

LMA ALERT

March 23, 2020

Continuing Sales - LMA COVID-19 Update

LMA Members –

Livestock Marketing Association is hard at work ensuring you have the ability to continue conducting sales during the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation. Livestock auctions taking proactive measures to reduce crowd size have helped in this effort and must continue.

From a national perspective, livestock auctions can continue to operate. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and White House have deemed food supply to be [critical infrastructure](#). This federal recommendation is backed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) deeming food and Agriculture employees as part of the [essential critical infrastructure](#) workforce during COVID-19.

However, states may create their own rules. We've seen an increased number of states restricting crowds to less than 50 or even less than 10 people. In some areas, we are seeing stay at home orders. Thankfully, we believe livestock markets to be exempt as a part of the food supply.

Additionally, city and county officials may make their own rules in addition to state requirements. If you have not yet connected with your local political leadership and health department, you may want to reach out to explain that your business must continue to operate to allow livestock to continue moving in the food supply chain. Explain that meat cases all over the country are empty and livestock auction markets like yours are the primary source of the cows and bulls needed to make ground beef. You may also wish to share that your livestock auction is likely the only way local producers can generate needed cash flow during this difficult time.

Please also note, many states and local municipalities are requiring restaurants (and market cafes) move to offering takeout orders only and stop allowing dine-in service.

While we have been successful in keeping auctions open, this flexibility could be lost if we do not take preventative measures. I've included an LMA alert with some

ideas on how you can adjust your business by reducing people in attendance and taking additional actions.

If you have questions or need anything contact Kristen Parman (816-645-5916 / kparman@lmaweb.com), or Chelsea Good (816-305-9540 / cgood@lmaweb.com), or your Regional Executive Officer.

COVID-19 Update Suggested Strategies

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 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;
- Limit crowd sizes:
 - Limit attendees in the arena to buyers only;
 - Discourage children or anyone under the age of 18 to be in attendance at the sale;
 - Discourage groups of people from congregating and, in particular, ask that they follow the CDC recommended 6-foot distance between individuals;
 - Request that consignors deliver livestock and return home rather than remaining at the facility;
 - 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;
 - Evaluate all options to utilize web broadcast or phone bidding;
 - Clearly communicate and enforce your policies:
 - 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.

- Put up signs to communicate with visitors. If you need help crafting sign language, please reach out to LMA;
 - Make announcements from the auction block throughout the sale reminding everyone of expectations for crowd limits;
 - Designate a staff person to monitor entry to the arena and/or regularly monitor the number of individuals present to stay within recommended crowd size limits;
- Take other preventative measures:
 - 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;
 - 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;

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