



Produce Safety
ALLIANCE



Food Safety on Farms in Time of COVID-19



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Need Science-Based Information

- SARS-CoV-2 is not a foodborne virus but has created a disruption across the whole food system
- There are on-farm risks that need to be managed
 - Some differently than foodborne risks, some the same
- Prioritize most impactful actions
- Be aware changes to markets and labor may require growers to make changes to their operations
- Something new almost everyday...for everyone!
 - We are all learning!



Priority #1 : Social Distancing

- Social Distancing is Most Important!
 - SARS-CoV-2 is predominantly spread person to person
- Think about the entire farm and how to implement at least 6 ft of distance between people
- Review planting, harvest, packing
- May need to rethink work schedules
- May need to slow down belt speeds
- Other considerations and solutions





Social Distancing Challenges and Risk Reduction Options

- Sometimes social distancing is not always possible
 - Planting, packing, checking out customers (e.g., u-pick)
- Use barriers and practices to reduce risks
 - Require cloth face coverings for everyone
 - Plexiglass
 - Provide hand sanitizer, handwashing options
- Divide crews by family or housing
 - Group people who are socially together
 - Minimize risks of losing all labor groups





Updating Training

- Social distancing and cloth face coverings
 - At work and in the community
- Handwashing and hand sanitizer use
 - Reduce risks from fomites
 - Also good for food safety!
- Don't touch your face!
 - Very, very difficult for most people
 - Makes handwashing and hand sanitizer use that much more important!





Labor Impacts

- Hiring
 - Recruiting and keeping employees
 - Training with social distancing
- Housing
 - Managing farm provided housing
 - Educating employees about reducing risks while in the community and at their own homes
- Transportation
 - Managing on-farm transportation
 - Thinking about employee transportation to the farm





Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting Oh My!

- Pre-COVID-19 still a need to help growers understand difference between cleaning and sanitizing
- COVID-19 created many questions about how and when to disinfect
 - EPA N-List of disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Stick with current cleaning and sanitizing SOPs unless reason to believe COVID-19 on the farm
- Increase C/S of commonly touched surfaces
 - May use disinfecting for these areas





Cleaning, Sanitizing, Disinfecting Resources

- Many new resources but still lots of questions
- **Always Be Cleaning & Sanitizing + Understanding Disinfection Webinar – L Johnston, C Simmons, E Rogers, C Gunter, NCSU**
 - <https://ncfreshproducesafety.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/04/always-be-cleaning-sanitizing-understanding-disinfection-webinar/>
- **A Guide to Cleaning, Sanitizing, and Disinfecting for Produce Farms – C Callahan, UVM**
 - <https://blog.uvm.edu/cwcallah/2020/03/30/clean-sanitize-disinfect/>
- **Setting the Record Straight on Cleaning, Sanitizing and Disinfecting in the COVID-19 Era and Beyond – R Petran, Ecolab**
 - <https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/resources/educators-group/>



Commodity Movement Impacts

- Disruptions
 - Distribution issues, market channel issues
 - Too much shopping, not enough shopping, not the right size containers (institutional vs individual)
 - Need for crop destruction
- Modifications
 - Moving from wholesale to direct market
 - Exploring new collaborations; Joint CSA
 - Giving it away

Changes may mean modification of prevention practices



Foodborne Concerns Still Exist

- Foodborne pathogens still exist and pose risks
- Important to keep food safety practices in place
- Need to keep and perhaps expand market access
 - Meet buyer requirements; Develop new markets
- Audit extensions
 - USDA extended expiration dates (60 days from 5/31/20)





Actions for Growers to Consider

- **Communication**
 - Always important; Critical Now!
 - Lots of misinformation, need to convey risks, policies, and plans to employees, customers, and consumers
- **Update farm food safety plan**
 - COVID-19 is not foodborne, but since food safety plan has relevant policies and SOPs, easiest to add/modify
- **Training, Training, Training**
 - New policies and plans require training
 - Changing information requires training





Additional Resources

- **Best Management Practices for U-Pick Farms During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/farm-resilience/best-management-practices-for-u-pick-farms-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

- **NCSU COVID-19 Food Safety Resources**

<https://foodsafety.ces.ncsu.edu/covid-19-resources/>

- **Institute for Food Safety at Cornell University**

<https://instituteforfoodsafety.cornell.edu/coronavirus-covid-19/food-industry-resources/>

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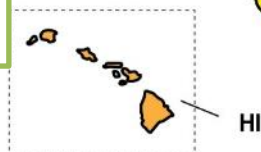
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The PSA Website

<http://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/>


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WELCOME TO THE PRODUCE SAFETY ALLIANCE WEBSITE!



Providing fundamental, science-based, on-farm food safety knowledge to fresh fruit and vegetable farmers, packers, regulatory personnel and others interested in the safety of fresh produce.



Water Summit Meeting
The Produce Safety Alliance hosted a Water Summit on February 27-28, 2018 at the



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