

Agriculture Messaging

Agriculture's workforce – including farmers, ranchers and our teams – are our greatest asset. During the COVID-19 outbreak, we want to do everything we can to keep you and your teams safe and healthy. Although the majority of cases reported by the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services (DHSS) are in the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas, rural Missouri plays a vital role in preventing the spread to our own communities. As we see details of [Governor Parson's Show Me Strong Recovery Plan](#) unfold, it is important we remain vigilant to ensure a safe and gradual reopening of the state's economy.

While social distancing practices have managed to slow the spread, new cases of COVID-19 continue to be reported both in the metro areas and throughout Missouri. As we travel, so too does the virus, and as a result we are seeing an **upward trend in cases along the I-55, HWY 67, HWY 60 corridors**. As of April 17, counties along these highways have reported a total of 232 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

For now, the state is monitoring the Southeast region for increased activity. To ensure there is not a further spike in cases, this is the time to remind everyone of the importance of social distancing, cleaning and sanitization and frequent handwashing.

You can play a part at your farm, ranch or agribusiness in preventing the spread of COVID-19:

- **Separate:** talk with teams about social distancing — they should remain six feet away from individuals as much as possible.
 - When you cannot remain six feet apart, make sure you are using a mask or face covering and wash your hands thoroughly.
 - Encourage your staff and their families to practice social distancing at home by not going out or interacting with others unless it is to get essential supplies or medical care.
 - Hang signage, which available in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Chinese](#), in breakrooms.
- **Cross train teams:** designate teams and keep those teams separated.
 - Also, consider cross training staff in the event one of your team members gets sick.
- **Succession planning:** ensure critical business functions (check writing, obtaining loans, etc.) can continue in the absence of a sick team member.
- **Identify symptoms:** know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough and shortness of breath) and be alert for symptoms in your team members, yourselves and your families.
- **PPE:** use personal protective equipment as appropriate and [recommended by the CDC and DHSS](#).
- **Good hygiene:** encourage staff and families to practice good hand hygiene frequently.
 - Frequently wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.
 - Avoid touching your face (eyes, nose, and mouth) with unwashed hands.
- **Clean & disinfect:** encourage your staff and families to increase efforts to clean high-touch surfaces using [one of these disinfectants](#).
 - High touch surfaces include breakrooms, showers, door knobs, gates, faucets, toilet handles, light switches, appliance handles (oven, microwave, and refrigerator) and phones, tablets, etc.
- **Use your resources:** check out available resources at [Agriculture.Mo.Gov](#), [USDA.gov](#) and [extension2.missouri.edu](#).

This content was developed with resources from the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services, University of Missouri Extension and the Missouri Department of Agriculture.