



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott
Governor of Texas
PO Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Governor Abbott,

The agriculture industry is essential and is responsible for the protection of the nation's food supply chain. The State of Texas is a leader in many areas of agricultural production for livestock, fiber, fruits and vegetables, and grain products. One in every seven working Texans is in an agriculture-related job. The importance of the agriculture industry to the nation as an essential service cannot be understated.

In the midst of the global pandemic, Texas agriculturists continue to produce high quality food products needed across the nation. There is not a segment of the agriculture industry that does not touch every U.S citizen in some way. Given the nature of this industry, those who supply feed, seed, water, fertilizer, herbicides, or insecticide or care for animals, groves, greenhouses, nurseries, vineyards, forests, farms, and ranches need our support and assistance now more than ever. Without it, we risk irreparable damage to this year's crop and negative implications on short-term and long-term animal welfare.

As you consider next steps regarding emergency response and potential restrictions on business operations in the U.S, the Texas Department of Agriculture respectfully requests that the agriculture industry be recognized as an essential industry, providing a service that is indispensable in the effort to protect our nation's food supply.

Please ensure that any shelter or emergency orders include agriculture as an essential business or industry. This should apply, but not be limited to farms, ranches, dairies, greenhouses, pest applicators, feed stores, grocery stores, livestock auctions, fruit and vegetable processing facilities, farmers' markets, food banks, convenience stores, fish operations, horticulture, floriculture, gas stations, cooperatives, farm and ranch supply businesses, and any food production related entity. Rural medical facilities are also an industry that must maintain operations. Additionally, we need to make sure we have a sufficient legal immigrant workforce to carry out these essential functions.

Thank you for your leadership during this crisis and your consideration of this urgent request. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to let me know.

Sincerely,

Sid Miller
Commissioner