

Subject: COVID-19 Agency Update: March 20, 2020
Date: Friday, March 20, 2020 at 3:32:37 PM Central Daylight Time
From: Blair L. Fannin
To: All Extension Employees
Attachments: Governors Executive Order GA-08 - Covid19.pdf

SENT ON BEHALF OF Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Director Dr. Jeff Hyde

Extension colleagues,

We appreciate your focus and commitment this week as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve. We are giving careful consideration to how we maintain business operations moving forward. Please see the following updates as we have several important items that will impact how you carry out work on behalf of the agency moving forward.

Face-to-Face Meetings

All face-to-face meetings will be cancelled ***through April 17*** at the earliest. This status will be reviewed based on the statewide public health disaster declaration made by the Governor (see attached declaration). Because the period may well be extended, all employees should continue to make contingency plans for no face-to-face events through May 4th.

- Further direction on Texas 4-H Roundup will be provided early next week.

Office Environments

Only **ESSENTIAL** employees should be available to work on site. Supervisors should communicate with administration their skeletal crew plans. It is stressed that only skeletal crews are essential to operations. Other key guidelines:

- People, businesses and communities should immediately undertake hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation practices that are accessible, affordable and known to be effective against COVID-19.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- People who are known to have, or are under investigation or monitoring, for COVID-19, should adhere to the direction provided to them by duly authorized persons, including public health officials. Failure to abide by such direction may result in involuntary quarantine or isolation for the purposes of preventing further community spread of COVID-19.
- Wash hands often for 20 seconds and encourage others to do the same.
- If no soap and water are available, use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue away.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Disinfect surfaces, buttons, handles, knobs, and other places touched often

- Faculty and staff (between midnight March 20 and midnight April 3) who do not avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people should self-isolate for 14 days.

Resource Gaps Survey

Those needing COVID-19 educational resources or who have identified areas needing to be addressed by the agency can visit the following Qualtrics survey: https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_50jR6NweloE0GmF.

Pesticide Safety Education

Guidelines have been established for Auxin training and Pesticide CEU training using Distance Technology and D2L courses. Specialists and agents will be receiving this resource document to utilize in program planning/implementation.

Digital Engagement

As we transition to digital program delivery, refer to the Digital Resources hub for employees: <https://digitaleducation.agrilife.org/digital-resources-for-employees/>. The Digital Education Learning Team is also providing opportunities for rapid course development to specialists. Go to the following link to learn more: <https://digitaleducation.agrilife.org/online-course-dev/>. The Team has assigned an instructional designer (ID) to each of the Extension regions. Requests for working with the IDs should flow through the Regional Program Leaders.

Online Technology Resource Document

Using Technology to Reach Clientele is a resource through Extension Organizational Development to assist with online program delivery planning: <http://od.tamu.edu/using-technology-to-reach-clientele/>.

Conference Services/Fee-based Virtual Sessions

AgriLife Conference Services can host registration and payment processing for online program offerings. Visit Conference Services and click on the About Us page. Complete the appropriate registration questionnaire. There is a minimum of two business days for this registration to go live once the final registration questionnaire has been received and processing finalized.

Once live on the website, the registrant will go online, register, pay via credit card, select to mail a check or receive an invoice (information about Payment Options is on the About Us page of the website).

If payment is submitted by credit card, they will be emailed a confirmation that contains text directions how to access the course/webinar. If they indicate they are mailing a check, those instructions will be emailed once the check is posted. If they wish to receive an invoice, once we receive the required purchase order and W9, they will be emailed the instructions to access the course/webinar. Visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/AboutUs>.

TexasData COVID-19 Reporting

Guidance on TexasData COVID-19 reporting will be provided through a series of upcoming online trainings. Please note the following dates and times:

- Wednesday, March 25, 3:30-5:00 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/351525220>
- Thursday, March 26, 1-2:30 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/766851629>
- Monday, March 30, 10-11:30 a.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/803576602>
- Tuesday, March 31, 1-2:30 p.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/386093608>

- Thursday, April 2 10-11:30 a.m. Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/934556379>

Reporting Financial Expenditures for COVID-19

For appropriate staff and others with conferences and events cancelled recently due to concerns related to COVID-19, there have been questions regarding allowability of expenditures on sponsored research accounts. If travel plans, programs, or events are canceled due to COVID-19, the costs associated with these cancellations or rescheduling that are directly related to the outbreak are considered federally allowable. These costs should be charged to the accounts to which they would have been allocated had the trip or event occurred. This procedure applies to all fund sources and we anticipate that these expenses will be considered allowable on federal grants and contracts.

We will need to be able to report on the overall expense impact to the agency on these types of expenditures. In order to accomplish this, a notation of “**C19**” should be referenced with any expenses related to this type of cancellation.

- In AggieBuy, invoices should include “**C19**” in report reference A.
- In Concur, for both Payment and Travel expense reports, include “**C19**” in FAMIS REF A field at the line item level. Also, on travel expense reports, in the business purpose field, please start the field with “**C19**”.

For additional questions, please contact Gwen Marucci at (979) 845-4748 or gwenc@tamu.edu or Jay Avila at (979) 845-6147 or jay.avila@ag.tamu.edu.

Messaging

It is important that our media messages be consistent as we go through this period. If you receive media requests, please direct those requests to Blair Fannin, associate director for communications, blair.fannin@ag.tamu.edu. Additional information on COVID-19 is available at texashelp.tamu.edu.

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