

## **COVID-19 Industry News and Updates**

There is a great deal of uncertainty about the ongoing impact of the Coronavirus on the beef industry. That uncertainty is shared by all of agriculture and every American. VCA is engaged in ongoing issues surrounding COVID-19 and its effects on our industry. We will work to keep you informed as the situation continues to evolve.



REMINDER: All of NCBA response materials can be found at: <https://www.ncba.org/coronavirus.aspx>

### ***Tuesday, April 14, 2020***

1. **Coronavirus-Related Cattle Industry Losses Estimated at \$13.6 Billion** -- Today's headline is that our economic working group, led by Dr. Derrell Peel of Oklahoma State University, completed their work on the economic damage assessment of the COVID-19 crisis. As of early this month, the estimated total damage to the beef cattle industry is \$13.6 billion. The group further breaks the impact down to \$111.91/head for each mature breeding animal, \$159.98/head for stockers/backgrounders, and \$205.96/head for feeders. The executive summary and full report are attached. This report has been transmitted to USDA and the White House. [Executive Summary](#) [Full Report](#)
2. We continue to work on positive messaging during this crisis. NCBA developed the "Still Raising Cattle" campaign which is airing on RFD-TV. Here is link to watch it: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOA5MZslyY&feature=youtu.be>

### ***Monday, April 13, 2020***

1. As expected, we learned today that the JBS beef plant in Greeley, Colorado, is shutting down due to worker and manager cases of COVID-19. At this time, they expect to take cattle again on Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>. We will keep you updated as we learn more regarding the total impact this closure will have on the industry.
2. In addition, we learned that the Cargill beef plant in Fort Morgan, Colorado, has combined their 2<sup>nd</sup> shift into the first shift in order to continue operating under health department guidelines.
3. [Attached](#) above is a resource guide listing all of the Federal government's COVID-19 resources.
4. Last night, FMCSA published a set of FAQs specifically regarding actions State Driver Licensing Agencies (SDLA) or commercial driver's license holders may take during the public health crisis that are permissible under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations (FMCSRs). The FAQ is [attached](#) above.

### ***Sunday, April 12, 2020***

1. We expect an announcement tomorrow regarding JBS' plans on operating the beef packing plant in Greeley, Colorado. We will pass along the details as we have them.
2. We will be working with the other livestock groups tomorrow to see if we can develop a state-based protocol on operating plants during this crisis. While USDA and the White House continue to support food and agriculture as essential, we have seen some issues with local and

state governments. We need to find a way to get over that, especially as we see more plants shut down.

3. We expect USDA to have the cattle producer stimulus program in place this week. As soon as we have details, we will get them out. We will be working with USDA throughout the week to finalize the program. Secretary Perdue made it clear to us on Friday that he wants this program implemented as soon as possible.
4. Finally, we continue to work on positive messages on our BeefUSA media properties. Our team worked on this post (posted on Friday) promoting #comfortfoodfridays. This post generated more than a thousand impressions in less than an hour and zero negative comments. That's a new three-week record for our policy social media efforts.

### ***Saturday, April 11, 2020***

- I'd like to start by sharing some good news. As you saw in earlier updates, NCBA's checkoff-funded "Beef Substitutes" campaign was designed to find ways to substitute beef for other proteins. Chef Lamar Moore was one of our featured stars with his cowlamari recipe. I'm proud to announce that Chef Moore won the Food Network's Vegas Chef Prize Fight contest. This additional recognition will help him be even more of an influential advocate for beef.
- Speaking of the Beef. It's What's for Dinner "Beef Substitutes" campaign, we have seen more than 1.2 million video views and nearly 1.5 million social media engagements. The overwhelming response from the consumer has been positive.
- You will also recall that Beef. It's What's for Dinner began online cooking classes and promotion of recipes after the COVID-19 crisis broke. Since those rolled out in March, there have been more than 5 million video views and a 51% increase in recipe-related views on BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com. This is a great response from our customers.
- One of the NCBA posts with the highest engagement of any post in the past two weeks highlighted that the Producer Education team opened up the Cattlemen's College instructional videos at no cost for producers. This posting generated nearly 60,000 impressions.
- Our team also created a promotional video for the release of the Spring issue of our *Directions* publication. The video can be seen here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/BeefUSA/videos/226041705299779/>
- We continue to monitor the status of packing plants across the country. As we have breaking news, we will provide that.
- While New York, New Jersey, Colorado, California, and Washington continue to get media attention regarding COVID-19, we must remember that rural America is not immune. Please practice social distancing and the other recommendations of the CDC. While food and agriculture are part of the critical infrastructure of the United States, there is no current provision to compel workers to show up to their jobs. We will continue to engage with USDA and the White House on this issue.

