

Contents

Introduction: 2

Hazard Assessment & Control: 2

Health and Safety Responsibilities: 2

Personal Hygiene: 2

 Handling Money: 2

 Eating Fruit:..... 2

 Hand Washing Stations:..... 2

 Hand Sanitizer:..... 3

 Wearing a mask:..... 3

 Wearing Gloves:..... 3

 Physical Distancing:..... 3

Facility Hygiene: 4

 Cleaning & Disinfecting Procedures: 4

 Entertainment & Gathering Areas:..... 4

 Check out Area: 4

 Fruit Containers: 4

Training Workers: 5

Communication: 5

 Posters and Signs:..... 5

 Conflict or Confrontations: 5

Parking & Coming on Property: 6

Transportation to the Field:..... 6

COVID-19 Outbreak: 7

Field Set up for Strawberries: 7

References:..... 8

Introduction:

The purpose of this best practice is to give u-pick and roadside stand operations resources to consider when opening up their operations to the public in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Use this best practice and the Farm Safety Nova Scotia [COVID-19 Health and Safety Prevention Guide](#) to build your own COVID-19 plan. Keep up to date on current [public health](#) recommendations and make changes where needed.

These practices aim to minimize the spread of COVID-19 person to person by maintaining physical distancing between fruit workers & customers and limiting the number of fruit workers & customers in the roadside stand and at the u-pick at a time.

Hazard Assessment & Control:

COVID-19 is a health hazard that poses a risk to everyone who works on the farm. It is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus can be spread by breathing in droplets from the air when a person coughs or sneezes, droplets that land on another person, and through droplets that rest on surfaces that are commonly touched by all workers on the farm.

Conduct a [hazard assessment](#) for your U-Pick and Roadside Stand. This will determine the risk associated with the operation and the controls required to be implemented to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

CFIA states that there is currently no evidence that food or food packages can be a source or route of transmission of the virus. Therefore, it is safe to use provided cardboard picking boxes or use your own clean 4L pails.

Health and Safety Responsibilities:

Determine the roles and responsibilities of the farm owner, managers, supervisors, workers and customers. More workers may be needed this season in order to effectively implement hazard controls to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as to enforce the hazard controls with the workers and customers.

Personal Hygiene:

Handling Money:

Money can change hands several times a day and it is not possible to track the handling of it. Money is also very dirty and a possible source of infection. Where possible, avoid handling cash by encouraging customers to use debit and credit card machines. If handling cash, ask customers for exact amount and ensure to wear gloves and change them frequently, or wash and disinfect hands directly after handling money.

If using debit and credit card machines be sure to disinfect between uses. Using the "TAP" feature will prevent additional handling of the machine.

Eating Fruit:

Post signs and include in the rules workers and customers are not allowed to eat the fruit while working, purchasing, or picking fruit. Hands may get dirty while working and picking fruit and can be a source of infection when transferring food from hand to mouth.

Hand Washing Stations:

Water of any temperature can be used with ample amount of soap, and single use towels to dry hands which should be disposed in a lined container.



U-Pick & Roadside Stand Best Practices During COVID-19

Typical hand washing stations may become a challenge for work in the field environment so creating hand washing stations in remote areas may need some creativity. Review these ideas on [Building Your Own Hand Washing Stations](#).

Strategically place hand washing stations in the parking lot of roadside stands. At the u-pick, add hand washing stations in the parking lot, waiting area, in the field, and at the check out area.

Hand Sanitizer:



Washing hands with soap and water is recommended whenever possible because handwashing reduces the number of germs and chemicals on hands. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Review hints and tips on [hand sanitizer](#), the [dangers of hand sanitizer](#), and a list of [local suppliers](#). Position the hand sanitizer, where it is safe to do so in the same locations as the hand washing stations and in particular, areas where hand washing stations are not possible.

