

Iowa State Updates

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: None

Food Service: Restaurants reopened statewide on May 15 with these [guidelines](#) in place. Bars were permitted to reopen at 50% capacity on May 28. On June 12, Gov. Reynolds lifted the 50% capacity limit.

**The full list of Iowa Reopening Criteria/Operation Restrictions can be found [here](#).

**The Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship COVID-19 resources page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Iowa, the biggest U.S. corn-producing state, is facing its most widespread drought since September 2013, state agriculture secretary Mike Naig said on Aug. 28, compounding problems for farmers after a damaging windstorm. The drought threatens to lower crop yields and grain quality even more for farmers who are also struggling with ripple effects from the COVID-19 pandemic. The scope of the losses will be determined by whether the state remains painfully dry, according to crop experts ([source](#)).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture is preparing to pay out the rest of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program payments to the nation's farmers while looking at ways to further cover ag losses, says Bill Northey, USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation. Congress provided an additional \$14 billion in Commodity Credit Corporation money to be able to address some other losses, and Northey says that will broaden out the commodities and sectors of agriculture they can provide assistance to. American Farm Bureau analysis indicates the \$7 billion of direct payments paid in the first round of CFAP averages out to around \$13,600 per producer. The top payout went to Iowa at \$697.4 million ([source](#)).

August 25

Financial worries, unpredictable weather, unpredictable commodity prices, plant pests, livestock diseases and isolation all contribute to farmers' anxiety. And now Iowa's rural communities and families are coping with the unpredictability and imposed isolation produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the destruction from the derecho that swept through Iowa. In response to this additional stress, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, in collaboration with COVID Recovery Iowa, will offer 10 online "Stress on the Farm: Strategies That Help" programs beginning Friday, said David Brown, behavioral health specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach ([source](#)).

Loopholes remain, but the USDA is tightening its crop subsidy rules by limiting who can collect a payment for managing a farm, historically one of its most porous definitions. The new regulation, to be published on Monday, requires people to perform at least 500 hours of management or at least 25% of the management work required annually to merit a subsidy check — “a very major advancement,” according to a small-farm advocate ([source](#)).

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds announced the additional allocation of Iowa’s funds from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security (CARES) Act of \$100 million, with much of that available to assist and support Iowa’s agricultural economy, including biofuel and livestock producers, and funds to help small meat processors expand ([source](#)).

Ohio State Updates

Stay at Home Order/Shelter in Place Order: expired May 29, and is now considered voluntary. The Urgent Health Advisory can be found [here](#).

Restaurants: Outdoor service resumed May 15. Dine-in service resumed May 21. The rules and guidelines for reopening and sanitation can be found [here](#).

**The Ohio Department of Agriculture's COVID-19 information and resources can be found [here](#).

September 1

N/A

August 25

Scott Kenney, an assistant professor of veterinary preventive medicine at The Ohio State University [College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences](#), whose research focuses on viruses that spread from animals to people, is pursuing grants with colleagues to study whether various farm animals are susceptible to COVID-19. He will address the risk of animals catching or spreading COVID-19 during "Ask the Expert" presentations Sept. 22–24 at this year's Farm Science Review, an all-virtual show sponsored by CFAES ([source](#)).

Indiana State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired statewide May 4 – expired in Marion County on May 15.

Restaurants: Restaurants in all counties except Marion, Lake and Cass were able to reopen at 50% capacity on May 4. Restaurants in Marion, Lake and Cass counties have all been able to reopen since. Restaurants are currently operating at 75% capacity and bars are operating at 50% capacity. Guidance for restaurants can be found [here](#).

**Guidance for businesses and employers can be found [here](#).

**The Indiana Farm Bureau's COVID-19 resource page can be found [here](#).

September 1

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds farmers and ranchers that the deadline to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is Sept. 11, 2020. This program provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19 ([source](#)).

Scottsburg-based farmer Doug Krieger said that in more than two decades of selling at southern Indiana farmers markets, he's never had a year like this one. The family's booming business could be a result of inaccessibility this year to some foods due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially early in the season when staples such as meat and eggs were scarce in groceries as shoppers stocked up for the unknown and supply chains were disrupted at times ([source](#)).