### ***Friday, April 10, 2020***

- Today, NCBA's Officer Team and Cattle Marketing Working Group had a call with Secretary Perdue and his staff. Secretary Perdue confirmed that the Packers and Stockyards Division of USDA was

working on the expanded investigation as we requested in our letter to the President, and that they were already working with the DOJ to have the additional access to records and resources needed to finish the investigation. We made it clear that USDA needs to complete this investigation as quickly as possible. We cannot wait for months to have this done.

- We also took the additional opportunity to make our case for all cattle-producing segments to be included in the CARES Act stimulus package. Secretary Perdue gave NCBA credit for making the funding happen. He indicated we could see a program roll out next week. We will keep you posted on all of the details as this comes together. Our economist and market analyst team are finalizing their proposal. This will help USDA complete their work.
- Over the past three weeks, NCBA's Membership and Communications team has been working to put together some traditional and social media materials as part of their work and to help supplement all the other member/producer directed work NCBA has been doing. As many of you have seen, there's been a great deal of negativity in the industry and much has been directed at NCBA over the past few weeks, but it is also important to remember that we have a lot of support among beef producers, and that support can be seen in the likes and shares the content below has generated. It's also a reminder that not everyone wants to engage with the policy issues and the noise surrounding it. We must remember to generate content and opportunities for engagement for those individuals too.
- The first noteworthy post was a call for calving photos. This post generated more than 38,000 impressions and we received more than 500 photos in response, the second-highest engagement of any post in the past two weeks. As a follow-up, our team turned those calf photos into a great video, which can be seen here: <https://www.facebook.com/BeefUSA/videos/1113185675714864/>
- Today, the Farm Credit Council put out a message regarding the work they are doing to help disburse the PPP program. Here is their notice:

April 10, 2020

As you know, the CARES Act included Farm Credit as a lender for the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP).

Similar to other financial institutions, Farm Credit lenders have experienced extraordinary challenges accessing SBA's system, the first step in helping America's farmers, ranchers and agriculture cooperatives apply for the PPP. While SBA officials continue to work to get Farm Credit institutions approved, most remain unable to access the system to begin taking applications from customers. We are, however, seeing improvements in this situation every day.

While working through the SBA access process, many Farm Credit institutions are racing to reinvent their own lending systems to handle loans guaranteed by SBA and begin taking applications from customers. Other Farm Credit lenders are working to identify an outside vendor with deep experience in SBA lending that could support Farm Credit customers. In many cases, Farm Credit lenders that have not yet been approved to begin lending are advising customers to try applying through the commercial bank with whom they have a depository relationship. Many commercial banks have existing relationships with SBA because they lend to businesses outside of agriculture. As an agriculture lender, most Farm Credit institutions have not traditionally utilized SBA programs. In short, we're doing everything we can to get access to SBA's PPP for our customers.

As of midday Friday, April 10, about a dozen Farm Credit institutions have made it through the SBA process, are taking applications from customers and are working in the SBA lending system to get approvals for loans for their customers. We expect more Farm Credit institutions to get final SBA

approval across the next week and begin working with customers to access PPP loans. Reports, however, indicate that SBA likely will run short of funding for the program sometime mid- to late-next week.

Farm Credit institutions are relationship lenders. They pride themselves on their ability to have deep insight into their customers' needs and to tailor financing solutions to meet them. While that approach has proven beneficial to our customers for more than 100 years, it means that many of our internal systems simply are not designed to process the thousands of SBA loan applications that we expect farmers, ranchers and rural businesses to generate. Even once Farm Credit institutions receive final approval from SBA, our capacity to transact will be limited. Again, we will do the best we can to make sure our customers get access to the program.

