



North Country Ag Advisor

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
North Country Regional Ag Team

CCE North Country Regional Ag Team

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Our Mission

"The North Country Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically and environmentally sustainable management practices, and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."

North Country Ag Advisor

Cornell Cooperative Extension of
Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin,
Clinton, and Essex Counties

"The North Country Regional Ag Team is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex counties."

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Update - Regional Ag Team Operations during COVID-19

By Kitty O'Neil

To our North Country farmers, ag businesses, partners, and friends,

Our CCE North Country Regional Ag Team has adapted to COVID-19 social distancing and NYS workplace mandates by equipping ourselves to work at or near normal levels from our home offices. We remain open during normal business hours for communications and requests, and are committed to you, and the whole of our agricultural industry. We will continue to do our best to be your agricultural information resource during this extremely challenging time.

Our primary goal is to remain healthy, avoid spreading the virus among our communities, and help achieve the most rapid and successful return to our normal business practices.

- Staff remain available to you by phone, email, text, web conference, and, only if essential and agreeable, a pre-arranged farm or field visit. It is likely that we will use remote methods to help us troubleshoot problems. Person-to-person contact will be avoided to reduce risk of contracting and spreading the virus. We may ask for photos or other electronic records to help provide recommendations and guidance remotely. We can accomplish a lot using these means! Our mobile phone numbers and email addresses are listed at the end of this document.
- Cornell Cooperative Extension county offices in the North Country and across the state are now closed to the public following NYS workplace mandates. Please call to communicate needs or requests. County CCE office phone numbers are listed at the end of this document.
- In-person meetings and group programs are **cancelled indefinitely**. Please visit our website at <https://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu> for additional updates on programming or call any of our mobile phone numbers, listed below, with questions. It is likely that any programs and trainings offered in the near future will be provided using an online program called "Zoom" which is free to download and use. Simply follow the link: <https://zoom.us/> and click "sign up" or download the app from the app store. Detailed connection information will be provided for each individual program.
- Newsletters, bulletins, updates, and other means of informational programming will continue as normal, but will be electronic versions. At this time we have little or no access to printers/copiers for mailings or hard copy communications. For the next several weeks, we are prioritizing the use of video, audio, and written materials, shared and accessed electronically, to provide information on animal and crop management, production, marketing, and other relevant topics. All of the information being developed will be uploaded to our website as it becomes available.

We will continue to send updated information electronically to inform you and your farm staff about resources that will help navigate the impact of COVID-19 on your farm and business.

This is an unprecedented situation for all of us, and no one is fully sure of what the next hours, days, and weeks will bring. We are modifying our policies and approaches on an ongoing basis. Please call us with suggestions, requests, and comments or just to talk. Farmers are some of the most resilient and ingenious people on the planet, and we strive to serve the NNY ag industry as best we can during this time.

Thank you for growing our food, and thanks for your continued support of Cornell Cooperative Extension. Please be safe!

Need information? View the following Cornell CALS and CCE Resource Pages (updated regularly) on the next page

Continued on Page 4

Current COVID-19 response information:

General Questions and Links:

<https://eden.cce.cornell.edu/>

Employment & Agricultural Workforce Questions:

<http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/>

Cornell Small Farms Resiliency Resources:

<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/farm-resilience/>

Food Production, Processing & Safety Questions:

<https://instituteforfoodsafety.cornell.edu/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Financial & Mental Health Resources for Farmers:

<https://www.nyfarmnet.org/>

Cornell Farmworker Program

www.farmworker.cornell.edu

www.trabajadores.cornell.edu (en Español)

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CCE Clinton County

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Field Crops and Soils

Report Seedcorn Maggot and Wireworm Damage: We Need Your Input

By Mike Hunter

Given the recent controversy surrounding the proposed legislative bans on some pesticides in NY, Cornell researchers and extension specialists are working to provide necessary data on the efficacy, usefulness, and perceived need for these products in our agricultural systems. To do this, we need your help with identifying, documenting, and quantifying losses to early season pests, such as seedcorn maggot and wireworm in your corn and soybean fields.

A collaborative effort between the NYS Integrated Pest Management program and Cornell Cooperative Extension Field Crop Specialists will begin in 2020, with the goal of monitoring for and documenting losses to pests that the neonic seed treatments are intended to protect against. Given the sporadic distribution of damage caused by seedcorn maggot and wireworm, it can be challenging to quantify losses to these pests in research plots alone. Therefore, we need assistance from farmers, crop consultants, agribusiness associates, and crop insurance claim adjusters to report fields with damage from these pests across NY State.

Your valuable input would require nothing more than a phone call or email to your local Field Crops Extension Specialist to report the specific location of damage soon after planting, while pests are still active and can be confirmed (by V2 stage). The Extension Specialist will then visit the field to confirm pest activity, and may conduct plant stand counts to estimate potential yield losses. Location and farm identity will remain anonymous, as we are only interested in quantifying losses across NYS, not where they occur.

Claims on the value (or lack thereof) of these insecticide seed treatments in NY field crop production cannot be validated or quantified without this sort of data, and we can't obtain this statewide data without your assistance. Therefore, whether you grow corn for silage or grain (or even sweet corn), soybean or dry beans, conventionally or organically, we need to hear from you! Please refer to the following list of Specialists to contact in your region to report damage from seedcorn maggot or wireworm in your fields this spring:

Mike Stanyard (CCE NWNy) – mjs88@cornell.edu, 585-764-8452

Jodi Putman (CCE NWNy) – jll347@cornell.edu, 585-991-5437

Jaime Cummings (statewide, NYS IPM) – jc2246@cornell.edu, 607-255-1747

Josh Putman (CCE SWNy) – jap473@cornell.edu, 716-490-5572

Janice Degni (CCE SCNy) – jgd3@cornell.edu, 607-391-2660, x414

Ron Kuck (CCE Cayuga Co.) – rak76@cornell.edu, 315-255-1183, x242

Jeff Miller (CCE Oneida Co.) – jim14@cornell.edu, 315-736-3394, x120

Kevin Ganoe (CCE CNY) – khg2@cornell.edu, 315-866-7920, x230

Aaron Gabriel (CCE ENY) – adg12@cornell.edu, 518-380-1496

Ken Wise (ENY, NYS IPM) – klw24@cornell.edu, 845-677-8223

Christian Malsatzki (CCE SENY) – cpm78@cornell.edu, 845-340-3990

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Elson Shields (Cornell Field Crops Entomologist) – es28@cornell.edu, 607-255-8428

Liquid Lime – Square Deal or Snake Oil?

