



May 8, 2020

All Hatching Egg Producers and Stakeholders

**RE: COVID-19 Update**

Dear Stakeholders,

It is my goal to keep you updated as the COVID-19 situation unfolds; it is volatile and changes very quickly, and your attention to these Friday updates is appreciated.

Staff has created a COVID-19 file on the producer side of the Commission website. All updates and information, inclusive of the sanitation checklists, are housed there. The producer sanitation checklist has been updated to reflect AgSafeBC recommendations, please ensure you are using the updated version, I have attached it to this update.

I have received some preliminary information on the AgriRecovery/AgriStability programming and the ability to potentially access some funding. The program is being reviewed. Please sign up as soon as possible for this program because if you are not signed up, you may not be eligible. As things unfold, I will be able to use it to assist in the relief efforts for hatching egg producers. AgriRecovery is working on the costs incurred by the Commission and AgriStability is developing a webinar for producers to attend in the upcoming weeks specifically on individual producer costs and losses. I will ensure you receive the invitation information when a date is set.

Commission staff and the BC Egg Hatchery Association are consulting weekly on egg flow and the impact to the processing age. Chicken Farmers of Canada (CFC) reduced their allocation for period A-164 by -7.5% in the west and -12.6% in the east. These figures are from the base allocation but as actual allocation for A-164 was 2.5% higher, the impact to the hatching egg sector is an approximate reduction of 10% in egg sets for the period. The A-164 allocation (last 4 weeks of the period) will be reviewed by CFC on May 21 and A-165 is to be discussed in early June, further reductions are possible.

Some domestic production continues to be re-routed to the interior, more since last week, but there is more capacity there and more eggs need to be re-directed. The CFC allocation reduction resulted in a bottle neck at the hatcheries, with the hatcheries' cooperation we seem to be through the most challenging time.

The Egg Hatchery Association and Commission staff are working on the request to the hatcheries to limit imports to leave room for domestic production. The Commission is further supporting the hatcheries, the BC Government and Canadian Hatching Egg Producers in a request to Global Affairs Canada for the reduction of penalties associated with not bringing in all their import allotment. This penalty further complicates the reduction of imported product being brought in by the hatcheries.

The Egg Hatchery Association and the Commission staff are also reviewing a potential breeder price increase that was brought forward. The Commission has requested further clarification on this request.



The Commission has also looked at reducing the processing age (see the May 1 letter from the Commission to stakeholders). Although the Commission has not decided to do so at this time, it will be sending out a decision letter outlining its expectations and conditions for maintaining the processing age as is for now.

Unfortunately, the processing sector has flagged labour shortages moving forward and booking these timeslots have become increasingly more difficult. The Superior Poultry plant closure has further exacerbated the shackle space shortage, so broilers, breeders, turkeys and layers are all competing for shackle space. The Commission continues to render flocks where no shackles are available for further processing which is at the Commission's expense and the producer is not paid for the fowl.

The Commission plans to review the processing age and fowl compensation received by producers at the end of the year, as was done in 2018 and 2019. At this time, producers are being compensated only for destroyed eggs. Under performing flocks are picked for destruction with inspection staff oversight. All these costs and losses are under review through the AgriStability and AgriRecovery programs.

The breaker plant situation remains unchanged and continues to limit the throughput of hatching eggs to the average weekly throughput experienced in 2019. We would like to send more eggs to the breaker, but this is an Egg Farmers of Canada national policy to avoid a surge of surplus hatching eggs going to breakers as there is not currently a market for them.

The office remains closed and staff are working remotely. On-Farm work continues with the Producer's comfort level except for SE testing. SE is a human health risk and the testing must continue as a result. The On-Farm team is taking every precaution to ensure that we are maintaining the Public Health Authority social distancing and equipment standards. They are wearing masks and gloves on-site in addition to their regular Biosecurity attire. If producers do not want to attend the SE sampling please leave the barn door unlocked at the time of the test and leave the barn lights on. Staff will text when they have left the site.

Please email me directly with any questions or concerns on any of these matters.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Nelson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Stephanie Nelson, Executive Director  
BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission

# **BCBHEC Daily Checklist for Producers in Response to COVID-19**

This is a daily checklist of screening and On-site practices for the health and safety of those who work here. This form is completed by the producers and signed off each day as complete. These forms are kept in a visible area in case someone on site becomes ill.

## **Screening Practices**

- **Monitor symptoms**
  - Example: employers can monitor common symptoms for each employee. Anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 or temperatures above 38 °C (100.4 °F) must not be at work.
- **Exposure**
  - Anyone in close contact with someone diagnosed or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 must not be at on-site, must remain in self-isolation for 14 days and follow public health protocols.
- **Travel**
  - If you have travelled, you must self-isolate for 14 days. This includes the barns and property.

## **On-site Practices**

**In addition to the mandated standards required by producer agencies and government regulators, farmers, employers and employees must follow best practices for limiting exposure on-site and ensure that all practices are well displayed and documented.**

- Discontinue all non-essential visits to farms.
- Essential visitors attending farms must sign into visitor log, wear biosecurity PPE, gloves and face mask.
- Necessary equipment, door handles, floors etc. that visitors touch should be disinfected after each appointment such as egg pickups, sawdust deliveries, feed deliveries etc.
- Egg collection stations should be disinfected after each collection and/or an employee change
- Employees should wear gloves and use a new pair for each activity: ex. Barn walk, egg collection, weighing birds etc. and wash hands frequently.
- Disinfect surfaces that are touched on a daily basis at the end of each day: ex. Door handles, equipment, egg sorting tables, counters etc.

## **Additional Resources**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca)

Canadian Food Inspection Agency: [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca)

Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca)

Consult your provincial or territorial government's website regularly for additional regional guidance.

## **BCBHEC Daily Checklist for Producers in Response to COVID-19**

- Disinfect anteroom twice a day, this includes floors, tables, stairs, chairs, bathrooms and any surfaces that are touched on a daily basis

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

VERSION 2

### **Additional Resources**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: [www.agr.gc.ca](http://www.agr.gc.ca)

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Consult your provincial or territorial government's website regularly for additional regional guidance.

# Site Access Health Questionnaire (COVID-19)

## Guidelines:

**To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to reduce the potential risk of exposure to the workforce, please conduct this questionnaire, daily, at designated entry points, prior to accessing the site. This health screening applies to all who wish to gain entry to this site!**

Any person who refuses to answer screening questions will be denied access to our work locations – **without exception**. Complying with our safety measures is in the interest of maintaining worker safety and those choosing not to comply will **not** be permitted to work.

## Screening Setup Station

1. In order to protect the person conducting the screening, each person screening must wear at a minimum gloves, a mask and safety glasses.
2. A barrier (i.e. table, cones, etc.) must be in place to keep a distance between each person being screened and the person screening.
3. The line for people being screened must be a minimum of 2 meters away to ensure privacy between the person being screened and the person conducting the screening.
4. Each person in the line must be a minimum of 2 meters apart from each other.
5. As each person is ready for screening, they are to approach the barrier.

## Screening Process Questions

Workers should be asked these questions in a manner that respects their privacy. Please devise a process at your location where workers do not easily overhear of co-workers who voluntarily divulge personal medical information.

### Each person will be asked 5 questions:

1. Are you currently experiencing any cold or flu-like symptoms? Such as;
  - New onset or worsening of existing cough
  - Fever (38°C or 100.4 F)
  - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
  - Sore throat
  - Severe fatigue
  - Runny nose
  - Vomiting
2. Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days?
3. Did you provide care or have close contact with a person with COVID-19 (probable or confirmed) while they were ill (cough, fever, sneezing, or sore throat) within the last 14 days?
4. Did you have close contact with a person who travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days who has become ill (cough, fever, sneezing, or sore throat)?
5. Have you or anybody in your home had contact with someone who is being tested for COVID-19 or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

**If the answer is YES to ANY of the above questions, please notify your supervisor and deny access to the individual requesting entry.**

**IMPORTANT:** Disinfect pens before sharing them between people. Have visitors file their own documents to avoid sharing paper. Consider asking these questions verbally to avoid sharing pens and documents. This must be done in a private area where their responses will not be overheard by co-workers.

This questionnaire is based on the BC Centre for Disease Control's COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool and WorkSafeBC Guidance.

DATE:		WORKER NAME	
EMPLOYER:		CONTACT PHONE #:	

<b>1</b>	<p><b>Are you experiencing any of the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• New onset or worsening of cough or other symptoms</li> <li>• Sneezing/Running Nose</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Difficulty breathing</li> <li>• Severe Fatigue</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>2</b>	<p><b>Have you travelled to any countries outside Canada (including the United States) within the last 14 days?</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>3</b>	<p><b>Did you provide care or have close contact with a person with COVID-19 (probable or confirmed) while they were ill (cough, fever, sneezing, or sore throat) within the last 14 days?</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>4</b>	<p><b>Did you have close contact with a person who travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days who has become ill (cough, fever, sneezing, or sore throat)?</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>
<b>5</b>	<p><b>Have you or anybody in your home had contact with someone who is being tested for COVID-19 or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Yes</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No</b>



May 1, 2020

To: BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission Pricing and Production Advisory Committee  
All BC Hatching Egg and Chicken Sector Stakeholders

## **PRICING AND OTHER COVID-19 RELATED MATTERS IN THE BROILER HATCHING EGG SECTOR**

The COVID-19 crisis has presented the BC chicken sector and the BC Broiler Hatching Egg Commission with an increasing number of issues and challenges. The purpose of this memorandum is to update the Commission's Pricing and Production Advisory Committee (PPAC) and all stakeholders on Commission-related matters following the A164 allocation decision of the Chicken Farmers of Canada. This memorandum will also advise of some current and potential regulatory measures that have been and may be taken by the Commission.

