

Background: COVID-19 Impact on Livestock and Poultry Producers

COVID-19 has caused substantial disruptions in demand for products and forced many processing facilities across the country to reduce or suspend production. These complications in the supply chain have negatively impacted livestock and poultry producers across the United States. To ensure animal welfare and protect the integrity of their product, producers cannot hold onto market-ready animals due to their fast growth rate – forcing them to euthanize animals that they cannot get to processing facilities.

While many of these facilities have been able to normalize processing capacity, producers are still faced with making decisions on how to move forward that reflect the current state of markets as we know them. Many of these farmers and ranchers have experienced, and continue to struggle with, longer waiting periods, receiving fewer animals to raise and in some cases have been forced to depopulate their healthy livestock. As a result of these circumstances, producers have suffered substantial losses in revenues and continue to face changing and uncertain demand. The livelihood of farmers and ranchers is dependent on their ability to process and sell their livestock. Unfortunately, COVID-19 pandemic has directly impacted their ability to do so.

Section by Section

- **Section 1 – Short Title:** The Responding to Epidemic Losses and Investing in the Economic Future (RELIEF) for Producers Act of 2020.
- **Section 2 – Emergency Assistance for Livestock and Poultry Losses**
 - Would provide assistance to producers who had to euthanize livestock due to lack of access to processing facilities.
 - Livestock value would be calculated based on the national average market value between March 1 and the date of enactment.
 - Reimbursements would be calculated for a 30-day period beginning with the date of initial depopulation, producers will get 85 percent of the value of losses.
 - Each 30 day period after that, the value of losses would be reduced by 10 percent.
- **Section 3 – Animal Disease Prevention and Preparedness**
 - Animal health networks have been working to assist and share resources with their public health partners to supplement testing capabilities during the current public health emergency.
 - This has resulted in reduction in capacity for animal agriculture to respond to a foreign animal disease.
 - This provision would provide \$300 million to support improved animal health surveillance and laboratories as they supplement testing capabilities of public health laboratories during the current public health emergency.
- **Section 4 – Emergency Authorities for the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC)**
 - Would amend the CCC Charter Act to add authority for the Secretary to deal with removal and disposal of livestock and poultry due to supply chain interruption during a public health emergency.
 - Would add the authority to provide assistance to agricultural processing plants in the event of a public health emergency in order to assure the continuation of markets for agricultural commodities.