

## Topic of the Month

### COVID-19 Resources

The Center for Dairy Excellence has provided some guidelines to farmers for working in the age of the novel coronavirus. The recommendations are similar to those given to the general population with some additions.

Producers are reminded that employees should wear milking gloves, avoid close contact, and stay home if they are sick. Frequent disinfection of surfaces is also important, as is eliminating the presence of any non-essential personnel on the farm.

The Center is also providing additional resources. These include publications with advice on preparing for a crisis, navigating labor laws, wellness information, and financial planning for possible consequences to the farm.

There is also information as to communication and social media strategies and potential to establish connections to help deal with labor shortages caused by this outbreak.

Currently, there is no evidence of livestock being able to harbor or transmit COVID-19 to humans and so it may be business as usual on most dairies, however, this is a time of great uncertainty. The Center is encouraging producers to prepare written contingency plans to address possible "what-if" scenarios related to this outbreak and its economic consequences. CDE will assist you in this process. The first step is to fill out the form located at <https://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/contingency-planning/>.

The CDE can also be contacted at 717-346-0849 or you can visit online at [centerfordairyexcellence.org/covid-19-farm-resources/](https://www.centerfordairyexcellence.org/covid-19-farm-resources/).

## Commodity Futures

### Prices

As of March 31, 2020

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Corn               | \$3.41/bu    |
| Soybean Meal       | \$321.50/ton |
| Milk (Class III)   | \$16.22/cwt  |
| Beef (Live cattle) | \$101.83/cwt |

## Practice News

- We have discontinued use of the answering service for after hours calls. Calls to the office phone outside of normal business hours will be forwarded to the phone of the veterinarian on call.
- Agriculture has been deemed as essential with regards to stay-at-home orders currently in place. We have been asked to help spread the word that agricultural businesses related to food production are exempt from mandatory closures, however, they are expected to comply with recommended practices such as maintaining personal space and limiting non-essential interactions. Livestock veterinary services are also permitted to continue with the request that we try to conserve supplies such as gloves.

## In The News

- JBS has announced that they will reduce production at their Souderton, PA plant, located near Philadelphia, for the safety of their employees due to two confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. This is a small swing plant, but will likely drive local beef prices down, even as demand is high. The plant will reassess their situation on April 14. The Cargill plant in Wyalusing is still buying cull cattle and bulls, but is not buying fat cattle right now.
- Canada ratified acceptance of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement last month. This trade agreement is meant to take the place of NAFTA and among other things, it should open some access to Mexican and Canadian markets for American dairy products.
- A lawsuit filed by R-CALF USA vs. Sonny Perdue and USDA has ended with a ruling in favor of USDA. The crux of the lawsuit was that mandatory beef check off payments were being used in part by state beef councils, and as such, cattlemen were being forced by the government to fund the free speech of private corporations, in violation of the first amendment. A federal judge in Montana has ruled against R-CALF.