



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
HEALTH / AGRICULTURE BUILDING
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TRENTON NJ 08625-0330

PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

DOUGLAS H. FISHER
Secretary

SHEILA Y. OLIVER
Lt. Governor

URGENT REQUEST

May 6, 2021

Dear Farm Owner/Operator,

As you are all aware, New Jersey remains under a Public Health Emergency as we try to contain and prevent the spread of COVID-19, a contagious and, at times, fatal disease transmitted mainly through close contact with infected people, such as an infected person's coughs and sneezes.

The Department of Health has identified farm workers as one of the most vulnerable populations in the state for potentially contracting COVID-19 because such employees typically work and live near each other.

Over the past several months, the Department of Agriculture has been closely coordinating with the Departments of Health and Labor to assist farm operators and farm workers in minimizing and controlling the spread of COVID-19 during this pandemic. New Jersey has worked hard to make sure Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) and other health entities across the state can offer COVID-19 vaccinations, testing, and educational and related support services FREE OF CHARGE for all farm workers. The Department of Health has also created [guidelines for seasonal farm labor camps](#), ["Quick Facts" infographic](#), ["COVID-19 Vaccine Quick Facts"](#) and prevention signs on [face coverings](#), [hand cleaning](#), [social distancing](#), and [helpful hotlines](#).

The Commissioners of the Department of Health and Labor strongly urge farm workers and staff to be vaccinated by an FQHC or other health entity. This will help reduce the risk of spreading the virus.

Our goal in New Jersey is to ensure equitable access to vaccinations throughout the state. To accomplish this goal, we are engaging in a multi-faceted approach to assist the agriculture community in getting tested and vaccinated.

- First, the website, covid19.nj.gov/finder enables individual farm owners and farm workers to search for available vaccine appointments across New Jersey and register directly with a health center.
- Second, in an effort to vaccinate groups of farm workers on or at nearby farms, local health centers or community organizers may contact your farm directly to set up a vaccination event.

- Finally, if you have not been contacted by a neighboring health center, we encourage you to complete this survey <http://healthsurveys.nj.gov/NoviSurvey/n/zz2jr.aspx> or email njmsfw@doh.nj.gov and the staff at the Department of Health will connect you to a neighboring health center.

We also want to take this opportunity to address concerns around the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine. Following a thorough safety review, including two meetings of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have determined that the recommended pause regarding the use of the Janssen (Johnson & Johnson) COVID-19 vaccine in the U.S. should be lifted and use of the vaccine should resume. The two agencies have restated their confidence that the vaccine is safe and effective in preventing COVID-19.

As the NJ Department of Health and NJ Department of Labor await possible changes at the federal level, we urge you to continue following current guidance and requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

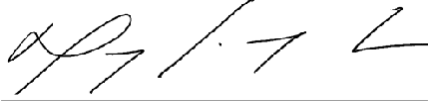
- The [2020 Guidance](#) for Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers, Their Employers and Housing Providers continues to be in effect. The Commissioner of the Department of Health has broad powers under the Emergency Health Powers Act to take all reasonable and necessary measures to prevent the transmission of infectious disease, which can include mandated testing for COVID-19 as part of this guidance (N.J.S.A. 26: 13-12; 13-13).
- Additionally, to protect workers, customers, and others who come into physical contact with any business, [Executive Order 192](#) health and safety requirements remain in effect.

A stakeholder call to the agricultural community, hosted by the Departments of Health, Labor, and Agriculture will be held in May and details will be forthcoming. We look forward to speaking with you then.

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Let's stand together and demonstrate the agricultural community's responsible reaction in confronting this unprecedented situation with emphasis on the safety of workers and farm families across the state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Fisher', written over a horizontal line.

Douglas Fisher
Secretary, NJ Department of Agriculture

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Judith M. Persichilli', written over a horizontal line.

Judith M. Persichilli, RN, BSN, MA
Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Health