Keeping you and your staff healthy at the farm

Guidance for Limiting the Spread of COVID-19

Based on data and information as of April 14, 2020.
Today’s Presenters

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COVID-19 Webinar Series for Produce Growers

- April 14, 2020 – Part 1: Worker Health and Hygiene Best Practices
- April 21, 2020 – Part 2: Cleaning and Sanitizing Best Practices
- April 28, 2020 – Part 3: Point of Sale Best Practices

All webinars will be recorded and posted on www.coproducesafety.org and https://coloradoproduce.org/covid-19/
What are we going to cover today?

- What is COVID-19?
- What do you need to know to identify and manage risks to your workers/staff on your farm?
- What resources are available to support new practices and strategies?
- Question and answers from audience
Review of COVID-19 facts

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that is transmitted:

- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks
  - When these droplets land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby, they could possibly be inhaled into the lungs
  - Preliminary research has found that respired droplets can land anywhere within a minimum of 6 feet of the person releasing them.
- Virus is spread person-to-person, not through food
  - When people are in close contact (within about 6 feet) = physical (social) distancing
  - May be transferred from hands to eyes, nose or mouth
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms (asymptomatic)
  - Reason why social distancing is so important

https://www.pma.com/topics/emergency-management

What about surfaces?

- COVID-19 appears to persist on surfaces for a period of a few hours to a few days.
- The virus' ability to survive may be influenced by temperature, humidity and type of surface.
- Heat, high or low pH, sunlight and common disinfectants (such as chlorine) all facilitate die-off of coronaviruses.
  - Structure of coronaviruses makes them particularly susceptible to soaps and sanitizers.
- Currently, no evidence of food or food packaging materials being associated with transmission of COVID-19 (FDA, CDC, USDA).
Key take-aways for growing, harvesting, handling and sales

Reduce viral transmission and keep your employees and customers safe by training employees in your health and hygiene practices:

1. Keeping hands, food contact surfaces and other high-touch surfaces clean and sanitized, and

2. Using physical (social) distancing of at least 6 feet whenever possible or use face coverings when physical distancing is not possible.
“Symptoms of Coronavirus Disease 2019” is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

“Feeling Sick” available in English and Spanish and in sizes 11 x 8.5 horizontal, 8.5 x 11 vertical, and 24 x 36 vertical.
“Share Facts about COVID-19” available in English, Español and Simplified Chinese

“Stop the Spread of Germs” available in English, Spanish, French, Simplified Chinese, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, Russian, Swahili, Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Korean, Amharic, Nepali, Haitian Creole, Pashto, Somali, Tigryna, Burmese
Educate yourself and your employees – Hygiene practices

- Structure of coronaviruses make them particularly susceptible to soaps and hand sanitizers
- Increase the number of hand washing stations; ensure they are fully stocked
- Hand sanitizer can be used in addition to soap
  - At least 60% alcohol
  - If used in place of soap and water, only use on hands that are not visibly soiled
  - Apply to hands and rub until hands feel dry

Handwashing 101 with Dr. Don Schaffner (from Produce Marketing Association)

1. Water temperature does not matter
2. Wet hands
3. Add soap to hands
4. Lather and get front, back, between fingers and under nails
5. Lather for at least 20 seconds or as long to get hands clean
6. Rinse hands
7. Dry with a paper towel
8. Throw away paper towel
9. Use a hand sanitizer on dry hands if needed for an extra level of disinfection.
Requirements for handwash stations:
• Water that contains no generic *E. coli*
• Soap
• Container to catch water
• Paper towels
• Trashcan with lid and a liner
• Ideal – foot pump for water dispensing, rather than a faucet turned on with hands
Don’t forget the trashcan!

- Need to contain trash with either a lid or by using an enclosed receptacle
- Need to have a liner
- Put rocks or sandbags in the bottom for weight
- Hands-free open/close is best

Many options!
If you have access to adequate hand washing stations and can train employees to wash hands frequently, maybe glove use can be reduced.

