

March 27, 2020

Dear Livestock Market Manager:

As our nation works diligently to halt the spread of COVID-19, livestock markets are vital to ensure a safe and steady food supply. **Markets, sellers, and buyers must do their part to protect the health of customers and employees.**

This is *not* business as usual. It is critical that all participants in livestock sales follow CDC guidelines to minimize risk of infection. We want to be sure that the ag industry complies with federal and state recommendations for good health.

Following discussions with Tennessee livestock market managers and owners, the Tennessee Livestock Marketing Association, the national Livestock Marketing Association, and the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation, in conjunction with the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture makes the following recommendations for all livestock sales:

- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between sale staff and customers.
- Do not allow people to congregate.
- Only allow one bidder per business or family on site.
- Prohibit spectators, including children. Consider providing a livestream of the sale for consignors and bidders to watch.
- Limit staff to essential people at sale time.
- Require buyers to sign in at arrival.
- Restrict access to the ring area by locking or staffing entrances.
- Ask consignors to drop off livestock and leave the facility.
- Offer curbside service for check delivery.
- If possible, allow bidding online and/or over the phone.
- Regularly disinfect frequently-touched surfaces.
- Employees and customers showing signs of illness should stay home.
- Communicate and enforce new policies with staff and the public.

This is a serious situation for our nation and our industry. Biosecurity is a longstanding practice in agriculture and we fully understand how important it is to immediately control a disease outbreak. We can work together to maintain our strong commitment to health. Even during these uncertain times, farmers remain resilient. We know that the agriculture community is uniquely prepared to weather this storm. Thank you for all you do to support agriculture in Tennessee.

Sincerely,



Commissioner Charlie Hatcher, D.V.M.