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# STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

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## DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK

PO BOX 20201  
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2001



DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK (406) 444-7323

ANIMAL HEALTH & FOOD SAFETY DIVISION (406) 444-2043

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (406) 444-2045

CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION (406) 444-4993

FAX (406) 444-1929

## COVID-19 Guidance to Livestock Markets and Related Businesses

The Department of Homeland Security has declared that agriculture is critical infrastructure during the COVID-19 response. This declaration means that we have a responsibility to maintain continuity within our agricultural industry. The State of Montana and the Department of Livestock likewise recognize the importance of business continuity for our livestock markets and the local and national food supply chain. Thus, we have made the decision that our staff servicing livestock markets and sales will remain on duty and encourage local governments to permit these activities to continue. Amid the COVID-19 situation, we would like to offer the following guidelines concerning market access, sanitation and communication with customers, and employees.

The Montana Department of Livestock recommends all livestock markets and related businesses implement the following:

- Post signage, restricting access to only those who are healthy.
  - Communication should specify admittance is not permitted for anyone with a fever or respiratory illness and those with chronic medical conditions should use extreme caution before entering.
- Access to market facilities should be limited to employees and active bidders only.
- Livestock consignors should unload livestock and return home without entering the market building(s), unless bidding.
- Require all who enter including employees to sign-in with their name and contact telephone number(s). This list can be utilized for epidemiologic purposes, in case an attendee is affected by COVID-19.
  - Sanitize pens or pencils in between each use or have an auction employee write down information for bidders.
- Provide hand sanitizer throughout the facility, focusing on areas where attendees and employees must contact surfaces (such as door knobs, gate latches, steering wheels, and other commonly contacted surfaces) or where they are more likely to interact with each other (such as the auction block and clerk's office).
- In restrooms, provide instructions on proper hand washing techniques according to the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/clean-hands/lifeisbetterwithcleanhands>.
- Encourage social distancing for attendees and visitors, maintaining six feet between one another at all times.
- Refrain from selling food or drinks. If food or drinks are accessible through a vending machine, the machine should be sanitized regularly and hand sanitizer should be in close proximity for its users.

- Sanitize common gathering places – seating and arm rest in sales ring, lobbies, office spaces, lunch rooms, locker facilities, etc.
- Eliminate areas that encourage social congregation, including indoor or outdoor eating areas.

Guidance to business owners and employees:

- Provide guidance for proper hand washing and handling materials to minimize risk of viral transmission.
- Stagger lunch times or provide additional space to increase distancing of employees.
- Require all sick employees stay at home.
- Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.
- Consider expanded use of phone or online sales opportunities to decrease in-person assembly and contact.

We appreciate the role that livestock markets and related businesses serve in our state's livestock industry. If you have any questions regarding the above guidance, please contact Ty Thomas at 406-439-2645.