In order to keep markets open and to maintain business continuity across the industry, we must all follow all relevant local, state and federal mandates. If we do not act responsibly in taking necessary measures, we will lose the ability to operate.

We ask that you take these take steps to mitigate disease spread and create contingency plans accordingly. The following strategies may be beneficial to prepare your operations:

- Familiarize yourself with and follow rapidly changing local and state rules regarding assembly of crowds. If you need assistance interpreting relevant recommendations and mandates, please reach out to Chelsea Good at cgood@lmaweb.com/816-305-9540 or your Region Executive Officer;
- Work with your café operators to follow location-specific guidance which may include closure or offering to-go service only;
- If you are in a situation where you are working to limit crowd size, request that consignors deliver livestock and return home rather than remaining at the facility;
- Markets working toward limiting crowd sizes at their facilities may want to put up signs to communicate with visitors. If you need help crafting sign language, please reach out to LMA;
- Offer consignors flexibility in picking up their checks if they can’t wait for them to arrive by mail, such as delivery or pick up from their vehicle while remaining in parking lot;
- Instruct any employee or visitor exhibiting symptoms of illness to remain home and request that any employee or visitor who is a member of a population of heightened vulnerability to consider avoiding areas where people are gathering;
- Evaluate all options to utilize web broadcast or phone bidding;
- Provide ample opportunities for visitors and employees to wash hands following CDC best practices;
- Clean and disinfect all commonly used areas frequently including restrooms and restocking with soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer;
• Update your website with instructions to customers and your plans for continued operation;
• Utilize your social media platforms to share fact-based information and your plans for continued operations. If you need help drafting your social media or website statements, please reach out to Kristen Parman at kparman@lmaweb.com/816-645-5916 or your Region Executive Officer.

If you need assistance or have additional questions, please contact me at 816-645-5916 or kparman@lmaweb.com Chelsea Good at 816-305-9540 or cgood@lmaweb.com, or your Region Executive Officer.