- NCBA continues to be a fixture in the media. Here are the latest headlines from today:

#### **Top NCBA Headlines**

- Daily Mail - [Donald Trump directs agriculture chief to expedite help to American farmers as many are forced to dump their excess stock and cattle prices drop dramatically amid coronavirus shutdowns](#)
- WNAX - [NCBA Assured By The USDA They Will Further Investigate Cattle Market Disparities](#)

#### **NCBA Mentions**

- DRG News - [Cattle Market Investigation will now Expand](#)
- Beef Magazine - [7 ag stories you might have missed this week - April 10, 2020](#)
- Ag Info - [USDA to Expand Cattle Price Inquiry](#)
- Brownfield Ag News - [USDA To Expand Cattle Market Investigation To Include COVID-19 Developments](#)
- RFD-TV - [USDA to Expand Beef Market Investigation](#)
- Agri Pulse - [Daybreak April 9: Farm aid could reach \\$15.5 billion](#)
- Ag Daily - [Secretary Perdue expands investigation into cattle markets](#)

#### ***Wednesday, April 8, 2020***

- The letter to President Trump was delivered today. This was a great example of how NCBA's producer-driven decision-making process works. The Cattle Markets Working Group met and made a recommendation to engage with a letter to President Trump. The Executive Committee approved, and the NCBA officer team ultimately approved the final letter submitted. We followed the submission with a press release and media interviews. We will be doing more interviews the rest of the week.
- And the President listened. Less than six hours after delivery of our letter, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced that USDA would be doing exactly what we asked the President to do for us.
- The Department of Transportation has extended the Hours of Service waiver until May 15<sup>th</sup>. It also expanded the waiver to cover liquefied gases to be used in refrigeration or cooling systems. The DOT declaration can be found at: <https://www.ncba.org/CMDocs/BeefUSA/Publications/DOT%20Hours%20of%20Service%20extension.pdf>

## ***Tuesday, April 7, 2020***

- The letter to President Trump approved by the Executive Committee (mentioned in last night's update) is complete and will be delivered first thing tomorrow morning. We will accompany it with a press release and media interviews.
- There have been many twists and turns to the COVID-19 crisis. As we mentioned last night, the rapidly depleting supply of carbon dioxide is a problem for our industry as it impacts cooling and refrigeration. We joined a coalition of other livestock groups in sending a letter to Vice President Pence. The letter is attached.
- As we have illustrated from the beginning of this crisis, NCBA is also responding and protecting the industry through our role as a contractor to the beef checkoff. One way we work to drive demand is through the "Beef So Simple" e-newsletter. Our Beef So Simple e-newsletter goes to more than 4,500 consumers and has an open rate, on average, of about 55% (compared to e-newsletters that on average have a 20% open rate). They are typically sent twice a month and we focus content around trending and popular recipes to help inspire consumer confidence in cooking beef. The latest Beef So Simple, which was distributed today (attached as Say So Long to Leftovers with these Delicious Recipes) which focuses on "planned overs" to help families prepare a meal and then use that leftover beef in another dish. We are still gathering metrics from this latest e-newsletter, but you might be interested to know that the March 19 Beef So Simple (attached as Discover Great Recipes Using Ground Beef) had the highest open rate we've had in the last 2 years (65% open rate), given the ground beef information in the e-newsletter. Anyone can subscribe to the e-newsletter by going here: <https://beef.us12.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=ed88edede3cc59fedbaf49664&id=239b9fda5e>.
- Congress is looking at taking action to increase the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to provide more relief to employers. No deal has been made yet, but we hear that it could increase the program by as much as \$250 billion. We will keep you posted.
- Last night we illustrated the "Beef So Simple" e-newsletter as part of our continued efforts as a contractor to the beef checkoff to help protect our industry during the COVID-19 crisis. Another checkoff-funded program is our Beef News Now e-newsletter that goes to more than 2,600 supply chain subscribers that are segmented into retail, foodservice, and nutrition-focused lists to help them understand that beef is their most valuable protein for their business. These have an average open rate of 25% (compared to e-newsletters that have a 20% open rate). Our initial Coronavirus response email (attached for your reference) had a 32.4% open rate and the foodservice version had a 37.5% open rate. We send between 6-8 of these each month, including information about market research, wholesale beef prices, and other information that helps showcase to our supply chain operators that beef is the most valuable protein.

