



Alberta Pork update on COVID-19

March 31, 2020

Find more information at: albertapork.com/covid-19-resources-for-producers/

During COVID-19, the Alberta pork sector continues to operate; however, the situation can change quickly. The board and staff at Alberta Pork have been monitoring the various events and issues that could affect producers and the pork industry. There have been almost daily conference calls at the national, regional and provincial levels with government and industry leaders, to help ensure our industry operates as smoothly as possible given the current situation.

While almost everyone is working from home and we all practice our self-isolation requirements, Alberta Pork is still here to help Alberta's registered pork producers wherever possible.

In a conference call on the evening of **Monday, March 30** with **Alberta** Premier Jason Kenney and Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Minister Devin Dreeshen, it was reassuring to hear that the provincial government places agriculture and its workers at the highest level of importance. Our industry is an essential service, and our actions from production and transport to processing and retail are needed by all Canadians. Premier Kenney and Minister Dreeshen are confident that Canada's agri-food system is working. They are trusting our industry to continue keeping food on store shelves and in the restaurants that can stay open. We all contribute to the well-being of our friends, neighbours and communities as we do the great work of feeding the world.

We know there is confusion and some mixed messages. That is why we held a webinar on **Monday, March 30** with the help of the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council (CAHRC). This was to help address concerns related to managing farm workers during the unique situation presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. To [View a recording of the webinar](#).

We have also placed updates and excellent links for further information on our [COVID-19 resources for producers](#) webpage. We are committed to getting all developments where possible to you in a timely fashion, but we also want to hear from you. We have enclosed a quick survey to help understand what you might be facing at the farm level in order to help us go after the critical things that might be facing our industry. Please [Complete our feedback form online](#) or [view the form as a PDF](#).

Because most of the Alberta Pork staff are working from home, their office phones are being redirected to cell phones. Unfortunately, calling the toll-free line at this time only leads to a message telling you to check the website for phone numbers (granted, somewhat annoying). Therefore, this is the list of key contacts for you, if you would like to speak to us directly:

- **Darcy Fitzgerald**, Executive Director: 780-491-3529
- **Charlotte Shipp**, Producer Services Manager: 780-491-3528
- **Javier Bahamon**, Quality Assurance and Production Manager: 780-469-8982
- **Cris Neva**, Quality Assurance and Production Specialist: 780-440-8459

- **Christina Quinn**, Swine Traceability Coordinator: 780-440-8461
- **Bijon Brown**, Production Economist: 780-440-8460
- **Andrew Heck**, Communications Programs Coordinator: 780-491-3527

We would also like to remind you of the importance of **developing or updating your farm's contingency plan(s)**. As you build or review your plan, consider the worst-case scenario. Please consider challenges such as a processing facility closure of up to 14 days, transportation barriers, farm worker illness, current labour needs, feed ingredient availability and barn space. Consider speaking to your processor's procurement contact about accepting lighter-weight pigs, in the interest of keeping supply lines functioning effectively. As well, consider having a conversation on acceptance of heavier pigs, should a potential closure at the processing facility create a backlog on delivery times. All just part of good planning.

As we continue to watch events unfold, we must remember COVID-19 is affecting everyone and all industries. We must also recognize our supply industries are still recovering from earlier strikes and blockages before the arrival of COVID-19. As producers, it is important that you plan ahead, plan for the worst and help each other through this very challenging time.

As you work to implement changes on-farm to support social distancing, keep in mind the biosecurity practices you use everyday to ensure the health of pigs and staff.

Again, we are working with our provincial counterparts, the Canadian Pork Council and packers to try to maintain as normal a system as possible. We are cooperating and collaborating with governments at the provincial and federal level to do what we can to get through this crisis.

If you have any questions related to Alberta Pork's response to COVID-19 or are experiencing challenges on-farm, contact **Darcy Fitzgerald**, Executive Director, Alberta Pork by email at darcy.fitzgerald@albertapork.com or by phone at 780-491-3529. For area-specific inquiries, contact any of the staff list above. Thank you.