



COVID-19 RESPONSE

COVID-19 AND AGRICULTURE

Protect yourself from COVID-19 while working on the farm.

Agriculture is an essential business during the COVID-19 pandemic. As farmers and ranchers, we know the work must continue. Many agricultural producers work by themselves or with one or two others, thinking they are social distancing, but in reality, you probably are working closer than you think. Social distance is keeping 6 feet of space between you and others. You need to keep this distance to protect your family, employees and yourself. Also, remember to practice social distancing when going to town for parts or supplies. Most stores are posting reminders on entrances and have marked spacing on the floor to assist with keeping the 6-foot spacing. If you must go to town for supplies, wear a mask of some type when in a public setting. Consider wearing a mask when traveling in a vehicle with others or when working with more than one person on a job on the farm. You may be working outside, but will still be within 6 feet of each other.

The most effective method of disease prevention is to avoid exposure to the virus.

- Avoid close contact—stay at home, putting at least a 6-foot distance between yourself and others.
- Clean hands often—wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used if soap and water are unavailable.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others.
 - You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
 - Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public; for example, to the feed store or to pick up other parts or supplies.

- There are many patterns for cloth face masks, including this link to the Oklahoma 4-H website for cloth mask patterns <http://4h.okstate.edu/literature-links/lit-online/family-consumer-science/fabric/diy-mask>
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve or crook of your elbow.
- Clean and disinfect—surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected often. COVID-19 is susceptible to most common household disinfectants.

The coronavirus can live for hours on surfaces you and your employees touch throughout the day. Disinfect high-touch areas (such as doorknobs) often during the day using a disinfectant wipe of some choice. You should disinfect the steering wheels of vehicles at the end of every day or anytime equipment operators change.

CONTACT

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HOW LONG DOES THE VIRUS LIVE ON SURFACES?

The coronavirus can live for hours to days on surfaces like countertops and doorknobs. How long it survives depends on the material from which the surface is made.

Metal

Examples: doorknobs, some handles; up to five days

Plastics

Examples: packaging like plastic buckets, oil jugs; two to three days

Stainless steel

Examples: refrigerators, sinks, some water bottles; two to three days

Researchers don't know whether exposure to heat, cold or sunlight affects how long it lives on surfaces.

Agriculture producers should be diligent in protecting themselves, employees and others from the spread of COVID-19. If you feel sick, the tendency in agriculture is to push through it—don't do that. Stay home and stay away from others. The common symptoms for COVID-19 are: fever (100.4), dry cough and shortness of breath. Call the doctor and tell them your symptoms before going to the emergency room or doctor's office.

Spring planting, fertilizing, spraying, haying or doing maintenance for the upcoming harvest season in a few short weeks is important to you and your business. It is imperative to protect your business by practicing social distancing, wearing PPE and having a disinfectant protocol. Do your part to protect yourself, your employees and ultimately your livelihood. As the business owner, remember it is as important to work on the business as it is to work in the business. It is important to realize the seriousness of this virus and make plans so your operation continues throughout the pandemic and does not have to shut down because of an outbreak among employees. The following links to the Centers, for Disease Control has guidelines to help you navigate the COVID-19 outbreak.

RESOURCES

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-small-business.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

For more information on protecting your business, family and employees contact your local OSU county Extension office or Jim Rhodes at jim.rhodes@okstate.edu