

For Immediate Release:  
March 24, 2020

## Missouri leaders protect food supply, agriculture businesses

**(JEFFERSON CITY, MO)** – Today, Governor Mike Parson, in coordination with the Missouri Departments of Health and Senior Services and Agriculture, has approved a request from Dr. Randall Williams to create a consistent directive across local governments for any individual or business that is part of the food supply chain. Farmers, ranchers, agriculture businesses and grocery stores are encouraged to continue essential business functions to feed, fuel and clothe our citizens.

“I’m a physician first, but I have worked on a farm and know the value that farmers, ranchers and the agriculture businesses bring our state,” said Dr. Williams, Director of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. “Nutrition is important, especially during a public health crisis, and this will benefit all Missourians.”

This guidance supports the list [published last week](#) (See Link Below) by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) identifying the food and agriculture industry as critical infrastructure during the COVID-19 response. Those traveling to and from places of work within food and agriculture, or for official food and agriculture business, within an area of restricted travel are encouraged to keep a copy of the [DHS guidance](#) (See Link Below), today’s [DHSS order](#) (See Link Below) and a letter from their employer. As a courtesy, the Missouri Department of Agriculture has provided a [template letter](#) for food and agriculture businesses.

“Missouri agriculture provides an abundant & nutritious food supply for our citizens,” said Chris Chinn, Missouri Director of Agriculture. “It’s important we keep every part of the food supply chain moving during this time, especially our most valuable asset – the men and women in agriculture. The decisions we make today for our farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses will directly impact food availability in our grocery stores down the line.”

Examples of essential businesses for a safe food supply include, but are not limited to:

- Food cultivation, including farming crops, livestock, aquaculture, greenhouses, orchards, and vineyards.
- Entities that provide support of agricultural production, including manufacturers, processors, transporters, and suppliers of livestock, poultry, dairy, animal feed, seed, fuel, water, fertilizer, herbicides, or insecticide and those that care for animals, crops, greenhouses, nurseries, vineyards, forests, farms, and ranches.

- Entities that provide services for agricultural production and facilitate commerce, including veterinary services, pest management services, feed mills, agricultural supply businesses, agricultural equipment sales and service businesses, livestock and produce markets.
- Entities that process, distribute, and transport food, beverages, and pet food, and laboratories and inspectors that ensure food safety.
- Entities that provide food to consumers including grocery stores, farmers' markets, farm and produce stands, supermarkets, food banks, convenience stores, grocery deliver services, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of food and beverages.

The request waives 19 CSR 20-20.040 and 19 CSR 20-20.050, which will remove the authority of local health agencies from closing or restricting the operations of a business that is a part of the food supply, whether that be agricultural production, manufacturing, or sale of food. This waiver shall not limit the authority of a local health authority from closing or restricting the operations of a retail food establishment. To see the full waiver, (See Link below).

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**About the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services:** The department seeks to be the leader in protecting health and keeping people safe. More information about DHSS can be found at <http://health.mo.gov> or find us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) @HealthyLivingMo

