

# 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.org/Dairy-Companies/covid-19>

Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association COVID-19 Resources:  
<https://www.wisconsincheesemakers.org/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](https://www.rd.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA_COVID-19_Fed_Rural_Resource_Guide.pdf)



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