



April 2020 Newsletter

In This Issue:

- Message to MGFA Members
- Important Message on Obtaining PPE in Response to COVID-19
- Senate Passes “Phase Four” COVID-19 Relief Package with SBA Loan Program Infusion
- NGFA Publishes Information for Industry Use in Communicating COVID-19 Workplace Safety Practices to Official Inspection and Weighing Service Providers
- Essential Critical Infrastructure Worker List Updated
- Reminder to Farmers & Lenders: Mediation Has Been Extended to 150 Days
- MDA Assists Livestock Producers/Processors During COVID-19 Pandemic

Message to MGFA Members

As we were pulling together information for the April MGFA newsletter, it has become clear that most of the news we are sharing is COVID-19 related. I’m sure that comes as no surprise to readers as this topic is the primary focus for everyone these days, in one way or another.

As a trade organization representing an industry that has been deemed “essential”, we know that while you’re operating day in and day out, it is not necessarily “business as usual.” MGFA staff continues to keep in contact with the membership to determine if there are issues or concerns your businesses may have that we can help with. One issue we’re monitoring is the closure of livestock processing facilities and the problems it can potentially create for feed mills, from ingredient availability in adjusting rations for producers to accounts receivable problems.

If your facility is experiencing any issues related to COVID-19 (or anything else), please reach out to us and we will help in any way we can.

Stay safe & healthy,
Laura

Important Message on Obtaining PPE in Response to COVID-19

Please see the important message below, which contains a link to an [Excel spreadsheet list](#) containing contact information for 42 distributors that have, or soon will have, significant supplies of non-medical-grade personal protection equipment (such as cloth face masks) available for use by workers within the Food and Agriculture Sector, including NGFA-member companies. This message is being distributed widely within the sector, so please contact these – or your existing – distributors ASAP, particularly if you have an immediate or near-term need for PPE.

To: Food and Agriculture Sector Coordinating Council (FASCC)

RE: Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) for Food and Agriculture Sector

For the past several weeks, we have been working intensely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the FEMA Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force to prioritize the needs of the food and agriculture sector for access to available personal protection equipment (PPE), as well as disinfectants and sanitation supplies, to protect the health and safety of employees within the sector and to retain consumer confidence.

Today, we are pleased to report that the discussions with the Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force have resulted in its identification of the [attached list of distributors](#) (with contact information provided) that have or soon will have significant quantities of PPE available, including non-medical-grade facemasks (including cloth masks). These distributors are prepared to receive requests from entities within the food and agriculture sector that have an immediate need for PPE that cannot be satisfied through their existing distributors.

Private-sector associations that participate in the FASCC are welcome to broadly distribute this message verbatim, as well as the attached list of distributors, to your members as you see fit. Individual companies that are members of the FASCC also are welcome to make use of this list as warranted by your needs for PPE.

Importantly, some of your associations' members – or individual companies participating in the FASCC – already may have agreements in place with one or more of these distributors. If so, we encourage them to reach out to their existing points of contact to explore options that may be available to meet their immediate and future needs, recognizing that doing so may necessitate having agreements with multiple distributors. We understand that the FEMA Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force is in frequent dialogue with these distributors and has urged prioritization of food and agriculture sector needs immediately behind the health care and medical sector whenever possible.

In a separate but related effort, we have worked on a prioritization document that is intended to provide a framework for both members of the food and agriculture sector and distributors that provide PPE, disinfectants and sanitation supplies. We are in the process of exploring ways to get that document issued through official channels and will keep you posted. We will continue to promote within the federal government prioritization of PPE, disinfectants and sanitation supplies for the food and agriculture sector, and explore options available through existing emergency-management processes, as well as the parallel efforts of the FEMA Supply Chain Stabilization Task Force.

Thank you and those you represent for your continued commitment and efforts to maintain the operational status of critical infrastructure-designated facilities within the food and agriculture sector, while also maintaining the health and safety of your employees and workplaces as we work together to support a whole of America approach to ensure the food supply chain remains safe, secure and resilient – and continues to meet the needs of consumers – during the COVID-19 national emergency.

Sincerely,

Clay Detlefsen

Chair

Sector Coordinating Council

Food and Agriculture Sector

Senior Vice President, Regulatory
and Environmental Affairs

National Milk Producers Federation

Randy Gordon

Vice-Chair
Sector Coordinating Council
Food and Agriculture Sector
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Michelle Colby, DVM, M.S.

Co-Chair
Government Coordinating Council
Food and Agriculture Sector
Chief, National Security Division
Office of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Source: NGFA

Senate Passes “Phase Four” COVID-19 Relief Package with SBA Loan Program Infusion

The Senate on April 21 passed a \$484 billion COVID-19 legislative response package, which includes an infusion of \$320 billion into the Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program. The House aims to approve the bill by Thursday, April 23.

Democratic leaders and the White House negotiated for days on how to replenish the \$350 billion Paycheck Protection Program. The economic relief program, created by the \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act enacted in March, was tapped by small businesses at a breakneck pace until it ran out of funds on April 16.

