

Phase I guidelines for farms and on-farm deliveries

The RI Department of Environmental Management in conjunction with the RI Department of Health issues this guidance to all Farms and for On-Farm Deliveries in order that these businesses may operate in compliance with the protocols in this guidance.

I. Protocols and guidance

The Rhode Island Division of Agriculture has put forth the following guidance to limit exposure and risk related to Corona Virus Disease 2019. It is critical to practice biosecurity for the safety of animals and the public. It is now critical to also consider ways to limit person-to-person contact and congregate in settings of no more than 5 people while maintaining social distance. The DEM Division of Agriculture staff will work closely with all Farms to inform, educate and enforce these protocols. DEM will collaborate with the RI Department of Health and local law enforcement to make random inspections operations to ensure that operation complies with this Guidance. It is essential for the following protocols to be effective that all relevant businesses in Rhode Island adhere to the same standards regardless of membership affiliation, business structure or size.

The specific, required protocols include:

COVID-19 Planning & Procedures

1. Identify a drop-off location for regular deliveries away from on-farm high traffic areas and housing.
 - Drop-boxes are recommended to be placed near the road, before on-farm entry.
 - If a drop-box is unavailable, designate a drop-off location on-site.
 - Deliveries of food should be handled and located to maintain temperature control, if needed, and prevent food from adulteration.
2. 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 to not greet them with a handshake. Instead, keep a recommended distance of at least six feet. Avoiding personal interaction is best.
3. Log all deliveries and on-farm entries.
 - Utilize a visitor's log for everyone entering the farm.
 - Monitor personal travel with a personal travel log.

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4. Prepare on-farm workforce.
 - Maintain social distancing space of at least six feet from one another.
 - Farm employees must wear a cloth face covering.
 - Provide guidance for handwashing and handling materials. Make sure guidance is available and communicated to employees in their native languages.
 - Stagger lunch times or provide additional space to increase distancing of employees.
 - All sick employees must stay at home.
 - Inform employees where they can find handwashing facilities and sanitizing materials throughout on-farm contact points.
 - Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.
5. Sanitize contact surfaces.
 - Disinfect all door handles and knobs, floor mats, steering wheels and other commonly contacted surfaces.
 - Sanitize common gathering places – lobbies, office spaces, lunchrooms, locker facilities, etc.

II. Continuity of Business (COB) Planning

It is recommended that all farms have Continuity of Business (COB) plans, to keep operations running smoothly in case of any disruption. RI Division of Agriculture recommends all 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 (who is not quarantined) 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, RI Division of Agriculture strongly encourages all farms to develop COB plans in case of illness or injury and communicate the plan to family or another person who can step in, just as you would a will and associated directives.

General Farm ID

- Fields and acres under control of farm (including rented property)
- Contacts sheet
- Key suppliers to the farm
- Key markets for farm products (including key contacts and relationships to marketers, auctions, etc.)
- Next of kin or trusted person to be in charge should head of farm become incapacitated (make this a 3-deep list in case two or more are lost)

Crop-based COB based on enterprise

- Planned crop rotation by field
- Soil tests and soil health records (nutrient management plan)
- Planned IPM program (including pesticide records/license/storage, weed control)
- Key workers for seasonal work (harvest)
- Equipment location for both owned and leased equipment
- Plan for leased or custom help to the farm (harvesters, etc.)

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Animal based COB based on enterprise

- Carrying capacity of fields for grazing and field rotation plan
- Barn layouts and functions
- Animal inventory and age. Major services by age for each enterprise (e.g. hoof trimming, vaccinations)
- Breeding records location (computer, gestation wheel, etc.) and plans
- Location of AI materials or contract with AI and other animal services
- Health records location and veterinary relationship record (including vet contacts)
- Feeding and nutrition records, feeding plan by age group and life stage
- Processing and hygiene programs and supplies
- Biosecurity plan / visitor plans for farm
- Key workers including part time who work on farm. Relief milkers with contacts

III. Preparedness for deliveries

On-Farm Delivery guidance should be followed by all essential businesses that provide deliveries throughout the supply chain.

Planning & Procedures

1. Contact the location prior to delivery.
 - Ask for drop-off point and delivery instructions.
 - Create a contact list for each delivery site.
 - For reoccurring deliveries, confirm drop-off locations in case they have been relocated.
 - Confirm there is signage on the property to identify the drop-off location.
 - If needed, notify the on-farm contact once the delivery is completed.
 - Deliveries of food should be handled and located to maintain temperature control, if needed, and prevent food from adulteration.
2. Log all deliveries and on-farm entries.
 - Monitor personal travel with a personal travel log.
 - Confirm deliveries by taking a photo of completed on-site drop-off.
3. Sanitize before and after every delivery.
 - Disinfect all footwear, floor mats, steering wheel, door handles, etc.
 - Wear and discard disposable gloves at each drop-off location.
 - Carry additional sanitation materials for on-site delivery.
 - Wipe down any drop-box and drop-off location contact points.
 - Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds when available. If water and soap are not available, use hand sanitizer containing at least 70% alcohol.
4. Avoid on-farm contact.
 - Practice distancing with farmers and farm workers. In these circumstances, it is best to not greet others with a handshake. Instead, keep a recommended distance of at least six feet. Avoiding personal interaction is best.

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5. Park away from housing & high on-farm traffic areas.
 - Drop-boxes assist in eliminating vehicles from entering high-traffic and housing areas. When these are not available, scope the property and avoid parking near high traffic areas whenever possible.

IV. Contact

Please contact Ananda Fraser, Produce Safety Program Coordinator, at (401) 222-2781 or via email at Ananda.Fraser@dem.ri.gov with any questions.

You may also sign up for the Produce Safety Program [newsletter](#) to receive regular updates on COVID-19 and other important events, resources, and other updates from the RI Division of Agriculture.