Wearing a mask:

When to use a [mask](#):

- Masks are not necessary and are not protective to healthy people but can prevent the spread of the virus from sick people. If you are healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you are taking care of a person with COVID-19.
- Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing.
- Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer.
- If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly.
- Masks are not recommended as a substitute for physical distancing.

Wearing Gloves:

Gloves may be worn when hand washing stations are not readily available. It is important to understand how to [remove gloves](#) and dispose of them to prevent contamination and the risk of infection. Workers may prefer to wear gloves when handling cash, or handling other items that customers have touched. Ensure to change gloves frequently.

Physical Distancing:

Physical or social distancing is a method used to keep space between yourself and another person. This is one of the easiest prevention methods to stop the spread of COVID-19. This prevents a person from being within the distance to which droplets can be transmitted through the air in which a person could inhale or absorb those droplets or have the droplets land on them or on a surface.

Follow the tips below to maintain physical distancing at the roadside stand or u-pick.

- Consider booking appointments to limit the number of people.
- Use a pre-order system with designate parking space for pick up.
- Stagger the times for the pickers entering the field.
- Stay 2 Meters or 6 feet apart in parking area, waiting area, fields, and checkout stands.
- Set up rows to maintain the 2 meters or 6 feet apart. See sample below for strawberry fields.
- Ensure customers know to stay in their assigned rows.

U-Pick & Roadside Stand Best Practices During COVID-19

- Avoid overlap of people coming and going by using directional signs. Have an entrance line leading up to roadside stands and exits leading away from the stand. Mark the 6 feet separation between customers with stakes in the ground or similar means.
- At the u-pick, avoid overlap of people coming and going by creating a map and using directional arrows and signs from the parking lot to waiting area to the field to the checkout.
- Do not gather in groups of more than 10 people.
- Avoid large gatherings or crowded areas.

Facility Hygiene:

Cleaning & Disinfecting Procedures:

Most common EPA-registered household or retail [disinfectants](#) will sanitize surfaces sufficiently to prevent the spread of germs. Use a disinfectant appropriate for the surface and as recommended by Health Canada. Do not work on or with surfaces that are porous. The more frequently the surface is touched, the more frequently it should be cleaned and disinfected. Set a cleaning and disinfecting schedule based on use. If surfaces are dirty, clean them using soap and water before disinfecting them.

Rather than relying on memory, it may be helpful to maintain a [cleaning and disinfecting log](#) to document all cleaning procedures. Adapt the Farm Safety sample cleaning and disinfecting log to suit your individual operation.



Common surfaces and things to clean and disinfect may include:

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| • Electronics (phone, debit/credit machines, tablets, computers...) | • Scales |
| • Cash box | • Washrooms |
| • Reusable buckets | • Door/Drawer Handles |
| • Vehicle, Wagon & Equipment Cabs (Steering wheel, controls, shifter, buttons, window, grip handles, and door handles) | • Dispensers |
| | • Railings |
| | • Counters and tables |

Entertainment & Gathering Areas:

As with county or municipal entertainment areas, gathering areas, play ground equipment, rides, etc.. are closed to the public. Ensure these areas are removed or clearly marked closed and do not allow workers or customers to use them until further notice.

Check out Area:

- Use two tables, one in front of the other, to keep distance from customers when paying.
- If possible, put up a barrier such as plexiglass to keep distance between the worker and the customer.
- Mark the ground or floor with physical distancing requirements to keep customers a part.

Fruit Containers:

Consider setting a unit price per container for product, allowing customers to use their own reusable containers to reduce the risk of contaminating surfaces at the roadside stand or u-pick. If not possible, ask customers to not bring their own containers.

If providing reusable containers, ensure they are cleaned and disinfected between customers following the procedures for cleaning and disinfecting above. A separate cleaning and disinfecting log may be required for these containers to track the frequency and ensure protocols are being met.



U-Pick & Roadside Stand Best Practices During COVID-19

If setting a price per weight for product, consider using new containers for customers to avoid potential contamination.

At roadside stands, limit customer handling by having pre-packaged or pre-weighed portions available.

