



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

May 5, 2020

Re: Executive Order Delegating Authority Under the Defense Production Act with Respect to the Food Supply Chain Resources During the National Emergency Caused by the Outbreak of COVID-19

The Executive Order signed by President Donald J. Trump on Tuesday, April 28, 2020, delegated to the Secretary of Agriculture the powers of the President, under the Defense Production Act, to take all appropriate action to ensure America's meat and poultry processors continue operations consistent with the guidance jointly issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regarding public health and worker safety. Congress enacted the Defense Production Act of 1950 to ensure the availability of critical supplies and materials, including food for national defense, which was later amended to include emergency and disaster response.

I understand that State and local leaders are working diligently to protect and maintain the well-being of their citizens, including those who work on the front lines in critical industries, such as meat and poultry processing. It is essential that we work together to ensure the health and safety of those who help keep food on the table during this unprecedented time.

Effective immediately, I have directed meat and poultry processors to utilize the guidance issued on Sunday, April 26, 2020, by CDC and OSHA specific to the meat and poultry processing industry to implement practices and protocols for staying operational or resuming operations while safeguarding the health of the workers and the community.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has also directed meat and poultry processing plants currently closed and without a clear timetable for near-term reopening to submit to USDA written documentation of their protocol, developed based on the CDC/OSHA guidance, and resume operations as soon as they are able after implementing the CDC/OSHA guidance for the protection of workers. USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service's (FSIS) mission is to inspect meat and poultry products to ensure that they are wholesome and safe. For this reason, USDA is partnering with OSHA and CDC as they are our Nation's federally recognized public health and worker safety authorities.

USDA, alongside our Federal partners at CDC and OSHA, will continue to work with State and local officials to ensure that facilities are implementing best practices designed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, while maintaining operations. Further action under the Executive Order and the Defense Production Act is under consideration and will be taken if necessary.

Signed,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S".

Secretary Perdue