



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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Issued: June 5, 2020

Guidance for Livestock and Other Agricultural Auctions:

Agricultural production is considered essential for maintaining a safe and abundant food supply during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Many livestock producers and produce farmers rely on auctions as the primary means for getting their product into mainstream distribution channels. However, traditional agricultural auctions are congregation points and pose a risk for transmission of COVID-19. All businesses have a responsibility to take measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is critical that livestock and produce auctions institute immediate changes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 among their staff, sellers, and buyers. Livestock and produce auction businesses are strongly encouraged to take steps to protect employees, customers and the general public from exposure and spread of COVID-19.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services recommends all agricultural auction markets take the following precautions:

- Whenever possible, conduct auction activities using online or telephone technology to avoid the congregation of individuals.
- Post signage restricting access to only those who are healthy to protect the well-being of employees and auction attendees. Strictly enforce that anyone with a fever or respiratory illness shall not enter the auction area.
- Post signage at the auction market instructing all staff, sellers, and buyers to practice social distancing, cover coughs and sneezes and wash hands or use hand sanitizer often.
- Employees working in customer or public facing roles (including dining service areas or concession stands, office staff interacting with customers, etc) are required to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth, as suggested in the [CDC Use of Cloth Face Coverings guidance](#).
- Encourage all employees, consignors, bidders and other participants to wear a face covering while attending an auction.
- Print out and post the most recent information sheets regarding COVID-19 from the CDC and VDH in your restrooms and other appropriate places.
- Update your website and social media with detailed instructions for sellers and buyers so they understand the expectations prior to any sale.
- Require all consignors and bidders to register in advance and restrict access only to registered bidders and consignors.
- No spectators, including family members of registered buyers or consignors should be allowed on site.
- Provide hand sanitizer or hand washing stations for employees, consignors and bidders.

- Restrict entrance to sales rings and barns to auction employees and only registered bidders.
- Maintain a log of all bidders, consignors and employees who were on premises for epidemiologic purposes, in case an attendee should contract COVID-19.
- Mandate social distancing, six feet between people at all times, for all employees, bidders or consignors.
- Consignors should unload livestock or produce and return home unless bidding.
- Consignors should be required to register to enter sales ring or barn.
- Indoor concession areas are limited to no more than 50% of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy, if applicable, while maintaining a minimum of six feet of physical distance between all individuals.
- Seating for any dining or concessions area should provide a minimum of six feet between parties at tables, (i.e., the six feet cannot include the space taken up by the seated guest). If tables are not movable, seat parties at least six feet apart.
- Use enhanced sanitation practices to regularly clean and sanitize the facility, especially any common-use areas.
- Restock handwashing supplies frequently, including soap and paper towels.
- Payment to consignors should be mailed or electronically transferred as to discourage consignors from congregating at a market's office or waiting at the auction for sales to be completed.