By Kitty O'Neil, Mike Hunter, and Quirine Ketterings (Professor, Cornell CALS)

It seems like every year or two, we at CCE get a flurry of phone calls about “liquid lime” being advertised to farmers. These farmers are right to research those materials and collect additional information because many times, those products turn out to be materials that have no impact on soil pH, and there are legal ramifications for the companies promoting them as such in NYS. The product being promoted to many farms via Craigslist this winter turned out to be calcium chloride, which has no neutralizing value and no impact on pH. It wasn't “liquid lime” at all, but more like a calcium fertilizer. Sometimes, salespersons are careful to keep specific pH claims out of their literature, only offering testimonials and making pH and liming claims verbally. That can be a clue that more inquiry is needed. This article provides context about liming materials and what questions to ask when considering a ‘liquid lime’ product.

Lime is an important agricultural commodity and is relied upon by farms and gardeners for raising low soil pH. Soil pH is simply a measurement of H^+ ions in soil solution. Maintaining soil pH in the proper range for intended crops is one of the most important parts of soil fertility management because soil pH affects nutrient cycling, soil microbial activity, and soil structure - and therefore impacts crop productivity. Most, but not all, NYS and NNY soils or crops need somewhat regular lime applications when H^+ concentrations increase too much. Specific lime recommendations are calculated from soil pH and buffer pH, which is a measure of how easily that specific soil's pH is changed, and also on tillage depth and future planned crops. The optimum pH for most crops falls between 5.5 and 7.0 and between 6.0 and 7.0 for field crops.

Sale of liming materials in NYS is regulated by NYS Ag & Markets to inform and protect farms from wasteful, misleading purchases. NYS law defines agricultural liming materials as “all materials and all calcium and magnesium products in the oxide, hydrate, carbonate, or silicate form or combinations thereof and intended for use in the correction of soil acidity, including such forms of material designated as burned lime, hydrated lime, carbonate of lime, agricultural limestone, slag, and marl.” Any material other than oxide, hydrate, carbonate, or silicate forms of Ca and Mg may not be sold as ‘lime’ in NYS because it does not raise soil pH. Many people mistakenly think it's the Ca or Mg in lime materials that neutralize acidity and raise pH, but this is not true. Rather, the oxide, hydroxide, carbonate, or silicate part of the compound removes the H^+ ions from solutions thereby raising the soil pH. Further, all liming materials permitted for sale in NYS must be tested and their relative liming value disclosed to customers, so that farms know exactly what they're getting and can compare one material to another regarding relative effectiveness. Ag & Markets requires that all liming materials permitted to be sold in NYS be certified with a minimum set of specifications including total neutralizing value, the Ca and Mg content, effective neutralizing value (ENV), and fineness. Look for this information with any liming agent you're considering purchasing.

Simply put, agricultural lime is any product whose Ca and Mg compounds will neutralize acidity. Common materials are listed in Table 1 (page 7). These materials remove H^+ ions from soil solution in a two-step reaction. First, the materials react with water and CO_2 in the soil to form Ca, and/or Mg and bicarbonate ions. The Ca and Mg ions swap places with H^+ sticking to soil particles so H^+ is released into soil water. Second, the bicarbonate ions react with the H^+ to form CO_2 and neutral compounds, like water and aluminum hydroxide. Through these two steps, liming materials remove H^+ from soil through their bicarbonate ion formation. Any material that cannot form a bicarbonate ion cannot remove H^+ and will not raise soil pH. Table 1 also lists two such materials that are often mistakenly assumed to be liming agents: gypsum and calcium chloride ($CaCl_2$). Gypsum is a good source of Ca or S for field crops, but it does not affect soil pH. $CaCl_2$ is discussed further on page 7.



Picture 1. Soil sampling a rye cover crop field in St. Lawrence County in Fall 2015. Photo credit: K. O'Neil.

Continued on to next page....

Table 1. Common liming materials and two materials with no liming ability. Calcium carbonate equivalent estimates assume 100% purity and fine particle size.			
Chemical Name	Common Name	Chemical Formula	Calcium Carbonate Equivalent
Calcium oxide	Lime, Burned lime, Quick lime	CaO	179
Calcium hydroxide	Hydrated lime, slaked lime	Ca(OH) ₂	136
Calcium carbonate	Calcitic limestone	CaCO ₃	100
Ca and Mg carbonates	Dolomitic limestone	CaMg(CO ₃) ₂	109
Calcium sulfate	Gypsum	CaSO ₄	<i>NONE</i>
Calcium chloride		CaCl ₂	<i>NONE</i>

What about “liquid lime” agents? Some are very good liming agents while others have zero impact on soil pH. There are a few true liquid lime products that contain the oxides, hydroxides, carbonates, or silicates of Ca and/or Mg needed to neutralize soil acidity. These liming agents will raise soil pH as advertised, but do some calculations to see if they are cost-effective for your farm. The oxides, hydroxides, carbonates, or silicates of Ca and Mg in these liquid products are not water soluble, but they are suspended in solution with the aid of very fine clay particles to keep them from settling out of solution. These liquids will appear cloudy as a result. These true and effective liquid lime products are often about 50-70% high quality lime and 30-50% water by weight. One such product has an ENV of 64%, so if your soil test calls for 1 ton per acre of lime (100% ENV), you would need 1.6 tons of that liquid lime product. These true liquid lime materials are subject to all the same NYS laws regarding licensure, testing, and labelling, so ENV information can be used to see if it is cost-effective compared with ordinary liming materials.