Putting on gloves safely:
Taking off gloves safely: https://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/pdf/poster-how-to-remove-gloves.pdf
Types of gloves

- Disposable:
  - Train employees how to put them on and remove them properly
  - Dispose of gloves when they become torn or potentially contaminated
  - Change after 4 hours if continuing same task

- Reusable gloves (fabric, leather, neoprene):
  - Keep clean through frequent washing and drying
  - Dispose of gloves that are worn, torn, or heavily soiled
CSU Best Practices for Gloves

COVID-19 Gloves: Best Practices for Produce Growers

The harvesting and handling of crops often involves the use of gloves to maintain proper hygiene. Colorado State University Extension is providing these best practices to promote the health of workers in produce industries.

Glove Use
Gloves create a barrier between workers and their environment, protecting them from infectious diseases.

Types of Gloves
- Latex: Recommended for handling raw produce.
- Nitrile: Good for contact with food.
- Vinyl: Not recommended for use with food.

When to Wear Gloves
- Applicable when handling raw produce.
- Not necessary for all tasks.

Tips for Proper Glove Use
- Wash your hands before putting on gloves and after removing them.
- Keep gloves away from heat, light, and water.
- Change gloves if they become contaminated or damaged.

How to Safely Remove Disposable Gloves
- Remove gloves from right hand and place in trash.
- Remove gloves from left hand and place in trash.
- Wash hands with soap and water.

April 14, 2020

Developing policies about not using masks: i) the data about them being effective to prevent infection are not clear (some studies show increased risk of respiratory illnesses when wearing masks), (ii) people are likely to touch their face more often when wearing masks, increasing transmission risks, and (iii) people may be less observant of social distancing guidelines.
CSU Best Practices for Face Coverings

COVID-19 Face Coverings: Best Practices for Produce Growers

Best Practices for Farms

- All members of the produce industry, including farmers, packers, shippers, and distributors, should wear face coverings while working to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

Face Coverings and Sanitation

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Wear clean clothing, including clean uniforms and clean work clothes.
- Wear clean, disposable face coverings when working with food.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces that come into contact with food.
- Wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Wear personal protective equipment (PPE) including masks, gloves, and goggles when necessary.

How to Use Face Coverings

- Face coverings should fit snugly around the nose and mouth.
- Wash face coverings regularly with soap and water.
- Avoid touching your face with your hands.
- Remove your face covering before eating or drinking.
- Immediately replace a damaged face covering.

COVID-19 Face Coverings Best Practices for Produce Growers

Face Coverings FAQ

- The best practices for face coverings include wearing a mask, using cloth face coverings, and practicing good hand hygiene.

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Educate yourself and your employees – Physical distancing

- When possible maintain 6 feet between employees
  - Train employees on exactly what this means
  - Use markings or give guidelines on what this looks like
- Breaks and break areas
  - Stagger breaks to have fewer employees in one area at a time and allow employees to maintain social distancing
  - Create multiple or larger break areas
  - Discourage physical greetings (handshakes, hugs)
  - Clean and sanitize break areas at least one time per day

Available to download and print: www.coproducesafety.org/covid-19
Other times for physical distancing

The following suggestions may lead to inefficiencies and potential added costs but will help you maintain the health of your workforce

- Transportation to/from fields or around the farm
  - Reduce number of people in vehicle
  - Wear cloth face coverings when in close proximity to each other

- Field operations, such as transplanting, weeding and harvesting
  - Evaluate best field position for employees and equipment while maintaining physical distance in the field
Other times for physical distancing

- Packing house operations
  - Consider slowing production lines to accommodate more space between employees
  - Evaluate where people and supplies are physically going to be positioned – Will they be crossing paths or moving amongst each other?
  - Wear cloth face coverings when physical distancing is not possible

- Meetings
  - Consider alternatives to in-person meetings: off-farm video conferencing or phone calls
  - For in-person meetings, use presentations or posters with increased font size to allow viewing from afar and prevent people from crowding
What about visitors?

- Identify all people coming to the farm – customers, deliveries, transportation, trash, gas
- Evaluate where you want them to go or not go
  - Will they come into your office and stay there or should they remain in their vehicles?
- Do you want them to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer upon arrival?
- Communicate your expectations to visitors
  - Do you have a visitor policy? Does it need to be updated for COVID-19 policies?
  - How will you get it to visitors? Email or phone call? Post on your website, office/building door?
Visitor policy

Example visitor policy from WA Dept of Health


COVID-19/Coronavirus Announcement

Thank you for coming to visit today. As you may know, the world is experiencing an expanding outbreak of respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a new coronavirus. The virus can spread from person-to-person. Older adults and those with underlying medical conditions are especially at risk.