Any advice from the PPAC, its members or other stakeholder response is requested by the morning of May 7, 2020 in support of a Commission meeting scheduled for that afternoon.

### **Pricing**

#### *Issues*

The crisis has impacted negatively on all stakeholders, including with respect to pricing and costs. The Commission acknowledges the extraordinary impact on processors and the measures they have taken to keep the industry operating. Given the circumstances, to date the Commission has exercised its discretion not to pursue an alternative to pricing based on the existing live formula and linkage processes. In the interim the Commission continues to work on a new approach to pricing for the longer term, including cost of production and hatchery margin formulae.

The potential for a reduction of the kill age from 56 weeks has been raised with the Commission's PPAC, the BC Chicken Marketing Board, the BC Egg Hatchery Association (EHA) and the *ad hoc* Supply Chain Working Group. It was also discussed with the EHA again at its weekly meeting with the Commission on May 1. Hatching eggs cannot be stored and shipments to the breaker are restricted to historical averages, providing minimal relief. Surpluses resulting from allocation cutbacks must be removed from the market, resulting in significant surplus removal costs as well as loss of opportunity costs for the Commission and hatching egg producers.

The Commission has yet to decide to reduce the kill age. Currently it is attempting to remove older and underperforming flocks from production, along with certain specified flocks that will further reduce the egg surplus. These efforts include some flocks marketed as spent fowl and some flocks processed for rendering



only, the latter at a cost the Commission (which is ultimately a cost to hatching egg producers). Getting access to shackle space would be ideal, however, given the critical shortage of that space the Commission is examining on-farm euthanasia and rendering options. Composting on farm is an option but undesirable.

Should shackle space or other measures not be available to reduce current overproduction as soon as possible to manage current and future egg flow, an earlier kill age, possibly below 55 weeks, may be required. It is important for the Commission to have as much up-to-date information as possible before making that decision on May 7.

Unfortunately, this elimination of BC flocks could also impact on the ability of domestic production to recover when market conditions improve. This will result in an update to the cost calculation for producing hatching eggs in the existing linkage process. As significant costs are already being incurred by hatching egg producers to reduce the current surpluses, a decision with respect to kill age must be taken soon.

Separately, and in response to processor requests, the Commission reduced the spent fowl price to \$0.20 per kilogram live weight until the end of Period A163 (July 4, 2020). Although this was an early recognition of COVID-19 market issues affecting processors, subsequent events have overtaken this pricing response and increased the cost impact on the Commission and hatching egg producers as they pay for flocks that are processed for rendering.

### *Regulatory Response*

The Commission will assess the situation at its May 7, 2020 meeting and determine whether a general reduction in the kill age is necessary. This decision will be based on information available at that time and the assessment will include the egg surplus situation, the status of existing flock disposal efforts and the utilization impact of hatchery Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) on domestic production.

### **Production Management**

In an April 17, 2020 letter concerning the pricing of spent fowl, the Commission confirmed an April 14, 2020 agreement with the EHA “that there should be cooperative management of both domestic and import production” which includes “timely, proactive forecasting” of upcoming processing requirements.

Since then, the Commission has been working with all BC hatcheries on measures to accurately forecast overall production demands and increase the use of domestic BC production where possible. This will also assist in retaining domestic flocks to supply the BC market through 2020 and into 2021.

There have been circumstances where some hatcheries have acted or attempted to act in a manner detrimental to the orderly marketing requirements of the Commission. Those issues have been addressed



as will any future problems. It is, however, the Commission's preference to continue working directly and cooperatively with each hatchery in managing BC's overall production requirements.

As well, the Commission has supported BC hatcheries in making representation to Global Affairs Canada (GAC) that penalties for not meeting the 90-percent target for 2020 TRQ imports be eliminated or reduced. The Commission has expressed its position to Canadian Hatching Egg Producers (CHEP) and to the BC ministries of Agriculture and Jobs, Economic Development and Competitiveness (Trade). These ministries have communicated with GAC which has advised that it is looking into the underutilization penalties issue. On April 27, 2020, CHEP and the Canadian Hatchery Federation made a joint submission to GAC requesting the penalty be reduced to 70 percent as soon as possible.

The Commission notes that hatcheries in most other provinces have already underutilized TRQ, which is reducing the impact on their domestic production.

Given the cost and management impacts of surplus production on the sector, it is the Commission's expectation that hatcheries will continue to provide timely and accurate forecasting information in support of the Commission's decision-making generally, and specifically with respect to a decision about kill age on May 7. It is also expected that hatcheries will work with the Commission in helping to protect BC domestic production through this crisis where and when their import allocations allow. The Commission will also continue working with the hatcheries in identifying and responding to production issues in a timely way.

### *Regulatory Response*

This cooperation and timely provision of information in support of production planning and managing changes to that planning is essential. The absence of this information will necessitate Commission inspection of hatchery floors and records as required to confirm actual production data. This will simply delay regulatory decision-making necessary for the sector to manage through the COVID-19 crisis and give rise to potential issues with respect to squandered eggs during 2020.

### **Surplus Removal Costs**

The COVID-19 cutbacks in allocation have resulted in actual, incurred costs and loss of opportunity cost to BC stakeholders. While acknowledging that COVID-19 has also led to additional costs to other stakeholders, the Commission notes here the costs incurred by it in removing surplus hatching eggs from the market, directly and indirectly through the removal of flocks from production. The reduction in the fowl price and an increasing reliance on rendering has also impacted financially on and hatching egg producers.

The Commission has supported the hatcheries in not incurring the cost of setting surplus eggs and hatching chicks that would have to be destroyed as surplus to the market. Similarly, the Commission



supports the hatcheries in avoiding rolling eggs to the point where potential issues with respect to hatching and chick quality arise. This would reduce hatchery productivity, impact on returns to hatching egg producers and the supply of good chicks to growers.

However, all of this has still resulted in the Commission and hatching egg producers incurring increased costs. These costs include dumping semi-trailer loads of eggs and paying to have fowl processed for rendering (which is also a revenue loss for producers). These costs are currently averaging over \$100,000 a week. This is unsustainable, even before you combine it with an estimated loss of opportunity cost of almost \$2,000,000 in farm gate receipts over periods A163 and A164. While hatching egg producers are an important cog in the BC chicken industry, they are not a large one.

This information illustrates the production management complexities of the hatching egg sector and the difficulties and impacts that arise in adjusting this long-term planning and production cycle to sudden changes in chicken allocations.

## Conclusion

While reserving the right to take the regulatory measures necessary to preserve orderly marketing in the BC hatching egg sector, it is the Commission's preference to work cooperatively with all stakeholders in managing through COVID-19. It impacts on all of us.

The Commission is facing critical production management and cost issues. Removing surplus eggs from the market by dumping them and killing flocks early and/or in larger numbers for rendering or composting have huge financial implications for the Commission and hatching egg producers. Although an earlier kill age can reduce costs in the short term, removing additional domestic flocks from production will have a negative impact on the recovery of BC hatching egg production in the longer term. It is a significant decision that the Commission must address at its May 7, 2020 meeting.

As noted, any comments, questions or concerns in response to this information should be provided to the Commission office not later the morning of May 7, 2020.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Collins".

Jim Collins  
Chair

cc: Commission Website

**EOC Weekly COVID-19 Update  
For Friday, May 8, 2020**

*This will be a weekly update if the Covid-19 situation continues to rapidly change or as needed if issues trail off. The update format will be an update from the emergency operations centre (EOC), key industry news items, and useful links.*

**AgSafe's hot tip of the week:**

We recommend that Farmer's have a plan in place in case of illness of farmer or key workers to allow for a smooth and safe transition on the farm.

- Identify who you can ask to help
- Does this person know the skills and knowledge for your farm?
- Write down a daily work plan detailing, stock location, feeding requirements and animal health plans.
- Provide operating instructions for all machinery. Including milking barn, automatic poultry systems and provide information of farms daily checks. "e.g. Check that feed isn't bridged in feed bin" etc.
- Provide a list of emergency contacts for farm including Veterinarian, technical advisers and relevant equipment dealership.
- Try to ensure workers are multi-skilled where possible. Can everyone operate feeding systems safely.
- Plan ahead and educate for safe operation in the event of your absence form farm

See AgSafe's Agricultural Site for COVID-19 Prevention Procedures and worker safety for more information.

