

December 1, 2020

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-Elect
1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. President-Elect:

We are grateful for your commitment to restoring public health in the face of our current pandemic. As organizations representing our nation's food and agricultural production sector, our members take seriously the tremendous responsibility we have to protect the health of our farmers and workers so that we may continue 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 that soon may be approved and available to protect public health. Our labor force, however, continues to ebb and flow as employees become infected. A single infected employee necessitates that we quarantine additional employees with whom he or she may have been in contact. This leaves critical positions unfilled, overworking existing employees and threatening to shut down processing facilities. This situation could very easily create disruptions and shortages in the food supply chain.

As new COVID-19 vaccines are approved and ready for distribution, we would like to encourage your transition team to support granting priority vaccine access to essential critical infrastructure workers. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has designated the food and agriculture sector as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. This ensures that planting, harvesting, processing, and distribution of human and animal food can continue to meet the needs of consumers.

We fully appreciate and support that our nation's heroic first responders, medical professionals, elderly and caretakers, along with other vulnerable individuals, clearly have the highest priority for vaccination. However, as we move beyond these highest priority groups, the undersigned organizations ask that front line food and agriculture employees be included in the next highest priority for the vaccine within any federal COVID-19 Vaccination Plans. This request is consistent with the recommendations of both the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine's (NASEM) Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations. 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 protect our workers and continue to provide safe, abundant, affordable and nutritious food to all consumers.

Respectfully,

Ag Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau
American Seed Trade Association
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American Soybean Association
Biotechnology Innovation Organization
CropLife America
Farm Credit Council
The Fertilizer Institute
Institute for Shortening and Edible Oils
National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
National Association of Wheat Growers
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Cotton Council
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
National Farmers Union
National Grain and Feed Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association
National Pork Producers Council
National Sorghum Producers
North American Export Grain Association
North American Millers Association
United Egg Producers
United Fresh Produce Association
USA Rice Federation