According to a [bill summary](#), \$60 billion of the \$320 billion infusion would be set aside for small institutions — half of the \$60 billion would go to lenders with assets of less than \$10 billion, and half would go to those with assets between \$10 billion and \$50 billion. The agreement provides \$10 billion for SBA administrative costs. SBA’s Paycheck Protection Program allows companies with 500 or fewer employees to seek loans of up to \$10 million from banks, which are forgivable if the companies use 75 percent of the loan amount to keep employees on the payroll for eight weeks or hire back positions before receiving the loan funds.

The bill also includes \$50 billion for the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program loans and \$10 billion for EIDL grants. EIDL loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can’t be paid because of the disaster’s impact.

The \$484 billion package, known as “phase-four” coronavirus relief bill, includes \$75 billion for hospitals and \$25 billion to “research, develop, validate, manufacture, purchase, administer, and expand capacity” for COVID-19 tests.

Source: NGFA

NGFA Publishes Information for Industry Use in Communicating COVID-19 Workplace Safety Practices to Official Inspection and Weighing Service Providers

NGFA and the North American Export Grain Association (NAEGA) on April 16 issued a [document](#) to member companies conveying information that may be useful in communicating their COVID-19-related employee workplace safety policies and practices to official inspection and weighing service providers working at their facilities.

This includes Official personnel employed by the Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS), Officially Designated Agencies and/or Delegated-Designated States.

“Use of this information is totally optional, and obviously will vary based upon the level of communication already occurring between facility management and Official personnel,” noted NGFA President and CEO Randy Gordon and NAEGA President and CEO Gary Martin in a letter to members accompanying the workplace safety document.

The document includes references to facilities’ policies and practices that may exist related to the use of facemasks, social distancing, and disinfection and sanitation practices.

[View the document here.](#)

Source: NGFA

Essential Critical Infrastructure Worker List Updated

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has released “Version 3.0” of its Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers list. This provides clarity on some additional critical infrastructure support functions. The guidance also includes language focused on sustained access and freedom of movement, a reference to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s guidance on safety for critical infrastructure workers, and a statement advising sick employees to avoid the workplace and the workforce. Agriculture is largely unaffected because most agricultural industries were already deemed “essential.” The announcement is [here](#).

Reminder to Farmers & Lenders: Mediation Has Been Extended to 150 Days

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is reminding Minnesota farmers and ag lending institutions that the state legislature extended the length of mediation available for farmers in the Farmer-Lender Mediation Program from 90 to 150 days. Minnesota farmers that are in debt can renegotiate, restructure, or resolve farm debt through mandatory Farmer-Lender Mediation. Mandatory mediation means that creditors cannot start a proceeding to collect a debt against agricultural property until an offer of mediation has been extended and, if the farmer so chooses, completed.

“I want to make sure that farmers and their ag lending institutions know that the mediation period was extended by 60 days to 150 days,” said Minnesota Agriculture Commissioner Thom Petersen. “This is a critical program for farmers – especially now when COVID-19 has caused the closing of agricultural markets. Having sixty more days to renegotiate or restructure will be a huge help in many cases.”

For more information and assistance, farmers can contact the MDA’s Farm Advocate Program at www.mda.state.mn.us/farmadvocates or the University of Minnesota Extension <https://extension.umn.edu/get-help/farmer-lender-mediation>.

Source: MN Department of Agriculture

MDA Assists Livestock Producers/Processors During COVID-19 Pandemic

Due to market and supply/demand changes for meat products during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) is helping livestock farmers and processors in addressing these current challenges.

- The recent closures of some meat processing plants around the region due to COVID-19 is disrupting traditional animal markets and the meat supply chain. The MDA is working to limit this disruption for producers of smaller herds or flocks by matching them with slaughter facilities and identifying other marketing opportunities.
 - Farmers with smaller herds or flocks seeking new processors, alternate markets, or increased storage, please contact Jim Ostlie, 320-842-6910, Jim.Ostlie@state.mn.us or Courtney VanderMey, 651-201-6135, Courtney.Vandermey@state.mn.us.
- The MDA is working with existing "Equal To" processors (plants under continuous inspection that are able to produce and process meat and poultry products for wholesale within the State of Minnesota) to expand capacity. We are also developing an expedited approval process to enable plants that currently do not sell wholesale within the state to do so. If these establishments meet the minimum requirements, they will be granted a 90-day provisional grant of inspection.
 - Processing plants interested in expanding their slaughter capacity, have additional processing capacity, or wanting expedited licensing, please contact Jennifer Stephaes at 651-248-2566.
- The MDA is providing additional financial assistance by awarding over \$345,000 in AGRI Value-Added Grants to nine Minnesota meat processors. The companies will be using the funds for facility improvements, such as increasing freezer space and new equipment for slaughter and processing capacity. Many of these grantees are required to make updates to be compliant with the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA). This new funding is in addition to the nearly \$1 million in Value-Added Grants in FY20, in which meat processors received a significant amount of the total grant funds.
- A new grant program, the AGRI Rapid Response Mini-Grant for Livestock Processing, is intended to assist processors and certain producers respond to market issues caused by COVID-19. This grant will be launched by April 30 and will be available to eligible Minnesota processors of meat, poultry, eggs, and milk, and to livestock producers who need storage capacity for processed products until existing markets return or new markets are developed.

Source: MN Department of Agriculture

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