

HANDLING COVID-19

BEST PRACTICES FOR AGRIBUSINESS

COVID-19 is spread primarily via close person-to-person contact, or when virus-containing droplets expelled during coughing or talking contaminate a surface that is later touched by a healthy individual. While most feed and supply stores continue to operate during disease outbreaks and other emergencies, preventive steps can be taken to protect the health of employees and customers.

CHANGING OPERATIONS

- Implement a rigorous cleaning and disinfecting program for frequently touched surfaces. Surfaces need to first be cleaned with soap/detergent and water, then disinfected following instructions on the manufacturers' label.
 - CDC recommends use of disinfectants on the EPA list found at: go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19 (Note: list is based on current data; compounds have not been validated for inactivation of the virus causing COVID-19)
 - A bleach solution of 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water may be used to disinfect surfaces.
- Limit one employee inside shared vehicles at a time and instruct employees to disinfect frequently touched surfaces when exiting and entering.
- One employee should fulfill orders or load trucks at a time to minimize contact with other workers.
- Cloth face coverings should be worn by employees while working.

PROTECTING CUSTOMERS

- Provide hand sanitizer and encourage all customers to use it upon arrival. Cloth coverings should be encouraged for customer use, based on local guidance.
- Limit the number of customers allowed inside at a time. Enforce a reasonable maximum time limit inside the store.
- Make sure customers, both inside and out, remain 6 feet away from each other.
- Alternatively, close the store to customers and take phone or online orders only. Have delivery or pick-up protocols in place that limit employee-customer contact, and inform customers of these protocols when they call to place an order. Encourage customers to remain in their cars during pick up.

During the pandemic, close interaction and socializing should be discouraged for the protection of the community.

- For frequently purchased or seasonal items, like flowers, spring vegetables, and fertilizers, consider moving displays outside of the building to allow customers to make selections while maintaining a safe distance from each other. Inform customers that items inside the store can be retrieved by an employee upon request.
- Consider posting a list of high-demand items and prices on a sign outside of your business. Include a phone number so customers can call and place orders without entering the store.
- Use card transactions or electronic transfer when possible. Paper money cannot be sanitized and may be handled by multiple people throughout the day. Make sure employees wash or sanitize their hands after completing transactions.

EMPLOYEE HEALTH

- Educate employees on COVID-19 transmission, how to reduce spread (hand washing, disinfecting surfaces, maintaining distance from others, etc.), and your sick leave policy. Sick employees must be instructed to stay home.
- Businesses should follow CDC and FDA guidance for screening employees who have been exposed to COVID-19.
 - Pre-screen employees for symptoms or fever before starting work.
 - Employees with fever and symptoms should be advised to see a doctor for evaluation and should be deferred to Human Resources for next steps.
- More information regarding COVID-19 and preparing your business can be found at go.ncsu.edu/oshacovid-19

