



## From Steve's Desk



In the past few days, I have had numerous conversations about the current situation with the COVID-19 virus. I have visited with MO-AG members, and have had several conference calls with national affiliates, with my counterparts in other states, and others. Agribusinesses are responding to the crisis and taking the necessary precautions to keep employees and customers safe. I know many MO-AG members have implemented policies to reduce face-to-face contact between suppliers, employees, and customers in your place of business.

The virus has resulted in emergency declarations from federal and state governments. Government officials are taking steps to help protect human life. Most of these steps involve government recommendations to reduce the amount of personal interaction. In certain hot spots, state or local governments have issued curfews or orders of sheltering in place. While most everyone understands the necessity of these actions given the crisis situation, we are working to ensure that some exemptions are allowed for agribusiness. We have to get a crop in this spring, and get the crop out this fall. Grain has to be marketed and animals have to be fed.

On March 16th, President Trump issued updated Coronavirus guidance which states that if you work in a critical infrastructure industry, you should maintain your normal work schedule. Yesterday, March 19th, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) released an initial list of "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers". Activities specifically included under the 'Food and Agriculture' section include:

- Production of chemicals, medicines, vaccines, and other substances used by the food and agriculture industry, including pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, minerals, enrichments, and other agricultural production aids
- Those employed in veterinary health; manufacturing and distribution of animal medical materials, animal vaccines, animal drugs, feed ingredients, feed, and bedding, etc.
- Those engaged in the manufacture and maintenance of equipment and other infrastructure necessary to agricultural production and distribution
- Those employed in livestock, poultry, pet and animal feed processing facilities, animal food, feed, and ingredient production, packaging, and distribution; manufacturing, packaging, and distribution of veterinary drugs; truck delivery and transport
- Those employed in commodity inspection; fuel ethanol facilities; storage facilities; and other agricultural inputs

The guidance basically acknowledges that the activities of most MO-AG members are deemed critical. Response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic are locally executed, state managed, and federally supported. Our expectation is that the State of Missouri and local jurisdictions within the State will follow this federal guidance. If you do encounter a government official limiting the ability of your business to function, please, let us know. Your MO-AG Director of Communications, Sarah Mengwasser, has put together some additional information which you will find by clicking [here](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please, give us a call at the MO-AG office at 573-636-6130.

Stay safe!

*Steve*

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