

BEEF BUSINESS

by Julie Mais, editor

In this month's "Beef Business," we present resources during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Virtual Summit opportunity and new nutrition labels.

Teleservices for COVID-19 stress

The University of Missouri (MU) Psychological Services Clinic is offering teleservices to help adults and children cope with anxiety and stress related to COVID-19.

The clinic offers up to five brief sessions through videoconferencing or telephone, says Debora Bell, longtime director of the clinic.

This service comes at the perfect time to help rural families under stress, says MU Extension health and safety specialist Karen Funkenbusch. "Health is a farmer's most important and yet most neglected asset," she says. "When stresses pile up, it becomes distress and overwhelms."

U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration lists farming as one of the top 10 most stressful occupations.

"Now, more than ever, the country sees how vital farmers and ranchers are to the food supply chain," says Funkenbusch, who is part of a team of MU Extension professionals trained to help farmers and ranchers facing stress.

"This MU telehealth service comes during one of the busiest times for row crop farmers," she says. "Those in the horticultural industry also face financial uncertainty as distancing requirements threaten timely direct sales opportunities such as farmers' markets."

Source: University of Missouri Extension

New nutrition labels

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced the launch of the "New Nutrition Facts label: What's In It For You?" education campaign.

This campaign is designed to increase awareness of the new Nutrition Facts label for packaged foods, which reflects updated scientific information, including the link between diet and chronic diseases such as obesity and heart disease. It is intended for the general population and subpopulations at increased risk of nutrition-related chronic disease.

The FDA is collaborating with other federal agencies, public health and consumer groups, professional associations, and industry groups to increase public awareness.

The Nutrition Facts label educational campaign is part of the agency's comprehensive, multi-year nutrition innovation strategy, which is designed to empower consumers with information to make informed food choices and encourages industry innovation toward healthier foods that consumers are seeking.

Source: FDA

Stay healthy during pandemic webinar

Staying healthy is top of mind, and University of Kentucky (UK) Family and Consumer Sciences Extension is offering webinars to provide

information that supports engaged, active and healthy lives during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Through our remote programming efforts, we hope to provide relevant and timely research-based information to help Kentuckians stay on top of their physical, mental and emotional health," says Jennifer Hunter, assistant director of UK Family and Consumer Sciences Extension. "Our goal is to provide ongoing support to individuals and families, as they begin to adapt to their new normal while navigating unprecedented circumstances."

Family and consumer sciences extension programming regularly focuses on many areas that can help individuals and families improve their lives. Areas of specialist expertise include making healthy lifestyle choices, nurturing families, embracing life while aging, securing financial stability, promoting healthy homes and communities, accessing nutritious food, and empowering community leaders. The webinars are a natural extension of the program's popular Talking FACS podcasts, and allow UK specialists to relay information to their clients with the use of the social conferencing platform Zoom.

Source: UK College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Virtual Summit speakers to address animal welfare conversation

Animal welfare is top-of-mind for everyone involved in food production from farm to fork, from farmers and ranchers to restaurant, retail and foodservice brands and every stop in between.

The latest topics in animal welfare and how to effectively communicate about this topic will be covered at the Animal Agriculture Alliance's 2020 Virtual Stakeholders Summit, themed "Primed & Prepared." The Summit is set for May 7-8, 2020, and registered attendees will also receive exclusive access to a series of preconference webinars.

Attendees will leave the 2020 Virtual Summit primed and prepared with the tools they need to take action and be part of any and all conversations that could affect the future of animal agriculture and their business.

In a preconference webinar available only to registered Virtual Summit attendees, expert panelists will discuss ways that the animal agriculture industry can help food companies ensure the science of animal welfare is not lost in navigating conversations where emotions play a large role.

Source: Animal Agriculture Alliance

USDA tools to help rural communities address COVID-19

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue on April 13, unveiled a one-stop-shop of federal programs that can be used by rural communities, organizations and individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Federal Rural Resource Guide is a first-of-its-kind resource for rural leaders looking

for federal funding and partnership opportunities to help address this pandemic.

"Under the leadership of President Trump, USDA is committed to being a strong partner to rural communities preparing for and impacted by COVID-19," Perdue says. "This resource guide will help our rural leaders, whether they are in agriculture, education, health care or any other leadership capacity, understand what federal assistance is available for their communities during this unprecedented time."

For more information on these actions, visit www.usda.gov/coronavirus.

Source: USDA

Marketing flexibilities amid COVID-19

Agricultural producers now have more time to repay Marketing Assistance Loans (MAL) as part of the USDA's implementation of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The loans now mature at 12 months rather than nine, and this flexibility is available for most commodities.

"Spring is the season when most producers have the biggest need for capital, and many may have or are considering putting commodities under loan," says U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. "Extending the commodity loan maturity affords farmers more time to market their commodity and repay their loan at a later time."

Effective immediately, producers of eligible commodities now have up to 12 months to repay their commodity loans. The maturity extension applies to nonrecourse loans for crop years 2018, 2019 and 2020. Eligible open loans must be

in good standing with a maturity date of March 31, 2020, or later or new crop year (2019 or 2020) loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020. All new loans requested by Sept. 30, 2020, will have a maturity date 12 months following the date of approval.

The maturity extension for current, active loans will be automatically extended an additional three months. Loans that matured March 31 have already been automatically extended by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA). Producers who prefer a nine-month loan will need to contact their local FSA county office. Loans requested after Sept. 30, 2020, will have a term of nine months.

Eligible commodities include barley, chickpeas (small and large), corn, cotton (upland and extra-long staple), dry peas, grain sorghum, honey, lentils, mohair, oats, peanuts, rice (long and medium grain), soybeans, unshorn pelts, wheat, wool (graded and nongraded); and other oilseeds, including canola, crambe, flaxseed, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sunflower seed and sesame seed. Seed cotton and sugar are not eligible.

Source: USDA

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