August 25

Steve Brown wrote a piece for AgriNews urging farmers and ranchers in Indiana to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program. He said, "Whether you farm one acre or many more, grow food for local markets or big supply chains, CFAP can help. We're accepting applications through Aug. 28 and encouraging producers to apply now. In Indiana, we have already approved 15,034 applications and disbursed \$164,250,055 as of July 27. I know many of you have applied for CFAP already, but the numbers indicate that some who are eligible have not. CFAP provides direct relief to producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19. A range of commodities are eligible for CFAP, including cattle, milk, corn, hogs and soybeans. You can access the full list of eligible non-specialty, specialty, livestock, dairy and wool commodities by visiting farmers.gov/cfap" ([source](#)).

A longstanding tradition of Indiana agriculture is feeling the effects of COVID-19. Organizers of the Indiana Farm Equipment and Technology Expo have announced the 2020 show, scheduled for December, will not take place. In a statement, show organizers said with safety protocols in place it is "impossible to operate the show in a way that will be beneficial and enjoyable for both exhibitors and attendees" ([source](#)).

Pennsylvania State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired statewide May 8 – Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northampton, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties remained under the order through June 4.

Restaurants: Counties in the green phase may reopen bars and restaurants at 25% occupancy for dine-in service and outdoor service if they follow the appropriate [guidelines](#). On-site alcohol sales at bars and restaurants are banned in Allegheny county.

**Reopening status by county can be found [here](#).

**Guidelines for essential business and operations employers can be found [here](#).

**The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture's COVID-19 guidance and resources page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Farmworkers are on the front lines of food production, and often exposed to environmental hazards, like pesticides. This year, their jobs have [become even harder](#), because of climate change, COVID and wildfires. In agricultural areas across the country, including in Pennsylvania, many farmworkers face unrelenting summer heat. With climate change, those temperatures are rising. In the vast industrial farmland of central California, where much of the nation's fruits and vegetables are produced, farmworkers face added [air quality concerns](#) caused by wildfires. This is all happening while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic ([source](#)).

The volume of sales for the 2019-2020 mushroom crop totaled 816 million pounds, down 2 percent from last season, according to the National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) 2020 Report. Value of sales for the 2019-2020 mushroom crop was \$1.15 billion, up 3 percent from the previous season. The average reported price was \$1.41 per pound, up 7 cents from the previous year ([source](#)).

August 25

On August 19, The Department of Agriculture on canceled the 2021 Pennsylvania Farm Show as an in-person event due to the coronavirus. Plans are developing for a virtual version of the January indoor agricultural exposition to take its place ([source](#)).

During a visit to Sauder's Eggs this week, Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding announced a \$10 million contract with Feeding Pennsylvania to acquire surplus agriculture products from Pennsylvania producers to be funneled through the charitable food system to put fresh, local foods into the hands of Pennsylvanians in need ([source](#)).

California State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: Yes – no official end date.

Food Service: On July 13, Gov. Newsom ordered all counties in the state to close all bars and the indoor operations of businesses including restaurants, movie theaters and museums, as Covid-19 cases continue to climb. The businesses will be allowed to operate outdoors, if possible, except for bars, he said.

** The California Climate & Agriculture Network's COVID-19 resource page can be found [here](#).

September 1

On August 29, Foster Farms announced that it would temporarily shut down the main building of its Livingston, California, poultry complex after almost 400 workers contracted COVID-19. In the statement, Foster Farms confirmed that 392 employees were sickened "in recent months," and eight of these had died of complications related to the virus. The closure follows an order from the Merced County Department of Public Health mandating that the main building close for at least six days ([source](#)).

A deepening COVID-19 crisis now surging in most California agricultural counties—puts farmworkers in the pandemic's crosshairs. Thousands of farm and packinghouse workers have contracted the virus in the agricultural counties of Imperial, Kern, Kings, Tulare, Merced, Stanislaus, San Joaquin, Monterey and Ventura. Farmworkers in the North Bay are at risk too. To avert catastrophe for workers and consumers, the federal and state governments must quickly adopt policies protecting the state's farmworkers' health and safety ([source](#)).