Calcium chloride (CaCl₂) is listed in Table 1 above because this is the material that was promoted as a soil pH treatment, a liming agent, across NYS as recently as this winter. The CaCl₂ salesman claimed “liquid calcium presents growers with an alternative to lime applications” and “calcium neutralizes soil acidity” and provided hundreds of apparent testimonials to that effect. These claims of pH correction are FALSE. CaCl₂ is quite soluble in water and is easily dissolved into solution, but, like gypsum, it does not contain the oxides, hydroxides, carbonates, or silicates needed to remove H⁺ ions from soil solution. Further, care must be taken to avoid chloride toxicity at high application rates.

When considering a “liquid lime”, or any other liming agent, read the label to be sure that the material is actually an oxide, hydroxide, carbonate, or silicate form of Ca or Mg. The CaCl₂ being marketed to growers in NYS is not “liquid lime” and has no liming ability. While CaCl₂ can be marketed in NYS as a Ca fertilizer, it will provide plant-available Ca to the soil, but Ca deficiencies are not common in field crops grown in NYS when pH is managed correctly. If you do need additional Ca or Mg fertility according to your soil test, calcitic or dolomitic lime is a very good source and is often the most cost-effective option. Be an informed consumer when comparing liming materials and always apply lime to your soil test.

Additional resources:

1. Ketterings, Q., et al. 2006. [Lime Recommendations for Field Crops](#), Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program, Factsheet #6.
2. Carey, P., et al. 2006. [Liming Materials](#), Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program, Factsheet #7.
3. Ketterings, Q., et al. 2006. [Lime Guidelines for Field Crops in New York](#), Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program, CSS E06-2.
4. Article 9-A: [Sale of Agricultural Liming Materials](#). NYS Consolidated Laws.
5. NYS [Licensed Sellers of Agricultural Liming Materials](#) (updated 26 April 2019).

Vitamin and Mineral Focus - Magnesium

By Casey Havekes

Magnesium is a mineral that is necessary for every major metabolic pathway and plays a large role in nerve conduction, muscle function, and bone formation. Perhaps the most commonly talked about role of magnesium in the diet is its involvement in the prevention of milk fever. A positive relationship between magnesium and calcium levels exists and is necessary for proper functioning of cardiac and skeletal muscles, and nervous systems signal transmission. However, there is also a negative interaction between magnesium and potassium which directly impacts calcium metabolism. High potassium dry cow diets are linked to high milk fever rates because potassium can inhibit magnesium absorption. It is also important to consider the role that magnesium has on parathyroid hormone (PTH) regulation – which again, plays a critical role in calcium metabolism. Magnesium deficiencies can make the body less receptive to PTH which consequently results in lower blood calcium levels. Magnesium, in its soluble form, is largely absorbed by the rumen epithelium. This means that the absorption of magnesium is independent of hormonal processes (unlike calcium which is regulated by PTH) and is directly related by intake. Avoiding magnesium deficiencies is an important strategy for minimizing the risk of milk fever on farm. Magnesium deficiency can be related to low magnesium content of forages – which can be prevented by fertilizing the soils if needed. Generally speaking, legumes contain more magnesium than grasses and cool weather (spring and fall) can reduce the uptake of magnesium by plant tissues resulting in lower magnesium levels in the feed. Remember, because magnesium absorption is directly dependent on feed intake, pay close attention to magnesium levels in dry cow diets especially as cows approach calving and their intake naturally declines. The NRC recommends feeding diets no higher than 0.4% magnesium, although no adverse effects are seen (other than a potential decline in intake) if diets are higher because the cow will just excrete the excess. If diets do exceed 0.4%, pay attention to intakes and if you notice low intakes, this may be an area to approach with your nutritionist.

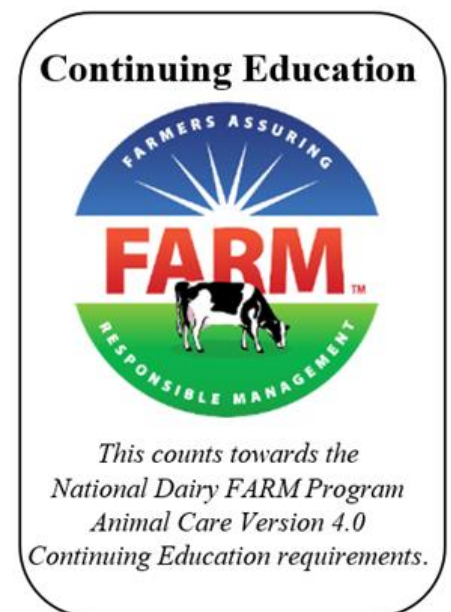
Helping you Meet the FARM Program Continuing Education Requirements

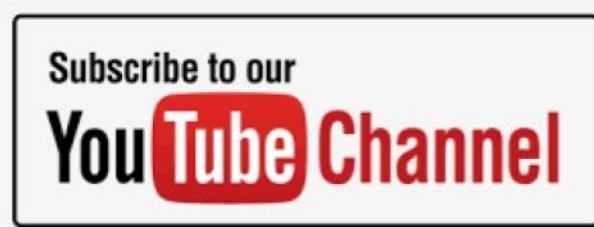
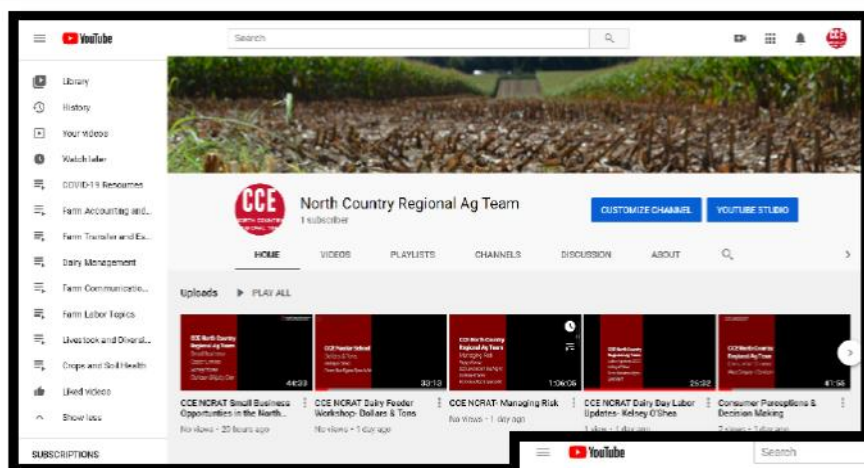
By Lindsay Ferlito

