

Slowing the Spread of COVID-19: Guidance for Farms Offering Pick-Your-Own Produce
UPDATED October 13, 2020

As our nation works diligently to slow the spread of COVID-19, access to fruits and vegetables is vital to ensure a safe and steady food supply. **Farms that allow customers to pick their own produce must do their part to protect the health of customers and employees.**

This is *not* business as usual. It is critical that all participants in agribusiness activities follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines to minimize risk of infection, and commit to the [Tennessee Pledge](#) to help Tennesseans return to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods, and reboot our state's economy.

Following consultation with Governor Bill Lee's Economic Recovery Group, the Tennessee Department of Agriculture makes the following recommendations to farms offering pick-your-own produce during this health emergency:

- Any person showing signs of illness or who had recent contact with a sick person should stay home. Consider the use of [COVID-19 symptom](#) screening questions and/or signage.
- Implement cleaning and disinfection practices according to [CDC recommendations](#), with frequent disinfection of shared/common or high-touch surfaces.
- Do not allow people to congregate. Restrict access to common areas. Employees and customers should maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.
- No matter if indoors or outside, [CDC recommends](#) wearing cloth face coverings in settings where social distancing is difficult to maintain. Note that children under age two should NOT wear cloth face coverings because of the danger of suffocation.
- Schedule appointments to limit the number of customers on site at one time.
- Provide handwashing or sanitizing stations and require customers to disinfect their hands prior to picking.
- Only allow adults, teens, and children to pick with adult supervision.
- Ask customers to only touch items they intend to purchase.
- Sell pre-weighed packaged items to limit food handling.
- Eliminate samples, eating areas, and on-farm activities until advisable to resume.
- Offer online or phone ordering, as well as curbside, pickup, and/or delivery service to minimize contact.

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- For indoor spaces that customers access, limit capacity in or at a venue at a given time. While no specific capacity percentage is being required or recommended, take into account critical factors such as venue capacity and physical characteristics, type of activity involved, and location (indoor vs. outdoor) to properly assess risk and exercise good faith judgment in maintaining appropriate social distancing for each unique situation. Large gatherings offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- For indoor spaces that customers access, employees should wear cloth face coverings and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC.
- Use plastic barriers between customers and employees at service counters and regularly disinfect the barriers.
- Have separate employees handle products and money. Employees should use hand sanitizer after every transaction.
- Adjust store hours to allow time for enhanced cleaning.
- Limit employees on site to essential people only.
- Adjust work schedules to limit the number of employees on site at one time. When possible, stagger arrival and departure times, breaks, and meals to promote appropriate distancing.
- Upon reporting to work, ask employees:
 - Have you been in close contact with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- Employees should not be allowed to work if they answer “yes” to any of the above questions or their temperature exceeds 100.4 Fahrenheit. Check employees’ temperature with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival or have persons self-check temperatures before reporting to work.
- Direct any employees who show signs of illness to leave the premises immediately and to contact their doctor.
- Upon reporting to work, require employees to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Encourage frequent handwashing throughout the day, especially after using the bathroom and before eating. If soap and water are not readily available, provide a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
- **Communicate and enforce new policies with employees and the public.**

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Every agribusiness should institute a response plan to maintain business operations, follow CDC recommendations to protect their employees and customers, and comply with local, state, and federal directives. The CDC has more information for businesses and employees [online](#).

These recommendations do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your operations pursuant to law or regulation. These guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safe operations during the COVID-19 pandemic and are subject to change.

The Tennessee Department of Agriculture is committed to providing the services you count on while also following CDC guidelines to safeguard the health of our staff and citizens. Access the latest information on Tennessee's response to COVID-19 [online](#) and follow @TNAgriculture on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for updates.

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