

To: All AgriLife Extension Employees

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose significant challenges and is likely to remain a concern for the next several weeks. As the President declared a disaster declaration today, March 13, we encourage you to be prepared but not panic, in our response to continue essential governmental functions.

Based on the mission of our agency, we should consider the following as essential functions during COVID19:

Preparedness

- Sustain all hazards health preparedness and prevention outreach/education throughout the state of Texas
- Provide public health education materials through the Extension Disaster Education Network (texashelp.tamu.edu).

Response

- Engage individuals in up to date information during all aspects of public health incidents.
- Engage in the JIC (Joint Information Center) through support of DSHS.
- Support DSHS consumer education related to public health through AgriLife Extension's network of agents and specialists.
- AgriLife Extension personnel are prepared to provide certification courses and continuing education to private, commercial and non-commercial pesticide applicators if there is a surge in local vector control needs.

The following actions are being taken regarding educational programs and face to face meetings:

- **March 16-20 all AgriLife face to face events, programs and meetings will be cancelled. We will reevaluate this policy on March 19, 2020. It would be a best practice to plan out for each event from March 21-May 31. One plan would be to hold those events as planned. Second plan would be to determine steps needed to reschedule.**
- March 13-15 meetings scheduled with less than 50 can continue. Programs larger than 50, contact your direct supervisor or if you are in route contact your supervisor for guidance.

List of Upcoming Programs and Meetings

As we navigate COVID19 we need to continue to gather information regarding face-to-face programming or meetings that are occurring between March 13- May 31. Please utilize the link below to list all upcoming and planned face to face meetings or programs. You will need to do a new entry for each event. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the identification of our state-wide face to face meetings. https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4YC7RwhRXfv6uSV

The follow best practices in relation to educational programs:

- Use digital engagement when appropriate (look for a separate email to support employees in this area early next week);
- No food demonstration at any programs until further notice;
- Protect vulnerable populations over 65 with underlying health conditions;
- Communicate cancellations as soon as you know.

Staffing Guidance for March 16-20, 2020

- There will be a skeletal crew at administrative headquarters in College Station. All other TAMU campus faculty should follow the guidance of their department.

- Extension employees at Research and Extension Centers should receive direction and leadership from the District Extension Administrator. Centers should also observe a skeletal crew with only essential personnel on sight.
- Counties should follow the continuity of operations plan identified by their County Judge. If you do not have direction from your county, please contact your DEA.
- With the agency emergency management responsibilities, certain divisions of AgriLife may have exceptions to the above staffing guidelines.

Travel Guidance

Under the direction of no face to face meetings from March 16-20 domestic travel should be limited to the geographical area (county, district, region or state) that you are authorized to travel. Future intra-state travel via airplane or other public transportation, should seek permission from the direct supervisor.

All of the above best practices and guidance will be reviewed on March 19th.

These actions, in conjunction with of our earlier responses, are necessary to slow the spread of the COVID 19, reduce the burden on the healthcare system and provide researchers, more time to learn about this virus and create strategies to combat and defeat it.

Our agency is very appreciative of the work you are doing, on behalf of our state, our clientele and our communities. Please, take care of yourself, your family and friends. If you feel sick, take actions to not spread the disease, especially among the elderly or those with underlying health challenges. Prepare, but don't panic! **Additional resources are available at <http://texashelp.tamu.edu> and <https://dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus/>.**

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