



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250  
April 17, 2020

Mr. John Schmeiser  
Western Equipment Dealers Association  
10100 N. Ambassador Drive, Suite #310  
Post Office Box 419264  
Kansas City, MO 64141

Dear Mr. Schmeiser:

Thank you for your letter of March 19, 2020, requesting that farm and construction dealerships be considered “essential” businesses in the event there is an executive action ordering the shutdown of “non-essential” businesses as part of the response to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize these are uncertain times for all Americans and share your concerns about the effects of the coronavirus on your health and that of your family, as well as the effects on our work in the agriculture industry.

Rest assured that we at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) are working around the clock to support our customers. We will continue to do our part to ensure the food and agriculture supply chains remain safe and strong.

On March 19, 2020, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in partnership with USDA and other federal agencies that also have a role in the food supply chain, issued guidance for state and local decision makers designating food and agricultural sector operations and employees as critical infrastructure sector. This guidance identifies “employees engaged in the manufacture and maintenance of equipment and other infrastructure necessary to agricultural production and distribution” as critical infrastructure. You can find more information regarding DHS critical infrastructure guidance here: <https://www.cisa.gov/identifying-critical-infrastructure-during-covid-19>.

As I have said publicly, I am proud of and deeply grateful for the dedicated workers on the frontlines ensuring that the food supply chain remains stable and safe during this difficult period.

In these unprecedented times, USDA remains committed to delivering services to America’s farmers and ranchers while following recommended safety measures to protect their health and well-being. Please visit <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus> for additional resources.

Again, thank you for your letter and continued support of American agriculture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sonny" and last name "Perdue" clearly legible.

Sonny Perdue  
Secretary