## ***Thursday, April 9, 2020***

- The Senate tried twice today to pass legislation appropriating \$250 billion in new money for the SBA relief programs. While they were not successful, we expect them to work on this again after they return from Easter.
- The President continues to look out for our interests. Just this evening he put out a Tweet directing Secretary Perdue to expedite help to farmers and ranchers. Our working group of economists and market analysts has almost completed their work on our proposal to USDA. We will see that finalized next week.
- It was a big day for us in the media world. Here are some headlines:

### **Top NCBA Headlines**

- CNN - [Meat plants are shutting down as workers get sick](#)
- Agri Pulse - [USDA to probe COVID-19 impact on beef prices](#)
- Beef Magazine - [NCBA, Sen. Deb Fischer call for investigation](#)

### **NCBA Mentions**

- KIWA - [NCBA Requests President Trump Expand USDA Market Investigation](#)
  - Bloomberg - [Scientists Worry Agency Plan to Prevent Fires Could Do Opposite](#)
  - Farm & Ranch - [Beef Industry Responds to Need for Affordable, Safe Food Supply](#)
  - Progressive Farmer - [USDA to Expand Cattle Price Inquiry](#)
  - KRTV - [Montana Ag Network report for April 8](#)
  - Gas World - [Coronavirus: CGA led coalition warns risk of CO2 shortage](#)
  - Market Screener - [NCBA Requests President Trump Expand USDA Market Investigation, Examine Futures Markets](#)
  - Drovers - [NCBA, Sen. Fischer Ask Trump To Investigate Cattle Markets](#)
- Here is a link with an updated spreadsheet on trucking exemptions for each state: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-F9sX0rrUyLJPN0fjbOAsfxqpFwE2iBy0VZK9qbNU-8/edit#gid=0>

### ***Monday, April 6, 2020***

- NCBA's Cattle Marketing Working Group held a call today to discuss the market situation and recommend actions items to the Executive Committee. The NCBA Executive Committee met later and approved the two actions. The first is to host a call with the Working Group and Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue to share our concerns regarding the cattle markets. The second is to send a letter to President Trump elevating the need for an investigation. NCBA staff are working on each of these now and we will keep you posted.
- We were engaged in discussions today regarding the shortage of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) across the United States. This will impact many different entities, and our industry will feel it, too. Carbon dioxide is used in cooling and refrigeration applications in packing plants. This goes back to all of the requirements needed to keep these packing plants running. We are working with a coalition of industries that are reaching out to the White House for assistance.

### ***Prior to April 6, 2020***

**CARES Act** -- NCBA applauded a congressional letter that was sent to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, urging swift relief for American cattle producers who have been adversely impacted by the ongoing Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The letter was signed by a bipartisan group of 147 members of the House and Senate. 105 members of the House of Representatives (21 Democrats and 84 Republicans) and 42 Senators (8 Democrats and 34 Republicans). Senators Kaine & Warner, Representatives Spanberger, Cline, Griffith and Riggleman signed onto the Congressional Letter. (Letter can be found here - <https://www.ncba.org/newsreleases.aspx?newsid=7210> )

- Work continues crafting the CARES Act stimulus package for cattle producers. We have contracted with Dr. Derrell Peel from Oklahoma State University to lead a group of economists and market analysts to help us develop a program we can take to USDA. Once Dr. Peel's team has a draft, we will share it among our affiliates to

get input in order to ensure our submission will cover all segments (except packers) as fairly as it can. Joining him on his team are:

- Derrell Peel Oklahoma State University
- Amy Hagerman Oklahoma State University
- Randy Blach CattleFax
- Glynn Tonsor Kansas State University
- Don Close Rabobank
- Dustin Aherin Rabobank
- Jim Robb Livestock Marketing Information Center
- Kenny Burdine University of Kentucky
- Josh Maples Mississippi State University

(It is important to note that it could be 60 days or more before this program will roll out. Experience has shown that it takes USDA a while to get these programs up and running. While we don't have any details yet, we urge you to spread the word that if you plan on applying for these funds. Be sure to save all your records and put them in a safe location.)

