Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Weekly News Update
April 13, 2020

Message from President Kevin Paap

Thank you for everything you, your family and your community are doing to help keep us safe, healthy and fed.

It is no secret that all Minnesotans are facing challenges. Farmers and ranchers continue to face challenges with decreased food service and restaurant demand which is causing our prices to plummet. We are having issues with processing plants that have slowed down and sometimes completely shut down which has devastating affects on the ability to deliver what we raise and grow and causes our prices to plummet. We definitely have the potential to overwhelm our systems.

Farm Bureau will continue to ensure that all sectors of agriculture are included in coronavirus assistance measures. After extensive outreach to Farm Bureau leaders around the country, the American Farm Bureau sent a comprehensive letter to Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to relay what we're hearing from our members. As your state President, I will continue to listen to you and make sure that your voice is being heard. Please call me at 507-327-4555 if you have concerns on how this is impacting your family, farm or community.

Please stay safe. We will get through this together.

Kevin Paap
President
Minnesota Farm Bureau

USDA Unveils Tool to Help Rural Communities Address the COVID-19 Pandemic

USDA has unveiled a one-stop-shop of federal programs that can be used by rural communities, organizations and individuals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The
COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide is a first-of-its-kind resource for rural leaders looking for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic.

Farm Bureau Urges Close Examination of Livestock Markets

Extreme volatility in livestock markets is raising red flags across the country, leading the American Farm Bureau to urge the Commodity Futures Trading Commission, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange to leave no stone unturned as they monitor and analyze market activity.

AFBF President Zippy Duvall spoke this week with both USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue and CFTC Chairman Heath Tarbert about the rising concern and frustration among livestock farmers. Duvall followed up with a letter to Chairman Tarbert.

The letter states, “We believe an intense examination of the volatility in cash and futures markets for beef, pork and dairy is needed to determine if any market manipulations have occurred to the financial detriment of farmers and ranchers… the disparity between the farm-level prices that producers receive and wholesale prices is alarming… We cannot afford to lose confidence in the integrity of the futures market nor the price discovery efforts in cash markets, on top of the many other market disruptions and stresses farmers and ranchers are facing.”

More information, including the full letter to Chairman Tarbert, can be found here.

Read AFBF MarketIntel here.

Walz extends Minnesota peacetime emergency through May 13

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz has signed an executive order extending the peacetime emergency through May 13.

Since the initial peacetime emergency order, Walz has ordered the temporary closure of bars and restaurants and other places of public accommodation and the implementation of distance learning in Minnesota schools. He has also implemented a stay-at-home order, along with other executive orders.

Read the executive order extending the peacetime emergency here.

USDA Addresses Milk Dumping

USDA’s Risk Management Agency (RMA) is ensuring that dairy farmers are not inappropriately penalized if their milk must be dumped because of recent market disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, RMA is extending inspection deadlines, waiving inspection requirements and authorizing more crop insurance transactions over the phone and electronically to help farmers during the crisis.
Specifically, RMA is:

- Allowing dumped milk to be counted as milk marketings for the Dairy Revenue Production (DRP) or actual marketings for the Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy (LGM-Dairy) programs;
- Allowing phone and electronic transactions for 2021 crop year sales and reporting dates, including options and endorsements;
- Extending the deadline for some perennial crop Pre-Acceptance Inspection Reports (PAIRs);
- Waiving the 2021 crop year inspection requirements for the Nursery and Nursery Value Select (NVS) programs in certain cases.

Click [here](#) for more information.

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**State Legislature Update**

**Coming Up**
The legislature returns for a third one-day session on April 14. Both bodies are expected to take up legislation that includes a number of policy modifications to assist Minnesotan’s daily lives during the Stay at Home order, including:

- Modifications to CDL’s
- Expanded coverage of telemedicine
- Extension of farmer-lender mediation

Lawmakers are also expected to take up a bipartisan proposal to create an emergency insulin program.

**Last Week**
Last week, legislators convened for the second one-day session since regular legislative activities were suspended the week of March 16. Together, the Minnesota House and Minnesota Senate passed bipartisan legislation related to workers’ compensation to ensure first responders and other essential employees do not have to put their financial health at risk.

The bill sunsets May 1, 2020 and requires the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry to provide a report to the Workers’ Compensation Council.

