



## Safety Protocols For Food Distribution & Purchases During COVID-19 March 2020

Food producers and food distribution centers,

We ask all food businesses that choose to remain open to review and adjust standard operating procedures to minimize risk for the benefit of farmers and customers alike. Please review the safety protocols below and enact them to the best of your ability. We also encourage you to stay tuned to your local health departments and the CDC for updates as things are changing rapidly.

This document provides guidelines for:

- On-Farm Pickups & CSAs
- Farmers Markets
- Employee Safety

***Disclaimer: this guide is a reference for direct local food sales; it is not a fully comprehensive formal list and cannot be enforced by authority. Each individual is responsible for what level of risk they are willing to take and what decision(s) are made regarding their own food purchases.***

### On-Farm Pickups & CSAs

1. Find a spot on your property that is far away from your house and the line of traffic to designate as your pick-up spot.
2. Provide the location and all procedures needed at the drop-off point to your customers.
3. Place signage on your farm communicating to customers your hours of operation and important safety rules and procedures.
4. Have clean hands and wear long sleeved shirts when dealing with the public.
  1. If you decide to wear gloves, be sure to wash your hands before and after use.
  2. If your gloves have touched something that could carry the coronavirus pathogen, either wash or change your gloves.
5. Do not allow customers to touch anything other than what you hand them.
  1. Place a 6-foot table in front of you so that customers don't automatically touch anything.
  2. Make sure the table has no table cloth on it so that it can be easily sterilized.
  3. Consider creating prepackaged boxes that families can pick up and go with, streamlining the process.

6. Have one person handle money and one person the items being sold. If you're a one-person show, only accept exact cash, check, or credit card.
  1. **Some suggestions:** have a cash box ppl can place their money in.
  2. If you run a credit card through Square, enter the number in manually on your phone, don't touch the card; AND, take out the step to need a signature for the purchase or get customer's approval to sign on their behalf so that only one person is touching your phone, you.
7. Aim to have no more than 10 ppl on your property at a time, but if there are more people, still use the following precautions:
  1. In the pick-up/drop-off area, put something in your driveway to demonstrate the 6 feet distance customers should keep between themselves, you can create this example marker of distance using chalk, spray paint, etc (the goal is to ensure customers separate themselves appropriately).
8. Wash & sanitize all equipment between uses.
  1. Recipe for how to make sanitizer yourself [here](#).
9. Promise to have someone else work for you (or your farm hands) if/when sick.
10. Implement safety procedures for all farm employees (see below).

## **Farmers Markets**

Farmers markets are asked to enact the following modifications for the safety of both farmers and customers:

### Market Managers, Volunteers, & Customers

- Market managers & volunteers should only allow 50 people at a time to shop at market.
- Volunteers will ensure customers are staggered to provide for appropriate social distancing according to CDC guidance - 6 feet between people at all times.
- Market manager will help during set-up to ensure there's appropriate spacing between produce stands to support social distancing and/or provide drive-through pick up.
- Market managers are to recommend there be at least two employees at every vendor stand, one person taking the money and one person getting the customers' products. The person handling the money should wear gloves and should change their gloves if/when they touch anything other than money. If you're a one-person show, only accept exact cash, check, or credit cards. (See suggestions above in Vendor section.)
- Ensure the availability of an adequate number of handwashing stations.
- Market Manager & volunteers will help put up signs and information to explain changes to customers (i.e. Please Don't Touch; Keep 6-foot distance; etc.)
- No sampling or tastings allowed at market for the time being, sorry!
- Customers are encouraged to wear gloves to market and are asked to not come if they are sick (ask someone else to shop for you).

### Farmers Market Vendors

- Don't allow customers to touch products on your table.
- Consider placing a 6-foot table in front and your food/products behind you. Ask your customers what they want and then you get it for them. This way only one person is touching your products, you.