- The Small Business Administration (SBA) issued an interim final rule (IFR) providing additional implementation guidelines and requirements for its Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) authorized by the CARES Act. Agriculture producers are eligible for PPP and if producers are interested in applying, they need to contact their lender as soon as possible. For the borrower application- <https://www.sba.gov/document/sba-form--paycheck-protection-program-borrower-application-form>  
To search eligible PPP lenders nearby - <https://www.sba.gov/paycheckprotection/find>
  - **Agricultural producers are eligible for PPP.** However, all small businesses are subject to SBA's affiliation rules under [3 CFR 121.301\(f\)](https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/13/121.301(f)) (<https://www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/13/121.301>) unless specifically waived in CARES (generally, affiliation exists when one business controls or has the power to control another or when a third party -or parties- controls or has the power to control both businesses. Control may arise through ownership, management, or other relationships or interactions between the parties. Additional information on SBA affiliate can be found at [https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/affiliation\\_ver\\_03.pdf](https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/affiliation_ver_03.pdf))
  - The determining factor of eligibility appears to be size, and any small business with 500 employees or fewer is eligible to participate. However, there has been speculation that small businesses will also be required to meet the SBA small business industry specific standards, which are set up using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) and classifies businesses based on economic activity. Under NAICS, the maximum level of receipts (not profits) that a beef cattle farm or ranch can have and still be considered small is \$1 million. The maximum for feedlots is \$8 million. *While the IFR clearly defines eligibility based on size, meaning industry specific standards would not be applicable/a*

determining factor of eligibility, NCBA is working to gain additional clarity on this issue.

- Loans of up to \$10 million will be made available to cover 2.5 times the average monthly cost of payroll, which is measured by payroll costs of the 12 months preceding the loan origination date, plus an additional 25% for non-payroll costs. This includes salaries, employee benefits (including health care and retirement), mortgage interest payments (but not prepayments or principal payments), rent, utilities, interest payments on any other debt obligations that were incurred before February 15, 2020; and/or refinancing an SBA EIDL loan made between January 31, 2020 and April 3, 2020. At least 75% of the loan must be used for payroll costs.
  - One potentially limiting factor to note: payroll expenses cannot include salaries for foreign workers or independent contractors (independent contractors are eligible to apply for PPP individually).
  - PPP is retroactive to February 15, 2020 and loans will be available through June 30, 2020. PPP funds used during this eight-week period of time can be 100% forgiven, as long as this funding is used on approved expenses and employees aren't terminated/wages aren't reduced. Any loan proceeds in excess of this amount are subject to repayment rate of 1%. Employers will need to keep careful documentation of these expenses in order to apply for loan forgiveness.
  - The maturity date is confirmed at two years and no payments are due for six months. However, interest will accrue from the date of loan funding. Individuals can only apply for one loan.
  - **While the program is open until June 30, loans will be available on a first come, first serve basis. Individuals who are interested in applying for PPP should contact their lenders ASAP.**
- Plant Issues –
    - On Thursday, about one-third of the workforce at the JBS packing plant in Grand Island, Nebraska, did not show up for work. Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts announced at a press conference that “Nebraskans should not walk away from their jobs in the hopes of collecting unemployment benefits. If you quit your job, you will be ineligible for unemployment benefits.” This statement was directed towards the JBS workers who failed to show up. He wanted to make it clear that leaving your job would not be a good idea. Reports are that the message seems to have worked. We will stay in touch with JBS as they begin work again Friday. As the concerns grow regarding workers not showing up to their packing plant jobs because of COVID-19 fear, it is time we ask the Governors to step in and follow the lead of Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts. NCBA has asked State Affiliates with beef packing plants to contact our Governors and request they engage and send a strong message to these workers that they need to show up and do their part for America's food security.
    - JBS packing plant in Souderton, Pennsylvania, is closing for up to two weeks due to excessive employee illnesses.
  - Both FDA and USDA continue to reassure consumers that COVID-19 cannot be transmitted via food. Frank Yiannas, FDA's Deputy Commissioner for Food Policy and

Response reiterated today that there is no evidence of COVID-19 spreading via food or food preparation. He also stated that food packaging is not associated with transmission of the virus. FDA recommends the thorough washing of hands and food preparation surfaces. He said that he does not personally sanitize the exterior of food packages. More importantly, if essential workers who handle food at manufacturing facilities or grocery stores test positive for the virus, FDA will not issue a recall of those foods. USDA Under Secretary of Food Safety Dr. Mindy Brashears reiterated to me that the Food Safety and Inspection Service maintains the same position regarding transmission via food and food packaging. Deputy Commissioner Yianna said there has been no uptick in foodborne illnesses since the outbreak of COVID-19 in the United States.

