

Ryan F. Quarles  
Commissioner



Corporate Drive  
Complex  
Frankfort, KY 40601  
(502) 573-0282

# Kentucky Department of Agriculture

October 27, 2020

Governor Andy Beshear  
Office of the Governor  
700 Capital Avenue  
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Dear Governor Beshear,

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Kentuckians in many ways over the past seven months. From the incalculable toll on the health of our citizens to historic unemployment, nearly every Kentuckian has been personally affected by this plague. Early in this pandemic, we all faced a crisis that would have seemed impossible just a few months before: empty shelves at the grocery store.

In March and April, many consumers experienced temporary meat shortages at their grocery stores as a direct result of the closure of many processing facilities outside of our Commonwealth. As you know, in May the Kentucky Agriculture Development Board (KADB) established an incentive fund to attract and expand processing capacity in Kentucky. As Vice Chair of the Board since 2016, I was proud to work with fellow board members to develop this program as a good first step toward reducing our reliance on out-of-state meat processors. However, further action is needed.

During the pandemic, other states such as Oklahoma, Iowa, Arkansas, and Wyoming have utilized funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to invest as much as \$10 million into efforts like the one we have undertaken in Kentucky. The CARES Act provided Kentucky with \$1.7 billion to assist the state in its recovery. **That's why I am writing today to formally request your office utilize \$2 million from the CARES Act to help bolster the Meat Processing Incentive Fund that was established in May.** This request is miniscule compared to the \$50 million investment our neighboring state of Tennessee set aside for its agricultural and forestry industries.

Kentucky is the largest beef cattle state east of the Mississippi River. By increasing the amount that the Meat Processing Incentive Fund can utilize, Kentucky can better position itself to become a hub of meat processing in the United States. Doing this would benefit every part of our food chain: our producers, consumers, and businesses.

If you have any questions about this letter or have further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Quarles".

Dr. Ryan F. Quarles  
Commissioner of Agriculture

