



March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

To All members:

For those of you that were able to attend our Zoom annual meeting this past Monday and those that were unable, thank you for your continued support

We left the meeting with a few take-aways and tasks to work on over the next several months.

First of all, the board will be working on possible further changes to the Bylaws. As I believe we made clear Monday night, the discovery of the problems with the old Bylaws came a few weeks before the annual meeting and we had to move forward with changes immediately. We will begin our review and consultation with counsel and encourage input from all members in this matter. We will provide further updates in the coming weeks. Don't hesitate to contact any of us by email with your suggestions.

Secondly, the issue of compensation for product damaged at Meatworks is one the board has already spent considerable time sorting through. A policy is in place at this time, based on USDA information, that was voted on by the board. However, we've heard the concerns of producers with using the USDA metrics so we will be reviewing this issue, once again, in the coming months.

Thirdly, the scheduling dynamics, particularly for small producers, needs to be looked at. Can we reserve processing slots in some fashion for small producers? Complicated, but we will be talking with our staff and producers to see how to address the issue.

Finally, either today or in the next few days you might hear or read of a USDA issue that surfaced with a missed stun on the kill floor about a month ago. We were issued a temporary suspension on a Friday morning after the missed stun. Our team worked closely with USDA from Friday morning through Saturday to assemble a corrective plan of action that was submitted to Philadelphia over the weekend. The suspension was lifted on Monday afternoon.

Such an event is an "egregious" violation of USDA policy and is very serious issue. Following a review on April 16, 2019, Meatworks was recommended by AWA for the slaughter of beef from Animal Welfare Approved farms. The AWA approval is an important part of TLI's and Meatworks mission. Meatworks has been in contact with the program and they are working with us. Because of our overall record, given that we have processed nearly 5,000 animals without one such violation, there will be no impact to our AWA status. As we have seen in other plants in New England, such repeated violations can lead to long suspensions. We completely agree with how USDA handled this matter and we are implementing our corrective plan so that this never happens again. Unfortunately, running a small meat processing plant is a tough, complicated



business. Problems inevitably surface; our focus is to have no problems but be transparent and proactive in addressing any issues that do surface.

We have made a lot of progress over the past year and we still have a lot of work to do. We encourage your input, feedback and involvement where possible.

Thank you for your continued support.

Here is the current Board:

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Sincerely,

Andy Burnes, President

The Livestock Institute of Southern New England