When weighing fruit, disinfect scale between uses.

Training Workers:

Farmers are required to communicate and train workers on the risk associated with COVID-19 and how to stop the spread of the virus while working on the farm. A sample orientation checklist as well as a COVID-19 Communication Checklist are available on the [Farm Safety Nova Scotia](#) website.

Farmers will also need to train customers on the risks associated with COVID-19 when customers come to purchase fruit at the roadside stand or when customers come to pick their own fruit. A similar checklist can be used to ensure that all bases are covered when bringing each customer on the farm. It may be repetitive, but it is necessary to ensure all health and safety practices are followed. The parking lot or point of entry to the farm is the best location to train customers and provide information.

Communication:

Posters and Signs:

Let customers know if they are experiencing any of the following symptoms they will not be permitted to participate in u-pick activities or make a purchase at the roadside stand.

Signs & Symptoms may include:

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| - fever (i.e. chills, sweats) | - muscle aches |
| - cough or worsening of a previous cough | - sneezing |
| - sore throat | - nasal congestion/runny nose |
| - headache | - hoarse voice |
| - shortness of breath | - unusual fatigue |

Prepare the customer before coming to the roadside stand or u-pick by sharing the new farm practices through social media, websites, ads, or pamphlets as well as put up [signs](#) at the entrance and in parking areas to prepare customers before coming on the property.

Put up [posters and signs](#) at u-pick and roadside stand entrances to alert visitors, customers, and workers that pre-screening measures are required before coming on the property as well as the procedures for preventing the spread of COVID-19. Consider posting signs for hand washing, physical distancing, rules for u-pick operation or roadside stand, payment methods, and stopping the spread.

Ensure all workers are highly visible and can be easily recognized by the customer.

Conflict or Confrontations:

When there is a change in the way we do things, and there is a high-risk environment, workers, customers and visitors can become stressed. Customers may not fully understand why changes have been implemented and disagree with the preventative measures put in place at the roadside stand or at the u-pick area. The stress may cause a person to become confrontational and create conflict.

It is important to let customers know the rules in a clear manner and that there are consequences if those rules are not followed such as not being permitted to buy fruit or participate in the u-pick. Post these rules in parking areas, waiting areas before picking, in the field, and at checkout locations. Also, communicate the rules on social media and website.

If there is a confrontation, follow the hints and tips below to deescalate the situation:

- Listen without reacting or interrupting and assess the situation. The person may just need to vent.
- Try to calm the person down by acknowledging their concerns.
- Apologize even though you haven't done anything wrong and let them know you understand.
- Depersonalize the situation by staying calm and in control of your own emotions.
- Try to see their perspective.
- Let the other person know their options, but enforce the rules.
- Ask the person to leave or leave the area yourself, if uncomfortable.
- Call for help if the situation becomes out of hand and you feel threatened.

Parking & Coming on Property:

It is best practice to maintain 2 meters or 6 feet of distance between cars in parking lots. Maintaining this distance will also help limit the number of customers in one area at any one time at the roadside stand or at the u-pick. Use a sign in & sign out sheet to document the customers coming and going from the roadside stand and u-pick area. The log would include the first and last name of the customer, the date, the time of arrival, the time of departure, and a phone number. It can be treated like a visitor's log.

Post a worker in the parking area directing traffic to ensure spacing between vehicles, to control the number of persons going to the roadside stand, and entering the u-pick area. Customers may be asked to wait in their vehicles if the u-pick or roadside stand is too busy or if they are not picking or making a purchase.

The worker in the parking area can conduct health screening of the customer looking for general signs and symptoms of COVID-19 listed above and review the rules for the roadside stand or u-pick.

Ensure the person working in the parking area is highly visible and comfortable in enforcing rules.

Transportation to the Field:

Some fields may be a distance from the farm access point, and transportation to the field to pick fruit may be required. Follow the best practice below in transporting customers to the field.