Texas State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired statewide April 30 – the city of Austin and Travis County will remain under the "Stay Home, Work Safe" order until December 15.

Food Service: Bars were ordered to close by Gov. Abbott on June 26. They can remain open only for to-go or delivery. Restaurants were ordered to reduce their capacity from 75% to 50%.

**Texas encourages restaurants and bars to follow the [CDC's guidelines](#) while remaining operations.

**The Texas Farm Bureau COVID-19 resources page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Texans receiving emergency benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program will continue to get their benefits through the month of September, according to Gov. [Greg Abbott](#). The Texas Health and Human Services Commission will provide approximately \$188 million in emergency food benefits in response to the coronavirus pandemic ([source](#)).

As part of its efforts to enforce the Perishable Agricultural Commodities Act and ensure fair trading practices within the U.S. produce industry, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has filed an administrative complaint against Martinez Fresh Produce LLC. The company, operating from Texas, allegedly failed to make payment promptly to eight produce sellers in the amount of \$155,508 from April 2017 through March 2019 ([source](#)).

August 25

The Environmental Protection Agency gave emergency approval Monday for the application of a cleanser intended to kill the novel [coronavirus](#) on surfaces for up to seven days, and the state of Texas said it would allow American Airlines and two branches of Total Orthopedics Sports & Spine to start using the new product ([source](#)).

Michigan State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired June 1

Restaurants: 32 counties could reopen bars and restaurants at 50% capacity on May 22 if they followed these [guidelines](#). On July 29, Gov. Whitmer closed down indoor bar service statewide. Outdoor service and restaurant service can remain open.

Operations that remain open must follow certain [guidelines](#) and can find other resources on how to keep employees safe [here](#).

**The Michigan Farm Bureau COVID-19 resources page can be found [here](#).

September 1

In August, Michigan for the first time began [publicly posting its weekly data on COVID-19 outbreaks by setting](#). This data provides a better picture of what types of locations and activities are driving new and ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks in the state and could potentially show how effective policies are at controlling outbreaks impacting industries like restaurants, bars and agriculture overtime. The [data is updated weekly](#) on Mondays by the state online and Eater is tracking and analyzing the numbers related specifically to outbreaks in the food industry here ([source](#)).

On Thursday, immigration attorneys with the Michigan Immigrant Rights Center and other groups filed a friend of the court brief with the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, opposing a lawsuit that was filed by attorneys representing farms trying to block a state order mandating coronavirus testing for farm workers. On Aug. 3, the state of Michigan ordered farms, migrant camps and food processing centers to test all workers for the coronavirus and have protections for their workers. A [lawsuit was then filed](#) on behalf of farms who alleged the order unfairly singles out them and discriminates against Latino workers. Immigrant advocates countered by saying the lawsuit was a cynical invoking of civil rights law to push the interests of farm owners, not Latino workers ([source](#)).

August 25

Michigan farm owners and immigrants advocates are in a dispute over a [state order](#) requiring coronavirus testing for farm and food processing workers. A lawsuit filed this month on behalf of farms in Michigan alleges that the state order issued Aug. 3 unfairly discriminates against farm workers, most of whom are Latino, by having requirements that are tougher than other industries. The deadline for businesses to comply with the state order was Monday. The dispute comes amid an increase in coronavirus outbreaks in farms, food processing centers and migrant camps. The number of outbreaks at these places has doubled from 11 to 21, according to the state Department of Health and Human Services ([source](#)).

The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is reminding farmers that grants to help farmers and processors affected by the coronavirus pandemic are still available. The Michigan Agricultural Safety Grant Program utilizes up to \$15 million in federal funding from the CARES Act to provide funding to farms and processors and their coronavirus mitigation efforts. To qualify, applicants must be a farm or agricultural processor located in Michigan and have at least 10 employees ([source](#)).

Minnesota State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired May 18

Restaurants: Bars and restaurants were able to reopen outdoor seating on June 1 and indoor dining on June 10. Guidelines for reopening can be found [here](#).

