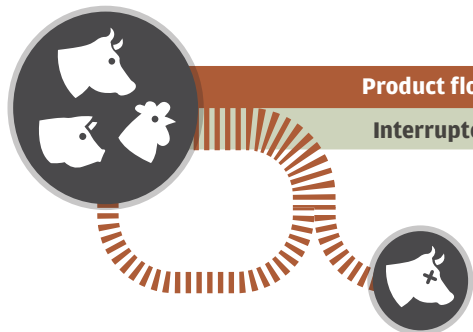


How COVID-19 is disrupting the nation's food chain

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has had a stark impact on the Midwest meatpacking industry, idling production lines and causing ripples up and down the vast food chain. The full impact is still not known.

PRODUCERS

Due to the lack of meatpacking production, demand for livestock plummets. Storage also brings expenses related to feeding and exposure to disease.



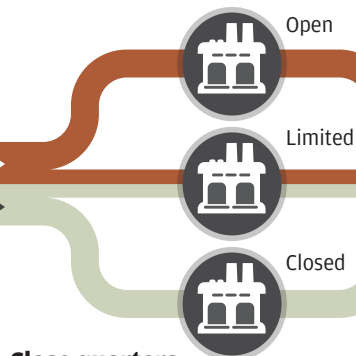
Livestock being culled

Facing a backlog, pork, beef and poultry producers decide whether to euthanize or send animals into fields.

WHERE THE CHAIN IS BROKEN

MEATPACKING PLANTS

Coronavirus infections sweep through meatpacking plants across the U.S., typically because of challenges with maintaining social distancing and adapting to new disinfection guidance, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Close quarters

Meatpacking plant employees typically stand shoulder to shoulder on the assembly line. A major contributor to the outbreaks.



! A total of 4,913 workers in U.S. meat and poultry processing facilities are ill from COVID-19 from April 9 to 27, according to the CDC.

RETAILERS

With a limited supply, some grocery store coolers go empty or are under-filled and limiting fresh meat purchases. The supply chain and inventory from meat plant to grocery store meat case is typically less than a few weeks.

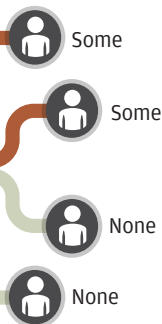


Abandon meat

Other businesses remove hamburgers or meat products from menus.

CONSUMERS

The result for consumers is fewer options, both in variety and quantity. The collapse of the supply chain also sends prices surging. Prices for wholesale beef and pork have jumped more than 20% since President Donald Trump's April 28 executive order requiring plants to stay open.



! By Memorial Day, retail pork and beef price inflation could be as high as 20% relative to prices last year.

SOURCES: National Cattlemen's Beef Association, National Pork Producers Council, CoBank

JASON KLEIN, CHRIS COATES, LAUREN CROSS - Lee Enterprises