

AAM Senter On The Hill 4-8-20

We are in uncertain times as most of the country is under a 'Stay at Home' order. Having the United States basically closed for business is unheard of, but necessary to save lives. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to the doctors, nurses, EMT's, police and firemen for their efforts to save lives. Also, I want to thank all the farm and ranch families that are getting up everyday to milk the cows, plant and harvest the crops and feed the livestock so that we as a nation have food on the table. The problem is Rural America is in crisis with dairy prices down over 30% this month, corn down 14% with new announcements of ethanol plant closing coming each week, soybeans prices down 8%, cotton down 31%, hogs down 31% and price paid to ranchers down 25%. This drop is from already low prices below the cost of production. Fruit and vegetable producers are unable to get workers to harvest their crops, plus they have lost the restaurant and school markets that helped keep them afloat. Then look at the prices in the grocery stores, boxed beef prices are way up as packers make off like bandits leaving producers with low prices. Joan went on Amazon to try to buy flour when our local store was sold out, they wanted \$11.00 when the last we brought in the store was between \$2 and \$3 dollars. Talk about price gouging it's going on.

The 2 Trillion dollar rescue package for businesses **must** include production agriculture. Chairman Dela Garza, Chairman of the House Ag Committee during the 1980's always told a story, he would ask 'how long can a nuclear submarine stay submerged, he would say until the food runs out'. Congress needs to step up and save Rural America. The MFP payments per acre won't do it, so we've heard during this debate on the recently passed CARE's Act, we must go big. All farm foreclosures should be stopped immediately, mandatory loan restructuring should occur, interest should be stopped for the balance of the year and commodity Loan Rates should be raised so producers can enter their crop in the CCC Loan Program for up to 3 years. This way it will give enough time to get through this crisis and give markets a chance to recover. Next our Rural Hospitals are in desperate need of help, these hospitals should have their debt frozen and interest stopped for the remainder of the year and needed financial help should be provided. Our small towns need help paying their employees during this time so water and sewer services are maintained, and police and firefighters can continue to work. If 100's of billions can be given to huge corporations then the same consideration should be given to Rural America. If we do not act and act soon, the largest concentration of production and agribusinesses we have ever seen will occur. It will change the face of America forever. This is a Call to Action for AAMer's. If you agree with AAM's message, please make calls to your Senators and Congressmen, this request is only fairness for Rural America and our producers.

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