



# Agricultural Leaders

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## O F M I C H I G A N

To: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer  
Cc: Director Jeff Donofrio, Labor and Economic Opportunity

Monday, March 24, 2020

Dear Gov. Gretchen Whitmer,

The Agricultural Leaders of Michigan is a coalition of agricultural, commodity and agri-business leaders committed to promoting Michigan agriculture, participating in the ongoing dialog about issues affecting our industry, and harnessing agriculture's power and potential to further grow our state's economy.

We want to thank you for your steadfast leadership during such an uncertain time. With the ever-evolving nature of COVID-19, we appreciate more than ever the aggressive action you have taken to keep all Michiganders safe. We are also thankful for your acknowledgment of the importance of the agriculture sector as an essential service to the state, especially during this crisis.

We are writing today to bring to your attention a significant labor issue facing the food supply chain. Recent events have caused disruptions to everyday business functions. We are already seeing challenges such as:

- Grocery stores reducing hours in order to restock due to labor shortfalls
- Delivery services being delayed due to a lack of qualified truck drivers
- Livestock, dairy and poultry producers in need of additional workers, and
- Food processing plants struggling to keep their shifts operating

As we move forward, this strain on the agriculture and food supply chain will only continue to increase. If not addressed, the strain could escalate and cause a major breakdown.

To help bring attention to this urgent need, we are respectfully requesting these jobs be featured in any future job-related announcements. As stated in Executive Order 2020-21, many jobs in the food supply chain fall under the category of essential services that are necessary to maintaining the health and safety of Michiganders.

In addition, we believe the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity can play a vital role in connecting out-of-work residents to employers who have an urgent need to fill these jobs.

We appreciate all you are doing to keep the residents of Michigan safe and look forward to working with your administration to ensure the food supply chain remains strong.

Sincerely,

Dave Armstrong, President and CEO  
GreenStone Farm Credit Services

Chuck Lippstreu, President  
Michigan Agri-Business Association

Mary Kelpinski, Chief Executive Officer  
Michigan Pork Producers Association

Ken Nobis, Senior Policy Advisor  
Michigan Milk Producers Association