

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](#).

October 27

N/A

October 20

Thousands of foreign farm workers who spend summers in Iowa fields detasseling corn, picking melons, building animal confinements and caring for millions of pigs and other livestock could see their pay cut in half, according to a lawsuit advocates filed Wednesday ([source](#)).

An anonymous donor has contributed \$750,000 to help immigrant farmworkers and meatpacking-plant workers in Iowa who are struggling with lost income, health care costs and other challenges tied to the COVID-19 pandemic ([source](#)).

State Auditor Rob Sand has notified Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds that her use of \$21 million of federal pandemic relief funding for a new state software system that was approved before the pandemic started is not allowed under the CARES Act ([source](#)).

October 13

The number of crop acres that Iowa farmers are unable to harvest after the devastating August derecho has grown to 850,000, a new U.S. Department of Agriculture report showed Friday. That's a more than 50% increase from September, when the USDA had set the estimated loss to the Aug. 10 derecho [at 550,000 acres](#) ([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](#).

October 27

Farmers are encouraged to contact their local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office to apply for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2.0 (CFAP 2.0). The application deadline is December 11, 2020 ([source](#)).

October 13 & October 20

N/A

October 6

Columbus City Council voted unanimously Monday to repeal a city ordinance halting the sale of food and alcohol at restaurants and bars at 10 p.m., and closing for all on-site business at 11 p.m. ([source](#)).

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a \$2.2 trillion COVID-relief bill with numerous provisions sought by the National Pork Producers Council ([source](#)).

September 29

It took five months of negotiation, but the Ohio General Assembly has enacted a controversial bill that grants immunity from civil liability for coronavirus injuries, deaths or losses. Governor DeWine signed House Bill 606 on September 14, stating that it strikes a balance between reopening the economy and keeping Ohioans safe. The bill is effective in 90 days. The new law provides certainty that agricultural businesses won't be assailed by lawsuits seeking damages for COVID-19. A person claiming harm from exposure to COVID-19 at an agricultural business will only be successful upon a showing that the business acted recklessly and with intentional disregard or indifference to the possibility of COVID-19. That's a high evidentiary standard and burden of proof for a claimant ([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. On Saturday, September 26, limitations on bars and restaurants were lifted. 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](#).

October 27

A week ago, only one of the 11 regions in the governor's reopening plan was forbidden to have indoor dining, bar service and crowds of more than 25 people. By Wednesday (Oct. 28), more than half of the state's population will be living under the stricter rules ([source](#)).

The government of Indianapolis is offering a grant to businesses to help them get outdoor dining set up for the winter months. The city is offering to reimburse businesses up to \$2,500 for items including heaters, outdoor seating capacity, canopies or personal protective equipment ([source](#)).

October 20

Indiana Farm Bureau has released its list of policy priorities for the 2021 legislative session which begins in January. The organization received policy suggestions from members in each county. Last month, the INFB board of directors identified the key issues to be presented ([source](#)).

October 13

N/A

October 6

Indiana Lieutenant Governor Suzanne Crouch announced last week that a new grant is available to support meat processing plants in Indiana made available by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture ([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. Gov. Tim Wolf allowed restaurants to increase indoor capacity to 50% on September 21 if they self-certify by October 5.

**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](#).

October 27

After a debate that included claims about saving businesses and saving lives, a sharply divided Pennsylvania House late Tuesday afternoon narrowly failed to override Gov. Tom Wolf's veto of a bill to loosen coronavirus restrictions on bars and restaurants ([source](#)).

October 20

The Department of Agriculture announced Friday, that despite being held virtually, the 2021 Pennsylvania Farm Show will still offer competitive opportunities with modified rules ([source](#)).

October 13

A new bill in the General Assembly could help Pennsylvania farmers reduce the amount of polluted runoff in rivers and streams and help the state meet its clean water commitments. Almost one-third of Commonwealth streams don't meet standards for drinking, fishing or recreation, and farms are a major source of that pollution. Under the multi-state [Chesapeake Bay Clean Water Blueprint](#), Pennsylvania is required to have plans in place to reduce water pollution flowing downstream to the bay by 2025 ([source](#)).

Federal funding has been allocated to 24 different businesses around Norristown in the most recent Pennsylvania state budget. Many of the businesses included nail salons, barbershops, sandwich shops, and more. To qualify, businesses had to have had 25 or fewer employees in February 2020, and annual revenue of less than \$1 million prior to COVID-19's impact, among other requirements ([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. Current guidance can be found for restaurants [here](#).

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

October 27

Restaurants in Alameda County resumed indoor dining Friday for the first time in more than seven months. It's the last part of the Bay Area to have maintained such restrictions for so long, and one of only two counties where indoor dining remained off-limits ([source](#)).

October 20

N/A

October 13

The first phase of a survey of California farmworkers about the impacts of COVID-19 found a community afraid to seek medical help, suffering financially more than most groups and missing out on information and guidance due to language barriers. The study, undertaken on short notice by a consortium of groups, led to a series of recommendations to improve assistance to workers who survey representatives said are three times more likely to contract COVID-19 than those in other jobs ([source](#)).

October 6

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed a farmworker relief package this week, which promises farmworkers stricter enforcement of health guidelines and education of paid sick leave for COVID-19, among other things. Lawmakers also requested Newsom prioritize farmworkers for both PPE and testing ([source](#)).

The [University of California, Davis](#), will offer free [coronavirus](#) testing for agricultural workers in the Central Valley, [where the coronavirus pandemic has reached alarming levels](#) ([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%. You can find more information about the minimum standard health protocols required [here](#).

**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](#).

October 27

N/A

October 20

The recent funding cut by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) only further exacerbates the crisis as it harms two populations hardest hit by the impacts of the pandemic, those who have lost their jobs and struggling farmers. As a result of the Governor's directive to trim state agency budgets by 5%, the TDA has slashed the Surplus Agricultural Product Grant by 44%. That is a \$1.9 million negative impact to a program that, this year, assisted food banks in acquiring 33 million pounds of fresh produce for those in our state who are experiencing hunger ([source](#)).

October 13

New data is showing a grim outlook for the \$66B Texas restaurant industry. It warns that half of Texas' restaurants may not survive the pandemic ([source](#)).

September 29 & October 6

N/A

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](#)).

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 were able to 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](#).

October 27

N/A

October 20

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation announced the farms and agricultural processors awarded Agriculture Safety Grants, which include some Upper Thumb operations. The MEDC had two different grant programs, the Small Farm Safety Grant program for farms with less than 10 employees and the Agriculture Safety Grants for farms and food processors with more than 10 employees ([source](#)).

October 13

The virus that causes COVID-19 in humans has been detected in mink housed on a Michigan farm, the state Department of Agriculture and Rural Development announced Friday ([source](#)).

Farms and food processors across Michigan have been awarded grants to help mitigate risks of [COVID-19](#) across the state's food production industry. In total, 177 farms and 159 food processors were awarded \$15 million in Michigan Agricultural Safety Grants from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Additionally, 124 small farms of less than 10 employees received \$567,000 in grants for COVID-19 risk mitigation through the MEDC Small Farm Safety Grants ([source](#)).

October 6

On Friday, [the Michigan Supreme Court ruled](#) that Gov. Whitmer did not have the authority to issue executive orders without the approval of the state legislature ([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](#).

October 27

N/A

October 20

Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan have announced a \$7.7 million plan to support agricultural producers, meat processors and farmers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Funded through the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, the financial support will help farmers who have experienced market disruptions recover from and purchase equipment and supplies necessary for COVID-19 ([source](#)).

With the backdrop of World Food Day on Oct. 16, a coalition of Minnesota CEOs and executive leaders formally launched a partnership that will address major challenges faced by food and agriculture sectors. The Mbold coalition will work to find solutions to feeding a growing global population, protecting natural resources and addressing impacts of climate change ([source](#)).

October 13

N/A

October 6

In Minnesota, meatpacking employees filed 930 workers' compensation claims involving COVID-19 as of Sept. 11, according to the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry. None were accepted, 717 were rejected and 213 were under review. The agency did not identify the employers ([source](#)).

Despite trade wars, a pandemic and what is still a five-year slump in corn and soybean prices, farmland in the Upper Midwest has mostly kept its value and one broker says he has seen a marked uptick in west-central Minnesota in the past 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](#).

October 27

N/A

October 20

Businesses, charities and individuals suffering from the economic effects of COVID-19 can soon apply for a new round of state aid, Gov. Pete Ricketts announced Monday. The new grants target some businesses that were passed by in the state’s initial round of aid offered back in June, including arenas, ethanol plants, zoos and massage and tattoo parlors ([source](#)).

October 13

The agricultural economy continues to be a force in Nebraska and remains resilient despite recent down years. That’s the conclusion of a report released last week by University of Nebraska-Lincoln researchers. The 2017 Economic Impact of the Nebraska Agricultural Production Complex report, authored by UNL ag economists Brad Lubben and Jeffrey Stokes, along with Eric Thompson of the Bureau of Business Research, found that agriculture accounts for nearly 34% of business sales, 22% of the gross state product and nearly a quarter of the state’s jobs ([source](#)).

October 6

Estimates are that 35% to 50% of Nebraska’s net farm income from 2020 will come not from the sale of livestock and crops, but from federal financial assistance. That is the stunning measure of the devastating impact of COVID-19 on the state’s largest industry. And it will be months, perhaps years, before the ag economy recovers to its pre-COVID-19 levels ([source](#)).

The coronavirus pandemic has hurt Nebraska’s agricultural industry. But a new report from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln says the strength of the state’s agricultural industry “also may explain why Nebraska has been more insulated from the impacts of COVID-19 than many other states,” said Eric Thompson of UNL’s Bureau of Business Research ([source](#)).

Georgia State Update

Stay at Home/Shelter in Place Order: expired April 30 for the general public – older persons and the chronically ill were under a shelter in place order through October 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](#).

October 27

Alpharetta city officials have launched the Vulnerable Population Grant Program and is currently accepting applications from not-for-profit agencies that provide certain services to support Alpharetta families who are suffering significant hardship due to the pandemic. According to city officials, the focus of the program will be overdue rent and mortgage assistance; utility assistance; food and nutrition; childcare; distance learning support; or other unforeseen financial/ emergency needs of the community. It may also focus on providing group community services such as food kitchens or pantries for the same population as mentioned above and/or may also focus on organizations that provide mental health services for vulnerable individuals ([source](#)).

October 20

N/A

October 13

Still crippled by the pandemic, many Atlanta restaurants are struggling to hang on. Nearly 30% of Georgia eateries unlikely to survive without bailout, according to a new survey ([source](#)).

October 6

As Georgia enters fall harvest season, Georgia Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey and Georgia Ag Commissioner Gary Black are encouraging Georgia farmers and agribusinesses harvesting and processing fall crops to remain vigilant in following guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19 ([source](#)).