<https://agsafebc.ca/tools/emergency-planning-resources/>

**UPDATE FROM THE POULTRY EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTRE (EOC)**

*The EOC and the BC Poultry Association continue to work with the four boards and commissions, processors, hatcheries, and the BC Ministry of Agriculture on issues related to day to day poultry operations and planning for Covid-19 related emergencies. The EOC participates in weekly poultry supply chain conference calls.*

## INDUSTRY UPDATES *(control click on title to move to the article)*

### Table of Contents

INDUSTRY UPDATES.....	2
The Resilience of the Canadian Agri-Food Supply Chain: A CAPI Digital Dialogue .....	2
Prime Minister announces virtual care and mental health tools for Canadians .....	4
Sorting through COVID-19 programs.....	5
Supporting Canada’s farmers, food businesses, and food supply.....	7
Updates and summary from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.....	9
Asia - Eat at home - the new trend in a post-COVID19 era .....	11
COVID-19 and its Impact on the Chinese Economy.....	12
COVID-19 RESOURCES - USEFUL LINKS:.....	13
Key BC provincial Links.....	13
National sources:.....	14

## INDUSTRY UPDATES

### [The Resilience of the Canadian Agri-Food Supply Chain: A CAPI Digital Dialogue](#)

The Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute has identified short- and long-term issues affecting the food system’s resilience. In a report resulting from discussion with 40 stakeholders, the Ottawa-based think-tank said the supply chain is performing well but uncertainty prevails.

Many challenges currently facing the industry, according to the report, were related to logistics. Supply does not rate as a high concern, but getting that supply transported, distributed and stocked on retail shelves does.

The report noted absenteeism of workers is up 10 percent at input suppliers, plants, warehouses and retailers, and there is concern workers at ports, including inspectors, will get sick, creating a backlog of imported ingredients or products needed to keep the supply chain efficiently operating.

“Without proper planning there is a risk of entire plants being closed temporarily. We have already seen this happen to two pork plants in Quebec, a beef plant in Alberta, and a grocery store in Ontario,” read the report.

“Many participants pointed out that when there are problems downstream, there are consequences for upstream sectors, such as the case with culling of market-ready hogs as a result of a plant closure.”

The report also pointed to concern over a shortage of skilled labour, such as truck drivers, mechanics and maintenance workers brought in to repair equipment, many of it specialized and imported from Europe or the United States.

“Thus, the retention of skilled workers as well as the recruitment of new ones and proper training to address the redundancy required in the event of illness and worker absenteeism remain important issues,” said the report, released April 27.

Noting that processing plants cannot sell their products without inspectors, the report raised concern over the availability of inspectors.

“This can lead to slowdowns in supply chains,” the report stated, later adding, “Allowing for some flexibility in enforcing regulations at plants, during transport of live animals and commodities and interprovincially and cross border would allow for less rigidity and fewer potential bottlenecks in the system.”

The report acknowledged some participants are concerned over a “lack of emergency preparedness by some companies in terms of risk management around pathogens and food safety and the lack of government-industry preparedness where regulators have sat on the sidelines waiting for the industry to respond.”

CABI also concluded in the report proper plans were not put in place following the 2003 BSE crisis.

“Business continuity plans were to be developed with tools to respond to natural disasters and pandemics,” read the report. “It was incumbent on the supply chain to map out the weaknesses in the system to be able to identify quickly where the challenges will arise after the BSE crisis.”

“This does not appear to have been done.”

Despite that work not being done, CABI says more readily available digital data and rules brought in by the Safe Food for Canadians Act have helped monitor operations within the food chain.

Several participants in the CABI-led dialogue expressed concerns around food security and the increase in food-insecure households growing because of a lack of income and increased food prices.

It’s expected concerns around food security to increase if forced closures of businesses continue.

Participants in the dialogue also acknowledged the impact decades-old decisions are having on the domestic food supply chain. A growing focus on trade and export markets rather than domestic processing and supply capacity has led to many of the challenges being experienced today.

“There needs to be more focus on ensuring we can supply it to our own people in the event of another pandemic or natural disaster,” says the report.

The full report is attached.

### Prime Minister announces virtual care and mental health tools for Canadians

For many Canadians, COVID-19 is having a major impact on their everyday lives, as they work to pay their bills, put food on the table, and take care of themselves and their families. That is why it is more important than ever that Canadians have access to the tools and resources they need to support their health and well-being.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced an investment of \$240.5 million to develop, expand, and launch virtual care and mental health tools to support Canadians.

Working with provinces, territories, and stakeholders, this investment will be used to create digital platforms and applications, improve access to virtual mental health supports, and expand capacity to deliver health care virtually, including projects to reach vulnerable Canadians. These supports will also help ease the burden on our health care system, as we continue to deal with COVID-19. This investment will:

- help Canadians safely engage with their regular health providers and specialist health services through telephone, text, or video-conferencing;
- support access to mental health supports and reliable health information in a safe and secure manner, which will reduce the pressure on our health system;
- help governments, public health officials, hospitals, and health care facilities make evidence-based decisions; and
- support federal, provincial, and territorial initiatives in collaboration with innovators, health stakeholders, and organizations like Canada Health Infoway, to expand virtual health services to Canadians.

This investment will support [Wellness Together Canada](#), an online portal that provides Canadians with free resources, tools, and professional support services to help with wellness and resilience, as well as mental health and substance use. It will also support a growing family of digital products that includes the Canada COVID-19 app, which helps people track their symptoms, receive the latest updates, and access trusted resources.

With these additional supports, we are helping Canadians access the health resources they need, wherever and whenever they need them. The government will continue to focus on the health, safety, and well-being of all Canadians during these challenging times.

### Quick Facts

- The Government of Canada has a suite of digital tools to help support the physical and mental health and well-being of Canadians during COVID-19. These include:
  - [Wellness Together Canada](#), an online portal dedicated to mental wellness and substance use support. It connects Canadians to peer support workers, social workers, psychologists, and other professionals for confidential chat sessions or phone calls, and makes it easier to find credible information and help address mental health and substance use issues.
  - [Canada COVID-19](#), a mobile app that features a symptom tracker, a self-assessment tool, trustworthy up-to-date information on COVID-19, as well as information on mental health and substance use support.
  - [Get Updates on COVID-19](#), a web-based email service that provides subscribers with critical information related to the pandemic. Subscribers receive emails directing them to important and authoritative content on the Government of Canada's COVID-19 website.
- On March 29, 2020, the Government of Canada announced \$7.5 million in funding to Kids Help Phone to provide children and youth with mental health support and counselling services during this difficult time.

### Sorting through COVID-19 programs

*Federal and provincial governments have created significant programs to support businesses and farmers. Here's a summary.*

COVID-19 has affected farmers and agri-businesses across all sectors of the agriculture industry. Provincial and federal governments are providing funding and options for producers as they deal with the pandemic's effects.

**Why it matters:** Some agriculture and food systems are struggling during COVID-19, especially farm and processing labour.

### Tax filing

The Canadian Revenue Agency has extended the deferred payments and income tax due dates. For individual income tax, the filing date for 2019 tax year has been extended to June

1, 2020 with the payment date being extended to Sept. 1, 2020. For self-employed individuals with a spouse or common law partner, the filing date remains the same at June 15, 2020, with the payment date for 2019 tax year being extended to Sept. 1, 2020. For corporations, the filing date for taxes has been extended to June 1, 2020 with the payment date for the current tax year being extended to Sept. 1, 2020

### **Work sharing**

Canada's work-sharing programs is an adjustment program to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity beyond the control of the employer. The employer and the employees must agree to participate in a work-sharing agreement and must apply together. The agreement must be submitted a minimum of 30 days prior to the requested start date. The program is possible for employees eligible for Employment Insurance benefits who work a temporarily reduced work week. More information can be found at the [Government of Canada website](#) along with an application guide.

### **CEWS**

The Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) is a temporary wage subsidy for employers that aim to prevent further job losses and want to re-hire previous lay offs as a result of COVID-19. The program will cover up to 75 per cent of an employee's salary, on the first \$58,700 earned. Individuals, taxable corporations and partnerships consisting of eligible employers may be qualified if there was a drop of at least 15 per cent of revenue in March 2020 and 30 per cent for the following months. To apply, eligible employers can apply through Canada's Revenue Agency's My Business Account portal. It's imperative that employers keep records demonstrating their reduction in arm's-length revenues and remuneration paid to employees.

### **10% wage subsidy**

Businesses which do not qualify for CEWS may be eligible for the 10 per cent remuneration paid from March 18 to June 20, 2020. It's a three-month program which allows employers to reduce the amount of payroll deductions required to be remitted to the CRA. Eligible employers are individuals, partnerships or Canadian-controlled private corporations who are eligible for a small business deduction. They must have an existing business number and payroll program with the CRA on March 18, 2020. For more details visit the [FAQ page](#) at the [Government of Canada website](#).

### **Foreign workers**

On April 13, the federal government announced \$50 million to assist farmers who rely on workers from abroad. The workers who are coming in from out of country are required to isolate for 14 days, this may become costly for the producer. The government is providing support in the form of \$1,500 for each temporary foreign worker, employers or those who are working with them to ensure proper isolation protocols are met. For more information visit 'Keeping Canadians and workers in the food supply chain safe' at the Government of Canada website.

