



On March 19, 2020 - Nebraska Cattlemen sent a letter to Nebraska's congressional delegation laying out a plan of short term and long-term action items to address current and future cattle market issues. As an update to the status of those five direct asks, we wanted to share the progress - and more importantly - the results we've achieved on behalf of our members to date.

Nebraska Cattlemen staff and leaders remain in constant communications with the highest level of elected officials on the state and federal level, as well as governmental agencies on the local, state and federal level to ensure that cattlemen's business continuity is a top priority.

You can find the original letter sent to Nebraska's congressional delegation in March [here](#).

## Immediate Action Request Updates

**A one-time "Beef Stimulus" payment for cattlemen and women that have dealt with rapid market decline and continued extreme volatility. This payment can and should be used to aid cattlemen weather the current extreme drain on whole farm/ranch equity.**

- o **CHECK** – Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP): USDA will utilize \$19 billion dollars to provide relief to those affected by coronavirus. The funds will be split between two delivery mechanisms:
  - \$16 billion in direct payments for farmers and ranchers combining existing funds available from the CCC and the \$9.5 billion provided in the CARES Act.
  - \$3 billion in purchases of ag products including meat, dairy, and specialty crops to support producers and those in need. Purchased goods will be utilized local and regional distribution channels to deliver food to food banks, as well as other community and faith-based organizations.

**Explore modifications to current and/or new risk mitigation programs to increase affordability and participation.**

- o **IN PROCESS** – The Nebraska Cattlemen board adopted interim policy regarding modifications to the Livestock Revenue Protection (LRP) program. A NC marketing and commerce subgroup is discussing potential modifications to the program to make it more affordable and user friendly to cattlemen from all sectors of the industry. As modifications and workable solutions are identified, those solutions will be communicated to members and congressional offices.

**Ensure USDA and other federal agencies remain operational to keep packing and processing facilities operational to allow entities farther down the beef production chain the ability to keep marketing cattle.**

- o **CHECK** – Nebraska Cattlemen staff and leaders remain in daily communications with the highest level of elected officials on the state and federal level, as well as governmental agencies on the local, state and federal level to ensure that cattlemen's business continuity is a top priority.
  - USDA to ensure inspectors are not the limiting factor in keeping plants operational.
  - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to expand hours of service for those who deliver products directly related to food production.
  - Nebraska Department of Agriculture to develop guidance for livestock markets and member production sales to ensure they can continue these necessary functions.
  - Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy to adopt an enforcement discretion policy regarding routine compliance monitoring.
  - Emergency Management and Clinical Operations team of Nebraska Medicine and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to issue guidance for implementing safety practices for critical infrastructure workers (processing plants) who may have had an exposure to coronavirus.

**Explore ideas to incentivize more cattle to be marketed on the cash market, thereby increasing true price discovery and transparency in the marketplace. NC policy encourages cash negotiated trade levels reach 50% of fed cattle marketed.**

- o **IN PROCESS** - The Nebraska Cattlemen Board amended current policy and passed interim policy to increase competitiveness in fed cattle markets by increasing packer capacity and reinstating good business practices by packers. This includes amending existing policy to strengthen language by mandating packers to purchase at least 50% of their weekly slaughter in the negotiated cash or negotiated grid market within specific delivery windows. NC leadership and staff are identifying workable solutions to reach the goal of reaching 50% levels of weekly negotiated cash trade.

**Demand USDA increase monitoring of packer bids and take swift action if undue price manipulation exists.**

- o **CHECK** – USDA has expanded their Packers and Stockyards (P&S) investigation that was started after the beef processing plant fire in Holcomb to also include market reactions from COVID-19.
- o **CHECK-CHECK** - Additionally, the Nebraska Cattlemen Board of Directors unanimously approved a [letter to the U.S. Department of Justice \(DOJ\)](#) to identify and investigate any evidence of fraudulent business practices within the beef meatpacking industry.