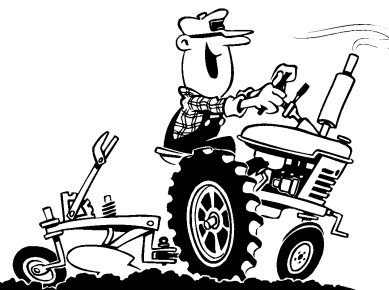


# Cultivating Cumberland

April - 2020 VOL. 25, ISSUE 4

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## COVID-19 Closure Information

Please be aware that while the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Office of Cumberland County may be closed, you can still reach your County Agents! We are working remotely to assist you. Office calls are being forwarded to each department. Call (856) 451-2800

Updates about our office can be found on

<https://cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu/> and [www.co.cumberland.nj.us](http://www.co.cumberland.nj.us)

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Department	Contact	Email
Commercial Agriculture	Wesley Kline	wkline@njaes.rutgers.edu
Environmental	Sal Mangiafico	mangiafico@njaes.rutgers.edu
Nursery Production	Tim Waller	twaller@njaes.rutgers.edu

Event/Program	Status
RCE Office Activities	Cancelled with a tentative date of 05/31/2020
NJDEP Pesticide Exams	Cancelled through 06/10/2020 More details at <a href="http://pcpnj.org">pcpnj.org</a> Rutgers will send available exam dates to applicants with cancelled exams after the restrictions are lifted.
NJDEP Agricultural Water Use Certifications	NJDEP is still processing applications. Contact a county agent for more information on processing your water usage reports.
NJPMA Pesticide Credit Classes	Webinar Classes Available More details on page 6
USDA specialty crops inspections and audits	60-Day extension on certifications expiring on or before 05/31/2020
Master Gardener Pesticide Credit Classes	Cancelled. Pesticide Credits are not available for online classes.

## **Farms Are Considered Essential During the Virus Outbreak**

Wes Kline

There have been questions about farms and whether they will be closed down. NO! The agricultural industry is considered essential by the state and federal governments. Also, agricultural workers are considered essential. Your workers should not have an issue going into work. What you need to do is train your workers on proper hand washing and try to give as much space between workers as possible. Remember, 6 feet between individuals should be maintained where practical. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture has the latest information from the state at <https://www.nj.gov/agriculture/>.

Our website, <https://onfarmfoodsafety.rutgers.edu/> has a series of factsheets and articles related to agriculture. This website is updated regularly so check it often to see what is new.

### **Remember:**

- Agricultural operations are considered essential.
- Farmer's markets are specifically exempt from being closed in the executive order.
- Nurseries and greenhouses can operate.

### **What should an operation do to protect their workers and themselves?**

1. Repeated handwashing for 20 seconds. This means as soon as people report to work, when they take breaks, when they use bathroom facilities, etc. This is not a time to make fun of handwashing, promote it! Hand sanitizers can be used if hands are not soiled. The better option is to wash hands then apply hand sanitizer. The sanitizer should be at least 60% alcohol.
2. If you have more than one crew, keep them separate. Have them work separately, take breaks separately and eat separately. Do not mix a crew once they are working together. If in a packinghouse, clean and sanitize all equipment between each crew.
3. Clean and sanitize break and eating areas before being occupied and before each time they are used.
4. Space everyone 6 feet apart or as far as possible. This is difficult if a crew is riding a transplanter but do the best you can.
5. If workers wear gloves, they must be single use and replaced frequently.
6. What about masks? Cloth masks are acceptable, but they should be laundered daily. If masks are purchased, they should be replaced at least daily and more frequently if dirty.
7. Should worker's temperatures be taken at the beginning of the day? No, this is not recommended unless medical personnel carry out the operation. You need to know what the reading means, that the correct thermometer was used, etc.

**Farm owners and supervisors must do the same thing that you expect your workers to do.**

Your Company  
Logo Here

**Employee Travel Related to Critical Infrastructure**

1. Presidential Policy Directive 21 (PPD-21) designates the food and agriculture sector as a critical infrastructure sector whose assets, systems, and networks are considered so vital that their incapacitation or destruction would have a debilitating effect on security, national economic security, national public health, or safety.
2. The President's Coronavirus Guidance published on March 16, 2020 instructs employees of Critical Infrastructure Industries, such as the food and agriculture sector, to maintain normal work patterns during the global coronavirus outbreak.
3. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA) published guidance on March 19, 2020 identifying food and agriculture employees as critical infrastructure workers essential to the continued viability of this sector who should maintain normal work patterns pursuant to the President's Coronavirus Guidance.
4. This document certifies that the individual bearing this document is an employee of, and traveling to or from work in, a food or agriculture facility that has been designated as critical infrastructure, the continued operation of which is vital for security, national economic security, national public health, and safety.
5. Accordingly, it is appropriate in light of the President's Coronavirus Guidance to allow this critical infrastructure sector employee to proceed in the federal interests of protecting the nation's food supply chain, notwithstanding local restrictions such as curfews, shelter-in-place orders, and other similar restrictions on travel.

