

Dear Producers,

Thank you so much for participating in the call earlier today. And, as discussed, thank you for your invaluable contributions to our food supply and to fellow Vermonters during this global pandemic. We all appreciate your important work and efforts, and want to help ensure that you, your employees, our inspectors, and everyone is protected from COVID-19 exposure to the greatest possible extent. We know you share you these goals.

Thank you for raising the question about social distancing. We understand that for some of you, maintaining the 6-foot perimeter around your employees is not possible. After the call, we consulted the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and are now able to share additional guidance interpreting the executive order. Please understand that this guidance is only applicable because you provide a critical service as enumerated in the Sixth Addendum to the executive order. When operating your meat facilities, you may rely on the following guidance when implementing the 6-foot distancing requirement:

The social distancing and related safety requirements in the 11<sup>th</sup> Addendum to the Governor's executive order are requirements for all businesses, including those industries that—like yours--provide critically important services. The State recognizes that it is not always physically possible for meat industry workers to maintain 6 feet of separation between all co-workers. Nationally, the meat industry has been hit hard by the coronavirus, and it is imperative that Vermont producers meet the required distance standard or utilize alternate additional safety measures whenever the 6-foot requirement cannot be met. Whenever possible, existing practices must be amended to accommodate the 6-foot distance requirement. When meeting the 6-foot distance standard is impossible even with adoption of those potential alternate practices, then employers must implement additional safeguards—like plastic shields between workers---to protect workers from potential exposure. The following link depicts relevant possibilities: <https://www.meatinstitute.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/167350> . Additional food production safety guidance is available here: <https://www.meatinstitute.org/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/166789> .

Thank you again for helping us all through this crisis, and for doing everything possible to help keep your employees, our employees, and everyone safe. Be well, keep up the great work, and stay safe.

Sincerely,

Steve

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