

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 22

On Friday, September 18, the federal government said that it will give farmers an additional \$14 billion to compensate them for the difficulties they have experienced selling their crops, milk and meat because of the coronavirus pandemic ([source](#)).

U.S. Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) led her Iowa colleagues in urging Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) to ensure funds for the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) are replenished in the upcoming government funding bill ([source](#)).

September 15

The windstorm that blasted across Iowa — “basically a 40-mile-wide tornado,” in the words of Governor Kim Reynolds — wiped out 9% of the crop in the nation’s No. 1 corn state and obliterated the chances for a record-large corn harvest nationwide, said the USDA. Farmers will see notably higher season-average prices for the smaller, but still ample, crop that remains in the field ([source](#)).

Iowa, the biggest U.S. corn-producing state, is facing its most widespread drought since September 2013, according to its state agriculture secretary, Mike Naig. The drought is compounding problems for farmers after the once-in-a-lifetime derecho 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](#)).

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 22

N/A

September 15

Montgomery County has allocated \$5 million from the Federal CARES Act for agribusiness in the county. Farmers impacted by the pandemic can be awarded up to \$100,000. A formal announcement will be made Wednesday, September 16. Applications for the grant money can be picked up at the Montgomery County Fairgrounds Monday through Friday from 2-8 p.m. ([source](#)).

For the first time in its nearly 60 year history, Ohio State's Farm Science Review scheduled for September 22 -24 will not be held in-person. Instead, a virtual show will be held and the Review will come to you on your laptop or smartphone this year, and for free. You can watch live streamed talks and recorded videos featuring the latest farm equipment and research to pique your curiosity ([source](#)).

September 8

Due to orders from the Ohio Department of Health limiting indoor gatherings due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 Ohio Farm Bureau Annual Meeting is going remote this year. The new format will enable many Ohio Farm Bureau delegates to join together in small groups throughout Ohio and connect with other delegates around the state through a virtual platform as they vote on policies and leadership. This year's remote experience also will recognize the organization's exciting accomplishments and will give even more Farm Bureau members an opportunity to take part in the programs. The major components of the annual meeting, the delegate and business sessions, will take place Dec. 11, with the organization focusing on presentations of awards and recognitions online earlier in the week ([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 22

N/A

September 15

UMOS has implemented a “Farmworker Protection Project” to assist migrant and seasonal farmworkers and employers in Wisconsin, Missouri, Northern Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Florida, Minnesota, Kansas, Texas, **Indiana** and Michigan ([source](#)).

Crop analysts are forecasting a record-setting soybean harvest and solid corn yields this year in Indiana, but area farmers say they still aren't expecting to bring in huge profits. The U.S. Department of Agriculture projects that soybean yields will be 61 bushels per acre, up 10 bushels from the 2019, setting a new state record. Total production across the state is forecast at 346.5 million bushels, up 27% from last year. That would also be a record high ([source](#)).

September 8

Rural broadband could be a main focus for Hoosier farmers in the upcoming legislative session. Indiana Farm Bureau delegates compiled a list of issues they would like to see the organization address in the upcoming legislative session. Due to the pandemic, farmers across the state called in for a virtual meeting last weekend to discuss what issues should be taken to the Indiana Statehouse ([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 22

Pennsylvania restaurateurs can now access the online self-certification form that will allow them to increase their capacity back to 50%. Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin announced Monday that the form was available on the PA.gov/COVID website in both English and Spanish, with plans to release it in other languages soon ([source](#)).

Governor Tom Wolf announced the approval of five agricultural projects being funded through the [First Industries Fund \(FIF\)](#). These projects, located in two counties, will help existing farms expand their operations, bring in additional revenue, and transition agribusinesses to the next generation of farmers ([source](#)).

September 15

Coronavirus-related policies implemented by Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf’s administration, which required people to stay home, ordered “non-life-sustaining” businesses to close, and placed limits on public gatherings are unconstitutional, a federal judge [ruled](#) Monday. U.S. District Judge William Stickman IV, an appointee of President Donald Trump, said that measures taken by Wolf and the state’s secretary of health to combat the spread of the virus were “well-intentioned,” but he found that “good intentions toward a laudable end are not alone enough to uphold governmental action against a constitutional challenge.” The judge ruled that limits imposed on gatherings violate the right of assembly under the First Amendment and found that stay-at-home and business closure orders violate the Fourteenth Amendment ([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 22

California businesses must disclose infections or exposures to the coronavirus in the workplace after Gov. Gavin Newsom [signed a bill](#) into law Thursday outlining company reporting standards to workers and the state ([source](#)).

Senator Doug Jones (D-AL) introduced the Senate companion to Representative Josh Harder's (CA-10) [Protecting Fairs During Coronavirus Act](#). The bill would establish a \$5 billion federal grant program to offset fair revenue losses during the Coronavirus Pandemic ([source](#)).

September 15

U.S. Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-Santa Barbara) brought both local and state agricultural leaders together on Sept. 11 for a Virtual Ag Forum. The H-2A guest worker program and [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) (CFAP) were among the hot topics discussed. Carbajal said that CFAP will give a total of \$16 billion in direct payments to growers across the nation who experienced price or crop losses due to COVID-19. There are a number of crops grown on the Central Coast that were initially eligible, he added, but [the list of eligible specialty crops](#) has since expanded ([source](#)).

A lack of access to COVID-19 personal protective equipment and an adequate labor force are among the greatest needs of Central Coast farmers and growers, according to a panel of agriculture industry representatives. But expanding assistance to specialty growers, more COVID-19 testing, tracing and treatment and a loosening of pandemic-related restrictions are also on the wish list given to 24th Congressional District Rep. Salud Carbajal, D-Santa Barbara, in a virtual forum Friday ([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 22

Texas restaurants will be allowed to expand their dining room capacities to 75 percent beginning Monday, September 21, as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott announced during a press conference Thursday. Bars will remain closed, and businesses are still required to follow social distancing guidelines. [Masks](#) will remain mandatory for everyone ([source](#)).

Rep. [Mike Conaway](#) (R-Texas), the top Republican on the House Agriculture Committee, on Monday introduced an amendment to a stopgap government funding measure that would provide farm aid and extend child nutritional assistance during the coronavirus pandemic. House Democrats earlier Monday introduced a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funding through Dec. 11 ([source](#)).

September 15

COVID-19 is expected to reduce the U.S. gross domestic product, GDP, by \$2.5 trillion and employment by 19 million full-time equivalent jobs over the next year, according to a [Texas A&M AgriLife](#) coordinated study ([source](#)).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has extended application deadlines for the [Coronavirus Food Assistance Program](#) for farmers and ranchers in Texas and Louisiana affected by Hurricane Laura. The deadline for the program was Sept. 11, but the USDA on Sept. 14 announced the extension for the producers affected by the hurricane, which made landfall on Aug. 27 and caused billions of dollars in damages in Louisiana and Texas. The new deadline for the affected producers is Oct. 9 ([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 22

In one Michigan county, almost half the COVID-19 cases are tied to farm outbreaks. Health department emails show that some farms resisted COVID-19 testing and workers claimed farms didn't take steps to keep them safe ([source](#)).

September 15

The Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association (MRLA) is back this week with more dire predictions about the state of the food and beverage industry during an ongoing pandemic. Among them, the trade group is projecting that roughly a quarter of the state's restaurants — approximately 4,000 establishments — could close within the next six months ([source](#)).

A lawsuit that was filed last month on behalf of some farms in Michigan against the state's mandate for coronavirus testing of all farmworkers was dismissed Wednesday. The move ends the legal dispute between farm owners and the state of Michigan over a state order issued Aug. 3 that required farms, meat plants and migrant camps to test all workers, many of whom are Latino immigrants. On Tuesday, attorneys representing the two farms — True Blue Berry Management and Smeltzer Orchards — and four workers filed a motion to dismiss the case. On Wednesday, the case was dismissed ([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 22

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture is once again offering The AGRI Livestock Grant to Minnesota livestock producers. The grant itself is a 10% reimbursement grant. Minnesota livestock producers apply, and if they are accepted, producers will receive 10% of their total future project's cost from the Department of Agriculture. Projects over the years have varied, but some examples of possible projects are buildings, equipment, safety technology and more ([source](#)).

September 15

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz called the state legislature into special session starting last Friday. He says there's a need to preserve emergency powers he's been using to manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Minnesota Farm Bureau's Public Policy Director Amber Hanson Glaeser is hoping lawmakers will be able to also pass tax and bonding bills and conform the Section 179 expensing for agriculture ([source](#)).

September 8

Seven west central Minnesota farm families are among 82 selected this year as winners of the University of Minnesota's Farm Families of the Year award for their contribution to the agriculture industry and their local communities. [One family per county](#) was selected by local University of Minnesota Extension committees based on their demonstrated commitment to enhancing and supporting agriculture. Typically the winners are honored at the annual Farmfest celebration, but the event was canceled this year because of COVID-19 and the recognition was held during a virtual event last month ([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 22

N/A

September 15

Gov. Pete Ricketts remained adamant Wednesday about refusing emergency supplemental food aid, despite a letter from 20 state senators urging him to change his mind. But the state is pursuing other federal food assistance aimed at families of children who are missing out on free or reduced-price lunches at school. Nebraska is the only state not to continue the pandemic-driven emergency supplemental assistance beyond July. The program, authorized by a federal coronavirus relief bill, boosted Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program benefits, formerly known as food stamps, to the maximum level for all recipients ([source](#)).

September 8

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue paid a visit to Nebraska on September 4, making stops in Lincoln and Omaha and taking part in a panel discussion. Perdue signed a Shared Stewardship Agreement with Gov. Peter Ricketts, toured parts of the University Nebraska-Lincoln as well as a Certified Piedmontese facility and made a visit to Food Bank for the Heartland in Omaha. The stewardship agreement, between the USDA Forest Service and the State of Nebraska, focuses on shared stewardship, according to the news release, and established a framework for federal and state agencies to maintain forest management, add collaboration and respond to ecological challenges in Nebraska ([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 30.

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 22

N/A

September 15

Georgia farmers have suffered substantial financial losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Farmers and agribusiness experts knew that Georgia producers were suffering large revenue losses due to the pandemic but no one could point their finger on the extent. A [new impact study](#) released this month by the University of Georgia Center for Agribusiness and Economic Development shows that 82% of farmers have seen revenue loss — those predicting an annual loss on average expected to be short nearly \$50,000 ([source](#)).

September 8

The Georgia Farm Bureau [recently released a report](#) in which the organization said many farmers will lose upwards of \$50,000 this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report was generated after the bureau surveyed approximately 900 farmers, 82% of whom said they will lose income due to the ongoing public health emergency. The average estimated loss totaled \$49,000 per farm. Among those impacted, GFB expects cattle farmers to be impacted the most. Not far behind, however, is field crop farmers. Cotton farmers, for example, saw prices plummet and demand drop when the pandemic hit and consumers stopped spending at the same levels. The international market often used to prop up the market as well was also stagnant as Coronavirus has taken a toll on a worldwide scale. The Georgia Farm Bureau has also been working with D.C. officials, including the USDA, in an effort to assist [with streamlining the H-2A program](#) and avoiding labor shortages ([source](#)).