### **FCC loans**

The federal government has provided an enhancement to Farm Credit Canada's capital base that will allow for an additional \$5 billion in lending capacity. FCC asks existing customers with cash flow or other financial concerns to contact the organization to discuss alternatives, such as loan payment deferrals and products available to assist with cash flow needs. FCC is using the money to provide additional support options, which may include:

- A deferral of principal and interest payments for six months or a deferral of principal payments for up to 12 months
- Access to an additional credit line of up to \$500,000

The credit line option is a 24-month credit line up to \$500,000 at a rate of Prime plus one per cent and no fees. FCC says it's important to contact your local office or the Customer Service Centre as each situation is different and each application is done on a case-by-case basis.

Source: <https://farmtario.com/news/sorting-through-covid-19-programs/>

### **Supporting Canada's farmers, food businesses, and food supply**

In uncertain times, it is more critical than ever for Canadians to have access to good, high quality, and nutritious food. That is why the Government of Canada is taking steps to support the farmers and businesses who provide Canadians with the food they need to keep themselves and their families healthy.

The Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, today announced important measures within agriculture programs and an investment of more than \$252 million to support farmers, food businesses, and food processors who provide essential services to Canadians every day by ensuring a safe and reliable food supply. He also announced that the government intends to propose an additional \$200 million in borrowing capacity for the sector.

The Government of Canada will provide targeted support to farmers, ranchers, agricultural producers, and food processors by:

- Creating a \$77.5 million Emergency Processing Fund to help food producers access more personal protective equipment (PPE), adapt to health protocols, automate or modernize their facilities, processes, and operations, and respond to emerging pressures from COVID-19 so they can better supply Canadians with food during this period.
- Launching a national Agri-Recovery initiative of up to \$125 million in funding to help producers faced with additional costs incurred by COVID-19. This includes set-asides for cattle and hog management programs to manage livestock backed-up on farms, due to the temporary closure of food processing plants. This new federal funding will help beef and pork producers and processors adapt to a changing market, and help farmers and ranchers keep their animals longer before marketing.
- Announcing the intention to increase the Canadian Dairy Commission's borrowing limit by \$200 million to support costs associated with the temporary storage of cheese and butter to avoid food waste. The government will work with opposition parties to achieve the required legislative change.
- Launching a first-ever Surplus Food Purchase Program with an initial \$50 million fund designed to help redistribute existing and unsold inventories, which could include products such as potatoes and poultry, to local food organizations who are serving vulnerable Canadians.
- Working with provinces and territories to increase interim payments from 50 per cent to 75 per cent through AgriStability, a federal, provincial and territorial program that supports producers who face significant revenue declines. This change has already been enacted in some provinces.
- Working with provinces and territories to explore possibilities for expanding the AgriInsurance program to include labour shortages as an eligible risk for the horticulture sector. This work with provincial and territorial partners would insure against lost production due to an insufficient workforce, should producers be unable to find enough labour to harvest.

The Government of Canada recognizes all workers across our food supply chain who provide an essential service to our country. We will continue to monitor and respond to the wide-ranging impacts of COVID-19, and take additional actions as needed to protect the health and safety of Canadians, and stabilize the economy.

#### **Quick Facts**

- Federal, provincial and territorial governments invest, on average, close to \$1.6 billion annually in business risk management programs to help producers remain viable under difficult circumstance. These programs include AgriInsurance, AgriStability, AgriInvest, and AgriRecovery.
- The enrolment deadline for the 2020 AgriStability program has been extended to July 3, 2020. The federal, provincial, and territorial governments agreed to the change to help producers deal with current market disruption and production challenges. British

Columbia, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island, and Alberta have all already agreed to the 75 per cent AgriStability interim payment.

- AgriRecovery funding is normally cost shared between federal, provincial, and territorial governments. This program will become more flexible so that the federal government can directly provide its share of the funding to producers, regardless of whether provinces and territories are able to contribute.
- The government has already committed significant resources to ensure industry has the support and tools needed to manage through these difficult times, including:
  - \$50 million to ensure farmers can safely welcome temporary foreign workers with measures necessary to follow the *Quarantine Act*, by assisting with the incremental costs of the mandatory 14-day isolation period. In April, sector partners, in close collaboration with the federal government, successfully brought in over 80 per cent of the normal amount of Temporary Foreign Workers to Canada, compared to the previous year.
  - New measures to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to help mitigate a shortfall in the workforce.
  - \$20 million to bolster services of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
  - \$100 million to organizations addressing food insecurity such as food banks.
  - \$25 million through Nutrition North to ensure food security for Canada's most vulnerable.
  - An additional \$5 billion lending capacity for Farm Credit Canada, which has already resulted in loan deferrals valued at over \$3 billion.
  - \$173 million in deferred Advanced Payment program loans for grain, cattle, and flower producers.
  - \$62.5 million for a new Canadian Seafood Stabilization Fund to help Canada's fish and seafood processing sector.

#### Updates and summary from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Please continue to consult the AAFC website regularly for updates. This week, we redesigned our webpage to make it easier to navigate so that you can find the information you're most interested in. We also added information on AAFC new job portal (Step up to the plate - help feed Canadians), the Government of Canada's support available to the sector and on international trade. We encourage you to check out the new look and to let us know if you have any feedback.

#### 1. **COVID-19 Guidance – Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) and Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council (CAHRC)**

For additional guidance on how to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic, please consult the CCOHS's free tip sheets and free online courses. You can also visit the CAHRC's website to obtain templates for pandemic preparedness plans.

## 2. COVID-19 Guidance – Food Processing Skills Canada (FPSC)

FPSC has two online courses they have made available to specifically support food and beverage manufacturers during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Both courses - “[Managing the Virtual Workforce](#)” and “[National Sanitation Training Program](#)” can be accessed within the Canadian Food Processors Institute at no cost by using the code **FPSChelps** at checkout.

## 3. Licence to Import Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Further to a question that was raised during our daily conference calls regarding the need for a license to import PPE, Health Canada indicated that there are no licensing requirements for businesses that purchase medical devices solely for use by their employees during work activities (e.g. first aid kits, disposable gloves) or for incidental emergency use, as long as it is clear that the business is the ultimate consumer AND is not in the business of offering healthcare services to employees or other individuals. It is recommended that you ensure the shipment is clearly indicated /labelled “for personal use” so it isn’t mistaken for commercial use. If you would like more information about your import, you can contact Health Canada’s Health Border Compliance Program at: [hc.hpbcp-pcpsf.sc@canada.ca](mailto:hc.hpbcp-pcpsf.sc@canada.ca).

Please also note that some pieces of PPE may not qualify as a medical device, therefore they are not subject to the regulatory requirements relevant to the Food and Drugs Act. To obtain guidance on a particular piece of PPE, Health Canada has a dedicated inbox for any question related to Medical Device Establishment Licences: [hc.mdel.questions.leim.sc@canada.ca](mailto:hc.mdel.questions.leim.sc@canada.ca).

## 4. Canada Emergency Student Benefit

On April 22, 2020, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, [announced](#) the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, which would provide \$1,250 per month for eligible students (or \$1,750 per month for eligible students with dependents or disabilities) who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. This financial support will be provided for eligible students who have demonstrated that they actively searched and were not able to find a job.

We strongly encourage you to list available jobs online where students can find them and to connect to the new [AAFC job portal](#) (*Step up to the plate - Help feed Canadians*).

## 5. Update on international supply chains

### United States

The United States continues to face challenges in the processing industry as a number of plants are facing closures and/or operating at reduced capacity due to COVID-19. Plant closures are causing production to back up. This is having an effect on prices and the ability to find markets for their animals.

On April 28, 2020, President Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) declaring meat and poultry plants as critical infrastructure. He delegated authority to the Secretary of Agriculture under the Defense Production Act (DPA) to ensure the continued supply of meat and poultry. This will ensure that processors continue operations to the maximum extent possible and

consistent with the guidance issued by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration specific for meat and poultry workers.

That said, CDC's guidance for critical infrastructure workers advises that these workers may be permitted to continue to work following potential exposure to COVID-19 provided they remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are taken. The USDA will work with meat processing to affirm they will operate in accordance with this guidance, and then work with state and local officials to ensure that these plants are allowed to operate.

### **European Union**

Agri-food supply chains continue to function despite certain challenges when it comes to transportation and logistics. Over the past few weeks, European countries have begun to gradually ease measures put in place to stop the spread of COVID-19. However, restaurants and other businesses will be slow to re-open given ongoing risks. **Spain** was the first of the hardest-hit EU countries to begin opening up on April 13. **Italy** announced that it will begin relaxing COVID-19 measures on May 4, with bars and restaurants reopening for takeaway service (currently just delivery). Bars and restaurants may be allowed to reopen for dine-in service starting early June (with social distancing measures in place), although no final decision has been made.

Please continue to consult regularly the [AAFC website](#) for updates.

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/covid-19-information-for-the-agriculture-and-agri-food-industry/?id=1584732749543>

### **Asia - Eat at home - the new trend in a post-COVID19 era**

*Asian consumers said they are more willing now to eat at home than they did before the coronavirus outbreak.*

Consumption habits in Asia are to be reshaped in a post-COVID era, according to a survey from IGD Asia. Eating at home will be the new trend in this region, which may change the outlook for the foodservice sector. The survey shows that a high share of consumers claimed they prefer to eat at home more often now than they did in the pre-COVID period. The trend can be seen in several Asian markets but is much more pronounced in China (86%) and Hong Kong (77%). In other markets such as South Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam the trend can be seen in 62% of the population.

