



Agriculture - Overview

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the food supply chain has been identified as a life-sustaining business in Pennsylvania. This means that most agriculture operations will be permitted to operate in the “Red,” “Yellow,” and “Green” phases of [Pennsylvania’s Phased Reopening plan](#); however, any business operations that can be conducted remotely should be done so to limit exposure.

The following guidelines from the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will help ensure safe operation in the agriculture sector.

For the source pages of the below information, see: [Procedures for Sanitization and Diagnosed Employees](#), [Farmer’s Markets and On-Farm Markets](#), [Farms and On-Farm Deliveries](#), [Agricultural Auctions and Markets](#), and [Food Products and Food Facilities](#).

Employer Tips and Guidelines

General

- Consistently monitor employee wellness and do not let anyone symptomatic report to work. Revisit your leave or sick program to allow for this time off.
- Employees who monitor their temperature at home should update their supervisor if they have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit and stay home.
- The FDA has stated that foodborne exposure to COVID-19 is not a known route of transmission.
- Wash hands frequently. Use warm water, apply soap, lather for at least 20 seconds, and rinse. Use paper towels to dry and to turn off faucet.
- Practice social distancing. Remain 6 feet or more away from others when possible.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with your elbow.
- Ensure high-contact surfaces are being cleaned and sanitized on a routine basis. Time needs to be allocated for all cleaning.
- Employees cleaning should be trained on how to properly clean and sanitize the type of surface they are working on.
- FDA-regulated food manufacturers are required to follow Current Good Manufacturing Practices (CGMPs) and many have food safety plans that include a hazards analysis and risk-based preventive controls. CGMPs and food safety plans have requirements for maintaining clean and sanitized facilities and food contact surfaces. See: [FSMA Final Rule for Preventive Controls for Human Food](#).
- All chemicals being used on food contact surfaces must be approved for food equipment on the label and utilized at the proper concentration per the label instructions.
- Require all customers to wear masks while on premises.

- Have a different person handle products and handle money or wash hands/sanitize in between these tasks.
- Frequently disinfect/sanitize all gathering places, restrooms, door handles, credit card machines, shopping baskets, etc. at regular pre-established time intervals.
- Stagger lunch times or provide additional space to increase distancing of employees.
- Inform employees where they can find handwashing facilities and sanitizing materials throughout on-farm contact points.
- Employees should avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.
- Cleaning staff should be provided disposable gloves, gowns, and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for all tasks.
- Inform cleaning staff to immediately report breaches in PPE such as a tear in gloves or any other potential exposures to their supervisor.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Stagger work start and stop times for employees when practicable to prevent gatherings of large groups entering or leaving the premises at the same time.
- Limit persons in employee common areas.
- Conduct meetings and trainings virtually. If a meeting must be held in person, limit the meeting to the fewest number of employees possible, not to exceed 10 employees at one time, and maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- Prohibit non-essential visitors from entering the premises of the business.
- Post signage at facility entrances, restricting access to only those who are healthy to protect the well-being of employees and others.
- Ensure that the facility has enough employees to perform all measures listed effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of the public and employees.
- For additional support, the Chester County Health Department can be reached at 610-344-6225.

Continuity

- It is recommended that all farms have Continuity of Business (COB) plans to keep operations running smoothly in case of any disruption.
- While COB plans are critical for all operations, small farms may be at greater risk if a disruption occurs because the owner may be the sole caretaker. It is important to have written documentation of your business operations so that another family member or neighbor can assist if you need to be isolated or treated due to COVID-19.
 - Include the following: fields and acres under control of farm, contacts sheet, key farm suppliers, key markets for farm products, next-trusted person to be in charge of farm

Agriculture-related Deliveries and Drop-offs

- Log all deliveries and on-farm entries.
- Utilize a visitor's log for everyone entering the farm.
- Confirm deliveries by taking a photo of completed on-site drop-off.
- Consider delivery or pick-up options and, if possible, allow online or phone ordering.
- Pre-package items to limit shoppers' handling of food and keep customers moving quickly.
- Consider alternate locations that could allow drive through or pick up.

- Identify a drop-off location for regular deliveries away from on-farm high traffic areas.
- Drop boxes/drop-off locations should be placed near the road, before on-farm entry.
- Create signage to easily identify drop-off points. Provide specific instructions for drop off.
- Practice distancing with delivery drivers. In these circumstances, it is best to not greet them with a handshake. Instead, keep a recommended distance of at least 6 feet.
- Contact any locations prior to delivering to them. Ask for drop-off point and instructions.
- In case of need for contact tracing, monitor personal travel with a personal travel log.
- Sanitize before and after every delivery. Avoid on-farm contact.
- Wear and discard disposable gloves at each drop-off location.
- Park away from housing and high on-farm traffic areas.