**Line 3 Comments Submitted to MPCA**
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) provided comments in support of the Enbridge Line 3 project. View comments [here](#).

**Surface Water Pesticides of Concern Comments Submitted to MDA**
In conjunction with the Minnesota Agricultural Water Research Center (MAWRC) comments were submitted on behalf of MFBF regarding the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s open comment period on “Surface Water Pesticides of Concern” in Minnesota. See comments [here](#).

**Immediate Wholesale Market Need Survey**
This survey was created by MDA and the MN Grocers Association for Minnesota producers whose existing wholesale markets were lost due to COVID-19 closures. Completing this [survey](#) is voluntary and responses will not be shared beyond the Minnesota Grocers Association and Minnesota Department of Agriculture. We hope to identify opportunities for farmers to reach alternative markets for the products they now have on-hand that had previous commitments for imminent purchase.

**Burning Restrictions and COVID-19**
The DNR will grant permits only for agricultural field and construction site preparation and limited prescribed burning. Call your local [DNR Forestry Office](#) if you are seeking a variance. Read more [here](#).
Maturity for Marketing Assistance Loans Now Extended to 12 Months

Farmers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities. Read more here.

Farmers Ready to Meet Increased Food Bank Needs

As food banks struggle to keep up with dramatic increases in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers and ranchers are eager to work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to bridge the supply gap and get farm products to those in need, according to a letter from the American Farm Bureau Federation and Feeding America.

The organizations praised USDA’s leadership through this crisis and offered recommendations for additional steps to ensure food banks across America are stocked, which would allow farmers to expand on existing partnerships with food banks and respond to shifting demands and pressing needs. While demand has increased across the supply chain and store shelves have emptied from panic buying, food banks are seeing as much as a 100% increase in demand.

View the full letter here.

Your Input Needed! Communications Survey

Share your input on communications preferences by taking the communications survey at fbmn.org/survey and be entered to win one of six $25 gift cards.

TransFARMation

Prompted by the many sources of stress currently impacting farmers and ranchers, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Red River Farm Network have joined forces to create a new radio and podcast series called TransFARMation.

TransFARMation: Talking Helps
TransFARMation: Farm Leader Says Healing Can Begin by Talking
TransFARMation: The Proper Attitude Can Help Take on the Challenges
TransFARMation: Let People Help You
TransFARMation: Farm Stress in Farm Children
TransFARMation: Faith and Farming

If you have a story idea for TransFARMation, contact Riley Maanum – MFBF area
Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture

**Sessions to Help Weather Stress**

Raising awareness of farm stress is important, but offering some tools to help weather the stress is critical. This interactive online series sets out to help women in agriculture cultivate resiliency by focusing on what they can control in these challenging times and connect them with resources and information that can help them weather stress.

- UMASH has archived sessions - listen [here](#).

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### Farm Resiliency Resources

**Please ask for help. Click the underlined phrases for more information.**

**Resources for difficult times**

Find help, counseling, advocacy, legal and referral resources.

**Farm financial counseling**

Experiencing financial stress? Call 1-800-232-9077 for free, confidential financial counseling.

**Farmer-Lender mediation**

Need help with farm debt? Learn how mediation can help.

*Source: University of Minnesota Extension*
The following links are meant to keep you aware of what's in the news. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation.

Behavioral Health and Emergency Preparedness
-MDH

Preparing for sick agricultural workers and COVID-19
-BAH

Interview with Sue Grafstrom, Roseau County Emergency Manager
-Center for Rural Policy and Development

Helping Kids Manage Farm Stress
-AgWeb

Move Forward and Live, Says “The Rookie” Jim Morris
-AgriTalk

MFBF Update
-Red River Farm Network
Sporting Clays Tournament
Viking Valley Hunt Club, Ashby

June 23
Minnesota Farm Bureau Foundation
Golf Outing
River Oaks Golf Course, Cottage Grove

August 4-6
Farmfest
Gilfillan Estate, Redwood Falls

August 27-September 7
Minnesota State Fair

September 15-18
Farmers to Washington, D.C. Trip

November 19-21
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
102nd Annual Meeting
DoubleTree Hotel, Bloomington

Minnesota Farm Bureau Website