

December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Dear Governor Kelly and Secretary Beam,

Thank you Governor Kelly and Secretary Beam for taking time to consider this important issue. We are grateful for your bold leadership in managing the pandemic within our state over the past 9 months. We appreciate the hard work you and your team have done to keep people safe.

With the expected release of COVID-19 vaccines in the next several weeks you have the authority to prioritize the distribution of these vaccines to various groups of people. While it is important that first responders, health care workers, and other high-risk individuals be at the front of the line, workers in the food and agriculture industry should also be a top priority. Our members have worked hard to keep their employees safe, but community spread still puts our employees at risk outside our facilities. If one employee gets sick, contact tracing may require quarantining other employees to prevent exposure, which threatens our ability to keep essential businesses operating. Additionally, Kansas agriculture producers depend upon the health and safety of processing and manufacturing workers to keep markets open and food moving from the farm to the grocery store.

If there is a disruption in our ability to process raw agricultural products due to illness within our agriculture-related businesses, such a disruption would affect food availability and prices across the entire supply chain all the way to the consumer.

This why the National Academies of Science (NAS) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) independently and meticulously determined front line agricultural workers are essential to the economy and recommended prioritizing these workers behind health care professionals and other vulnerable individuals. We ask that you follow these CDC & NAS guidelines by making front line ag workers a priority in our state behind the obvious top tier recipients.

The nation is sick, tired and hungry. We cannot even give food away to the hungry if we can't process our agricultural products. As you know, farm income has fallen during the last several years and any processing disruptions would threaten farm income even further. We need your thoughtful consideration to make food processing and agricultural workers a priority. We want to work with you in any way we can to protect our workers and our food supply chain. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Kansas Agribusiness Retailers Association  
Kansas Corn  
Kansas Association of Conservation Districts  
Kansas Electric Cooperatives  
Kansas Dairy  
Kansas Cooperative Council  
Kansas Grain and Feed Association  
Kansas Grain Sorghum Association  
Kansas Livestock Association  
Kansas Pork Association  
Kansas Soybean Association  
Kansas Wheat  
Kansas Veterinary Medical Association  
Renew Kansas Biofuels Association