- FDA has a great FAQ page regarding protocols for workers who test positive with COVID-19, and goes into details as to why this virus is not being spread via the food supply. The information is geared to both consumers and food workers. <https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- NCBA joined a coalition of groups requesting the governors of all 50 states to adopt the same “critical infrastructure” guidelines regarding food and agriculture as defined by the Department of Homeland Security.
- NCBA is cancelling the 2020 Young Cattlemen’s Conference due to uncertainties related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, many of the tour stops, hotels and other facilities have announced closures that extend beyond this year’s tour dates, leading us to this decision.
- **FREE CATTLEMEN'S COLLEGE RECORDINGS** — NCBA knows it’s important for you to get your industry education to help make your operation more profitable and sustainable. With meetings canceled across the country where many producers attain that education, NCBA is proud to announce starting today until May 31, FREE access to ALL Cattlemen’s College content from 2014 - 2020!

To receive your free content, visit the Cattlemen's College Online Campus site and follow these simple steps listed below:

- Click on the FREE CONTENT tab and login using your Cattlemen's College username and password
- Check off the grey box beside the words "2014 - 2020 Free Access to Content".
- Click on the "SUBMIT" button, which will appear on the bottom right corner of the page
- Lastly, click on the "ACCESS" button to be re-directed to all 2014 - 2020 session recordings

**\*\* New users MUST create an account on the Cattlemen's College Online Campus site, in order to access the free content. If you are a new member, please click here to create your account today!**

- The “Beef Substitutes” campaign to provide Americans at home new recipe ideas to try while they have more time on their hands. It is also trying to incentivize more beef purchases after the past two week’s run on beef. This is going to become even more important as we see retail sales begin to slow. We need to move more beef. On April 1, a “Beef Substitutes” campaign was rolled out. Being April Fool’s Day, the timing was great to play off the alternative meat/meat substitute issue we have been working. This is a very creative campaign and the recipes are awesome.
  - Chef Joe Sasto is “substituting” beef for duck in his Peking Chuck dish. Here is a link to the recipe: <https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/recipes/beef-substitutes/peking-chuck>
  - Chef Esther Choi is “substituting” beef for chicken in her Korean Fried Beef dish. Here is a link to the recipe: <https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/recipes/beef-substitutes/korean-fried-beef>
  - Chef Lamar Moore is “substituting” beef for squid in his version of cowlamari (instead of calamari). Here is a link to the recipe: <https://www.beefitswhatsfordinner.com/recipes/beef-substitutes/cowlamari>
- With many sale cancellations and postponements because of the ongoing COVID-19/Coronavirus situation, we have created a sale listing page on the NCBA website where auction markets and seedstock producers can post any upcoming sales with the goal of creating a central resource where producers can go to check sales are still taking place. You can find the link here. Sales can be added by simply clicking the “Submit Event” button.
- NCBA submitted a letter to Congress attached asking for financial assistance for cattle producers to be added into the next COVID-19 stimulus package. That letter resulted in \$9.5 billion in financial assistance earmarked for USDA to issue stimulus payments for cattle producers.
- We worked with the White House and the Department of Homeland Security to get food and agriculture designated as “critical infrastructure” and essential to the safety and security of the United States.
- We were successful in getting truck stops and truck stop/rest stop workers deemed as critical infrastructure. We were informed this morning of haulers having a hard time finding places to eat, shower, and use the restroom. Our engagement and leadership this morning got the “essential/critical” designation completed.
- We worked with USDA and the Department of Labor regarding labor for our industry. As a result, USDA announced flexibility in H-2A and H-2B visas where workers leaving certified positions that have expiring contracts could be available to transfer to a different employer’s labor certification. This is a positive more for the entire industry, and it will be critical for public lands ranchers whose predominately South American labor force will likely be unavailable this grazing season.
- We worked with a coalition of other industries to get tax relief provisions added to the stimulus package passed by Congress.
- We worked directly with supply chain partners to provide support as they adjust to the current consumer and business environments. This included helping food service distributors re-route beef to retail stores.
- Given that most Americans are eating three meals at home during this crisis, NCBA, as a contractor to the Beef Checkoff, utilized Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner recipes and cooking lessons to help the consumer make great beef dishes and learn tips on how to best prepare beef.
- We worked with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to get a waiver of Hours of Service for haulers. This waiver allows drivers to get more cattle and beef from one place to another. It has

been helpful in getting supplies of beef delivered to the retailers. We also got DOT to allow drivers who have expired CDL licenses and medical cards to continue driving through this crisis.