**The list of MN essential Food and Agriculture workers can be found [here](#).

**The Minnesota Department of Agriculture COVID-19 resources page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Starting this week, farmers in parts of Minnesota, including in Morrison County, will face new restrictions on how they apply nitrogen fertilizer. The regulations are aimed at reducing nitrate contamination in the state's groundwater. In a testing program a few years ago, more than half of the wells tested in Agram Township, where Tschida farms is located, had a level of nitrate higher than what the federal government considers safe for drinking water. Above that limit, nitrate poses a health risk to humans, especially infants. Consuming too much nitrate can cause a potentially serious or even fatal condition known as blue baby syndrome. Starting this week, farmers won't be allowed to apply nitrogen fertilizer in the fall or on frozen ground, in parts of Minnesota where the groundwater is vulnerable to contamination. The rule applies to about 12 percent of the state's cropland, mainly in the central and southeastern parts of the state ([source](#)).

August 25

Minnesota is the top turkey producing state in the United States, according to USDA statistics, and a new report by the University of Minnesota Extension researchers shows that COVID-19 won't change that ([source](#)).

Minnesota turkey growers and producers are feeling the sting as COVID-19 is causing producers to slow down production. Former Chairman of the National Turkey Federation John Burkel says the industry will be working full-time to help ensure families are not going to be negatively affected by food prices or the upcoming holiday season. Because the industry cannot provide projected losses from the winter, they were not able to qualify for USDA funding leaving them without help for months. Minnesota Congressman Collin Peterson and Senate Republicans have been pushing funding bills to help cover losses from COVID-19 ([source](#)).

Nebraska State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: No official stay at home order – the “21 Days to Stay Home and Stay Healthy” expired April 30.

**Restaurants and bars can reopen and serve customers if they follow these [guidelines](#).

**The Nebraska Farm Bureau COVID-19 resource page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Amid ongoing impacts from last year’s bomb cyclone, low commodity prices and the COVID-19 pandemic, rural Nebraskans remain optimistic about their current situation and future, according to the 2020 Nebraska Rural Poll. In 2019, rural Nebraskans were the most optimistic they had been in the history of the Rural Poll, according to Rebecca Vogt, survey research manager. Only slight changes from those levels were seen in the 2020 poll, which was sent to 7,000 rural households across the state in April. Fifty-three percent of respondents believe they are better off than they were five years ago – a slight decrease from 56% last year ([source](#)).

On Aug. 31, the Nebraska Department of Agriculture unveiled a new marketing initiative geared toward Nebraska's agricultural sector. The program, “[Nebraska Straight from the Good Life](#),” features a statewide catalog of agriculture businesses, including bulk grain producers, livestock, food processing and equipment.

August 25

The American Farm Bureau Federation recently reported farm bankruptcies increased 8% over a 12-month period, with 580 filings from June 2019 to June 2020. A six-month comparison by AFBF, however, shows the number of new Chapter 12 filings slowing. According to AFBF, several contributing factors are likely at play as farmers struggle to stay afloat during the pandemic. The Midwest, Northwest and Southeast were hardest hit, representing 80% of the filings across the U.S. Wisconsin led the nation with 69 filings, **followed by 38 in Nebraska**. Georgia and Minnesota each had 36 filings ([source](#)).

Georgia State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired April 30 for the general public – older persons and the chronically ill are still under a shelter in place order through September 15.

Restaurants can open for dine-in if they follow Gov. Kemp’s regulations outlined [here](#). Bars were able to open June 1.

**Food and agriculture business is generally safe and can continue operation. However, they have to work under extensive [guidelines](#) to operate.

**The Georgia Department of Agriculture COVID-19 resource page can be found [here](#).

September 1

Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, visited Bonaire Elementary School in Houston County, to announce the extension of the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box program. The program gives families food and has distributed over 75 million boxes of fresh produce since May. Houston County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Mark Scott, says the expansion will help families in his school district ([source](#)).

August 25

For the first time since the Georgia National Fair began in 1990, the October event has been canceled. The Georgia Agricultural Exposition Authority made the decision to cancel the 2020 fair on August 12 after determining that it would not be possible to host a fair that abides by Georgia and Centers for Disease Control safety regulations for COVID-19 ([source](#)).