Version 4.0 of the National Dairy FARM Program is now in effect from January 1, 2020, to December 31, 2022. One of the changes to this version is the requirement of training and continuing education for employees as well as family member employees and owners. Version 4.0 requires continuing education in animal care and handling for anybody with animal care responsibilities, and job-specific training for the following topics if they apply:

- Stockmanship
- Pre-weaned calf care
- Non-ambulatory animals
- Euthanasia
- Determining if animals are fit to transport

Over the next five months, the Regional Dairy Specialists will write articles covering all five of these topics. We will also be hosting a program where we play the Merck Dairy Care365 and FARM Program videos (on the 5 key topics) in multiple counties (currently postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions). Look for the symbol to the right to know that educational materials and programs hosted by the CCE North Country Regional Ag Team qualify as continuing education for the FARM Program.



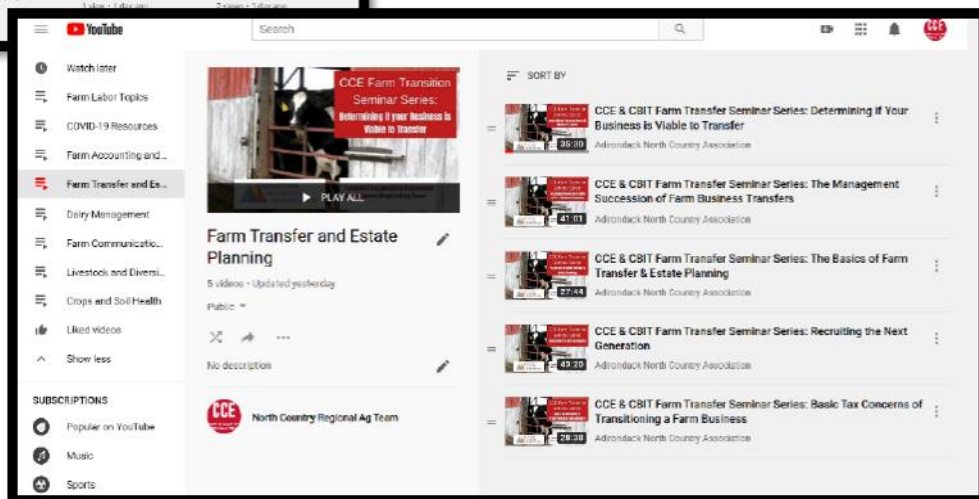


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Stockmanship Training with Curt Pate: It's All about Pressure

By Lindsay Ferlito and Betsy Hicks (CCE South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team)

You've been handling cattle for years, and you do it every day, so what's there to think about? At the last year's Dairy Managers Training Program, Curt Pate, a rancher and stockmanship expert from Montana, demonstrated that there actually is a lot to think about. Dairy cattle have been domesticated for a long time, and they are handled daily, so it's easy to forget how big of an impact our presence can have on them.

How we handle cattle can significantly affect both their mental state and their productivity. Curt explained that animals can't be in "survival" mode and "growth" mode at the same time, so if we are mishandling them, and creating a stressful environment, their health and production will be negatively impacted. We need to therefore design barns and handle cows effectively to minimize stress and keep the animal in "growth" mode.

Barn and facility design plays a critical role in minimizing stress and making it easier to move cattle, but ultimately it is up to the handler to use the right technique and apply the right pressure to move the cows successfully. As Curt says, moving cattle does not take physical strength, it takes your mind. You need to be smart, aware, and present to effectively move cattle. While cattle handling should be low stress, it also requires you to know how to apply effective pressure at the right time.

There are three types of pressure that a person can use on cattle – driving, drawing, and maintaining. Driving pressure is just what it implies – it is pressure used to move or "drive" cattle away from us to a specific location. Drawing pressure is the opposite of that, and can be slightly harder to achieve. Drawing pressure involves getting the attention of the animal and having the animal walk towards that pressure. The third type of pressure, maintaining pressure, involves being able to maintain the animal's attention, without having them move towards or away from that pressure. Driving pressure can be a person, a crowd gate, or a dog. Drawing pressure can be the sound of pen gates opening or the sound of the vacuum pump, or movements by a person to draw animals closer to them. Maintaining pressure can be the hardest to achieve, as it is asking the cow to wait to make a decision on which way it will go.

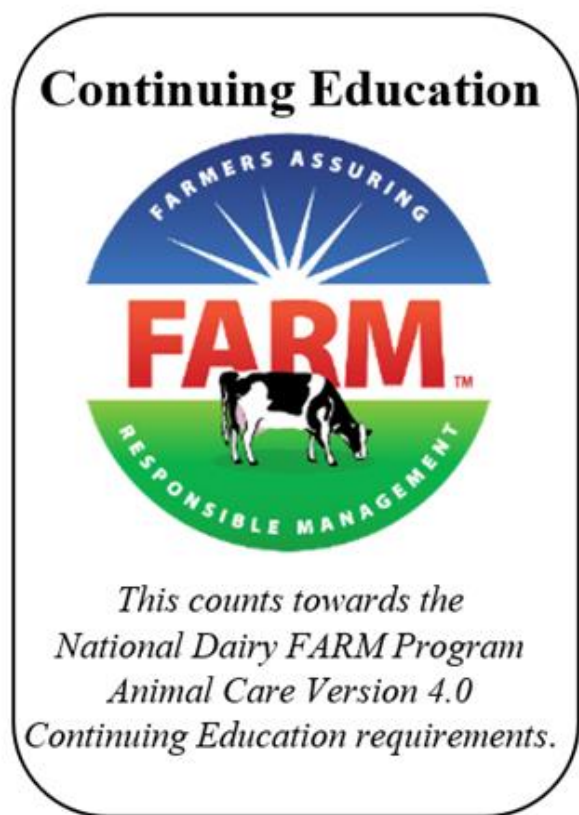
When working cattle, they have two options: they can react to a situation, or they can think about the situation before they respond. Rather than having cows that use only their

instinct and react to every situation, we can work with our cows to have them think about a situation. Over time, this tendency to have cows think first before reacting can be trained. Depending on how they are handled, however, cows can switch back and forth between thinking and reacting. This makes every moment working with animals a learning experience, as the handler can recognize movements that either engage the cow's brain or switch it off.

