

U-Pick Farm Operations DURING COVID-19



COVID-19 is a respiratory illness, and there is currently no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with its transmission. However, the virus that causes COVID-19 is spread by being in very close proximity to many people or coming into contact with regularly touched surfaces. The nature of pick-your-own farm operations allows customers to go out in the field and harvest their own produce, which necessitates the importance of following best safety practices against COVID-19 at these operations.

BEST PRACTICES:

1. Through social media, communicate any changes in your U-pick operation because of COVID-19 to your potential customers. For example, you may be encouraging limited numbers of people in the field. You may be providing picking containers, or customers need to bring their own. You also may need to inform them about face-covering requirements while in the facility.
2. Inform your customers that you will have hand-washing stations and hand sanitizer available at the facility entrance.
3. All employees must be trained on food safety policies in your operation or basic food safety and proper hand-washing.
4. Customers and employees should practice maintaining a social distance of 6 feet from one another.
5. A policy requiring face coverings, such as disposable facemasks or cloth covering, by everyone on the premise. Note: While using cloth coverings, make sure that it covers the nose and below the chin, fitting snugly but comfortably against the side of the face and secured with ties or ear loops. It should include multiple layers of fabric, allowing breathing without restriction. The cloth coverings should be able to be laundered and machine-dried without damage.
6. Everyone should wash their hands before going to the field and upon exiting.
7. Create a policy dictating the number of customers allowed in the field at one time or where they can pick. For example: Customer may pick every other row. Decide which rules are feasible in your facility.
8. Employees must be around to see if the policies are being practiced in the field.



Use clean containers.



Do not eat.

9. Any supplies used in the field, like harvest tools, containers, transport equipment, including wagons or carriages, are frequently touched items. Thus, they must be cleaned and sanitized before and after every use.
10. Employees should use hand sanitizer after serving each customer and should wear gloves at checkout.
11. Routinely sanitize the counter areas at the checkout depending on exposure. Touchpads can be sanitized after each transaction.
12. Routinely sanitize surfaces like reusable bins, buckets, doorknobs and tables.

HAND HYGIENE

1. Hand-washing stations must be conveniently available at several places on the farm.
2. Signs with hand-washing procedures should be posted in appropriate locations to promote hand hygiene.
3. Remember, gloves are never a substitute for washing your hands.
4. Everyone must wash their hands properly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds when arriving at farm or facility or upon exiting. They also must wash their hands after coughing or sneezing, after going to the restroom, and before and after eating. Also, wash your hands after contact with animals.
5. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry.
6. Adequately stock hand-washing stations with basic supplies, such as a disposable paper towels, toilet paper, hand-washing soaps and hand sanitizers.



Wash your hands.



No pets.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Clean and sanitize all areas that can be touched, like picking buckets, bins, wagons, checkout area countertops, touchpads, tables, doorknobs, and others. Prioritize routing cleaning and disinfecting operations for frequently touched areas.

1. First, clean dirty surfaces using detergent or soap and water before disinfection.
2. For disinfection, diluted household bleach solutions and alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol as well as other common [EPA-registered household disinfectants](#) can be used against the coronavirus.

Effective bleach solution: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends adding 5 tablespoons (one-third of a cup) bleach per gallon of water or 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water for disinfection of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

WHAT IF SOMEONE TESTS POSITIVE AT YOUR FARM?

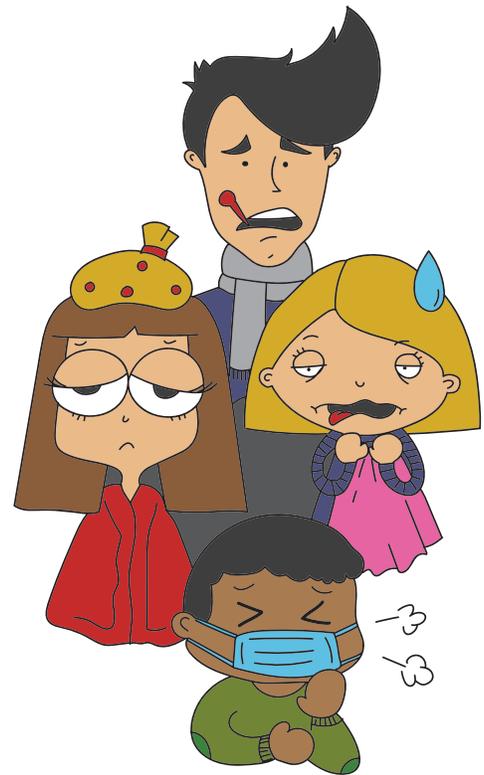
If any employee tests positive for COVID-19, instruct them to stay at home and follow the CDC guidelines on [what to do if you are sick with COVID-19](#). Make sure to clean and disinfect the surfaces in the employees' workspace. Inform other employees of the situation immediately. If a worker reports being in close contact with any person who tested positive for COVID-19, follow these [steps by the CDC](#):

1. Pre-screen — Monitor the employee's temperature and symptoms before starting work.
2. Regular monitoring — If no symptoms are seen, the employee should still self-monitor under the employer's occupational health program.
3. Wear a mask — The employee should wear a face mask or cloth face covering at all times in the workplace for 14 days after last exposure.
4. Social distance — As work duties permit, maintain 6 feet of distance in the workplace.
5. Disinfect and clean workspaces — Bathrooms, offices, common areas and shared equipment must be routinely cleaned and disinfected.

REFERENCES:

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-safety-during-emergencies/food-safety-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19#workers>



Don't pick if you are sick.



Don't drink or smoke.



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