"The shift away from out-of-home dining to at-home food delivery and cooking during the outbreak is likely to continue. This presents an opportunity for FMCG companies to reinvigorate the growth by engaging consumers for this new stay-at-home occasion. As consumers spend more time cooking at home with families, they are re-evaluating their eating habits. COVID-19 has reoriented consumer thinking and actions, which will have long-term consequences," said the team who conducted the market research.

Part of the success that home eating is enjoying in the markets that have surpassed the peak of the outbreak is the new look of the foodservice sector, with social distancing measures still

in-place and many restaurants going out of business. Also, income challenges for those that were under lockdown may influence their decision to eat at home.

Source: [https://euomeatnews.com/Article-Eat-at-home---the-new-trend-in-a-post-COVID19-era/3829?utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_campaign=055f8d3e39-EuomeatNewsletter\\_05\\_02\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_bf6cb3cef1-055f8d3e39-36654843](https://euomeatnews.com/Article-Eat-at-home---the-new-trend-in-a-post-COVID19-era/3829?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_campaign=055f8d3e39-EuomeatNewsletter_05_02_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_bf6cb3cef1-055f8d3e39-36654843)

### COVID-19 and its Impact on the Chinese Economy

China ended its golden week holiday from May 1-5. Tourist spots operated on a 50 percent capacity rate to keep social distancing. 115 million visits/counts are achieved during May 1-5th, about 41 percent down compared with last year.

Shanghai rolled out a big promotion called "5.5 shopping festival" on May 5th. The average discount is about 30 percent off the original price. 10 billion RMB worth of sales revenue from retail and food service was achieved within 24 hours. Other cities are distributing coupons to stimulate sales in retail.

Disney will open its Shanghai amusement park on May 11th. It will still limit the number of visitors and all visitors are required to wear masks in the park. Disney Shanghai Park has been temporarily closed for more than 100 days after the outbreak of COVID-19.

Restaurant and food service business are still on recovery. Individual servings are recommended by disease control doctors.

## COVID-19 RESOURCES - USEFUL LINKS:

Several organizations have compiled a list of COVID-19 resources helpful to producers.

*New links are in red font.*

### Key BC provincial Links

Non-medical information about COVID-19 is available 7:30am-8pm, 7 days a week at 1-888-COVID19 - (1-888-268-4319).

Download a Covid-19 self-assessment tool:

<https://bc.thrive.health/?fbclid=IwAR3wzChMn8L1Qn6AdCCdfb4xxzSi5dzG2FLLdYHPi0sXrrG4lCf7AutSh14>

AgSafe's Agricultural Site for COVID-19 Prevention Procedures and worker safety

<https://agsafebc.ca/tools/emergency-planning-resources/>

AgSafe's A farm worker has a suspect or confirmed COVID -19 infection.

<https://agsafebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-09-COVID-19-Employer-Guide-Worker-Infection-AgSafe.pdf>

AgSafe's The farmer owner /manager has a suspect or confirmed COVID-19 infection .

<https://agsafebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-09-COVID-19-Employer-Guide-Self-Infection-AgSafe.pdf>

AgSafe's worker self-assessment chart

<https://agsafebc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/2020-04-17-Self-Assessment-Flow-Chart-AgSafe.pdf>.

BC Centre for Disease Control

[www.bccdc.ca](http://www.bccdc.ca)

COVID-19 Provincial Support and Information

[gov.bc.ca/covid19](http://gov.bc.ca/covid19)

Province of BC - Protecting BC farmers and farm workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-farms-farm-workers.pdf>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/business/small-business/resources/covid-19-supports>

BC Business COVID-19 Support

Servicefile:///C:/Users/Christine/Documents/Jobs%20two/Covid-19/Supports%20for%20Business%20in%20BC%20-%20Small%20Business%20BC%20April%2017,%202020.pdf

**National sources:**

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada COVID-19 Information Page

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-information-for-industry/?id=1584732749543>

<https://www.inspection.gc.ca/covid-19/cfia-information-for-industry/eng/1584462704366/1584462704709>

<http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/workplace-guidance-for-sector-employers-and-employees/?id=1588862952557>

Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)

<https://ceba-cuec.ca/>

Canada's Emergency Wage Subsidy

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan/wage-subsidy.html>

Preparation for the Canada emergency wage subsidy application

[https://logankatz.com/article/business-mybusinessaccount/?mc\\_cid=775f61dd61&mc\\_eid=662a56ce8a](https://logankatz.com/article/business-mybusinessaccount/?mc_cid=775f61dd61&mc_eid=662a56ce8a)

Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html#businesses>

Canada – interactive help page

[https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/s/group-groupe?language=en\\_CA&token=a0B5W000000BJcSUAW](https://innovation.ised-isde.canada.ca/s/group-groupe?language=en_CA&token=a0B5W000000BJcSUAW)

Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council

<https://cahrc-ccrha.ca/programs/emerging-agriworkforce-issues/information-and-updates-coronavirus-covid-19>

Canadian Federation of Agriculture

<https://www.cfa-fca.ca/resources/resources-on-covid-19/>

Canadian Food Inspection Agency COVID-19 Page

<https://www.inspection.gc.ca/covid-19/eng/1584729805758/1584729899016>.

CFIA's Guidance to Meat Slaughter and Processing Establishments on Prevention and Response to Suspect and Confirmed COVID-19 Plant Employees

<https://inspection.gc.ca/covid-19/cfia-information-for-industry/guidance-to-meat-slaughter-and-processing-establishments/eng/1585620151816/1585620617343>

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA):

[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH):

[www.camh.com](http://www.camh.com)

CMHA "Six tips to respond to employee anxiety about COVID-19:

<https://cmha.ca/news/6-tips-to-respond-to-employee-anxiety-about-covid-19>

CRA - Frequently Asked Questions – Temporary Wage Subsidy for Employers

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/frequently-asked-questions-wage-subsidy-small-businesses.html#h2>

Do More Agriculture Foundation

<https://www.domore.ag/>

Employment and Social Development Canada - employers of Temporary Foreign workers (TFWs).

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/foreign-workers/employer-compliance/covid-faq.html>

Export Development Canada (EDC)

<https://www.edc.ca/en/about-us/newsroom/edc-covid-business-support.html>

Federal programming for producers:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/23/prime-minister-announces-support-farmers-and-agri-food-businesses>

Immigration, Refugees, and Citizen Canada - travel ban exemption for Temporary Foreign Workers

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-special-measures.html>

Public Safety Canada's guidance on essential services and functions in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/crtcl-nfrstrctr/esf-sfe-en.aspx>

Service Canada COVID-19 – Benefits and services

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Step up to the plate – Help feed Canadians

[http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/canadian-agri-food-sector/step-up-to-the-plate-help-feed-canadians/?id=1587057952017&utm\\_source=ext\\_web&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=feed-canadians&utm\\_content=2020-04-20\\_0013](http://www.agr.gc.ca/eng/canadian-agri-food-sector/step-up-to-the-plate-help-feed-canadians/?id=1587057952017&utm_source=ext_web&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=feed-canadians&utm_content=2020-04-20_0013)

The Working Mind Self-Care and Resilience Guide:

<https://theworkingmind.ca/blog/working-mind-covid-19-self-care-resilience-guide>

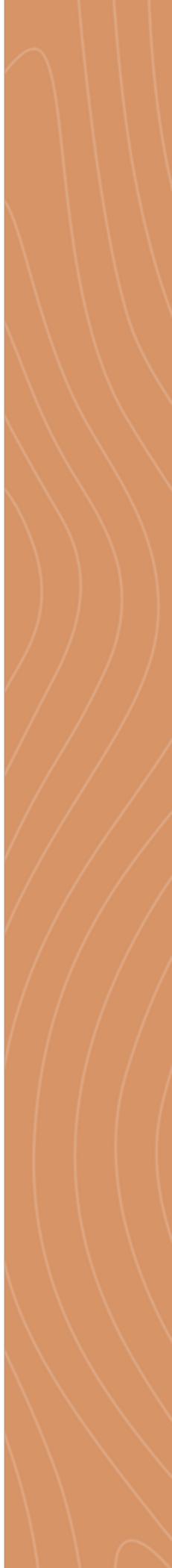
World Health Organization (WHO) Getting your workplace ready for COVID-19

[https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7\\_6](https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/getting-workplace-ready-for-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=359a81e7_6)

# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Guideline for Food Processing Facilities

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April 28, 2020



# Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Guideline for Food Processing Facilities

We understand the importance of maintaining an ongoing food supply chain during the COVID-19 emergency. This document is independent of and does not negate Work Safe BC requirements. This document is also based upon current knowledge and it should be understood that guidance is subject to change as new data become available and new developments arise with this new virus; furthermore, unique situations may require some discretion in adjusting these guidelines which are meant to be supportive, not prescriptive.

## WHAT is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory infection caused by a newly identified virus. The infection has symptoms similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold: cough, sneezing, fever, sore throat and difficulty breathing. Other symptoms can include fatigue, muscle aches, diarrhea, headache or lost sense of smell. While most people infected with COVID-19 experience only mild illness, severe illness can occur in some people, especially in those with weaker immune systems, the elderly and those with chronic medical conditions.

