



November 24, 2020

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor, State of Illinois
207 Statehouse
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

Every sector in Illinois continues facing unprecedented challenges because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and agriculture is no exception. Earlier this year, food distribution was drastically disrupted due to processing plant shutdowns and resulting slowdowns from the pandemic. Livestock farmers were devastated to see shortages of their products at grocers and strains on food pantries across the state.

However, the agriculture industry remains resilient, and we continue to persevere. Our packing plant industry worked hard to develop COVID-19 control and assessment plans following the Meat and Poultry Processing Workers and Employers Interim Guidance developed by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

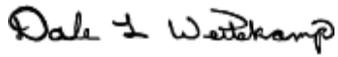
Plants made significant and costly changes to their engineering and administrative controls. Plants provided every employee with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and increased education and training in a variety of languages to reach all ethnic backgrounds employed at the respective plant. They also implemented social distancing guidelines, heightened cleaning, and disinfection throughout the plants, and developed screening of employees as they entered the plant.

Now that a vaccine is on the horizon, we are asking you to please continue designating these packing plant employees as essential workers, stated in Executive Order 2020-32 Section 12. B, and allow them to receive priority level status under Section C. of the Illinois Department of Public Health's draft plan for vaccine distribution.

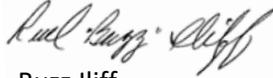
We are worried about another devastating hit on the Illinois livestock industry, which has immediate impacts on the entire agricultural sector. Corn and soybean crops raised here supply feed for the livestock, in addition to being exported. Without additional help at this critical time, Illinois family farms will go out of business and will not be able to return.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support of the agriculture industry.

Sincerely,



Dale Weitekamp
President
Illinois Pork Producers Assn.



Buzz Iliff
President
Illinois Beef Assn.



Richard L. Guebert, Jr.
President
Illinois Farm Bureau®



Doug Schroeder
President
Illinois Soybean Assoc.



Randy DeSutter
President
Illinois Corn Growers Assn.



Donald Mackinson
President
Illinois Milk Producers Assoc.

CC: Dan Hynes, Deputy Governor
Jerry Costello, Director of the Illinois Department of Agriculture
Dr. Connie Austin, State Public Health Veterinarian, Illinois Department of Public Health