

COVID-19 UPDATE March 23, 2020

On Saturday March 21st Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 107 further limiting business operations in NJ and increasing the request for people to stay at home.

Find the full order here:

<http://d31hzhk6di2h5.cloudfront.net/20200321/72/72/ea/72/bec24cb2fad63980ea9e0db/EO-107.pdf>

What does this mean for NJ agriculture?

The order does several things that should be a comfort for New Jersey Agribusiness. Early in the executive order the instructions preempt local and county rules, regulations, ordinances or resolutions that run counter to his EO and the intent behind it. This means the state has one set of rules for operating during this emergency. He also issued Executive Order 108 to further clarify this statement.

The following is a list of essential business that can operate:
this list:

- a. Grocery stores, farmer's markets and farms that sell directly to customers, and other food stores, including retailers that offer a varied assortment of foods comparable to what exists at a grocery store;
- b. Pharmacies and alternative treatment centers that dispense medicinal marijuana;
- c. Medical supply stores;
- d. Retail functions of gas stations;
- e. Convenience stores;
- f. Ancillary stores within healthcare facilities;
- g. Hardware and home improvement stores;
- h. Retail functions of banks and other financial institutions;
- i. Retail functions of laundromats and dry-cleaning services;
- j. Stores that principally sell supplies for children under five years old;
- k. Pet stores;
- l. Liquor stores;
- m. Car dealerships, but only to provide auto maintenance and repair services, and auto mechanics; It was clarified this applies to bicycle and Motorcycle repair as well showrooms closed but repair shops open
- n. Retail functions of printing and office supply shops; and
- o. Retail functions of mail and delivery stores.

Farms, Farm Markets, and farms that sell direct are open

under section a of this order they and all businesses are encouraged to do the following;

Essential retail businesses must, wherever practicable, provide pickup services outside or adjacent to their stores for goods ordered in advance online or by phone. Additionally, online and telephonic delivery services are permitted to the extent the retail business is authorized to operate an online or telephonic delivery service under existing law.

Any essential retail business whose brick-and-mortar premises remain open to the public shall abide by social distancing practices to the extent practicable while providing essential services. These include all reasonable efforts to keep customers six feet apart and frequent use of sanitizing products on common surfaces.

For social distancing purposes, the CDC recommends avoiding gatherings of 50 people or more, the Whitehouse is recommending gatherings less than 10, keep this in mind in your business operations.

For additional food safety information please see the Rutgers fact sheet here:

<https://onfarmfoodsafety.rutgers.edu/covid-19-information/>

The intent of the executive order is to encourage businesses to stay open but have workers work from home. In those cases where it is impossible for workers to work from home a business can operate as long as they practice the above social distancing and use on line ordering and delivery services as much as possible. Examples of these businesses are out lined here.

Examples of employees who need to be physically present at their work site in order to perform their duties include, but are not limited to, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and other first responders, cashiers or store clerks, construction workers, utility workers, repair workers, warehouse workers, lab researchers, information technology maintenance workers, janitorial and custodial staff, and certain administrative staff.

NURSERY GREEHOUSE AND GARDEN CENTERS

Are open, this would include lawncare and landscape businesses, florists, greenhouse and garden centers and their workers, they are agricultural workers the same as working on a farm.

These businesses should practice the same social distancing. Workers going on to job sites should travel in separate cars, keep the social distancing rules in mind for them as well.

Horse Farms and Equestrian Operations

As farms that market direct to the consumer they can be open. The order for entertainment and exhibitions, fairs and shows means all events are cancelled!

These farms should stop all group lessons and only conduct a lesson if the 6 foot social distancing rules can be followed.

Access should be permitted for owners to come care for and work with their horses. Farms should set up schedules and limit the number of persons on the farm at any given time (the 10 people and under rule is good here) Horse owners should respect the farms limits and guidelines.

The owner or their designee should be the only one to come and work with the horse, families should not all come and visit as a group.

Hand washing and equipment sanitizing should be practiced by all visitors to the farm.

Workers employed by the farm, as well as farriers and other contractors are also able to work and come to a farm. These people need to follow the social distancing rules and respect the operational hours of the farm owner.

The American Horse Council has posted more detailed information about the responsibilities of horse owners and those visiting equine operations find that information here:

<https://www.horsecouncil.org/covid-19-resouces/>

Additional information for all Businesses

The business action center has updated their website with additional information on how EO 107 and 108 can impact business in NJ please see the site for additional information

<https://faq.business.nj.gov/en/articles/3799035-how-do-executive-orders-no-107-and-108-on-closures-and-social-distancing-affect-my-business>

The federal government also issued their list of critical infrastructure industries; food and agriculture are part of that (NJ uses the same list) if you are concerned about employees traveling to and from work and the farm or on farm business please keep a copy of the 11 page in your vehicles.

<https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA-Guidance-on-Essential-Critical-Infrastructure-Workers-1-20-508c.pdf>

NJ has consolidated the information about COVID-19 to a new website please see here for general information on the outbreak here in NJ <https://covid19.nj.gov/>