



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
DIVISION OF ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH
28 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0028

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

Interim Guidance for Agricultural/Animal Care Operations

April 6, 2020

Updated May 6, 2020

This guidance is provided for animal agricultural workers to include those employed in veterinary health; manufacturing and distribution of animal medical materials and supplies, animal vaccines, animal drugs, feed and bedding, etc.; raising of animals; animal production operations; transportation of live animals, animal medical supplies; transportation of deceased animals for disposal; livestock markets, including live bird markets, slaughter and packing plants. It also includes equine operations and companion animal/pet stores and shelters; veterinary services for equine, companion animal and other businesses considered essential; and related support/service operations. This guidance may be updated.

Background:

In December 2019, a new respiratory disease called Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) was detected in China. COVID-19 is caused by a virus (SARS-CoV-2) that is part of a large family of viruses called coronaviruses.

On March 24, 2020, Governor Mills signed [Executive Order 19 FY 19/20](#) with a new directive mandating that all non-essential businesses and operations in Maine close their physical locations that are public facing, meaning those that allow customer, vendor or other in-person contact. Essential businesses are exempt from this guidance.

The Executive Order excludes businesses that provide essential services including, but not limited to: food processing, agriculture, industrial manufacturing, construction, trash collection, grocery and household goods (including convenience stores), home repair and hardware and auto repair, pharmacy and other medical facilities, biomedical, behavioral health and health care providers, child care, post offices and shipping outlets, insurance, banks, gas stations, laundromats, veterinary clinics and animal feed and supply stores, shipping stores, public transportation, and hotel and commercial lodging.

Note that the proclamation does not compel any business designated as essential to continue to operate. The Department recognizes that the practicalities of and risks posed by staying open

E. ANN GIBBS, DIRECTOR
90 BLOSSOM LANE
DEERING BUILDING



PHONE: (207) 287-3891
FAX: (207) 287-7548
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

as a business can be difficult during these unprecedented times. It is ultimately the business owner's decision to continue to stay open, adjust schedules and routines, or to shut down.

The staged state reopening [plan](#) announced by the Governor on April 28, 2020 does not change how agricultural businesses operate other than to require that [cloth face](#) masks be worn where physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain. The Department's guidance regarding implementing sanitation and physical distancing measures available on its COVID-19 [website](#) remain appropriate for farms, food producers and other ag businesses to utilize in their daily operations.

Animal Care Operations:

For the purposes of Executive Order 19 FY 19/20, agricultural and animal care operations are defined as the following businesses/activities:

Livestock/Equine/Captive Cervids

- Feeding
- Barn or facility maintenance, stall cleaning and enclosure repair
- Turnout and exercise
- Essential hoof maintenance and veterinary care
- Transportation necessary to meet any of the above functions
- Agribusiness that supports any of the above functions

Companion Animals

- Care and feeding of companion animals in shelters, kennels, rescues, operations and pet stores
- Pet food manufacturers, distributors and retailers
- Essential veterinary care, including spay/neuter, treatment for infectious disease
- Animal shelters receiving seized, lost or abandoned animals
- Community Animal Control managing lost, abandoned animals or rabies vector species
- Animal shelter operation of a pet food pantry adhering to social/physical distancing guidelines
- Adoption of animals from within Maine
- Pet boarding facilities
- Service dog training and care

If a business does not fall within this guidance, but you believe that it is essential or it is an entity providing essential services or functions, you may request designation as an essential business. [Request designation as an essential business.](#)

Animal Care/Boarding Facilities:

If you have an animal at a privately-owned boarding facility, terms regarding client use and visitation rests with that business owner. Social/physical distancing must be adhered to.

For equine: It is permissible to have horse owners as the primary providers of daily care for their own horses at boarding facilities, however business owners and horse owners must collaborate to minimize the number of people in the stable and to adhere to social/physical distancing.

*There is no evidence that animals, including pets, in the United States might be a source of infection/can spread this new coronavirus. To date, the CDC has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19.

For Employees

Cleaning/Disinfecting and Social Distancing:

All facilities must practice social distancing, and proper cleaning and sanitizing of those facilities. This includes:

- Regular hand washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. This should be done:
 - ✓ Before and after eating.
 - ✓ After sneezing, coughing, or nose blowing.
 - ✓ After touching face, hair, cellphone, and/or clothing.
 - ✓ After using the restroom.
 - ✓ Before handling food.
 - ✓ After touching or cleaning surfaces that may be contaminated.
 - ✓ After using shared equipment and supplies.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with tissues or the corner of elbow.
- Disposing of soiled tissues immediately after use.

It is encouraged that businesses post [signage](#) with handwashing procedures in prominent locations to promote hand hygiene. Clean and disinfect buildings and equipment as outlined in the [CDC guidance](#).

If you need more information about the State of Maine response to Covid-19 please follow the links below.

Department of Agriculture Conservation and Forestry (DACF)

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/covid19/index.shtml>

Maine CDC

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/epi/airborne/coronavirus.shtml>

CDC COVID Guidance for Animals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html>