- We worked with Secretary Perdue at USDA to provide oversight of the markets and scrutinize transactions to ensure nobody in the supply chain was manipulating the market. We also worked with the Commodity Futures Trading Commission Chairman Heath Tarbert to do the same with the futures markets.
- In order to help veterinarians utilize telemedicine to address animal health needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDA generally does not intend to enforce the animal examination and premises visit portion of the VCPR requirements relevant to the FDA regulations governing Extra label Drug Use in Animals and Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) drugs. This will allow veterinarians to prescribe drugs in an extra label manner or authorize the use of VFD drugs without direct examination of, or making visits to, their patients, which will limit human-to-human interaction and potential spread of COVID-19 in the community. Although the FDA intends to temporarily suspend certain federal VCPR requirements, veterinarians still need to consider state VCPR requirements that may exist in their practice area.
- We received quite a few calls and inquiries about why consumers still can't get beef in some retail outlets. This is an issue of demand and allocation, not supply. If a store is normally ordering 100 cases per day and now, they are ordering 500 cases per day, the warehouses cannot manage a 400% increase. Therefore, they must allocate to each location what they feel are the most critical out of stocks and as a result, we see empty store shelves. So, if a store is ordering 500 cases each day to fill their shelves and say they are only getting 100 every order, then how can they keep up with demand and maintain full shelves? In the conversations we have had with our retail partners, they are getting trucks every day and each day there are different items available. The corporate teams are having to move available product between all their stores. Now compound that with every grocery chain in the country doing the same thing and you will see empty shelves...for now.
- Then, we can look at the warehouses. This is all refrigerated product, which warehouses only have so much storage space. The product cannot come into a warehouse and right onto a delivery truck. It has to be scanned, received, slotted and then is able to be picked for orders. A warehouse that might normally pull 100,000 cases per day, is now being asked to pull 500,000 cases per day...and this just can't happen. They don't have the manpower or the storage capacity. Since they can't bring product in fast enough, truckers are experiencing extreme detention times before they can offload into the warehouse. This only helps to exacerbate the issue of being able to keep enough wheels under the product coming out of the packers. Hopefully, this helps to paint a clearer picture for anyone trying to understand why there are empty shelves in their grocery store.
- We worked to prepare employee letters and affidavits to help producers and employees in states and cities where "shelter-in-place" and "stay-at-home" order were in effect to have the proper documentation to show they are essential to the "critical infrastructure" of the United States and should keep doing their jobs.
- NCBA contacted EPA requesting the agency provide a "no action" assurance during the COVID-19 pandemic. A "no action" assurance would allow our members to do their jobs without concern for EPA inspectors showing up on site to conduct an inspection or other EPA compliance activity. EPA listened to our concerns and made an announcement today of an enforcement discretion policy. This is a tremendous win for us. It is retro-active to March 13, and they will continue to evaluate how long it needs to stay in place.
- In our letter to the White House last week, we wrote: "Additionally, in light of the current market conditions (including cattle market volatility), America's cattle producers need flexibility and increased access to low- and zero-interest loans in order to remain viable and ensure that grocery store shelves remained stocked. To that end, NCBA encourages USDA's Farm Service

Agency (FSA) to expand availability of these loans, in addition to increasing flexibility of terms for existing loans. Further, we request that FSA coordinate with USDA Rural Development and the Small Business Administration throughout the implementation of these accommodations.” This week, USDA’s Farm Service Agency announced several actions that provide flexibility such as:

- o Extending the deadline for applicants to complete loan applications.
  - o Preparing loan documents even if FSA is unable to complete lien and record searches.
  - o Extending deadlines for producers to respond to loan servicing actions, including loan deferral consideration.
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- Regarding our media presence, over the last seven days, we’ve had 25,000 unique visits to the COVID-19 resource page on NCBA.org, recorded more than 110,000 Facebook Impressions with more than 22,500 video views of our content, and now have a larger following (119,000 followers) than the American Farm Bureau Federation (97,600).
  - We worked with USDA, the Department of State, and the Department of Homeland Security to allow flexibility for guest workers to ensure we have enough workers on farms and ranches, in feedlots, and packing plants. Flexibility has been granted to the guest worker program.