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RAVNSBORG JOINS WITH MIDWEST AND WESTERN ATTORNEYS GENERAL URGING FEDERAL INVESTIGATION OF MEAT PACKING INDUSTRY PRACTICES

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Tuesday, May 5, 2020

PIERRE, S.D. – Attorney General Jason Ravensborg and the Attorneys General from ten other Midwestern and Western states are urging the Department of Justice to pursue a federal investigation into suspected national price fixing by meat packers in the cattle industry.

In [a letter to US Attorney General William Barr](#), the Attorneys General expressed concern over the likelihood of manipulation of the market for processed beef. The four largest meat packing companies control more than 80% of the beef processing in the United States. The shelf price of beef is exceptionally high, while cattle prices are low and continue to dive. The concern over market manipulation has increased with beef prices reaching record levels as consumers stockpile meat in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but cattle prices remain low and are decreasing.

“These activities should be alarming to all cattle producers and consumers,” said Ravensborg. “A federal investigation is warranted to protect consumers and promote competition in the marketplace.”

The Attorneys General believe the pricing margins are a sign that meat packers are using their ability to control the market for processed beef and take advantage of the situation in a manner that could violate the federal antitrust law. In addition to harming cattle producers, this potentially illegal practice hurts consumers nationwide, many of whom are themselves struggling because of loss of employment and reduced incomes.

Ravnsborg, along with the Attorneys General from North Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, Missouri, Idaho, and Arizona believe the situation warrants a full federal investigation because the alleged anticompetitive conduct harms consumers and cattle ranchers across the United States.