- Try to have two people at your stand, one person taking the money and one person getting the customers' products. The person handling the money should wear gloves and should change their gloves if/when they touch anything other than the money. If you're a one-person show, only accept exact cash, check, or credit cards.
  - **Some suggestions:** Have a cash box people can place their money in by themselves; make your prices round numbers so you don't have to deal w/ coins.
  - If you run a credit card through Square, enter the number in manually on your phone, don't touch the card. AND take out the step to need a signature for the purchase or get customer's approval to sign on their behalf so that only one person is touching your phone, you.
  - Consider creating prepackaged boxes customers can pick up and go with.
- Have clean hands and wear long sleeved shirts when dealing with the public.
  - If you decide to wear gloves, be sure to wash your hands before and after use.
  - If your gloves have touched something that could carry the coronavirus pathogen, either wash or change your gloves.
- No sampling or tastings allowed at market for the time being, sorry!
- Please don't come to market if you're sick, ask someone else to attend on your behalf.

See here the document "[Implementing Safety Protocols at the Farmers' Market: Lessons Learned](#)" to see lessons learned from a farmers market that implemented these protocols.

The table below provides a contrast between Farmers Markets that apply the modified conditions outlined above and most grocery stores.

Farmers Markets	Grocery Stores
Open Air	Indoor
Stalls can be spread out to support social distancing	Aisle width cannot be changed
Market Managers can enforce 6' distancing	Limited control over numbers admitted
Customers will not directly handle the produce	Customers pick through and handle produce
Food conveyed in clean bags	Customers use their hands to place goods on check-out conveyor belt which is not frequently cleaned
Separation of money handling from food handling	Check-out cashier handles both money and food
No hand to hand contact with the food handler	Customer may contact cashier, who also handles the food, when paying

We believe that if farms and farmers markets abide by these standards they will be safe places for customers to get the healthy, nutritious foods they need.

## **Employee Safety**

Some of the information for this section came from the Cornell Ag Workforce website, which you can visit [here](#).

1. **Employ strategies to practice social distancing and find virtual ways to communicate with your farm staff.** Start a group text with employees to give direction, reports from shift to shift, create a Facebook group, or implement three-way calling. Consider utilizing teleconference and web conferencing services for longer discussions. *Do not hold face-to-face staff meetings.*
2. **Provide cleaning supplies to your employees,** including disinfectant, disinfectant wipes, buckets, mops, etc. Review safety procedures for handling these products. Frequently used sinks may run out of towels and soap more frequently. Keep them stocked.
3. **Coming on/off farm.** Workers should have a way to clean the bottoms of their shoes. Same with work vehicles.
4. **Create plans if employees or managers become sick.** If an employee would become sick, communicate health issues with all employees still coming to the farm. If a manager becomes sick, remotely assign temporary management responsibilities to another employee or consider asking an outside manager to step in.
5. **Adhere to CDC social distancing guidelines in all interaction with employees and consultants** and postpone group meetings and non-essential face-to-face meetings. Avoid work shift overlaps and instead use whiteboards, chat groups on cell phones, and other written forms to communicate on the farm to transfer information and instruction.
  - a. Do not use common markers and erasers, and disinfect shared computer keyboards and mouse before and after each use.
  - b. Make sure to disinfect commonly used door handles, light switches, tools, etc.
6. **Cross-train employees for critical jobs** using virtual communication. Determine which tasks must continue on current schedule, which ones can be reduced, and which tasks can be discontinued until they are practical to start again.
7. **Prepare “Worker Travel Letters”** to have on hand and provide to employees in case “Shelter In Place” restrictions are put in place. Providing these letters to your employees to have with them as they travel back and forth to work is critical. Copy and paste onto your farm letterhead.
8. **Have clean hands and wear long sleeved shirts when dealing with the public.**
  - a. If you decide to wear gloves, be sure to wash your hands before and after use.
  - b. If your gloves have touched something that could carry the coronavirus pathogen, either wash or change your gloves.
9. **Cell phones should be treated like a third hand.** Make sure they are left at home or are constantly sanitized.