

WISCONSIN

GUIDANCE ON PREPARING WORKPLACES FOR COVID-19



AGRICULTURE



The agriculture industry contributes more than \$100 billion a year to Wisconsin's economy. From dairy products to ginseng, the diversity of Wisconsin's agriculture sector provides jobs on farms, in food processing facilities, and with service providers across the state. Beyond its economic impact, Wisconsin's agricultural tradition is essential to the state's cultural identity and the fabric of its rural communities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the food supply chain nationwide, putting further strain on the farm economy and threatening farmers' livelihoods. The closure of schools, restaurants and other institutional buyers has jeopardized key outlets for milk, cranberries and other agricultural products that are grown and raised in Wisconsin. Direct marketing channels, such as farmers' markets, have also been affected by social distancing measures. This has resulted in unpredictable demand for food products and, paradoxically, has led to food waste at the same time food insecurity is on the rise.

The following guidelines aim to help farmers safely continue operations as recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic begins. In addition, please see the "General Guidance for All Businesses" document for guidance that applies to all industries, and please consult the other available industry guides as relevant for your specific business type.

Guidance and Resources for Agriculture

General

Employee health and hygiene

- ▶ Employees who have a fever or other symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to work.
- ▶ Maintain an adequate supply of paper goods, soap and hand sanitizer to allow proper hand hygiene among employees.
- ▶ Provide tissues for proper cough/sneeze etiquette and no-touch disposal receptacles.
- ▶ [Wisconsin Emergency Order 25](#) states that at migrant labor camps, high-touch areas must be disinfected daily, per guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Handwashing stations or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol must be made available in cooking and eating facilities, sleeping facilities, and in the field or other farming/food operation centers.
- ▶ Provide training and supplies for employees for cleaning and disinfecting the workplace and employer-provided employee housing. Encourage employees to wear clean clothes at the start of their shift. Provide gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment as needed to work safely with cleaners and disinfectants.



PROTECT



WASH OFTEN



DISINFECT



CAUTION

Clean and sanitize

- ▶ Increase cleaning and sanitizing throughout the farm and workplace, including steering wheels, water jug spigots, and farm tools and equipment.
- ▶ Instruct employees to avoid sharing farm tools and equipment if possible. Consider providing a water source other than a common water cooler.
- ▶ Provide time for employees to wash their hands throughout the day.

Protective equipment and cloth face coverings

- ▶ [Wisconsin Emergency Order 25](#) tells migrant labor camp operators to make sanitized cloth face coverings available for workers to wear in the living areas of the camp.
- ▶ Instruct your employees how to properly put on and remove a facemask or cloth face covering. The [CDC](#) illustrates how to properly wear a face covering and has several tutorials for how to make one.
- ▶ The CDC recommends [wearing cloth face coverings](#) in public settings, especially in areas of community transmission. A cloth face covering does not protect the wearer from viruses, but it may prevent the spread of viruses from the wearer to other people. Face coverings are not PPE and are not appropriate where masks or respirators are required.
- ▶ Employees should wash their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds after putting on, touching or removing the mask.

Social distancing

- ▶ Ensure that employees are keeping at least six feet from other employees whenever possible, including in fields, orchards and packing houses, and when clocking in at the beginning of their shift.
- ▶ Staggering the start, break and lunch times of crews could also help to promote social distancing.
- ▶ During harvest, consider adjusting product flow to maintain inspection and sorting standards with fewer employees on the line.
- ▶ When traveling to different sites or to employer-provided employee housing, provide hand sanitizer in the vehicle and encourage employees to refrain from eating or drinking while in the vehicle.
- ▶ If there is employer-provided employee housing, assigning crews by housing unit can help limit exposure among employees and facilitate quarantining sick employees if necessary.
- ▶ Establish a location for receiving regular deliveries away from on-farm, high-traffic areas and housing.
- ▶ Whenever possible, reduce the number of customers at points of sale by staggering pickup times and designating different employees to handle cash than those that handle produce.



- ▶ Starting or expanding online sales with off-farm pickup or delivery options can help diversify revenue for farmers and limit exposure for employees.

Biosecurity

On-farm visitors

- ▶ Limit farm visitors to only those that are necessary to continue the operation, e.g. DATCP dairy sanitarians and other regulatory agents. Speak to advisors and service providers on the phone when possible.
- ▶ All deliveries to the farm should be logged and dropped off in a box or other location to limit person-to-person contact.



Contingency plans

- ▶ Develop a contingency plan that specifies how business operations will continue if employees are unable to work, and communicate that plan to a family member, employee or friend.
- ▶ Consider cross-training employees in backup positions and sharing resources with a neighboring farm if necessary.

Dairy farms

Cleaning and sanitizing

- ▶ Ensure employees always wear milking gloves and wash their hands after working in the milking parlor or other areas of the dairy.
- ▶ Encourage employees to take a shower after working in the dairy and wash work clothes before beginning a new shift.

Milk disposal

- ▶ Before disposing of milk or feeding unpasteurized milk to a dairy herd, review the appropriate regulations and guidelines, summarized on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) [COVID-19 Dairy website](#).

Herd health management and diet

- ▶ As it is necessary to undertake reducing expenses, ensure that these reductions do not adversely impact herd health and diet.
- ▶ Evaluate replacement animal inputs, review herd management procedures to ensure social distancing, and ensure that reducing milk production does not harm cows or threaten future production.