## HOW is COVID-19 Spread?

COVID-19 is spread through liquid droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus in these droplets can enter through the eyes, nose or mouth of another person if they are in close contact with the person who coughed or sneezed. COVID-19 is not transmitted through particles in the air and is not something that can enter the body through the skin.

## HOW can Food Processing Facilities protect employees from COVID-19?

As we continue our efforts to manage and contain the COVID-19 pandemic, food processing plants hold an essential role in every community by continuing the safe and reliable operation of our food supply chain. This guide is intended to help food processing plants develop their own policies and procedures to continue operating while minimizing the risk COVID-19 poses to the health and safety of its employees, and to the continuity of its business operations.

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The province of British Columbia has created a phone service to provide non-medical information about COVID-19 which is available from 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. at 1-888-COVID19 (1-888-268-4319) or via text message at 604-630-0300.

More information on COVID-19 can also be found online:

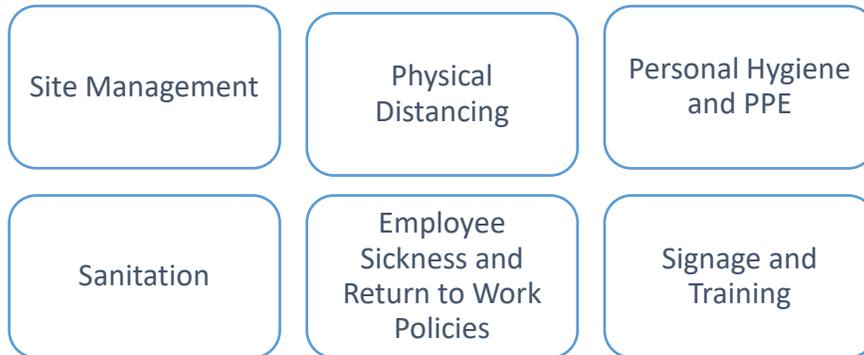
Fraser Health <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/covid19>

BC Centre for Disease Control <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

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## How to Use this Guideline

When developing your own COVID-19 policies and procedures consult the enclosed tip sheets and note the goals and considerations for each of the following areas of concern:

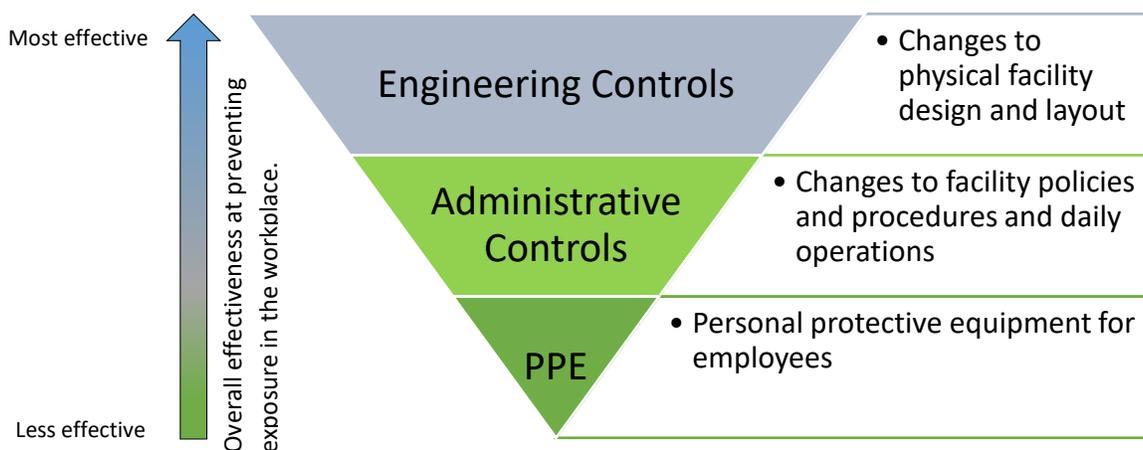


## Prioritizing Action

It may be helpful to understand the rationale behind the various recommendations contained in the following tip sheets, and the relative impacts each can have on controlling the spread of COVID-19 in your workplace. Some controls will be more difficult to implement but may have a greater overall impact, while other controls will be easier to implement but may have less overall impact.

## Levels of Control

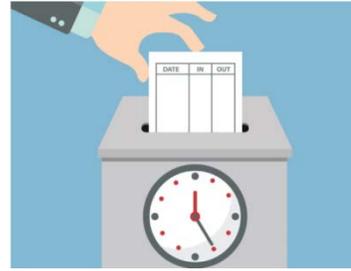
In the model shown below, control methods at the top of the pyramid are generally more effective and protective than those at the bottom. Following this model normally leads to the implementation of inherently safer systems, where the risk of illness exposure and/or transmission has been substantially reduced.



Typically, engineering controls are favored over administrative and personal protective equipment (PPE) for controlling exposures in the workplace. This is because most engineering controls are designed to prevent workers from coming into contact with an infectious person or contaminated surface in the first place.

# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants



### Site Management

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**Goal: Modify the working environment and business operations to minimize the potential for COVID-19 to spread in the workplace.**

#### Engineering Controls

- Extend production lines and/or reduce production speeds to limit and/or space apart number of employees on production floor.
- Eliminate communal storage areas for employees' personal belongings, and instead provide separate sealable bins or lockers.
- Provide a supply of hand sanitizer at sign in and posters reminding of the importance of handwashing following contact with common touch surfaces.
- If possible, prop inside doors open so employees do not have to touch handles.
- Remove shared cutlery and tableware from lunchrooms. Consider providing single-use utensils.
- Provide hand sanitizing stations at entrances/exits and common spaces in the building.

#### Administrative Controls

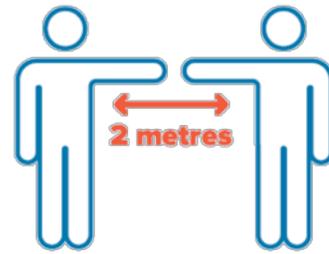
- Adjust production rates and schedules to minimize the number of personnel in the building at one time (e.g. longer or shorter working days/shifts) in order to maximize physical distancing.
- Wherever possible, production shifts should be staggered so nobody sees anyone from the next shift (i.e. 20 minutes between shift changes).
- No external visitors should be permitted in food processing plants, except for essential personnel required to run the business.
- Have employees declare they are symptom-free when signing in for the day. If employees have any symptoms, even mild symptoms they must go home.
- Avoid communal food / sharing of meals.
- Provide designated uniforms that are laundered by a service or encourage workers to wear clothes that can be washed frequently.
- Consider developing specialized checklists managers can use to evaluate measures being taken on production floor and any associated office/common spaces.

#### Resources:

- Poster: [Do Not Enter when Sick](#)
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# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants



### Physical Distancing

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**Goal: To minimize in-person social interactions and increase the space between people to eliminate potential transmission of the virus.**

#### Engineering Controls

- Designate additional rooms for break areas, or new outdoor spaces.
- Where possible, employees should work more than 2 metres (6 feet) apart; use tape to delineate work areas.
- Install production line shields between close work stations (e.g. plexi-glass) where physical distancing requirements cannot be achieved.
- Increase floor space by removing unnecessary materials and/or equipment, especially in hallways and other high traffic areas.
- Control foot traffic patterns using cones and floor arrows to reduce gathering at meeting points, washrooms, and other shared spaces.
- Designate travel paths so workers do not have to pass each other closely (e.g., one set of stairs for up, another for down) or have workers call out before entering shared spaces.
- Mark 6 foot increments on floors where crowds normally form (e.g. line-up for washroom).
- Provide lunchroom table dividers to physically separate diners.

#### Administrative Controls

- Stagger break times, meetings and team talks to avoid large groups.
- Conduct virtual meetings.
- For necessary in-person meetings, hold outdoors or in a large area that allows for physical distancing.
- Appoint social distance safety monitors.
- Limit the number of employees allowed in the lunch room at one time.
- Discourage carpooling to/from the worksite.

#### Resources:

- Poster: [Physical Distancing](#)
  - Video: [Why do we need to socially distance?](#)
-

# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants



### Personal Hygiene & Personal Protective Equipment

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**Goal: Have all employees practice diligent personal hygiene, and use personal protective equipment where necessary to minimize their risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 in the workplace.**

#### Engineering Controls

- Washrooms must have liquid soap, paper towels and warm running water at all times.

#### Administrative Controls

- Frequent and proper handwashing is the best way of preventing all viral respiratory infections.
- Employees must wash their hands at the start of their shift, before eating or drinking, after touching shared items, after using the washroom, and before leaving the worksite.
- Employees must follow cough and sneeze etiquette.
- Employees must avoid touching their face without first cleaning their hands.
- There should be no sharing of cigarettes or vaping equipment.
- Employees must be encouraged to self-report if they are experiencing symptoms of illness.

#### Personal Protective Equipment

- Ensure employees who are cleaning are equipped with any required personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, goggles, apron and mask).

