

March 24, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your commitment to restoring public health in the face of our current pandemic. The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is the nation's largest general farm organization, representing farmers and ranchers in all 50 states and Puerto Rico, who are involved in all facets of agriculture. Farm Bureau members take seriously our tremendous responsibility to protect the health of our employees, as we continue our essential work of feeding the nation. We stand ready to work with you in meeting this challenge.

Like all Americans, we are thankful for the unprecedented research effort that has led to the development of multiple new vaccines and anxiously await the vaccine supply to meet current demand. In addition to employee health concerns, the coronavirus spread among the workforce leaves critical positions unfilled, current employees stretched thin and the threat of additional farm and processing facility shut downs. This situation could again create disruptions and shortages in the food supply chain: a situation I'm confident we all hope to avoid.

We fully appreciate and support that our nation's heroic first responders, medical professionals, the elderly and caretakers, along with other vulnerable individuals, clearly have the highest priority for vaccination. As new COVID-19 vaccines are approved and ready for distribution, we encourage the Administration to support granting priority vaccine access to employees across the food and agriculture supply chain. This prioritization would ensure that planting, harvesting, processing, and distribution of human and animal food can continue to ensure our grocery shelves and food pantries remain stocked.

While farmers and farmworkers in some states have been able to access the vaccine, other states have not allowed food and agriculture workers priority access. As we work to achieve herd immunity as a nation, we request that your Administration take additional action to eliminate any barrier to vaccine access for America's farmers and farmworkers.

Recently, you directed states to prioritize vaccines for teachers, committing to use the full authority of the federal government in this effort. We request that similar action be taken to prioritize vaccine access for individuals who work to produce safe, nutritious food. This request is consistent with the recommendations of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's (NASEM) Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook

for Jurisdiction Operations, and the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommendations. We concur with these recommendations from our nation's top scientists and experts on infectious diseases.

We thank you for your consideration and stand ready to work with your team to increase vaccine access and acceptance. Ensuring our employees are protected helps to ensure we can continue to provide safe, healthy and abundant food to families across our great country and beyond.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Zippy Duvall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "Z" and "D".

Zippy Duvall
President, American Farm Bureau Federation