Overall Summary:

As the Federal Government is leading efforts to respond to coronavirus (COVID-19), states are serving on the front lines. Below is a quick summary of all the main resources that might be helpful to you and your staff. Please do not hesitate to reach out to NASDA staff with questions, concerns, or reports of disruptions impacting your department.

All this information can also be found at nasda.org/coronavirus.

STATE ACTIONS

- **National Governors Association**: Updates on state declarations of emergency, and specific state actions.
- **National Conference of State Legislatures**: Updates on state responses, bills, state travel restrictions, etc.

FEDERAL ACTIONS

Federal agencies have created specific websites to provide updates on their efforts to combat the spread of coronavirus. Below is a quick summary of all the main information resources available:

- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**: More on the novel coronavirus and its situation in the United States.

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**: The U.S. Department of Agriculture developed a website addressing some of the main areas of concerns as relates to USDA’s activities. Additionally, USDA has added frequently asked questions related to Food Safety, Access to Food, Pet Safety and Trade, and Foreign Agricultural Affairs [https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus](https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus).

  - **Food Supply Chain Disruption**: USDA is part of the food supply chain interagency working group. If you are currently hearing of any major disruptions on the food supply chain in your state or has any questions please contact USDA at foodsupplychain@usda.gov.
- **Access to food**: USDA created flexibilities for their FNS programs during the pandemic response. More information can be found here.

Find your FNS local office here.

USDA is also working with the private sector to deliver boxes of food to children affected by coronavirus related school closures. If you know of any stakeholder in your state that would like to be part of this effort please have them reach out to feedingkids@usda.gov.


**Food Safety and Inspection Service:**

- Meat, poultry, and processed egg inspection services continue as normal.
- Planning for absenteeism is a part of normal FSIS operations and as such, FSIS is closely monitoring and tracking employee absenteeism to plan for and minimize impacts to operations.
- FSIS is also working to prioritize inspection at establishments based on local conditions and resources available.

**Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS):**

- APHIS and AMS continue to provide critical inspections and grading services.
- APHIS and AMS are ensuring the health and safety of USDA employees while still providing the timely delivery of the services to maintain the movement of America’s food supply moving from farms to forks.
- APHIS and AMS are prepared to remedy any possible disruptions in their services.
- AMS will continue to report commodity prices through its market news service.
Commodity markets can be assured that the USDA will keep America’s food supply safe as well as abundant during this national emergency.

The National Veterinary Stockpile maintains supplies of PPE and disinfectant which is used to support animal health disease events, such as the ongoing virulent Newcastle disease incident in California. Any request to redirect for the public health emergency should come through federal partners (HHS/FEMA) to ensure supplies are distributed to the areas with most need. In determining what to release, a decision on minimum levels to maintain for animal health mission activities and the ability to restock to maintain response capabilities and lab operations would have to be made.

APHIS frequently asked questions: [here](https://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a)

- **Trade operations:** In collaboration with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, USDA continues to inspect imported agriculture and food products. The Foreign Agricultural Service has postponed trade promotion activities, including trade missions and shows.

- **Ag Labor:** USDA is working with the State Department and White House on H2A issues. USDA is updating its website on the U.S. embassies status. U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Mexico will be closing starting March 18th.
  - Updates: [https://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a](https://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a)
  - If there are *specific situations* that you are aware of please send them to (aglabor@usda.gov)

- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):** Additional information on approved disinfectants, and expedited product approvals.

- **Food and Drug Administration (FDA):** NASDA is in communication with FDA about continuity of operations. We should have more will be provide you updates from the agency pertinent to cooperative agreements and inspections soon.

  **Audit Guidance:** Temporary Policy Regarding Preventive Controls and FSVP Food Supplier Verification Onsite Audit Requirements

  FDA issued guidance outlining that due to restrictions, FDA is aware that the ability to do onsite audits as part of the supplier verification activities under the PCHF, PCAF, and FSVP regulations is going to be impacted due to coronavirus. This guidance provides a temporary enforcement discretion policy.

  **Clarifying food worker status as part of critical infrastructure sector:** FDA is working with state and federal officials to ensure that law enforcement agencies...
are made aware that human and animal food workers are part of the critical infrastructure and must be allowed to travel to and from their jobs.

Please spread this message and work with your sister agencies and food stakeholders to spread this word. There have been instances of workers being stopped.

If your stakeholders are experiencing issues regarding supply chains, delivery of goods, or business continuity, please contact the FEMA National Business Emergency Operations Center at NBEOC@fema.dhs.gov. This is a 24/7 operation and they can assist in directing your inquiry to the proper contact.

- **Department of Homeland Security (DHS):** Guidance on critical infrastructure workforce can be found [here](#).
  
  - **Industry proposed definition for critical infrastructure for the seed sector:**
    - Seed Labs and companies conducting seed research including plant breeding
    - Seed producers including producers of research and foundation seed
    - Seed processors
    - Seed suppliers and brokers
    - Seed testing laboratories - private, state and Federal
    - Public and private seed certifying agencies
    - Manufacturers and suppliers of seed treatments including but not limited to insecticides, fungicides, inoculants and biologicals
    - Agricultural retailers and distributors
    - Transporters of agricultural inputs

- **U.S. Trade Representative (USTR):** USTR staff continue to work on implementation and enforcement of trade agreements. No updates to share regarding current negotiations.

- **Department of Interior (DOI):** The Department does not anticipate any delays with processing or approving federal grazing permits. Turnout for the summer grazing season is proceeding as planned.

- **Department of Labor (DOL):** DOL is continuously updating their coronavirus information [here](#).
The website highlights unemployment, workers comp and workplace safety. H-2A update should come before the end of the week. Check this page for updates. We are hearing about delays from some states.