Different situations call for different kinds of pressure. Driving pressure is effective for moving cows to the parlor. When moving animals quickly, a handler can use their movement behind the cow to allow the cow to watch them move from the left side of the cow to the right side of the cow. Because a cow's eyes are located on the side of their head, a handler can utilize this when handling by "switching eyes" on the cow. A cow would prefer to stop and turn to look at the handler, but by moving from one side to the other and switching eyes, the cow is continually propelled forward. If the handler just worked from one side of the cow, the cow would eventually stop and turn at least her head, if not her whole body, to fully see the handler. The handler can maintain this forward movement by constantly applying pressure from eye to eye behind the cow.

When getting cows up off their beds, often handlers will stand next to the cow and tap the stall divider or speak to the cow to encourage her to get up. A different strategy explained by Curt involves the handler rocking back and forth from left leg to right leg to encourage the cow to stand up and back out of her stall. This constant movement applies different pressure to the cow that will drive her up and back out of the stall, rather than allowing her to stand and wait for further pressure from the handler. The constant movement keeps the cow just a little bit out of her comfort zone, and she will back out of her stall with little encouragement other than the rocking.

Sorting cows utilizes drawing pressure to be most effective. Many handlers will work cattle in close proximity, with that area getting smaller and smaller as more animals are sorted out of the group. Using drawing pressure allows a greater area around the group of cows. The cow's attention is drawn to the handler as he or she backs up and away from the group. Cattle will spread out and even move towards the handler. Driving pressure can then be used to make a certain cow go the desired direction.



The amount of pressure used in any given situation is more about the balance of the cow in that particular moment. If the handler is between a cow and the herd, her balance point is actually behind the handler with the rest of the herd. Using the point of the shoulder of the cow is too close of a balance point, and will likely be ineffective on this cow. She will probably try to move past the handler because the shoulder is too close to the handler to make her move any other way other than to move to the herd. Distance should be factored in when trying to effectively move this cow, and pressure used earlier on to allow for this point of balance being so far behind the handler. The handler should always try to maintain the cow in the “thinking” part of her brain.

The handler wants her to use her mind first, then her feet. The handler should work with her and her balance points in that moment to turn her when sorting and get her to stop with both front feet and ears forward when approaching the handler. This movement shows she is “thinking” rather than reacting. The handler’s movements and pressure will allow her to walk past if she’s thinking, rather than running past if she’s reacting. Working with heifers to train them on this can be helpful in avoiding injuries from cattle. Allowing cattle to run past a handler only teaches them to disregard space; maintaining that thinking action in the cow allows the cow to grow and respond more calmly the next time she’s in that situation.

As a handler, there are other situations that might be useful to consider. When loading cows on to a trailer, the loading

height should be as level as possible. Also, the surface appearance should be as consistent as possible from the barn to the trailer. For example, putting shavings on the floor of the barn and shavings on the trailer eases the transition from one to the other. In addition, many handlers have found that having the engine of the truck that is attached to the trailer being shut off is helpful.

Additional time and patience should be used to move cows when they are overstocked, in the sick or lame pen, or under heat stress. In any of these situations, the movement of the cow is compromised, whether by her health or physical constraints within the pen. Allowing for ample time to move these cows will benefit all parties, as it will be less stressful and movement more intentional. Young heifers should also be allowed more time and patience when handled. Time spent with these groups of animals will help in the long run, especially if we take the time to train them to “think” rather than react. Many handlers have been knocked over by heifers losing their footing as they run by and slip on manure. Keeping these heifers thinking will minimize their reactions and make movement more deliberate and less chaotic.

Some dairy farms also utilize bulls. While this is not recommended from a safety standpoint, a farm that runs bulls in their pens should properly train their employees to handle them appropriately. When working with bulls, handlers should be able to turn the bull with minimal driving pressure. Bulls should be worked with to maintain that relationship and space requirement of the human, but above all else, handlers need to be vigilant and pay attention to any changes in attitude or demeanor of the bull. Once a bull fails to respect the driving pressure and space requirement of the handler, that bull should be out the door.

Cows should know the difference between when they’re being worked and when they’re not being worked. For instance, we don’t want cows to get up every time we enter the pen, but we do want to effectively get them up to move them to the parlor when it’s their time to be milked. Adopting a mannerism when you’re moving cows is helpful to let them know what to expect. This can be in the way the handler carries him or herself, eye contact with the animal, utilizing that rocking movement to back cows out of a stall, and making a certain noise when driving pressure is being used.

A good stockman doesn’t do the same thing every day no matter the situation. They adapt to the cow and the situation and utilize different amounts and forms of pressure to achieve movement. Keep this in mind as you are moving cows next time and be aware of the type of pressure you are applying and how the cows are reacting. Remember, mind first, then feet.



Cornell Cooperative Extension

AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Growing Great People: Training Skills for Dairy Farmers Become an Effective On-The-Job Trainer

Effective trainings contribute to success of employees and the farm business. With training employees learn how to effectively complete their task and why it is important to the farm. When employees have the knowledge, skills, and attitude needed to do the job right and understand why it should be done this way it:

- saves time and avoids problems
- makes people feel important and involved, which keeps them engaged and reduces employee turnover



Develop your training skills in this webinar training that includes a learning system of:

TELL: Describe the procedure and why it is important

SHOW: Demonstrate the procedure and emphasize key points

DO: Allow the learner to try and answer any questions

REVIEW: Are the steps in the procedure done correctly?

After the webinar training you will be able to:

1. Plan for organized and effective trainings
2. Train in a way that works for most people
3. Measure and follow up to make sure learning happened

These trainings are supported by a grant from the
New York Farm Viability Institute.



