

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS



Department of Agricultural Resources

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**BULLETIN 2020-04**

To: Livestock Auction Market Operators

From: Director Mike Cahill, Division of Animal Health

Date: March 24, 2020

Re: COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Guidance for Livestock Auction Markets

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The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) recognizes the need for cull agricultural animals to be moved efficiently through the market system to destination for both humane and economic reasons. However, due to the Governor's Emergency Declaration regarding "Social Distancing", there are to be no public gatherings of more than 10 people.

The livestock markets operate under Livestock Market agreements signed jointly by the market operators, DAR and the United States Department of Agriculture Animal Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services (USDA APHIS VS). The markets generally sell animals through a public auction model.

In an effort to allow continued operation of our livestock markets, the Department will require that the markets change their mode of operation to minimize public gatherings and mitigate potential spread of COVID-19. It is understood that all food vendors will not be on the grounds.

The auctions may adopt one of two modes of operation:

1. The markets may operate as a modified auction. The sellers may drop off their animals and leave the premises. Market personnel sufficient to handle, weigh, and move the animals safely will remain on premises during the "auction". Only licensed livestock dealers buying for slaughter markets may attend the auction. There are to be no more than 10 persons present during the auction. Animals are to leave the premises within 24 hours of the end of the sale and all areas of the market shall be cleaned and disinfected.
2. The markets may operate as a "buying station". The animals may be brought in by farmers and/or licensed livestock dealers for weighing and sorting. These same sellers should have prearranged buyers and truckers for their animals by age, weight, and species. At no time are there to be more than 10 people at the market. After weighing and sorting, the animals are to be loaded for shipment to their destination. Animals are to leave the premises within 24 hours of the end of the sale and all areas of the market shall be cleaned and disinfected.

For questions about this Bulletin, please contact Michael Cahill, Director, Division of Animal Health, Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources, at 617-626-1794 or [Michael.Cahill@mass.gov](mailto:Michael.Cahill@mass.gov).