#### Resources:

- [Video: Cough & sneeze etiquette](#)
  - [Video: Hand Washing](#)
  - [Hand Washing Poster](#)
  - [Coronavirus Prevention Poster](#)
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# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants



### Sanitation

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**Goal: Increase cleaning and disinfection of common touch points to prevent COVID-19 from spreading through contaminated surfaces.**

#### Engineering Controls

- Have separate cleaning and sanitizing equipment for different areas of the plant.
- Provide multiple plastic lined waste containers to dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials.
- Consider providing sanitizing wipes so employees can sanitize their own work stations.
- Provide bottles of sanitizing solution at each table in lunch rooms.

#### Administrative Controls

- Increase the frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g. cooler, freezer and regular door handles, faucets, bathrooms, hand-held tools, switches, loading bay door handles, ladders, pallet jacks, control panels, plant machinery, etc.).
- Create a checklist of all surfaces that must be cleaned, determine the frequency of cleaning and disinfection based on your organization's needs.
- More frequent cleaning (every 2 to 3 hours) may be necessary.
- Record when cleaning and disinfection has occurred.
- Clean dirty surfaces with soap and water before disinfecting.
- Specialized disinfection products are not necessary, use regular disinfecting solutions found in your sanitation plan (bleach or quaternary ammonium is recommended).
- Follow manufacturer's instructions when using disinfectants.
- Make sure any person required to clean has received the appropriate training.

#### Personal Protective Equipment

- Ensure employees who are cleaning are equipped with any required personal protective equipment (e.g. gloves, goggles, apron and mask).

#### Resources:

- [Health Canada approved disinfectants for COVID-19](#)
  - [BCCDC: Information on bleach concentrations to inactivate COVID-19](#)
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# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants

### Employee Sicknes & Return to Work Policies



**Goal: To maintain a healthy workforce by ensuring that sick employees remain home for at least 10 days from the onset of symptoms and do not return to work until safe to do so.**

#### Administrative Controls

- Develop an employee illness plan that is communicated to all staff.
- If while at work, an employee starts experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, ask the employee to don a mask and to leave work immediately, go straight home, and have them contact their family physician/primary care provider or 8-1-1 for further guidance.
- Ensure that objects and surfaces (e.g. tools, tables) touched by sick employees are disinfected before being used by others.
- Tell your employees that if they are sick with any symptoms of respiratory illness consistent with cold, influenza or COVID-19, even if symptoms are mild, they must not work, remain at home, and contact Health Link BC at 8-1-1.
- Sick employees should use the BC COVID-19 self-assessment tool.
- Anyone with symptoms can now be assessed and receive a COVID-19 test.
- Testing is not recommended for people who do not have symptoms.
- If an employee has a COVID-19 diagnosis, the local public health department will identify any co-workers who may have been exposed to the sick employee.
- The employer and employees should be reassured that if they haven't been contacted by public health then there is no issue or concern that was identified by public health.
- If temperature screening for employees is being conducted, use in conjunction with a broader daily screening program including a symptom check-list and clear policies for staff exclusions. Make sure thermometers are calibrated regularly. Anyone with a temperature over 37.5°C may have a fever and should consult with their family physician/primary health care provider.

#### Resources:

- [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Poster: COVID-19 Testing for all who Need It](#)

# COVID-19

## Tip Sheet for Food Processing Plants



### Signage and Training

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**Goal: Provide training and use signs to communicate how COVID-19 spreads, and to remind employees how to protect their own health and the health of others.**

#### Engineering Controls

- Place signs on front doors to tell anyone entering the plant not to enter if they are feeling ill.
- Post physical distancing signs in common areas, and in line of sight to workstations.
- Post hand washing and personal hygiene signs in washrooms and lunchrooms.
- Ensure signs contain clear language that is easy to understand, and
- When possible, use signs that include diagrams and pictures.

#### Administrative Controls

- Train employees about the virus so they know how to minimize its spread.
- Train administrative employees to disinfect high-touch work surfaces in offices.
- Staff training sessions should be done in small groups with adequate social distancing, or online.
- Consider providing electronic COVID-19 resources to all employees.
- Communicate information in multiple languages.

#### Resources:

- [VIDEO: Transmission of the COVID-19 coronavirus](#)
  - [Translated training materials and signage](#)
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April 6, 2020

## **The Canadian Feed Industry Amid COVID-19**

As an integral part of the food value chain, members of the [Animal Nutrition Association of Canada](#) (ANAC) and feed businesses play a critical role in ensuring the safe and continuous supply of food to consumers in Canada and around the world. The feed industry has been deemed an essential service in the federal government's "Guidance on Essential Services and Functions in Canada During the COVID-19 Pandemic" as well as in all provinces where lists have been published.

The Canadian feed industry is committed to providing safe and nutritious feed to all Canadian livestock during the COVID-19 pandemic. The feed industry continues to monitor the supply and demand curves of the livestock industry and are prepared to react to changing market demands that may impact producers. To this end, ANAC has assembled an advisory committee consisting of members from across the country and the feed value chain to monitor and address the rapidly evolving situation. This allows our industry to be proactive to work on mitigating any challenges we might face within the feed continuum to ensure there is no disruption in the manufacturing of livestock feed. ANAC is also in constant communication with our federal and provincial governments to discuss and resolve issues related to COVID-19.

Possible raw material shortages, both in the short and medium term, are being assessed regularly. Where shortages are identified, ingredient substitutions are being or will be made in formulations to minimize the impact on overall feed costs while maintaining the quality, nutrition and safety of the feed delivered to customers. Despite all the mitigating measures being undertaken by industry and due to the complexities of the global supply chain and the weakened Canadian dollar, prices are expected to increase as a result of the COVID-19 situation.

ANAC members recognize the importance of continuing to feed Canadian livestock while following recommendations of public health officials to safeguard the health and safety of employees and customers. Consequently, many producers will see changes in how our industry engages and works with them. These include virtual visits and consultations instead of going on-farm as well as, where permitted by law, moving to electronic labels and delivery slips instead of managing paper documentation.

If you have questions regarding the work ANAC is doing related to COVID-19, please email [mbosch@anacan.org](mailto:mbosch@anacan.org).

## WHAT WE HEARD

### The Resilience of the Canadian Agri-Food Supply Chain: A CAPI Digital Dialogue

On April 3, 2020 CAPI organized a “digital dialogue” with supply chain participants to learn more about how the sector is faring in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the short term, as well as to identify key issues towards longer-term solutions for the future resilience of the sector. Of the approximately 40 individuals participating on the call, more than half of these represented various industry organizations, academics and non-profit organizations in the agri-food supply chain. This digital dialogue, moderated by CAPI President and CEO, Don Buckingham, provided participants the opportunity to present their views in response to three questions:

- (1) What are the most pressing issues facing your organization as it relates to COVID-19?
- (2) How do you see the food system/industry working together to ensure food can continue to be produced and distributed?
- (3) Do you see a role for CAPI to help from a short and long-term policy perspective?

#### A. Pre-Digital Dialogue Consultation with Industry Stakeholders

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These questions, along with two short CAPI think pieces on the resilience and the impacts on agriculture and food systems of COVID-19,<sup>1</sup> were provided to around 40 stakeholder participants in advance of the dialogue. Reflections shared with CAPI from these participants from pre-dialogue emails are aggregated into two categories: *immediate issues affecting the system’s resilience* and *longer-term threats to supply chain resilience*.

##### Immediate Issues Affecting the System’s Resilience

- **Lack of redundant capacity:** Labour, transportation, technical expertise, plant and storage capacity, disruption in input supplies
- **Regulatory Rigidity:** Shortage of inspectors, lack of agility of the system to adjust to fast changing needs
- **Border Issues:** Migrant labour, border crossing of perishables, trade restrictions of foreign buyers and suppliers, etc.
- **Cost Pressures:** Global recession, exchange rate, shortages and price inflation

##### Longer-Term Threats to Supply Chain Resilience

- **Systemic Failures:** Breakdown and fracturing of global and domestic supply chains
- **Trade Disruptions:** Loss of markets, inability to import and source product, trade wars, increased tariff protection
- **Food Security:** Shortages, food price inflation and lack of affordability and access, loss of consumer trust in food safety, potential civil unrest
- **Loss of Human and Social Capital:** Unemployment, depopulation of rural areas and loss of know-how

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<sup>1</sup> Buckingham, D et. al. “Agriculture and Food in, and Beyond, COVID-19: Shoring-up and Strengthening a Canadian Essential Service.” March 2020. Available at: <https://capi-icpa.ca/explore/resources/agriculture-and-food-in-and-beyond-covid-19-shoring-up-and-strengthening-a-canadian-essential-service/>; CAPI, “The Resilience of Canadian Agri-food Supply Chains.” March 25, 2020. Available at: <https://capi-icpa.ca/explore/news/capi-news/the-resilience-of-canadian-agri-food-supply-chains/>.

## **B. Digital Dialogue with Industry Stakeholders**

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Of the almost 40 industry stakeholders contacted in the pre-digital dialogue, 17 were able to participate on the digital dialogue. On this zoom meeting, participants were given an opportunity to present their views based on the three questions that framed the discussion. Below is a summary of the discussion and the key issues facing the sector, based on those questions.

