

COVID-19

Best Practices for Community Supported Agriculture Farms



COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Best Practices for Farms

The following are best practices to help farmers keep their workforce healthy, their food products safe, and to protect their businesses as much as possible during this COVID-19 outbreak. Farmers are encouraged to continue these best practices and integrate them into their farm hygiene and sanitation systems to ensure their on-farm health and hygiene standards remain at a high level into the future.

COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that are common in humans and many different species of animals.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) is transmitted through two routes: respiratory droplets generated when an infected person exhales, coughs or sneezes, and contact with any surface where droplets containing the virus could land.

Currently there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19 ([U.S. Department of Agriculture](#)).

Preparedness

1. Purchase cleaning and sanitation supplies now and make sure to keep an up-to-date inventory of products and equipment to support your hygiene practices. You don't want to run out of supplies.
2. Develop schedules for cleaning and sanitation. Designate one employee to supervise and reinforce all hygiene related activities.
3. Develop Standard Operating Procedures for cleaning and sanitizing both non-food contact surfaces and food contact surfaces.
4. Post signage reminding employees about zero-tolerance ill-worker policies and personal hygiene requirements.

Food handling

Reduce the amount of contact consumers have with your food products and handling areas:

1. Have employees use disposable gloves for all produce bagging and boxing.
2. Pre-bag produce and pre-box CSA shares. Ensure that all food contact surfaces, such as tables and bins, have been cleaned and sanitized at least daily.
3. Avoid allowing CSA customers to bring their own packaging to pick up their shares; rather provide containers such as plastic bags for them to transport their food to their vehicles.
4. If you offer add-on shares of other products, request that those producers also pre-package their items so you can easily add those products into the appropriate boxes.

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KEY TAKE-AWAYS FOR FARMERS:

- Improve your farm's hygiene and sanitation programs by making them more frequent and in-depth. Keep high-touch surfaces clean and sanitized (see [cleaning and sanitation](#)).
- Have ill employees stay at home (see [farm worker health and hygiene](#)).
- Reduce numbers of customers at points of sale at any one time to maintain social distancing (see [customer management and communications](#)).
- Stay informed and responsive by checking updates on the [CDC](#), [CDPHE](#), and your [local public health](#) websites.

Customer communication and management

Communicate clearly, often and in multiple ways:

1. Let your customers know that you have stringent hygiene practices in place (post information on your website and in newsletters, as well as at your CSA pickup site(s)).
2. Use directional signage and cordon off pick up areas so your customers can clearly understand how to access their shares.
3. Reduce crowding at your point of sale areas by:
 - Clearly designating a pick-up and check out/payment area.
 - Restricting visitor/customer access areas.
 - Extending sales hours to allow you to spread out customer access with less crowding.
 - Delineating areas to help customers and farm staff maintain social distancing of 6 feet between individuals.
4. Increase frequency of cleaning and sanitizing around areas that customers access. Twice per day may be a desirable frequency.
5. Post signage reminding customers who are ill, or who believe themselves to be ill, to avoid from coming to your pick-up site for public health and safety.
6. Post signage for vendors and delivery services that warns them not to enter if they are sick or not feeling well, have recently traveled outside of the US, or may have come into contact with someone with COVID-19. Here is example [signage](#) recommended by the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment that you can adapt to your operation.