Certified by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Food company representative]

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Employee Name]



## **USDA extends harmonized GAP assistance program in 16 States**

### **AMS' Specialty Crops Inspection Division**

Tel: (202) 720-5021

Email: [scaudits@usda.gov](mailto:scaudits@usda.gov)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has extended the USDA Harmonized Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Assistance Program to remain available to eligible producers until all allocated funds are depleted. The program helps fruit and vegetable growers in 16 states enhance market access by defraying the costs of user fees for voluntary audits.

Under the assistance program, USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) will continue to provide Agricultural Management Assistance funds to cover up to 100% of the cost of Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits for farmers in 16 states authorized by Congress to receive financial assistance for conservation and financial risk mitigation. The authorized states are Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

Produce buyers often require third-party food safety certifications from growers. USDA Harmonized GAP audits, provided by the USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risk of food safety hazards.

## **New Jersey Pest Management Association Cancellations**

We will be cancelling all pesticide training classes (Core, 7A, 7B, 8B, 3A,3B, 13) next week and holding all other classes in abeyance until further notice. We are monitoring this situation week by week since this is the peak time for pesticide applicators to take our classes. In addition, we are exploring alternate dates on Saturday and evenings to accommodate the demand on a timely and convenient basis when deemed appropriate. We are also working to have online classes should the current health issues continue.

You can direct all inquiries to us (800-524-9942) or encourage callers to check our website at [www.njpma.com](http://www.njpma.com).

We are still hoping we can resume holding the classes by early April.

Leonard Douglan

Executive Director

P.O. Box 24, Livingston, NJ 07039

973-994-2331 \* Fax: 973-992-5823

[len@njpma.com](mailto:len@njpma.com)





# HANDLING COVID-19 PRODUCE FARMS AND PACKINGHOUSES

While there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is a food safety concern, it is a worker health concern as it spreads via close person-to-person contact or by contact with contaminated surfaces. Food does not appear to be a likely cause of COVID-19 transmission, but many of the same practices used to prevent foodborne illness on foods should still be used to reduce the likelihood of COVID-19 contamination on fresh produce and the risk of COVID-19 spread among farm and packinghouse workers.

## COMMUNICATION TO WORKERS

- Educate workers on COVID-19 symptoms, how it spreads, and how to reduce the spread of the disease. Instruct workers to stay home if they are sick (coughing, sore throat, fever, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.).
- Some employees may need reassurance that they will not be punished for missing work due to illness, while others may be unwilling to miss a paycheck due to illness. Have a plan and communicate in advance for how you will address these individuals (paid sick leave, etc.)
- All employees must wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, frequently throughout the day. This includes when they arrive to work, before handling food, after breaks/using the restroom etc.

## DISINFECTING EQUIPMENT, TOOLS AND SURFACES

- Cleaning and disinfecting are two separate steps and should be done in order. Cleaning removes dirt and soil and often requires the use of a soap/detergent and water. Disinfecting uses a chemical to inactivate virus the surface.
- Shared tools should be cleaned and disinfected between uses by a different employee.
  - CDC is recommending use of disinfectants on the EPA list found at: [go.ncsu.edu/epacovid-19](https://www.epa.gov/epaospr/epa-registered-disinfectants)
    - Note: this list is based on current data, but compounds have not been validated for inactivation of the virus causing COVID-19
  - Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but the concentration is higher for COVID-19 than for everyday sanitation: 5 tablespoons bleach per gallon of water
- Clean harvest baskets, bags, aprons, knives, etc. after each use. Wash fabrics with a detergent in hot water, and apply a disinfectant to nonporous surfaces. See CDC guidelines on laundry [go.ncsu.edu/cdclaundry](https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/s0515-laundry-cleaning.html).
- Disinfect frequently touched surfaces, including door handles, steering wheels, keyboards, touch screens, etc. throughout the day.

During COVID-19 or any other outbreak situation, increase routine cleaning and disinfecting frequency in order to protect the health of workers. Disinfecting routines also need to include administrative offices, field trucks and break areas that not generally included in day-to-day cleaning.



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Stay informed:  
[go.ncsu.edu/covid-19](https://go.ncsu.edu/covid-19)

Updated March 26, 2020



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# HANDLING COVID-19 PRODUCE FARMS AND PACKINGHOUSES

## HYGIENE AND PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Hand sanitizing stations should supplement but not replace handwashing. Consider having sanitizer available for harvest or packing crews.
- Discourage employees from sharing phones, tools, utensils, vehicles, etc.
- Single-use gloves should be provided to all workers handling food and should be changed when contaminated (e.g. when hands touch skin or the ground). When gloves may interfere with a worker's ability to do their assigned task (e.g. harvesting, applying stickers, etc.), handwashing or hand sanitizer should occur frequently.
- Some workers may prefer to wear masks while working in close proximity with others. Masks should be allowed but not required, and workers should be instructed on how to wear them properly to prevent illness or injury.

## DISTANCING AND COHORTING

- Instruct workers to keep 6 feet away each other. Limit one employee per vehicle at a time, and instruct drivers to disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the vehicle before their shift ends.
- When physical distancing is not an option, consider dividing workers into cohorts that only work with members within that cohort for the duration of the outbreak.
  - For example, divide your packing crew into two groups that only show up for their groups designated shift. Have the first shift clean and sanitize their works areas and equipment at the end of their shift, and give a buffer of 15 to 30 minutes between the end of the first shift and beginning of the next shift to ensure employees are not in contact with each other during shift changes.
- Smaller operations may want to consider having designated harvest and packing crews, the members of which never cross paths during the work day. Employees in the same household should be assigned to the same crew or cohort. Cohorting reduces the risk of losing your entire workforce, such as may happen if an employee that works at the same time as all of your other employees tests positive for COVID-19.

## MONITORING EMPLOYEE TEMPERATURES

**Consult with your attorney before you start a program monitoring employee temperatures. Depending on your state, taking employee temperatures may be a HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) violation. Additionally, the act of taking employee temperatures may increase the likelihood of disease spread if thermometers or personal protective equipment are not used or sanitized properly between employees.**



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
EXTENSION

Stay informed:  
[go.ncsu.edu/covid-19](https://go.ncsu.edu/covid-19)

Updated March 26, 2020



NC STATE  
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## Calendar of Important Events

- ✓ Indicates a newly added event since the last calendar
- Online Class

✓ **April 7, 8, or 9, 2020**

● **Basic Pesticide Training;** This online webinar will provide the candidate applicator or operator with the training required to take the exam. Register online at <https://njpma.com/classes/basic-pesticide-training-course-core-certification/>

✓ **April 20-22, 2020**

● **HACCP Plan Development for Food Processors;** Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education; Discover the basic concepts of HACCP and how to develop a plan for your company in this online course. For more information or to sign up visit [cpe.rutgers.edu/food](http://cpe.rutgers.edu/food)

✓ **June 4-5, 2020**

**Practical Food Microbiology;** Rutgers Office of Continuing Professional Education; Having a solid understanding of pathogens and how they threaten food products protects companies and employees from liability. Learn how to best manage and control the risks posed by these organisms. For more information or to sign up visit [cpe.rutgers.edu/food](http://cpe.rutgers.edu/food)

✓ **August 8, 2020**

**The Dandy-Line Dance & Dinner;** Merighi's Savory Inn; 6 PM—10 PM; \$65 register online at [vinelandchamber.org](http://vinelandchamber.org) or call 856-691-7400

**REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETINGS**

✓ Indicates meeting will be held at RCE of Cumberland County

Extension Education Bldg., 291 Morton Ave, Rosenhayn, NJ (Between Carmel and Rosenhayn)

<p>✓</p> <p><b>Cumberland County Pesticide Certification Exam Schedule</b></p> <p>RCE of Cumberland County 291 Morton Avenue Millville, NJ 08332 (Between Rosenhayn &amp; Carmel)</p>	<p><b>Cumberland County Agriculture Development Board</b></p> <p>County Administration Bldg. Freeholder Room 164 W. Broad Street Bridgeton, NJ 08332</p>	<p>✓</p> <p><b>Cumberland County Board Of Agriculture</b></p> <p>RCE of Cumberland County 291 Morton Avenue Millville, NJ 08332 (Between Rosenhayn &amp; Carmel)</p>
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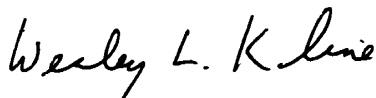
**Meeting dates to be determined once COVID-19 restrictions are lifted.**

<p><b>To Register call 609-984-6614</b></p> <p><b>For information call 856-451-2800</b></p>	<p><b>Reg. Meetings start at 7 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>For information call 856-453-2211</b></p>	<p><b>Meetings start at 7 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>For information call Lew DePietro,</b> <b>President at 856-981-9843</b></p>
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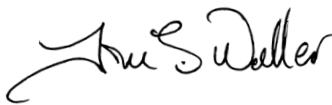
**The program in Cumberland County is suspended until further notice.**

**Cumberland County Improvement Authority (CCIA)**  
**Pesticide Container Recycling**  
**9:00 a.m. to 12 Noon**  
 Cumberland County Solid Waste Complex  
 169 Jesse's Bridge Rd. (located off Route 55 Exit 29)  
 Deerfield Township, New Jersey  
 Questions? Call Division of Ag & Natural Resources, NJ Dept. of Ag 609-292-2242

Sincerely,



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Environmental and Resource Mgt. Agent  
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**Pesticide User Responsibility:** Use pesticides safely and follow instructions on labels. The user is responsible for the proper use of pesticides, residues on crops, storage and disposal, as well as damages caused by drift.

**Use of Trade Names:** Trade names are used in this publication with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. In some instances the compound may be sold under different trade names, which may vary as to label.

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Have you visited the Cumberland County website for the  
Present and/or past issues of "Cultivating Cumberland"? It's a great  
resource for information and dates...  
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu/>

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Public Notification and Non-discrimination Statement

Rutgers Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity program provider and employer. Contact your local Extension Office for information regarding special needs or accommodations. Contact the State Extension Director's Office if you have concerns related to discrimination, 848-932-3584.

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