



COVID-19 Guidance: Agricultural Auctions & Markets

Includes: Livestock and poultry auctions and markets, produce auctions, hay and feed auctions, equine auctions, and agriculture supply and equipment auctions.

Agricultural auctions and markets selling food and agricultural products are considered life sustaining businesses during the mitigation phase of COVID-19 detection in Pennsylvania. While these businesses are allowed to operate, they must take steps to protect employees, customers, and the general public from exposure and spread of COVID-19.

Special consideration is required to protect not only customers, but also to protect the workers needed to run and operate life-sustaining businesses. Therefore, Governor Tom Wolf and Department of Health Secretary, Dr. Levine, have issued an [order](#) directing protections for critical workers who are employed at businesses that are authorized to maintain in-person operations during the COVID-19 disaster emergency. This Order shall take effect immediately and be enforceable as of 8:00 p.m. on April 19, 2020.

Management of agriculture auctions and markets must implement the following cleaning, social distancing, and COVID-19 transmission mitigation protocols:

Facility Safety Measures

Cleaning, disinfecting, and other maintenance and security services performed by facility service employees are critical to protecting public health and reducing spread of COVID-19.

(1) In addition to maintaining pre-existing cleaning protocols established in the facility, as specified (in paragraph 2) below, clean and disinfect high-touch areas routinely [in accordance with CDC guidelines](#):

How to Clean and Disinfect:

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

- Clean dirty surfaces using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Disinfect all door handles, knobs and gates latches, floor mats, steering wheels, equipment controls and other commonly contacted surfaces.
- Disinfect all common gathering places – seating and arm rests in salesring, lobbies, office spaces, lunch rooms, locker facilities, etc.

- Use an [EPA-approved](#) disinfectant against COVID-19
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for concentration, application method and contact time, etc.
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
 - Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Soft (Porous) Surfaces (include office spaces)

- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. If the items can be laundered after cleaning, follow laundry guidance below. Otherwise, use [EPA Approved Products](#) that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Electronics

- For electronics such as tablets, touch screens, keyboards, and remote controls, remove visible contamination if present.
 - Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.
 - Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.
 - If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Clothing and other items that can be laundered

- In order to minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air, *do not shake dirty laundry.*
- Wash items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Hand Hygiene

- The risk of exposure to cleaning staff is inherently low. Provide cleaning staff with disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
 - Gloves and gowns should be:
 - Compatible with the disinfectant products being used.

- Removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area
- Gloves should be removed after cleaning a room or area occupied by ill persons
 - Advise staff to clean hands often by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty, wash with soap and water. Clean hands:
 - After removing gloves
 - After handling dirty laundry
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After contact with animals or pets
 - Before and after providing routine care for another person who needs assistance such as a child
- Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products being used and whether there is a risk of splash.
- If gowns are not available, coveralls, aprons or work uniforms can be worn during cleaning and disinfecting. Reusable (washable) clothing should be laundered afterwards (see above).
- Inform cleaning staff to immediately report breaches in PPE such as a tear in gloves or any other potential exposures to their supervisor.
- Follow normal preventive actions while at work and home, including cleaning hands and avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

(2) Establish cleaning and disinfection protocols for execution *upon discovery that person(s) suspected/confirmed to have COVID-19 have been in the auction or market facility:*

- a) Timing and location of cleaning and disinfection of surfaces:
 - Close off areas visited by the ill persons. Open outside doors and windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation in the area. Wait 24 hours, or as long as practical, before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
 - Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment like tablets, touch screens, keyboards and remote controls used by the ill persons, focusing especially on frequently touched surfaces.
- b) Identify employees who were in close contact (within about 6 feet for about 10 minutes) with a person with a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19 during the 48 hours period before symptom onset to the time at which the patient isolated;
 - If the employee(s) remains asymptomatic, the person should follow the CDC, April 8, 2020 [Interim Guidance for Implementing Safety Practice for Critical Infrastructure](#)

[Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19;](#)

- If the employee becomes sick during the workday, the person should be sent home immediately.
 - The employee's workspace surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected.
 - Determine who had contact with the ill employee during the time the employee had symptoms and during the 48 hours prior to symptoms—employees at the workplace with close contact (within 6 feet) of the employee during this time would be considered exposed.
 - Notify employees who were in close contact with a suspected or confirmed infected person while maintaining confidentiality of ill employee.
 - Ensure that the facility has enough employees to perform the above protocols effectively and in a timely manner.
- c) Implement temperature screening of each employee prior to start of each shift or workday. Send any employee showing signs of elevated temperature or fever of 100.4 °F home. Practice social distancing while employees are standing in lines for temperature screening.
- d) Employees must report any signs of COVID-19 symptoms (shortness of breath, fever, aches) to their supervisors.
- e) Sick employees should follow CDC recommendations: [What to Do if You Are Sick](#). Employees should not return to work until CDC criteria to discontinue home isolation are met in consultation with healthcare providers, state and local health departments. Consider liberal attendance policies and paid time off and/or incentivizing attendance of healthy employees.