Farmer's Markets

- Offer designated times for high-risk and elderly persons to shop at least once every week if there is a continuing in-person customer-facing component.
- Consider putting up signs and information on websites and social media to explain any changes, delivery options, or extra precautions taken to limit exposure to COVID-19. Example: Instruct customers not to handle food.
- Package cheese and eggs for customers, even if the cheese and eggs are individually packaged. Open egg cartons for customers to see the eggs they are getting instead of having them handle multiple cartons.
- Separate stands to limit crowds. Consider limiting the number of customers within your market at one time.
- Remove tablecloths and sanitize tables regularly.
- Eliminate samples and eating areas. Direct customers to take prepared foods home.

Agricultural Auctions and Markets

- Allow only known buyers into agricultural markets to discourage people entering to browse.
- For auctions with bidders writing their bids, encourage bidders to use their own pens or pencils. Otherwise, sanitize pens or pencils routinely or have an auction employee write down information for bidders.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations at bottlenecks where attendees must contact surfaces or are more likely to interact with each other.
- At auctions, restrict entrance to a sales ring and livestock/poultry areas to employees and bidders with visible bidder cards. If a bidder card is not visible, access should be denied.
- Maintain a daily log of all buyers, consignors, and employees who were on the premises for contact tracing purposes, in case an attendee should contract COVID-19.
- Consignors should unload products and return home unless purchasing products. In that case, consignors should be required to register and get a bidder card to enter the sales ring or barn.
- Refrain from selling food or drinks, or only provide food through takeout or pick up.
- Eliminate indoor or outdoor eating areas to discourage congregation.
- Consider use of wipeable covers for any electronics.
- Prepare your employees before sales by providing guidance for handwashing and safe handling of materials. Make sure guidance is available and communicated to employees in their native

languages. Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.

How Employees Can Protect Themselves

- Self-monitor your temperature every morning. Employees who have a temperature exceeding 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should stay home and notify their supervisor.
- Wear protective masks/face coverings.
- Know where to find sanitizing materials.
- Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet from others and avoid large gatherings.
- Do not handle customers' reusable bags and let customers pack their own bags.
- Employees who have symptoms should stay home and not come to work until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Practice effective hand hygiene including washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- Regularly clean high-contact surface areas.

If an Employee Tests Positive

- If the individual receives a positive test notification while at work, follow established Human Resources policy. If the individual receives a positive test notification while NOT at work, the individual should follow established Human Resources policy, stay home and self-isolate in accordance with Chester County Health Department guidance.
- Close off areas visited by the positive individual. Refer to the [CDC's general cleaning & disinfecting guidance](#) and [guidance in facilities where someone is sick](#).
- Determine who had contact with the positive individual during the time the individual had symptoms as well as 48 hours prior to symptoms. Notify employees who were in close contact with the confirmed individual while maintaining confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
 - People who had close contact must self-quarantine for 14 days from the date of last contact with the positive individual.
 - "Close contact" is defined as having contact for more than 15 minutes, at a distance of 6 feet or less, with a positive individual.
- Individuals may discontinue home isolation and return to work under the following conditions:
 - At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since your fever went away without the use of fever-reducing medication
 - AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath)
 - AND At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- After returning to work, individuals should:

- Wear a facemask at all times while at work until all symptoms are completely resolved or until 14 days after illness onset, whichever is longer.
- Be restricted from contact with individuals at a higher risk (e.g., older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness).
- Adhere to hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, and cough etiquette (e.g., cover nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing, dispose of tissues in waste receptacles).
- Self-monitor for symptoms. Seek immediate re-evaluation from occupational health/primary care provider and do not work if symptoms recur or worsen.
- The Chester County Health Department will be notified of all confirmed cases through established disease reporting protocols and will follow-up with the individual appropriately. Contact the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6225.

Supporting Customers and Clients

- Visitors should monitor for signs of illness and may take their temperature before arriving. They should stay home if they show symptoms of illness or have a temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Practice effective hand hygiene including washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol.
- When possible, maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other individuals.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a sleeve or elbow, not hands.
- Wear protective masks/face coverings.