Resources

Wisconsin DATCP COVID-19 Toolkit:
[DATCP COVID-19 Resources Including COVID-19 Tool Kit](#)

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin COVID-19 Resources:
<https://wisconsinmilk.com/Dairy-Companies/covid-19>

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association COVID-19 Resources:
<https://www.wisconsincheesemakers.com/news/covid-19-resources>

California COVID-19 Agriculture Infection Prevention Fact Sheet:
<https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Coronavirus/COVID-19-Infection-Prevention-in-Agriculture.pdf>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Federal Rural Resource Guide:
https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA_COVID-19_Fed_Rural_Resource_Guide.pdf



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WISCONSIN'S REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS:

7 Rivers Alliance
Centergy
Madison Region
Economic Partnership
Milwaukee 7

Momentum West
Prosperity Southwest
Grow North
The New North
Visions Northwest

CHECKLIST GUIDE FOR REOPENING

Your Agricultural Business

After reading through the available guidance for your business sector at wedc.org/reopen-guidelines use this checklist to ensure that you have taken the necessary steps to open your business safely, protecting the health of your employees and customers. In addition to reviewing this checklist, be sure to consult your local health department, as some communities may have additional local regulations in place.

Policy Checklist

- Create a policy for identification and isolation of sick people, including employee self-monitoring, required reporting of illness, sick leave policies and isolating employees who become ill at work. Establish a strategy for on-site health screening upon entrance to the facility.
- Assess leave policies for quarantined/isolated workers and those caring for sick family members.
- Update employee policies. Recommend that employees wear face masks or cloth face coverings when social distancing is not feasible. Face coverings are not appropriate where masks or respirators are required. Face shields or goggles can be used by employees who must work together at distances closer than six feet.
- Connect employees to employee or community assistance resources such as the Wisconsin COVID-19 hotline (211) or COVID-19 Resilient Wisconsin dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19
- Create a customer service policy. To the extent possible, customers should wear face coverings when receiving services. Recommend customers bring their own face mask or covering, and also provide them for customers who don't bring their own. Considerations should be made for customers who are unable or unwilling to wear a mask or cloth face cover. Refuse service to any customer who arrives with symptoms.
- Create a response plan in the event that an employee has COVID-19 symptoms or is suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19. This should include criteria for impacted employees to return to work and guidance for identifying, communicating with and accommodating potentially exposed workers.

Communications Plan Checklist

- Establish an employee communications schedule and develop a training plan for employees with modules on social distancing, hygiene and sanitation best practices, what to do if they feel sick, proper use of PPE and cloth face coverings, and how to educate guests about the new policies and practices.
- Update website and social media with new policies and procedures. Inform customers of digital payment options, curbside and other no-contact options.
- Limit farm visitors to essential reasons and schedule these visits for times when fewer workers are present.
- Maintain adequate records of your guests, including names, telephone numbers and visit dates, to assist if contact tracing becomes necessary. Also maintain accurate work records of staff for contact tracing purposes.

Facility Plan Checklist

- Post signage about policy changes for customers and employees.
- Provide tissues and no-touch trash receptacles.
- Set up sanitizer or handwashing stations in convenient locations around the business. Provide disinfectant wipes in/near equipment requiring touch (e.g., steering wheels, water jug spigots, farm equipment).

- Eliminate unnecessary physical contact and increase space to at least six feet between employees.
- Consider providing a water source other than a common water cooler.
- Close common areas (kitchens, break rooms) or sanitize after each use. If open, modify seating so that employees cannot sit within six feet of one another.
- Minimize the need for employees to share equipment/tools by purchasing additional sets as needed. If sharing cannot be avoided, provide a means to sanitize the shared items after each use.
- Identify a low-traffic location for receiving deliveries or customer pickup.

Operations Plan Checklist

- Assign one or more staff members (ideally one per shift) to take the lead on cleaning and disinfecting. Review cleaning/disinfecting/sanitizing product labels to determine glove and other PPE requirements. Provide chemical hazard training to employees.
- Consider cross-training employees in backup positions, and make arrangements for sharing resources with a neighboring farm if necessary.
- Purchase face masks or cloth face coverings for customers and PPE for staff. Provide additional resources for employees to use in disinfecting employer-provided housing.
- Encourage employees to wear clean clothes at the start of shifts. Provide sanitized face coverings for workers to wear in employer-provided living areas. Encourage employees to take a shower after work and to wash their work clothes at the highest appropriate temperature setting and dry them thoroughly before the next shift.
- Purchase cleaning supplies appropriate to sanitize the type of surfaces and products found in your facility.
- Maintain accurate work records of employees for contact tracing purposes.
- Stagger work days and start times to the extent possible. Stagger breaks to minimize congestion and contact.
- Hold in-person meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces when possible.
- When traveling in vehicles, provide hand sanitizer and encourage employees to refrain from eating and drinking in the vehicle.
- For dairy farms, ensure that employees always wear milking gloves, and that they wash their hands after working in the milking parlor or other areas of the dairy. Ensure that reducing milk production does not harm cows or threaten future production.
- During harvest, adjust product flow to maintain inspection and sorting standards with fewer employees on the line.

Cleaning Schedule

Between Customers/Frequently

- Common areas (door handles, steering wheels)
- Shared equipment (farm equipment, water jugs, tools)
- Restrooms

Daily

- Counters, tables, workstations