

COVID-19

Best Practices for Tools, Equipment & Facilities



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](https://www.usda.gov/press-releases/2020/03/20200319)).

1. Develop more frequent schedules for cleaning and sanitation.
2. Designate one employee to supervise and reinforce all hygiene related activities.
3. For surfaces that will be in contact with food or food products (such as produce bins, coolers, boxes, tools), use detergents and sanitizing solutions that are food safe:
 - Clean the surface with a detergent (for example, Dawn dish detergent) and rinse thoroughly.
 - Use a sanitizer product that is approved for use on food contact surfaces (<https://producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/sites/producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/PSA-Labeled-Sanitizers-for-Produce.xlsx>).
 - This list provides information on sanitizers that will be effective on non-porous surfaces. Wood and cardboard are porous surfaces, as are pitted or damaged hard surfaces. You will not be able to adequately sanitize a porous or damaged surface.
4. To clean and sanitize surfaces that will not come into contact with food or food products (such as chairs, tables, truck beds):
 - Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.
 - Clean the surface with a detergent (for example, Dawn dish detergent) and rinse thoroughly.
 - Use a product that the EPA has approved for use against viruses and other emerging pathogens, including coronaviruses: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf.

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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.
- Have ill employees stay at home.
- Keep high-touch surfaces clean and sanitized.
- Reduce numbers of customers at points of sale at any one time.
- Stay informed and responsive by checking updates on the [CDC](#), [CDPHE](#), and your [local public health websites](#).

5. Follow the label instructions for the sanitizer you use when mixing, applying and storing it. For example,
 - Note whether the product must be diluted or whether it is ready-to-use (RTU).
 - All EPA listed sanitizers require contact time on the surface to be effective (from several seconds to 10 minutes, depending on the specific product).
 - Some sanitizers require a rinse step, and some must either air-dry or be wiped dry.
6. Use appropriate personal protective equipment with all sanitizing agents. Sanitizers are considered agricultural pesticides.
7. Develop Standard Operating Procedures for employees to use for cleaning and sanitizing both non-food contact surfaces and food contact surfaces.
8. Regularly clean and sanitize employee break areas and all surfaces that employees touch (door knobs, handles, keyboards, touch screens). See CDC recommendations [here](#).