### **Question 1 - What are the most pressing issues facing your organization as it relates to COVID-19?**

#### **Supply chain performing well overall but uncertainty prevails**

There was general agreement that the Canadian agri-food supply chain was performing well under the current circumstances. Up until now, there did not appear to be any supply issues. Rather there were issues related to transportation, distribution and stocking of shelves at the retail level, given the sudden, increase in consumer demand for many staple food items as a result of fear and hoarding by consumers. Both the federal and provincial governments had designated food and related industries as “essential” services, so they were required to continue their operations. However, one participant argued that there are weak links along the supply chains and that we may be fast approaching a tipping point where we will not be able to maintain supply.

#### **Lack of redundancy in the system is a major concern**

A chief concern of most stakeholders was the health of their workers. Most input suppliers, plants, warehouses and retailers have taken steps to ensure that public health directives are being followed with adequate social distancing, including staggering of shifts, spacing of workers, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and increased cleanliness guidelines for handwashing and disinfecting facilities/stations on a regular basis. Some companies have developed “playbooks” and guidelines to ensure processes are in place to follow them.

There has been a rise in absenteeism (up 10%) and several employees who have felt unsafe working have been given the opportunity to take leave. In many cases employers, working with unions, offered wage increases and boosted overtime premiums for those essential workers who have remained. This could ultimately result in cost pressures. In addition, because of the dependence of many supply chains on imported ingredients or products, the health of workers at ports and of federal and provincial inspectors are also a concern.

Of course, if workers become sick everybody in contact with them needs to be isolated. Without proper planning there is a risk of entire plants being closed temporarily. We have already seen this happen to two pork plants in Quebec, a beef plant in Alberta, and a grocery store in Ontario. Many participants pointed out that when there are problems downstream, there are consequences for upstream sectors, such as the case with culling of market-ready hogs as a result of a plant closure.

Another area of concern relates to the shortage of skilled labour such as truck drivers, technical experts, mechanics and maintenance workers brought in to repair machinery and equipment. This is particularly important for specialized equipment that has been imported from the U.S. or Europe. In this case, specialized mechanics, parts and technical expertise are required for repair and maintenance. With travel restrictions recently enforced in Quebec, access to this expertise may also become a local issue.

Thus, the retention of skilled workers as well as the recruitment of new ones and proper training to address the redundancy required in the event of illness and worker absenteeism remain important issues.

### **Regulatory rigidity**

Shortages of available inspectors is a source of concern. As the health of the inspectors is of high importance, an inspector is not required to enter a facility if they do not feel safe. Without inspection, plants cannot sell their products, particularly in meat, fish and fruit and vegetable processing plants. This can lead to slowdowns in supply chains. Shortages of inspectors at ports and licensed graders transporting milk all contribute to the lack of redundancy. Allowing for some flexibility in enforcing regulations at plants, during transport of live animals and commodities and interprovincially and cross border would allow for less rigidity and fewer potential bottlenecks in the system.

Some participants expressed real concern with the lack of emergency preparedness by some companies in terms of risk management around pathogens and food safety and the lack of a government-industry preparedness where regulators have sat on the sidelines waiting for industry to respond. Some weaknesses in industry-government governance issues were expressed, particularly relating to interprovincial alignment. This has not been the case in the U.S. where regulators are ahead on the government-industry response and guidance on critical infrastructure workers. In Canada, after the BSE crisis of 2003, business continuity plans were to be developed with tools to respond to natural disasters and pandemics. It was incumbent on the supply chain to map out the weaknesses in the system to be able to identify quickly where the challenges will arise after the BSE crisis. This does not appear to have been done.

On the other hand, there have been good efforts over the last two to three years to digitize data on the agri-food supply chain by telecommunication entities. This will help monitor operations and outline any potential gaps or shortfalls in preparation for future supply chain challenges. As well, the new Safe Food for Canadians Act improves how certain issues are addressed. Some argued that there is a lot of good work being done now, and while it is taking longer than anticipated to roll out, progress is being made. One participant gave the example of the Ontario Incident Command Centre that was serving as a model for how communication and response was being well coordinated across industry and government regulators to address the crisis.

### **Border issues – coming in and going out**

Most of the participants agreed that an open border was key to the success of the supply chains because of North American integration of supply chains and our reliance on agricultural inputs, machinery parts, ingredients, materials, commodity imports and exports, technical expertise and temporary foreign labour that comes from abroad. Any threat to the free movement of these items could be devastating for any number of players in the supply chain. Thus far, both the U.S. and Canada have understood the significance of this need and the borders have remained opened for trade purposes only. However, there is a shortage of PPE equipment that is needed in many facilities and getting them for these essential workers has not been a priority for governments. We need to be able to produce these items domestically to ensure we have enough supply and serious efforts are being made to reconfigure manufacturing plants in Canada to produce products we need.

### **Food security**

Several participants expressed their concerns over the rise of food insecure households as a result of the loss in income with the forced closure of non-essential businesses and less affordability as prices rise. Food Banks will see fewer donations in this time of need and so several companies have made significant donations, as has the Federal government (i.e. \$11 million). Given that we do not know how long the forced closures will last, food security will continue to grow as a concern. We also need to ensure that in the long term, every Canadian is fed. It is becoming increasingly clear that there is a need for Canada to develop strategies and policies that are focused on our own peoples' needs. Decisions we have made over the past two decades have influenced our capacity to respond, given our focus on the trade balance and export markets and less on domestic processing and supply capacity. Clearly some of the issues arising now are due to the lack of domestic processing capacity and an incomplete understanding of just how essential our food supply chain is. There needs to be more focus on ensuring we can supply it to our own people in the event of another pandemic or natural disaster. This is a topic for a longer-term exercise, of which CAPI could take a leading role.

Several participants also raised the issue of whether our current suite of Business Risk Management (BRM) programs could address the increased commodity market volatility, lack of liquidity and hedging capacity and supply chain blockage implications on commodity prices. Also, financial institutions' role in addressing the sector's cash/liquidity problems need to be considered. However, revisiting BRM would be more appropriate after the current crisis is over, in the context of longer-term strategies, policies and solutions.

### **Question 2 - How do you see the food system/industry working together to ensure food can continue to be produced and distributed?**

#### **Coordinate communication about supply chain**

Given the fear that consumers are feeling as a result of the pandemic it is important for all players in the supply chain to collaborate in communicating a realistic message about the supply chain. Leaders of various companies have done a great job getting the message out for their sector, but it is piecemeal and needs to reflect confidence in the entire agri-food supply chain. Along with efforts to digitize the agri-food supply chain, "communities of visibility" was suggested as a longer-term solution that can ensure data and information is collected and communicated honestly and transparently to consumers and all stakeholders in the chain.

#### **Capture the lessons learned**

In order to prepare for a new future during and after the recovery from this pandemic, participants suggested that there is a real need to capture the lessons learned and develop the processes for afterwards. This could be done by journaling and collecting evidence as it comes, so our learnings and following innovations can be evidence-based. Industry and government need to consider longer-term strategies and to re-examine Canada's role in the world.

#### **Consider exercise planning for more and different serious natural disasters**

As we are experiencing a pandemic and its impact thus far on the agri-food supply chain, we need to prepare for other disasters such as a solar flare knocking out electricity, hurricanes, or volcanic eruptions to develop the tools to respond successfully. We can use this experience as a lesson for increasing resiliency at local, regional and national levels and challenge the way we do things, including the way we

farm. Through this exercise a better response and a subplan for future pandemics or natural disasters could be developed.

### **Define longer-term challenges resulting from this pandemic**

Some of the longer-term considerations for the agri-food supply chain that need to be studied after the pandemic recedes include:

- Consider how we will pay for this in the future given cost pressures.
- Study how consumer demand will change in terms of how and where consumers shop and the implications for the supply chain.
- Assess how to rebuild the economy and work towards recruitment and retention of skilled workers, which were already in short supply before the crisis.
- Consider international relationships that may be affected by closed plants and stopped exports.
- Realign on reducing regulatory burdens, while defining best practices in case of crises, and developing strategies before a crisis occurs.
- Develop creative solutions and invest in new technologies to address lack of labour and plant redundancies.
- Develop future food security strategies that focus on the Canadian peoples' needs to ensure the country can be fed.
- Review where we source our ingredients and supplies.
- Consider increasing domestic value-added processing capacity, while still being a global player.
- Help industry and governments develop more tools to address natural disasters and pandemics and look at other entities in developing a plan of action in case of future crises.
- Rethink Canada's role in the world.

### **Question 3 - Do you see a role for CAPI to help from a short and long-term policy perspective?**

#### **What CAPI should NOT do?**

Some argued that one should be cautious about being too critical of the responses from the supply chain or government to date. Things are changing very quickly, and CAPI should avoid "adding to the noise" or duplicating work that has, or is, already being done around short-term issues.

#### **What CAPI should consider doing?**

Rather, CAPI needs to be forward-looking. We can document and capture the evidence regarding the important lessons learned and the good work being done by the supply chains in response to the current pressures.

CAPI's role is to inform policy. As such it needs to take a step back and evaluate the longer-term issues and send a strong message to stakeholders and government. CAPI can gather the evidence in a way that is honest and transparent in order to identify the long-term consequences of the supply chain's response to COVID-19. As a convener, CAPI could play a role in holding a forum once the world is in recovery mode. It would be here that CAPI would present evidence to guide the government and industry on what could be done differently in the future. In this way, CAPI could play a crucial role in envisioning what makes a more resilient agri-food supply chain for a better Canada and a better world.