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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Diversity and inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage.
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WEBINAR TRAININGS

The four hands-on regional training workshops previously scheduled for April 14 to 21, 2020 are cancelled to protect public health from the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Separate webinars will be offered in English and Spanish.

In-person trainings conducted simultaneously in English and Spanish will be rescheduled in fall.

**April 14 - English
6:30 to 8:00 PM**

[cornell.zoom.us/
j/220191306](https://cornell.zoom.us/j/220191306)

**April 16 - Spanish
12:00 to 1:30 PM**

[cornell.zoom.us/
j/293244800](https://cornell.zoom.us/j/293244800)

Webinar participation is
FREE

Registration is
NOT REQUIRED

The webinars will be recorded and available after the event on the Ag Workforce Development website.

agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu



Agriculture and Markets

RICHARD A. BALL
Commissioner

Interim Guidance for Horticulture

March 24, 2020

This guidance is provided for greenhouse operations, landscapers, arborists, garden centers, and nurseries.

Background:

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed the ["PAUSE" Executive Order](#), a 10-point policy to assure uniform safety for everyone. It includes a new directive that all non-essential businesses statewide must close in-office personnel functions effective at 8PM on Sunday, March 22, 2020. Essential businesses are exempt from this guidance. Horticulture operations as defined below have been deemed essential and are exempt.

Horticultural Operations:

For purposes of Executive Order 202.6/PAUSE Executive Order, "Essential Business" states "agriculture/farms," which includes the horticulture industry. As outlined in Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25-AA Section 301, horticulture is a key component of agriculture and New York State farms.

For horticultural operations, the Department defines the following businesses/activities as consistent with Executive Order 202.6:

- Production, movement, maintenance, and sale of vegetable plants, nursery stock, trees, plants, and flowers at greenhouse and nursery operations.
- Tree and shrub trimming and removal for disease, safety, and public health purposes.
- The placement and ground maintenance of sod, landscaping plants, flowers, ornamentals, and trees on residential and commercial grounds.
- Transportation necessary to meet any of the above functions.
- Agribusiness, including the sale and application of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and minerals, that support any of the above functions.

Continued on next page...

If a business does not fall within this guidance, but you believe that it is essential or it is an entity providing essential services or functions, you may request designation as an essential business. [Request designation as an essential business.](#)

FOR EMPLOYEES

Cleaning/Disinfecting and Social Distancing:

All privately-owned facilities must practice social distancing, and proper cleaning and sanitizing of the facility. This includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done:
 - Before and after eating.
 - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
 - After touching face, hair, cellphone, and/or clothing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before handling food.
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
 - After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

It is encouraged that businesses post [signage](#) with handwashing procedures in prominent locations to promote hand hygiene. Clean and disinfect buildings and equipment as outlined in this [guidance](#).

For additional information, visit the links below:

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus>

NYS Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>



Photo Credit: NCRAT



Photo Credit: CCE of Jefferson County

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New York State to Pass New Emergency Paid Leave for COVID-19 and Permanent Paid Sick Leave

NYFB • 159 Wolf Road, Suite 300, Albany, NY 12205 • 1-800-342-4143 • <http://www.nyfb.org>

Today, **March 18, 2020** the New York State Legislature will pass, and the Governor is expected to sign, a bill that adopts **two separate and distinct sick leave programs**:

- A provision that provides paid time off for employees impacted by the COVID-19 virus (effective upon the Governor's signature); and
- A new, permanent law requiring all employers to provide sick leave to their employees (effective January 1, 2021).

Paid Time Off for Employees Impacted by the COVID-19 Virus (State)

In the event of a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation issued by the state of New York, the Department of Health, a local board of health, or any government entity duly authorized to issue such an order due to COVID-19:

Employers of 99 or less will be obligated to:

- Notify employees of the availability of leave as described below;
- Provide job protected leave as described below;
- Provide documents required for that employee to apply for Paid Family Leave (PFL) and New York State Short Term Disability (DBL).

Employers of 100 or more only need to provide paid sick leave as required (see below).

Available Leave According to Number of Employees:

Employers of 10 or fewer as of January 1, 2020:

- Must provide unpaid sick time during an employee's period of ordered quarantine or isolation, except those employers with net income of more than \$1 million, which must provide five days of paid sick leave.

Employers of 11 to 99 as of January 1, 2020:

- Must provide at least five days of paid sick leave.

Employers of 100 or more as of January 1, 2020:

- Must provide at least fourteen days of paid sick leave.

Public employers:

- Must provide at least fourteen days of paid sick leave.

Continued on Page 17

Other Provisions

Benefits would not be available to employees deemed asymptomatic or not yet diagnosed with any medical condition and is physically able to work, through remote access or other means.

This leave is job protected; however, employees are not eligible to use this leave if the employee is returning from personal travel to one of the destinations on the CDC travel advisory list. These employees would be able to use any available employer provided leave time or, absent that, unpaid sick leave for the duration of the quarantine.

Paid Family Leave and Disability (State)

For employers of 99 employees or less, should an employee's period of quarantine or isolation extend beyond available sick time as described above, the employee would be able to apply for Paid Family Leave (PFL) and New York State Short Term Disability (DBL) concurrently – which is not possible under current law. Benefit amounts would be a combination of payments from PFL and from DBL up to 100% of an employee's average weekly wage for those employees earning up to \$150,000 per year.

For example:

An employee making \$150,000 per year (\$2,884.62 per week) may be eligible for:
\$840.70 payment from PFL (60% of average weekly wage to the 2020 maximum benefit amount), and
\$2,043.92 payment from DBL (a significant – temporary increase over the current maximum of \$170/wk.)

Additionally, there is no waiting period for the commencement of DBL payments under these circumstances. PFL benefits may also be used to care for a dependent minor child under such a mandatory quarantine of isolation order; this provision does not apply in cases where the child's school is closed and requires daycare.

The law also provides for the creation of a risk adjustment pool to help stabilize the DBL/PFL insurance carrier industry. And, if federal COVID-19 benefits are approved, these state benefits would only apply if they would provide employee benefits in excess of what is available under federal law.

