



## 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.  
Joe L. Leathers

COMMISSIONERS:

Thomas E. Oates  
Joseph G. "Joe" Osterkamp  
Keith M. Staggs  
Leo D. Vermedahl, Ph.D.  
Mike Vickers, D.V.M.  
Eric D. White