1. Have customers use their own vehicle. Use directional signs to ensure customers know where to go.
2. Use a wagon or open vehicle to transport customers still maintaining 2 meters or 6 feet of distance.
3. Load the transport vehicle from back to front maintaining 2 meters or 6 feet apart from each other.
4. If using a closed vehicle, avoid having anyone sit up front with the driver. Keep space between passengers.
 - a. Roll the window down to increase ventilation.
 - b. Recommend passengers to wear a mask or cloth face covering.
 - c. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or the sleeve of your elbow when you cough or sneeze.
5. Unload the vehicle from front to back maintaining 2 meters or 6 feet apart from each other.
6. Ensure the transport vehicle is stocked with tissues and a hands-free waste container to dispose of tissues. Driver to remove waste after each trip.
7. Driver to wipe down all surfaces of the transport vehicle touched with disinfectant after passengers are offloaded.
 - a. Surfaces may include windows, window controls, door handles, arm rests, head rests, steering wheel, shifter, cargo boxes, tissue box, hand grips, railings, etc.



U-Pick & Roadside Stand Best Practices During COVID-19

COVID-19 Outbreak:

[If One of Your Workers or a Customer Tests Positive for COVID-19](#)

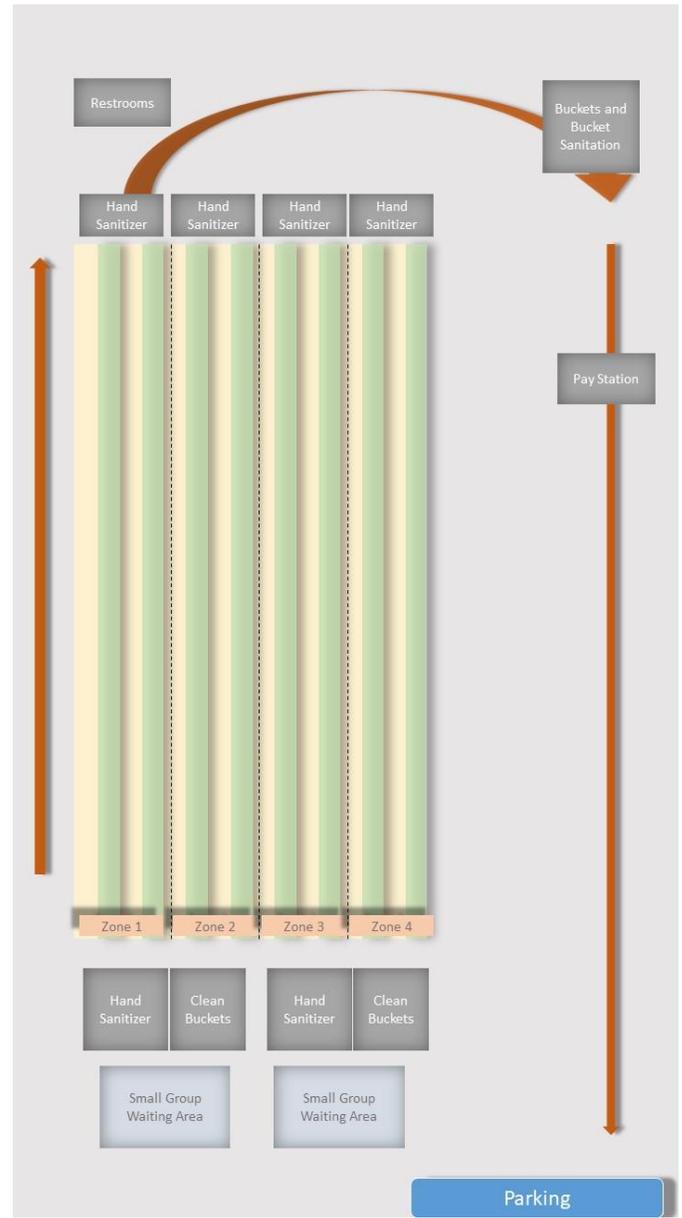
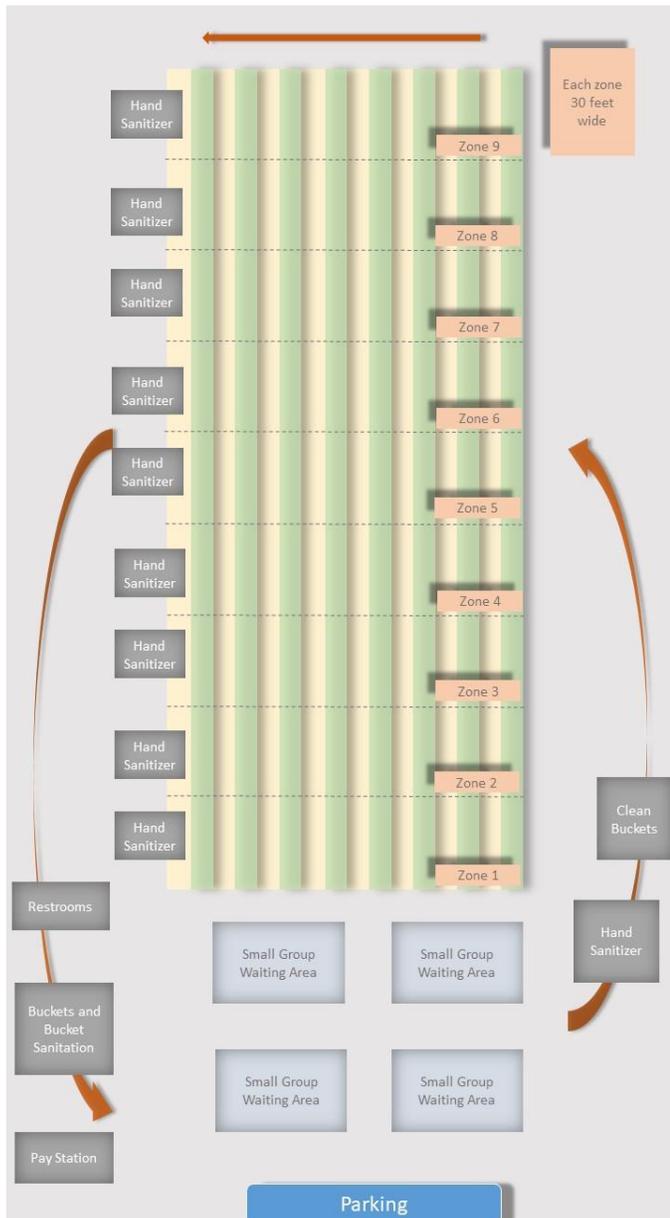
When a worker or customer tests positive for COVID-19, Public Health will contact the worker or the customer and they will work together to identify all close contacts and determine if they need to self-isolate. Sign in and sign out sheet for customers will help identify those individuals that the worker or customer were in close contact with.

If Public Health doesn't contact the farm, then it was determined the risk was low and workers can continue working. You don't need to shut down farm operations if one worker or customer tests positive for COVID-19.

Follow the [If You are Sick](#) resource to identify the correct measures for worker isolation on or off farm, gaining medical help if needed, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Call 8-1-1 to report the case to the health authority.

Field Set up for Strawberries:

U-Pick fields could be divided into block-zones. Read more at: <https://strawberries.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/03/covid-19-daily-farmers-and-strawberry-update-3-29-2020/>. Recommend maintaining a directional approach to lead your customers through the field. For example, have them start at one end of the field and end at the other end if possible and have dedicated paths for them to go to pay station and parking lot. You decrease the possibility for people to come into close proximity to each other that way.



Pictures taken from: COVID-19 Daily Farmers and Strawberry Update 3/29/20: <https://strawberries.ces.ncsu.edu/2020/03/covid-19-daily-farmers-and-strawberry-update-3-29-2020/>

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