



SOUTH DAKOTA FARM BUREAU[®]

April 15, 2020

Dear Gov. Kristi Noem,

On behalf of South Dakota Farm Bureau, we are writing today to request your expeditious efforts to reopen Smithfield Foods in Sioux Falls.

With COVID-19 information changing daily, we urge you to employ the recently updated science and guidelines from the Center for Disease Control for critical infrastructure. It's important to note these guidelines do not require managing to zero infections at packing plants.

Today we engaged in a conversation with USDA Under Secretary Ibach, who stressed the importance of Farm Bureaus to work with our state's Governors in elevating the importance of keeping critical infrastructures, such as packing plants, operating and following the latest CDC guidelines. Anecdotal reports have indicated the spread of COVID-19 among packing plant workers is the result of not following social distancing practices outside of the plant, and not due to their working environment. In such a case, closing the plant and displacing workers to be around the community is not necessarily going to help the situation.

The unprecedented times we are currently in requires courageous leadership and an understanding of the impacts and ripple effects of every decision. We know you recognize the affect the closure of the Smithfield plant has on the supply chain pipeline, including the devastating impact on swine producers in South Dakota and surrounding states. Every day Smithfield is closed, puts burgeoning strain on our food supply as well as financial and management pressure on producers, who are having to make unthinkable decisions about the pigs in the pipeline without a delivery outlet.

SDFB commends the science-based approach you've taken throughout the COVID-19 developments in South Dakota. It's our understanding that you are working with national leaders on a reopening strategy for Smithfield Foods. Today we implore you to apply the latest science and recommendations from the CDC and reopen Smithfield at the soonest possible opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership for the state of South Dakota during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

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