Federal

As of this writing, Congress is also considering legislation that may expand the Family and Medical Leave Act and/or require paid sick days during the COVID-19 crisis. A plan has already passed the House.

Permanent Paid Sick Leave (Effective January 1, 2021)

The second component of this bill is a new, permanent employer mandate to provide job protected sick leave. These provisions include:

- Employees are to accrue sick leave at a rate of one hour per thirty hours worked;
- **Employers of less than five employees** must provide up to forty hours of unpaid sick leave in a calendar year, except those with net income of more than \$1 million, which must provide up to forty hours of paid sick leave;
- **Employers of 11 to 99** must provide forty hours of paid sick leave each calendar year;
- **Employers of 100 or more** must provide fifty-six hours of paid sick leave each year.

Continued on Page 18

Eligible Uses of Paid Sick Time

Eligible uses are for care for the employee's own mental or physical illness, injury, or health condition or of the employee's "family member;" for diagnosis or care of medical issues; or for absences related to domestic violence, sexual offenses, stalking and/or human trafficking.

"Family member" is defined as an employee's child, spouse, domestic partner, parent, sibling, grandchild or grandparent, and the child or parent of an employee's spouse or domestic partner. Sick time can be used "upon oral or written request of an employee." Employers can set reasonable minimum increments of use, not to exceed four hours. Unused sick leave may be carried over into the following calendar year. Employers can limit the use of sick leave to forty hours (employers of less than one hundred) or fifty-six hours per year (employers of one hundred or more).

Employers are prohibited from discriminating against or taking any retaliatory action against any employee exercising their rights under this law.

Employers with leave policies that encompass the amount of sick time required under this statute are not required to provide additional sick time as long as sick time may be used in the same way as proscribed in the statute.

Recordkeeping

Upon request, employers are required to provide employees with a summary of their sick leave accrued and used in the current and previous calendar.

The bill preempts all municipal sick leave ordinances other than New York City, and employers must maintain six years of records on sick leave provided to all employees.

As you can see, there is plenty of activity on both the state and federal levels aimed at protecting the income of employees impacted by the Coronavirus. NYFB will keep its members informed of these and any other relevant changes as they occur.

This fact sheet is provided as a service of the NYFB Legal Affairs Department. While the general information in this publication is about legal issues, it is provided for informational purposes only; it is not intended to be, nor should it be considered, a substitute for legal advice. Because of the rapidly changing nature of the law and our reliance upon outside sources, we make no warranty or guarantee of the accuracy or reliability of information contained herein. If you have any questions about the application of the issues raised in this fact sheet to your particular situation, seek the advice of a competent attorney.

March 2019



New York Crop Insurance Education Program




[HOME](#) [ABOUT THE PROJECT](#) [CROP INSURANCE 101](#) [CROP INSURANCE RESOURCES](#) [CONTACT US](#)

Podcasts



CHECK OUT PODCASTS AT <http://www.agriskmanagement.cornell.edu/materials/podcasts/>

Here you will find podcasts developed by our extension educator partners covering various topics on risk management for agricultural producers.

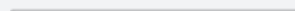


Discussion with crop insurance agent, John Fitzpatrick, outlining the crop insurance policy sign up process.

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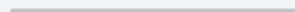


Discussion with crop insurance agent, John Fitzpatrick, outlining what can be done to avoid problems when filing a claim.

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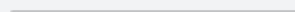


Discussion with a New York farmer, Danica Ferrante, on what can be done to retain a reliable workforce.

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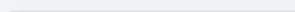


General discussion with Dr. Jennifer Ifft from Cornell University about crop insurance and what she has found through her research.

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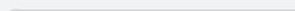


Discussion with Dr. Jennifer Ifft from Cornell University about Whole Farm Revenue Protection and how it can be used by New York agricultural producers.

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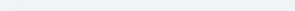


Discussion with Dr. Jennifer Ifft from Cornell University about the importance of developing a good relationship with your crop insurance agent.

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Discussion with Dr. Jennifer Ifft from Cornell University about how crop insurance can be used by New York agricultural producers.

▶ 0:00 / 0:00   

Discussion with Steve Hadcock from Cornell Cooperative Extension regarding marketing challenges faced by New York agricultural producers.

▶ 0:00 / 0:00   

Interim Guidance for Animal Care Operations

March 22, 2020

This guidance is provided for animal agriculture workers to include those employed in veterinary health; manufacturing and distribution of animal medical materials and supplies, animal vaccines, animal drugs, feed, and bedding, etc.; raising of animals; animal production operations; transportation of live animals, animal medical supplies; transportation of deceased animals for disposal; livestock markets, including live bird markets, slaughter and packing plants. It also includes equine operations and companion animal/pet stores and shelters; veterinary services for equine, companion animal and other businesses considered essential; and related support/service operations.

Background:

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

On March 20, 2020, Governor Cuomo signed the ["PAUSE" Executive Order](#), a 10-point policy to assure uniform safety for everyone. It includes a new directive that all non-essential businesses statewide must close in-office personnel functions effective at 8PM on Sunday, March 22. Essential businesses are exempt from this guidance. Animal care operations, as defined below, have been deemed essential and are exempt.

Animal Care Operations:

For purposes of **Executive Order 202.6**, **animal care operations** are defined as the following businesses/activities:

Livestock/Equine/Captive Cervids

- Feeding
- Barn or facility maintenance, stall cleaning and enclosure repair
- Turnout and exercise
- Essential hoof maintenance and veterinary care
- Transportation necessary to meet any of the above functions
- Agribusiness that supports any of the above functions

Companion Animals

- Care and feeding of companion animals in shelters, kennels, rescues, operations and pet stores
- Pet food manufacturers, distributors, and retailers
- Essential veterinary care, including spay/neuter, treatment for infectious disease
- Animal shelters receiving seized, lost or abandoned animals
- Adoption of animals from within New York State
- Pet boarding facilities
- Service dog training and care

Continued on Page 21

If a business does not fall within this guidance, but you believe that it is essential or it is an entity providing essential services or functions, you may request designation as an essential business. **To request designation as an essential business, please [click here](#).**

Animal Care/Boarding Facilities:

If you have an animal at a privately-owned facility, terms regarding client use and visitation rests with that business owner. Social distancing must be adhered to.

