



## Livestock Marketing Association of Texas

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](mailto:jcarver@lmaweb.com).

Jesse Carver  
Livestock Marketing Association



## TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION

Coleman H. Locke  
*Chairman*

Andy Schwartz, D.V.M.  
*Executive Director*

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

William Edmiston, Jr., D.V.M.  
Jim Eggleston  
Ken Jordan  
Barret J. Klein  
Wendee C. Langdon, Ph.D.  
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## 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

### CONNECT WITH US

[www.cisa.gov](http://www.cisa.gov)

For more information,  
email [CISA.CAT@cisa.dhs.gov](mailto:CISA.CAT@cisa.dhs.gov)



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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:kparman@lmaweb.com) Chelsea Good at 816-305-9540 or [cgood@lmaweb.com](mailto:cgood@lmaweb.com), or your Region Executive Officer.