



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road - Suite 300 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

March 17, 2020

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

New York Farm Bureau appreciates your management of the COVID-19 pandemic in New York State. We fully realize the gravity of the pandemic and stand at the ready to continue to provide healthy, locally-produced food for consumers across the state. This is especially true during this time of potential food insecurity for many underserved populations.

While we recognize the severe implications of COVID-19 for public health, the state's access to food and farmers' concern for livestock health remain at the forefront. Farmers and their employees are being encouraged to follow proper health and safety protocols. They are also closely monitoring potential mandatory requirements for social distancing, public gatherings and workplace densities and are concerned about potential impacts of such requirements on their farm operations.

It is extremely important that if mandatory workplace restrictions or closures are implemented in New York State, that agricultural operations, food processing plants and the agribusinesses which they rely on for supplies and services will be exempt from any Executive Order. Despite the spread of the COVID-19 virus, cows need to be milked, livestock needs to be fed, seeds need to be planted, machinery has to be repaired and regulations mandating environmental compliance will need to be met in order for food to continue to be placed on store shelves. The state's food security and livestock health depend on obtaining an exemption from mandatory workplace staff reductions or closures for businesses across the state.

In addition, roads must also remain open for farm deliveries, milk pick-ups and other agricultural commerce to keep the necessary supply chains open for both farms and consumers.

Again, we understand the magnitude of this public health crisis and we believe that New York's farms must play a critical part in both controlling the spread and feeding the people of this state and country during this difficult time.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Fisher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Fisher
President

cc: Patrick Hooker, Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture
Richard Ball, NYS Department of Agricultural and Markets
Jennifer Trodden, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets
Geoff Palmer, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets