

April 14, 2020

Guidelines for Agriculture Producers that Employ Migrant (H2A) Farm Workers during the COVID-19 Outbreak

H2A workers are starting to arrive in many Kentucky counties. These workers are vital to the success of farming for many of our producers in the State. Travel during the COVID-19 outbreak has been limited based due to recent executive orders issued by Governor Beshear. The most recent being April 2nd stating that non-residents entering the state are mandated to self-quarantine for 14 days after entering Kentucky. This executive order applies to all migrant agricultural workers (H2A) entering the state. Farmers employing these migrant workers need to consider whether they want to expose both their employees, their families, and themselves to potential disease.

Agricultural employers that hire migrant workers, need to take the following precautions:

- Ensure that the workers are quarantined on the farm for 14 days from their arrival date; this means they cannot leave the farm for 14 days unless for an emergency.
- Make arrangements to provide food, cloth masks (not surgical grade), and sanitation supplies to workers upon their arrival. Masks should be worn by only one individual and cleaned or replaced every day. Workers should never share masks. Hand washing with hot water and soap is preferred to hand sanitizer when possible.
- Provide guidance for social distancing and sanitization of frequently used tools and surfaces. Social distancing should be a minimum of 6 feet but a greater distance is more preferable. The CDC has several educational materials on these matters in both English and Spanish at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>.
- Evaluate workers daily for symptoms of respiratory illness, which includes fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If a worker exhibits any of these symptoms, they should not work and should be housed in a separate room with a separate bathroom from people who are not exhibiting symptoms.
- Assist workers in seeking medical care if they are sick.
- Contact local health officials if a worker tests positive for COVID-19, or if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive. If a worker has come in contact with a person testing positive for COVID-19, they should not work and be self-quarantined for 14 days. Farm workers should not return home without consultation with a local health official.

This an unprecedented time for Kentucky agriculture and it is going to require the cooperation of all to keep everyone safe yet still be productive and provide agriculture products throughout the growing season and into the Fall. Please make every effort to protect yourself, your families, and employees. Kentucky Cooperative Extension and your County agents are there to provide any assistance you required.

Stay safe and healthy.