



Ohio Corn & Wheat and National Corn Growers Association

COVID-19 On Farm Planning and Procedures

Ohio Corn & Wheat and NCGA are committed to keeping you informed and passing along best practices as we move through the COVID-19 outbreak in the U.S..

Preparations for Spring planting means activity levels are increasing on the farm for things like field preparations and on-farm deliveries. Limiting interactions and exposure is a good idea to limit exposure and risk related to COVID-19 (novel coronavirus). It is critical to practice biosecurity for your family, your employees, the public, and animals. Please read the procedures and planning recommendations developed by NCGA below.

On-Farm Safety Procedures

- Minimize the exposure of outsiders. Use telephone, emails or texts for communications with employees or contractors who do not reside on the farm. Observe appropriate social distancing if someone needs to visit the farm or work on site.
- Increase sanitation of workspaces and make it part of your daily/weekly routine. Simple things like disinfecting work surfaces, counter tops, computer keyboards, doorknobs, hand railings, tractor controls, and monitors can make a difference.
- Make cleaning supplies readily available, including cleaning solutions, buckets, mops, brushes, etc. for cleaning break areas and the shop readily available. Place disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer on equipment and in truck cabs and in high traffic areas.
- Stay in the house if you're sick. Farmers and their employees regularly work while sick. This is a time to break that tradition. If employees are sick, tell them to stay home, and if the family is sick, they should isolate themselves as much as possible and not visit work areas.
- Monitor personal travel with a personal travel log.
- If you feel the need to provide a letter for family and employees carry with them to prove they are performing out an essential activity (farming), you can download a draft letter from Ohio Corn & Wheat.
- Provide guidance for hand washing and handling materials. Make sure guidance is available and communicated to employees.
- If you have off-farm employees or seasonal help alert them, all sick employees must stay at home.
- If your operation has a significant number of employees, encourage them to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.
- Alert employees where they can find sanitizing materials in the shop, or in the truck or farm equipment.
- Regularly sanitize contact surfaces. Disinfect all door handles and knobs, floor mats, steering wheels and other commonly contacted surfaces. Regularly sanitize common gathering places – shops, lunch areas, office spaces.

Receiving Deliveries

- Identify and coordinate a drop-off location for supplier deliveries to the farm. If possible, set this up away from on-farm high traffic areas and housing.
- Create specific instructions for drop-off deliveries.
- Provide the location and all procedures needed at the drop-off point.
- Create signage to easily identify drop-off points.
- List all point of contacts with contact information to assist with questions leading up to delivery and upon arrival.
- Practice distancing with delivery drivers. In these circumstances, it is best not to greet them with a handshake. Instead, keep a recommended distance of at least six feet.
- Avoiding personal interaction is best.
- Log all deliveries and on-farm entries.
- Utilize a visitor's log for everyone entering the farm.



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On-Farm Planning

According to a recent survey of farmers, 70 percent have no formal back-up plan should a key member of the family farming operation become ill with COVID-19. This doesn't mean farmers aren't thinking about the issue, but in most cases, it has not resulted in a plan of action.

Granted, most farms continue to be family-run operations with minimal employees and or seasonal help, so much of the advice currently being shared with businesses may not apply. However, there are some basic things you can do and should consider.

- Schedule a brainstorming meeting with all family and employees involved in the operation to discuss possible scenarios, solutions to potential disruptions during planting and subsequent fieldwork.
- Develop a written contingency plan and make sure everyone has a copy. Are there neighboring farmers who might be able to share resources and or labor in an emergency? Who will manage for a few weeks if you or another key person is unable to leave your house or are hospitalized?
- Make a list of immediate changes that can be implemented that can lower risk on your farm.
- Prepare an on-farm workforce, including your family members.
- Consider cross-training of family members and employees regarding key functions and appropriate safe operation of equipment.
- It is recommended that all farms have Continuity of Business (COB) plans, to keep operations running smoothly in case of any disruption. Many state departments of agriculture are recommending farms review and update, or write, a continuity of business plan in case of disruption due to COVID-19. COB plans are critical for all operations; however, small farms may be at greater risk if a disruption occurs because the owner may be the sole caretaker.
- It is important to have written documentation of your business operations in case of illness so that another family member or neighbor can assist if you need to be isolated or treated due to COVID-19. Regardless of operation size, production practices, or type of operations, you are strongly encouraged to develop COB plans in case of illness or injury and communicate the plan to family or another person who can step in.