



Guidance for Livestock Markets to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 Virus

With COVID-19 spreading across the state and nation, Governor Pete Ricketts has issued guidelines to slow the spread of the virus. Under those guidelines, Nebraskans need to implement improved personal health practices to slow the spread of the virus. These practices include keeping at least six feet between each person, coughing and/or sneezing into our elbows, washing our hands often with soap for at least 20 seconds, and refraining from touching our face, nose and eyes. In addition, public gatherings should be limited to no more than 10 people.

Governor Ricketts has issued Directed Health Measures (DHMs) in several Nebraska counties that further restrict activities in those counties.*

For purposes of clarity, livestock markets are not considered gatherings under the DHMs issued by the state. It is important for livestock markets to institute changes to slow the spread of COVID-19 among their staff, sellers and buyers. The Nebraska Department of Agriculture strongly recommends that all livestock markets adhere to the following guidance:

Critically evaluate each auction to determine whether it needs to be held. If an auction can be postponed, please do so. If you decide to hold an auction, take the following protective measures:

- Use technology to host virtual sales whenever possible.
- Limit the number of customers at the sale to ensure everyone maintains at least a 6-foot separation between themselves at all times.
- Sellers should leave the sale after unloading and watch it online.
- Customers can make arrangements to pick up checks in the parking lot if they can't wait for the mail.
- Instruct any employee, seller or buyer exhibiting symptoms of illness to remain home and request that anyone who is a member of a population of heightened vulnerability to avoid areas where people are gathering.
- Provide ample opportunities for visitors and employees to wash hands with soap and water.
- Clean and disinfect all commonly-used areas frequently including restrooms and restock often with soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer.
- Consider closing all parts of the auction market that are not directly associated with the sale to prevent people from co-mingling, including common seating areas.
- Provide times for in-person viewing of the offerings to accommodate smaller groups.
- If the auction market is being held within a county with a Directed Health Measure (DHM) – the livestock market café dining area must be closed. Pick-up, take-out, curbside or delivery of food items are allowed. If the county is not within a DHM, there can be no more than 10 customers at a time in the dining area, and they need to maintain six feet of distance from each other.
- Clearly communicate and enforce your policies.

*Counties under Directive Health Measures can be found on Governor Ricketts' website at governor.nebraska.gov.