For equine: It is permissible to have horse owners as the primary providers of daily care for their own horses at boarding facilities, however business owners and horse owners must collaborate to minimize the number of people in the stable and to adhere to social distancing.

*There is no evidence that animals, including pets, in the United States might be a source of infection/can spread this new coronavirus. To date, CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Cleaning/Disinfecting and Social Distancing:

All privately-owned facilities must practice social distancing, and proper cleaning and sanitizing of the facility. This includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds should be done:
 - Before and after eating.
 - After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
 - After touching face, hair, cellphone and/or clothing.
 - After using the restroom.
 - Before handling food.
 - After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
 - After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Dispose of soiled tissues immediately after use.

It is encouraged to post [signage](#) with handwashing procedures in prominent locations. Clean and disinfect buildings and equipment as outlined in this [guidance](#).

For additional information, visit the links below:

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus>

NYS Department of Health: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>

CDC COVID Guidance for Animals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html>

CDC COVID FAQ for Animals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#animals>

CDC COVID Guidance for Pet Owners if in Isolation:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/interim-guidance-managing-people-in-home-care-and-isolation-who-have-pets.html>

H-2A Update: Virtual Housing Inspections, Database of Workers, Termination of Existing Job Orders

 agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/2020/03/26/h-2a-update-virtual-housing-inspections-database-of-workers-termination-of-existing-job-orders/

March 26,
2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a challenging and uncertain situation for H-2A growers, workers, and the agencies who serve them. Growers are scrambling to determine how many workers will actually reach them this year and which crops they can successfully grow. Workers are just trying to get into the country while still meeting their family needs back home. Agencies are trying to provide service under new and difficult restrictions and home-based working conditions. In this environment, a few updates for existing growers who use H-2A are in order.

NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) Provided an Update on Housing Inspections for H-2A Job Orders

From NYSDOL:

In many cases, in-person housing inspections have been temporarily suspended. For the time being, housing will be inspected via the new virtual inspection process. For housing for 5 or more workers, please note that this inspection is for the purposes of the H-2A program only. You will still need to work with the NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH), when available, to ensure that your migrant farmworker housing is permitted per NYSDOH [Part 15 requirements](#).

To complete the virtual inspection process, employers must submit requested photos, a signed attestation form (provided by our staff), well water test results, if applicable, and any other documentation that the Foreign Labor Certification Unit (FLCU) deems necessary for review (for example, measurements may be requested in some cases, to determine square footage). The virtual inspections should be completed with the understanding that the FLCU will follow-up with in-person inspections when needed, and particularly for any new housing.

Please reach out to the Foreign Labor Certification Unit with any questions: Caylin Gwise, 585-258-8855, H2A@labor.ny.gov

USDA Database of Available H-2A Workers

Continued on Page 23

H-2A is a federally administered program primarily involving the U.S. Dept of Labor (USDOL) and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Given the current crisis, however, USDA has been raising the alarm that the agricultural workforce, including H-2A workers, are critical to the U.S. food supply. USDA and USDOL recently announced an information-sharing program to connect H-2A employers with available workers. There are as many as 20,000 H-2A workers in the country right now working on contracts that will expire in coming weeks.

USDA set up a website to assist farmers to use the H-2A program here: <https://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a>. This site contains COVID-19-related announcements and changes that employers will find helpful, such as agency updates and information about embassy services and border closures. You can also download a PDF file or Excel file with information about workers in the U.S. on soon-to-expire contracts. Employers seeking these employees could then contact the former employer or attorney/agency who placed the expiring H-2A contract.

Terminating an Existing Job Order

Some growers may find the COVID-19 situation so disruptive to business that they simply choose not to operate or they drastically cut back in scale for 2020. The federal agencies recognize this issue and are trying to accommodate grower needs. USDOL's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) recently issued guidance in the form of FAQ's dated 3/20/2020:

#2. Employers may terminate H-2A and H-2B orders by emailing the CNPC with the request and COVID-19 should be in the email subject line, followed by their case number.

QUESTION: Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I no longer have a business need for the workers employed under the temporary labor certification I received. What do I do?

ANSWER: Employers who received temporary labor certification under the H-2A, H-2B, or CW-1 visa programs may request approval from the OFLC Chicago NPC Certifying Officer to terminate work under the job order and/or work contracts before the end date of work due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. An employer may submit a request for "contract impossibility" to the Chicago NPC Certifying Officer using the following method:

Continued on Page 24

Email: TLC.Chicago@dol.gov Include the phrase “COVID-19” followed by the full case number in the email subject line. Important Reminders: • An employer continues to be responsible for its obligations under the work contract until receiving a favorable “contract impossibility” determination from the Certifying Officer. • In the event that the Certifying Officer makes a finding of contract impossibility, the employer should document its efforts to comply with each aspect of the contract impossibility provision under the regulatory requirements applicable to the H-2A (20 CFR 655.122(o)), H-2B (20 CFR 655.20(g)), or CW-1 (20 CFR 655.423(g)) visa programs.

New York H-2A employers can also reach out to Jeanette Lazelle, the Director of NYSDOL’s Division of Immigrant Policies and Affairs at 518-461-2599 (work cell) or email: Jeanette.Lazelle@labor.ny.gov.

By Richard Stup, Cornell University. Permission granted to repost, quote, and reprint with author attribution.

The post [H-2A Update: Virtual Housing Inspections, Database of Workers, Termination of Existing Job Orders](#) appeared first in [The Ag Workforce Journal](#).



Cornell Cooperative Extension
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Photo Credit: Tatum Langworthy



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CCE North Country Regional Ag Team
203 North Hamilton Street
Watertown, New York 13601

What's Happening in the Ag Community

Cornell Herd Health Conference - now virtual, April 7, 2020, visit [PRO-DAIRY](#) website for more information.

April 14th, Growing Great People: Training Skills For Dairy Farmers webinar, see page 12 for more information.

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