

News Release
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**STATE AGRICULTURE PROGRAMS MAINTAINING PUBLIC
SAFETY DURING FEDERAL SHUTDOWN**

West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Walt Helmick assures West Virginia citizens that the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has the ability and the authority to protect human and animal health in the Mountain State regardless of the duration of the federal government shutdown.

“The state code grants the Commissioner of Agriculture broad powers to conduct inspections, enact embargoes and quarantines, and to deal with any disease outbreaks in livestock,” Commissioner Helmick said. “Although our federal partners provide welcome assistance in many regards, the WVDA is continuing its wide-ranging daily activities of protecting West Virginia and its agricultural resources.”

Generally, the WVDA has had little change in its operations. Daily inspections at livestock slaughter and processing facilities has continued, along with surveillance of egg and dairy products, disease testing of poultry flocks, export certification of West Virginia timber, and a host of other routine activities.

Earlier in the week, the WVDA moved its Livestock Market Report to the department’s webpage, rather than sending it to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to integrate into a national report because USDA’s website has been offline during the federal shutdown.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs, as mandated by state law. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials in West Virginia. For more information, visit www.wvagriculture.org.