

Crawford



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CRAWFORD COUNTY'S AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY IS ESSENTIAL TO ALL OF US *County farmers, shippers, and grocery stores play an important part in our county economy*

MEADVILLE, PA – The Agriculture Industry in Crawford County plays a big part in our economy and affects every resident every day. Whether they're readying the soil for spring planting, tending to crops that have already sprouted, feeding and milking their dairy cows or looking after their cattle, chickens and pigs, farmers and fresh fruit and vegetable distributors take very seriously their commitment to fill grocery store shelves with safe, affordable food.

There is a lot beyond farmer's control and still unknown as we face this crisis, but we can focus on and be faithful with the tasks at hand. For farmers their calling hasn't changed: they are committed to rising every day to produce the food we all depend on. But they can't do that work alone. It takes all of us safely working across the supply chain from the workers harvesting crops to the grocery store employees stocking shelves.

Times like these remind us all of the importance of ensuring our county, state, and nation's food security, and we want to assure residents that agriculture remains on call 24/7. We are reminded of and grateful for the tireless hours' farmers, shippers, and grocery store workers put in all year long to supply healthy, affordable food to be processed and packaged so stores can restock shelves, produce bins, and meat and dairy cases.

As food banks struggle to keep up with dramatic increases in demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic, farmers are eager to work with the agencies and departments to bridge the supply gap and get farm products to those in need. From adding handwashing and sanitizing stations in the field to limiting person-to-person interactions as much as possible, socially isolating to the farm, and even preparing for the worst – a COVID-19 infection on the farm - farmers are taking all these precautions to ensure we have food to eat every day.

Like other businesses, farmers and others in the agriculture industry are facing short-run adverse effects of the COVID-19 crisis and longer-term recession challenges. One important difference is that farming is considered an essential activity, and unlike many service businesses, farms are not being asked to shut down their operations. Despite this, Congress has included in the CARES Act bailout an additional \$23.5 billion for the agricultural sector. Ensuring that these funds are targeted to farm households in need should be a priority.

This is also a good time for producers to look at nutrient & manure management planning or other best management practices as well as seek funding sources such as REAP (Resource Enhancement & Protection Program). There are many local, county, state, and federal agencies able to help those involved in the agriculture industry during this pandemic; www.agriculture.pa.gov and www.usda.gov.

The County Commissioners remind Crawford County residents to stay calm, stay home, stay safe, and wear a mask, and to support local agriculture businesses.

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