



National Association of State Departments of Agriculture

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April 29, 2020

The Honorable Michael Pence
Vice President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20050

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Vice President Pence and Secretary Perdue,

The National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) writes to express concern regarding the availability and prioritization of personal protective equipment (PPE) for food and agriculture workers. PPE is essential to protect workers, keep production facilities open, and ensure a stable supply of food for consumers. NASDA thanks you for taking swift action to maintain a strong food supply chain during these unprecedented times. In order to keep it strong, we ask that PPE for all food and agriculture workers be given the next highest priority behind our nation's healthcare workers.

President Trump's Executive Order signed April 28, 2020 mandates meat and poultry processors to continue operations as critical infrastructure, which relies on adequate access to PPE. To effectively implement this order, NASDA requests that PPE availability, procurement, distribution and use be promptly prioritized for all food and agriculture workers. The health and safety of all food and agriculture workers, from farmers to grocers, must not be forgotten and rests on the ability to secure PPE as we work to keep the supply chains open.

We are also greatly concerned about the lack of PPE for our farmers and ranchers who rely on this equipment to be able to safely conduct applications and overall activities within their operations. Access to PPE is vital for protecting the health of our nation's farmers and the ongoing security of the nation's food supply.

The past week has shone a spotlight on the vulnerability of the food and agriculture sector due to closures around meat processing facilities across the nation. Addressing this complex issue will require collaborative approaches at the federal, state, and local levels. NASDA stands ready to assist and is well poised to help support and protect our nation's food supply chain including workers, farmers, and food companies on the front lines. Together we can strengthen American agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara P. Glenn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Barbara" being the most prominent.

Barbara P. Glenn, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer