



Harvest in a Covid Era

Cranberry crops are ready and it's the most important time of year---harvest. 2020's harvest raises questions about how normal habits can be adapted to bring the crop in safely, keeping worker and farmer health, food safety, and the uninterrupted harvest and transport of cranberries in mind.

The goal of this site is to help **eliminate risk that doesn't bring a benefit**. Simple and straightforward steps to reduce the risk of disease spread are outlined, enabling a safe harvest. Each farm will make its own choices about which steps to follow based on practical considerations and infrastructure available, and this site is offered as a list of measures to consider. When a plan is established, communicate that plan with year-round workers, as well as temporary harvest workers. [This video](#) can be shared with your workers to ensure all major points are understood before they arrive at work.

References are provided where more information may be desired, and the Extension Cranberry Outreach Specialist welcomes discussion to tailor the best balanced guidelines for your marsh. Luckily, much of our work can be done outdoors, as fresh air flow dilutes viral particles. After considering risks, and eliminating risk that doesn't bring a benefit, cranberries can be safely harvested.

Coordinator

Designate a year-round employee to be covid coordinator for the marsh

- the coordinator will be responsible for making the marsh's covid plan, and ensuring the plan is followed

Staffing & Pods

Divide workforce into "pods", and don't let people from pods mix

- a pod is a group of workers on the same work crew
- ride together
- use the same restrooms
- if workers carpool to the farm site, put them in the same pod
- when possible, cross-train workforce so that operations can continue even with key workers absent

Consider hiring 10% more workers than usual so there is no pressure to come in when sick

Consider shift-style work (so that only certain pods are on site at various times, either in partial day or whole-day shifts)

Consider staggering start, break, lunch, and finish times for pods to promote physical distancing



Basic Precautions

Symptom checking

- ensure workers know the symptoms of covid [CDC symptoms]
- ask workers to stay home from work if they are exhibiting symptoms
- if a household member of a worker has covid, the worker must stay home as well

Distancing and hygiene

- the most common source of covid transmission is by flugge droplets produced when persons with the virus speak, breathe, sneeze, or cough.
- maintaining physical distance of 6' or greater limits virus spread [CDC distancing]
- when physical distance cannot be maintained, masks are the main line of defense [CDC masks]
- washing hands and frequently touched surfaces is always a good practice, and continues to be so during covid-19

Take temperatures [temp taking]

- use a non-contact infrared thermometer (available for ~\$20) to assess workers' temperatures when they arrive onsite
- if a worker has a temp > 100°F, ask them to report to a local testing facility or self-isolate at their home

Provide and/or require masks

- employers have the right to require workers to wear masks [mask required]
- regardless of whether that right is exercised, it is good practice to have disposable masks available for workers who wish to protect themselves from flugge droplets from others talking or coughing [flugge droplets]
- if a worker's mask gets wet, they should put on a new, dry mask
- face shields are not as protective as masks but may be an option if someone has a medical reason to not wear a mask, or if they are mostly working isolated but may come into contact with others occasionally

Cleaning and sanitizing [WEDC guidelines]

- clean and sanitize surfaces as part of well-rounded hygiene practice
- include commonly touched items such as steering wheels, bathrooms, water jug spigots, and tools
- use disinfectants which meet EPA criteria, such as 70% alcohol solutions
- instruct workers to avoid sharing tools
- provide time for employee hand washing throughout the day



Site Prep

Entry

- have an infrared thermometer for temperature taking upon arrival, and have temperature checker offer masks
- move punch-clock outdoors and encourage pre-work socializing outdoors
- using floor tape, mark areas for boot and raingear storage by pod

Bathrooms

- if practical, provide separate bathroom facilities for each pod
- leave windows open and run fans directed outside
- have blocks to block open porta-potty doors when not in use (Christmas tree stands work well)
- have signs encouraging flushing with the lid down and washing hands

Lunch facilities

- if you usually provide a microwave, put the microwave on an extension cord so people can use it outdoors
- remove chairs from dining area so people are not tempted to eat indoors

Work on Site

Parking

- park as normal but avoid pulling up next to people exiting their vehicles. Station the temperature-checker near the parking lot, check temps as workers arrive.

Masks

- disposable "OR masks", N95 masks, or homemade cloth masks are all acceptable
- masks are especially important when you cannot maintain 6' of distance, and indoors and in cabs
- if a mask gets wet, it must be removed and replaced with a dry mask
- workers bringing cloth masks should bring a dry spare
- workers using disposable masks must dispose of used masks in trash cans

Bathrooms. The virus can be transmitted through fecal matter, so bathrooms are a place of high risk [fecal]

- designate a bathroom per worker pod
- keep windows open and a fan running out the window to promote airflow
- block porta-potty doors open when not in use
- post signs encouraging handwashing and closing the lid before flushing



Riding together

- keep pods in separate vehicles
- where it is legal and safe to do so, riding in a truck bed is preferred to sharing a cab
- when cabs are being shared, windows should be opened. When it is cold, windows open and heat on full blast is still preferable to closed windows.

Lunch

- workers should eat in their own cars, rather than in a shared lunch space
- if meals are provided, provide them in 'grab & go' fashion so workers can physically distance before eating
- workers who prefer to eat outdoors should distance 6 or more feet between their picnic sites

Swapping out cabled tractors

- whenever practical, designate one driver per cabled tractor and avoid multiple switches per day
- if a switch is necessary, open all windows before first worker exits the cab and second worker exits
- second worker should keep windows and/or door open

Non-worker contact

- workers should avoid all contact with truckers and tourists who may be on-site
- workers who need to interface with tourists and truckers must use masks

Truckers

Check with receiving station to be sure truckers know and will follow the receiving station precautions

Segregation

- only a designated worker, wearing a mask and distancing at 6 feet, should interact with truckers
- if practical, provide a separate porta-potty for truckers
- do not allow truckers to share restrooms with other workers
- consider offering bottles of water or other sealed, grab-and-go snacks to show truckers their work is appreciated



If Someone Tests Positive [CDC when positive]

Check with county health department: these are CDC guidances, but some counties require more stringent measures

Cleaning

- vacate the area the positive worker was in for 24 hours, with all windows and doors open
- after 24 hours, clean the area thoroughly with >70% alcohol cleaner or other cleaner known to deactivate the virus

Duration [CDC Duration]

- a worker who has tested positive or has covid symptoms with no negative test result may return to work after all three conditions are met:
 - 10 days have passed since symptom onset
 - 24 hours have passed since fever has subsided without medication and
 - all other symptoms have improved

Notification within

- notify managers and owners of a positive test result, and which pod it was in
- notify all members of the pod
 - notify immediately if you learn of the positive test result during the workday
 - notify by phone before they come to work the next day if you learn about it in the evening.
- pod members of positive workers must not come to work until they have received a negative test, or have been symptom-free for 14 days
- ask workers to respect the privacy of the person who tested positive. Their identity can be shared to aid contact tracing, but not for other purposes.

Notification outside

- if the testing site has not already notified your county health agency, notify them
- if the positive worker interacted with truckers, inform the truckers or trucking company
- if the positive worker interacted with tourists, a bulletin may need to be posted by the county health board, as contact tracing won't be possible.



References

[DATCP toolkit] <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/DATCP%20COVID-19%20Toolkit.pdf>

[CDC distance] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>

[CDC masks] <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2020/p0714-americans-to-wear-masks.html>

[CDC symptoms] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

[Temp taking] <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/eeoc-coronavirus-temperature.aspx>

[mask required] <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/organizational-and-employee-development/pages/ask-hr-can-companies-require-masks.aspx>

[flugge droplets]

<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rsif.2009.0407.focus#:~:text=Respiratory%20droplets%20can%20carry%20microorganisms,travel%20more%20than%20%20m>

[WEDC guidelines] <https://wedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/COVID-19-Agriculture-Guidelines.pdf>

[fecal] <https://www.webmd.com/lung/news/20200527/covid19-virus-found-in-stool-may-be-infectious>

[CDC when positive] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>

[CDC duration] <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/disposition-in-home-patients.html>