(3) Stagger work start and stop times for employees when practicable to prevent gatherings of large groups entering or leaving the premises at the same time.

(4) Provide ample space for employees to have breaks and meals while maintaining a social distance of 6 feet. Arranging seating to prevent employees from facing each other in eating and break settings.

(5) Stagger employee break times to reduce the number of employees on break at any given time so that appropriate social distancing of at least 6 feet may be followed.

(6) Limit persons in employee common areas (such as locker or break rooms, dining facilities, training or conference rooms) at any one time to the number of employees that can maintain a social distance of 6 feet.

(7) Conduct meetings and trainings virtually (i.e., by phone or through the internet). If a meeting must be held in person, limit the meeting to the fewest number of employees possible, not to exceed 10 employees at one time, and maintain a social distance of 6 feet.

(8) Provide employees access to regular handwashing with soap, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes and ensure that common areas (including but not limited to break rooms,

locker rooms, dining facilities, rest rooms, conference or training rooms) are cleaned on a regular basis, including between any shifts.

(9) Provide masks for employees and make it a mandatory requirement to wear masks while on the work site, except to the extent an employee is using break time to eat or drink,

Mask Utilization

Cloth face coverings must be worn by all employees during work hours and:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

Inexpensive cloth face coverings from common materials can be made at home.

Instructions for making masks with sew and no-sew methods, proper removal, and cleaning of masks are provided on the Centers for Disease Control website:

- [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders.

(10) Ensure that the facility has enough employees to perform all measures listed effectively and in a manner that ensures the safety of the public and employees.

(11) Ensure that the facility has enough personnel to control access, maintain order, and enforce social distancing of at least 6 feet.

(12) Prohibit non-essential visitors from entering the premises of the business.

(13) Ensure that all employees are made aware of these required procedures by communicating them, either orally or in writing, in their native or preferred language, as well as in English or by a methodology that allows them to understand.

(14) Post signage at facility entrances, restricting access to only those who are healthy to protect the well-being of employees and attendees. No one should enter if they have a fever, respiratory illness or chronic medical condition.

(15) Allow only known buyers into the markets to discourage people entering to browse.

(16) For auctions with bidders writing their bids, encourage bidders to use their own pens or pencils. Otherwise, sanitize pens or pencils routinely or have an auction employee write down information for bidders.

(17) Provide hand sanitizer stations at bottlenecks where attendees must contact surfaces or are more likely to interact with each other.

(18) At auctions, restrict entrance to a sales ring and livestock/poultry areas to employees and bidders with visible bidder cards. If a bidder card not visible, access should be denied.

(19) Maintain a daily log of all buyers, consignors, and employees who were on the premises for epidemiologic purposes, in case an attendee should contract COVID-19.

(20) Encourage social distancing - six feet should be maintained between people at all times, for all employees, buyers, and consignors.

(21) Consignors should unload products and return home unless purchasing products- consignors should be required to register and get bidder card to enter the sales ring or barn.

(22) Refrain from selling food or drinks or only provide food through take out or pick up.

(23) Eliminate indoor or outdoor eating areas to discourage congregation.

(24) Prepare your employees before sales by providing guidance for handwashing and safe handling of materials. Make sure guidance is available and communicated to employees in their native languages. Encourage employees to avoid large gatherings and practice social distancing during non-work hours.

Animal producers and dealers and haulers should review and follow the [COVID-19 On-Farm and On- Farm Delivery guidance](#) to limit risk when bringing animals or products from the farm/ storage facility to the market and back. Farmers, haulers, auctions and markets should continue to practice biosecurity to ensure the safety of the animals, public health and the food supply.

A secure and safe food supply begins with each of us and in this time of heightened risk, it is of paramount importance that we all do everything in our power to protect our health and well-being as well as animal health.