

February 15, 2021

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215-6117

Dear Governor DeWine:

On behalf of the undersigned Ohio agricultural groups, we thank you for your ongoing support of agriculture in our state. We also greatly appreciate you promoting many agricultural priorities in your budget proposal with strong investments in broadband expansion, H2Ohio funding, and making sure the inspection programs in the Department of Agriculture have the resources they need to enable business to continue.

One area with which we remain very concerned however is the future of our state, county and independent fairs. We appreciate your recognition of the importance of our fairs and your love of 4-H, FFA, livestock shows and all the great educational opportunities that are part of our fairs. While it is hard to imagine with snow still on the ground, our fair season is just around the corner and we are very concerned that the county, independent and Ohio State fairs will not have the adequate time needed to prepare and move forward without immediate guidance from the Governor's Office. We ask that you release your plans for the safe operation of fairs this year as soon as possible.

Many of our members count on the income from the sale of livestock for 4-H and FFA projects and those sales are a major source of their farm income on an annual basis. Families with youth count on these 4-H and FFA projects as learning and leadership experiences and as potential income to start careers or attend college after their 4-H and FFA experiences. An entire fair industry including county, independent and the Ohio State fairs, concessionaires and ride companies all with a multitude of jobs are counting on the fact that there will be fairs in 2021 and beyond.

As you know, our Ohio State, independent and county fairs are extremely important to our members and communities. Our fair boards and exposition commission continue to be in limbo, waiting for guidance on how to move forward in the planning process with their respective fairs and we would ask for immediate guidance and authority for our fairs to be able to fully operate.

Additionally, along with the guidance to move forward, we would like to specifically lift up the urgent need for financial resources for the Ohio Exposition Commission so they can bring back the personnel needed to move forward with a safe and successful Ohio State Fair. We would ask for \$2 million in additional funding so the Ohio Expo Commission can effectively operate.

It clearly has been a difficult time for our state and we thank you for your leadership in helping chart a path towards recovery. As always, we stand ready to be a resource for you and to help in moving our state forward.

Sincerely,



cc: Lt. Governor Jon Husted
Dorothy Pelanda, Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture
Tracy D. Intihar, Assistant Director, Ohio Department of Agriculture