



COVID-19 Guidance

For Livestock Auctions

March 30, 2020

Guidance for Livestock Auctions Regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)

With COVID-19 spreading across the state and nation, all Kansas businesses are making significant efforts to prevent continued spread of the virus. The primary business activities conducted by Livestock Auctions are considered essential functions pursuant to Executive Order No. 20-16 issued by Governor Laura Kelly on March 28, 2020. The purpose of this document is to clarify the status of livestock auction markets as essential functions, to provide guidance for local officials and livestock auction market participants, and to emphasize the necessity to practice safety protocols during the performance of essential functions.

Governor Kelly's Executive Order No. 20-16 recognizes *distribution* that maintains supply chains for essential functions and critical infrastructure as defined by the Department of Homeland Security (KEFF 200-2) and *supplies* that include the production and providing of agricultural products and services (KEFF 400-5) as essential functions during the statewide "stay home" period.

Licensed Livestock Auction Marketsⁱ and Livestock Breeding Stock Auctionsⁱⁱ may continue, **but these functions are limited to activities necessary for the direct buying and selling of livestock, and not to any nonessential activities or social interaction that may traditionally be associated with livestock auctions.**

Despite being essential functions, all auctions are required to implement measures intended to limit the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to: social distancing, remote or online bidding, and limiting the total number of persons in attendance to the extent that it will not disrupt the primary purpose of the auction.

During the current statewide stay home order, auction market managers should critically evaluate each auction to determine if it could be postponed until after April 19, 2020, without causing a significant disruption to its essential function(s).

If a livestock auction is conducted during a statewide or local stay home and/or temporary prohibition of mass gatherings period, livestock auction management must act to institute changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The Kansas Department of Agriculture strongly recommends that all livestock auctions adhere to the following guidance:

- Use technology to host virtual online sales if at all possible and encourage buyers to utilize this service.

- For Livestock Breeding Stock Auctions, buyers are encouraged to observe sale offerings in advance (if opportunity is provided) and submit bids online or to sale management and/or sale representatives.
- For Licensed Livestock Auction Markets, attendees should be restricted to registered buyers only, keeping the number of people onsite to a minimum.
- In all situations, attendees should maintain at least a 6-foot separation between each other at all times.
- Sellers (consigners) at Licensed Livestock Auction Markets should remain in their vehicles during the unloading process, and not enter the livestock market indoor facility.
- Customers are encouraged to make arrangements to pick up checks in the parking lot if they can't wait for the mail.
- Instruct any employee or buyer exhibiting symptoms of illness, or exposed to anyone who is ill, to remain home and request that anyone who is a member of a population of heightened vulnerability avoid areas where people are gathering.
- Provide ample opportunities for attendees and employees to wash hands following the Centers for Disease Control's best practices.
- Clean and disinfect all commonly used areas frequently including restrooms, and restock regularly with soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer.
- Close all areas of the auction facility that are not directly associated with the sale to prevent people from co-mingling, including common seating areas.
- Licensed cafes within a Livestock Auction Market are to abide by EO No. 20-16 and limit their activity to preparing or serving food for takeout or delivery purposes only.
- Clearly communicate and enforce your policies.

ⁱ Licensed Livestock Auction Markets

Kansas has approximately 45 livestock auction markets (sometimes referred to as sale barns) that provide an essential critical infrastructure role in the food supply chain. Consigners to these markets are area livestock producers who are reliant on the markets' services for the sale of their commodity and to sustain the food supply chain. In addition, these auctions are crucial for timely and transparent price discovery needs, which is relied upon by the supply chain within Kansas and throughout the multi-state region.

ⁱⁱ Livestock Breeding Stock Auction

Kansas has many livestock producers who breed and raise genetically superior animals as breeding stock for other producers. In some instances, these animals are sold in a breeding stock or production sale, often held at the farm or ranch of the breeder. These sales usually occur in the fall and spring so livestock producers may restock their breeding herd for the next breeding season. Breeding stock purchased in the spring are critical for the crop of newborn animals in 2021 and will help sustain the food supply chain. While online sales are becoming a popular avenue for Livestock Breeding Stock Auctions, it's not feasible for all sales to occur without a live presence of buyers.