

Durbin Meets With Illinois Pork Producers Association

September 17 2020 1:05 PM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry, today spoke by phone with Illinois Pork Producers Executive Director Jennifer Tirey and President Dale Weitekamp about the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on pork producers and [federal support](#) for farmers during this crisis, including the USDA Coronavirus Assistance Program. In May, Durbin joined a [bipartisan letter](#) calling for additional USDA funding in the next COVID-19 relief package to assist pork producers facing hog depopulation due to supply chain bottlenecks from the pandemic.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has bruised every part of the American economy, including hog producers. Despite the urgent need in America’s heartland, the Senate is failing to have earnest conversations about the financial relief that rural Illinoisans, including our pork producers, desperately need,” said Durbin. “It’s time my colleagues in the majority took this virus’ economic impact seriously and deliver the support that rural areas require.”

Durbin spoke about the importance of expanding international markets for pork, and the necessity of animal disease prevention such as African Swine Fever, which has infected pig herds internationally. To address these concerns, Durbin has called for an additional

\$300 million, as authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, in the next COVID-19 relief package for the Animal Disease Prevention and Management Fund for a vaccine bank, increased animal surveillance and response, and for the National Animal Health Laboratory Network, including the University of Illinois' veterinarian laboratory.

Durbin is a cosponsor of the [*Food Supply Protection Act*](#) which would authorize new funds from USDA to reimburse farmers who package and deliver food directly to food pantries and for grants that will allow smaller local meat processors to purchase PPE and pursue capacity expansions to alleviate supply chain bottlenecks