



Monday 23 March 2020

The following is a message from Beef + Lamb New Zealand and the Meat Industry Association

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern today announced New Zealand has moved up to COVID-19 Alert Level 3. The country will move up to COVID-19 Alert Level 4 at 11:55pm on Wednesday night. The Government anticipates this level will last for **at least four weeks**.

Essential businesses and those that support them can continue to operate.

Following a discussion with the Ministry for Primary Industries' Director General Ray Smith and Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor, we can confirm that farmers, processing plants, and key elements of the supply chain that support farming and processors, are considered "essential services".

At the time of writing, the following farming-related activities have been so far been classified as essential.

Primary industries, including food and beverage production and processing:

- Packaging, production and processing of food and beverage products.
- Food safety and verification, inspection or associated laboratory services, food safety and biosecurity functions.
- Veterinary and animal health/welfare services.

Transport, electricity, gas, water, waste, fuel are also essential.

The current description of Essential Services can be found at <https://covid19.govt.nz/help-and-advice/for-businesses-and-organisations/employers-including-rse/>

We're getting a few questions about the classification of some of the services needed to support production of food, such as seed, fertiliser, animal feed etc. At this stage, we understand these will likely be regarded as essential, but we will be working with other industry bodies and the government to ensure that the appropriate parts of the supply chain are able to operate to support farming operations.

What's important is that farmers, processors and exporters can have confidence that animal welfare will be prioritised, that animals can be processed, we can continue to export products to our global markets, and provide food to New Zealanders.

Under the new requirements programme, companies will be required to register and demonstrate steps they are taking to manage risks to people and mitigate against the spread of the virus. We will also keep farmers updated about these requirements.

Importance of keeping our sector safe and looking out for each other

Our sector is fortunate to be able to continue, but with this comes a serious responsibility.

It is essential for everyone in the sector to do everything they can to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and ensure that we can continue to operate.

Please protect your families and your staff. There is information about how farmers can do this on our B+LNZ website page.

The next few months will be incredibly challenging. We are conscious that there is drought in parts of the country that farmers are also having to deal with, on top of COVID-19.

It is more important than ever that we look to stay connected, reach out to your neighbours and work out a plan to support each other.

These are uncertain and unsettling times. Please look after yourself and your close ones.

More information can be found at: <https://beeflambnz.com/news-views/covid-19-looking-after-red-meat-sector> and www.covid19.govt.nz



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