We take our role in protecting the health of our residents very seriously. Before entering our facility, we respectfully ask all visitors confirm:

- You are not currently sick.
- You have not travelled to an area of the world with an active COVID-19 outbreak within the last 14 days.
- You have not been in close proximity with someone who is currently sick with the COVID-19 or any other respiratory illness within the last 14 days.

We are taking extra measures to keep our facility clean. During your time here today, we respectfully ask that you:

- Wash your hands or use provided sanitiser often.
- Disinfect all shared surfaces before and after use.
- Please reach out to a staff member if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you!
Develop guidelines for coming to work and sick leave policy

- Tell employees when to stay home by creating guidelines or policies for attendance that include:
  - If they have symptoms of illness – both COVID-19 and other illnesses
  - If they are taking care of someone who has COVID-19
  - If they have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19

- Create a sick leave policy and communicate to employees
  - Will you pay them for sick leave? Self quarantine?
  - What will it include? All illness and injury?
  - Will you do daily wellness checks (check temperatures, visual inspection for illness, ask “how are you feeling”)?
  - Policy should include accommodations for employees and those who need to care for family

- Cross-train employees on duties or tasks to be prepared for absent employees
  - Plan for short- and long-term absences

PMA Prevent Spread with Field Employees: https://www.pma.com/-/media/pma-files/covid19/fieldworker_covid_flyer.docx?la=en


What if an employee comes to work with symptoms?


- Send the employee home.
- If anyone else was within 6 feet of this person in the previous 48 hours they would be considered exposed:
  - Contact your local public health department for guidance.
  - CDC recommends that exposed employees who are not experiencing symptoms should monitor their body temperature, wear face masks, and practice social distancing at work. If they begin to feel ill they should stay home.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces the person might have come into contact with.
What if someone from your farm tests positive for COVID-19?

- Contact your local public health department
  - Find your local office: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdphe/find-your-local-public-health-agency
- Determine who and what surfaces the affected person came into contact with during the previous 48 hours
  - Clean and disinfect any surfaces the person might have come into contact with
- Do not reveal the name of the sick employee
- Do not need to recall produce or food products
- Do not need to close your farm or facility

Everyone needs to determine how they want to manage risks (your other employees getting sick, you getting sick, your children...), CDC does provide some guidelines to help.

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What can you do to be prepared?

- Increase the number of well-stocked handwashing stations
- Have hygiene supplies (soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, etc.) available
  - Check your inventory to make sure you do not run out
  - Make your own hand sanitizer: https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/Guide_to_Local_Production.pdf
  - If you provide employee housing, ensure adequate hygiene facilities/supplies, drinking water, and trash disposal
- Designate one employee to supervise and enforce all hygiene related activities
- Develop written policies for handwashing, glove and mask use, physical distancing, sick leave, return to work, and visitors
What can you do to be prepared?

- Order/print and post signage:
  - Reminding employees about zero-tolerance ill-worker policies and personal hygiene requirements
  - Alerting visitors to your hygiene requirements/visitor policy and where they can/cannot go on the farm

- Show your commitment by providing adequate time for training and communicating these policies to employees and cross-training for absences

- **Remember** to continue all food safety practices including your normal cleaning and sanitizing routines and associated recordkeeping. The recommendations we discussed today highlight ways to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
These are specific for training your employees about COVID-19.

We still have all of our normal worker health and hygiene resources at www.coproducesafety.org/worker-training/
COVID-19 worker training videos

- COVID-Field Employee Tips:
  - https://youtu.be/4CqHPYGcToc (English)
  - https://youtu.be/EcD4F7G3-Zs (Spanish)

- Signs and symptoms of COVID-19:
  - https://youtu.be/UBVFekc95w (English)
  - https://youtu.be/WKfxFyqipj0 (Spanish)

Additional resources

- CSU Extension produce safety resources and tools: http://freshproduce.colostate.edu/covid-19-resources-and-information/
- Western Growers Association: https://www.wga.com/covid-19-resources-page
- USDA coronavirus information for foods: https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment: https://covid19.colorado.gov/
Contact Information

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https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/images/keepcalm.gif
We’re all in this together. Just 6 feet apart.

Together, we can slow the spread of COVID-19.

Stand Together. Stay Apart.

Borrowed from Seattle and King County Public Health,