

COVID-19 Agency Update: March 24, 2020 AgriLife Extension

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

Extension colleagues,

Thank you again for your continued commitment as adjustments are made with work and family as the COVID-19 situation continues to unfold. Please see the following agency updates:

Directors Message - Live

Please plan to join Dr. Hyde on Thursday afternoon at 3 p.m. for a webinar on the agency's status in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Monty Dozier will provide an update on COVID-19 and the response by the Disaster Assessment and Recovery (DAR) Team. We will also feature information that should be helpful in thinking through digital approaches to programming. To prepare for this, Dr. Hyde is asking for your input via a very brief (two question) online survey:

https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9ogqfpbOxVWYozH

An invitation to the web meeting will be sent soon.

Operations

College Station headquarters is limited to essential staff. Both the Dallas and Stephenville Research and Extension Centers are closed through April 3 and being operated by essential staff only.

Travel/Field Work

Personnel (not using Concur for approval) who are completing critical work and required to travel within their assigned geographic location will be required to complete a form requesting permission to work in the field/community. This form will need very specific information in order to be approved, and should be forwarded to their immediate supervisor for approval, who will then share with Dr. Angela Burkham and System Risk Management for recording in a master file. The [COVID-19 Travel Request](#) can be downloaded or obtained from your immediate supervisor (DEA or ADH).

Clean Hands

Dr. Mark D. Faries, associate professor and Extension health specialist, is leading coordination of a 'clean hands' campaign, consistent with [CDC's 'clean hands save lives' \(and 'clean hands count' for healthcare settings\)](#). This campaign is in possible collaboration with Texas DSHS, while also serving as a centralized location for Extension education, tools, programming, awareness, behavior change, research and other efforts in handwashing.

Anyone with interest, ideas and/or current efforts in the area of handwashing (or hand sanitizing) can contact Dr. Faries (mark.faries@ag.tamu.edu) for more information, and to better coordinate Extension's efforts in this important area — of which we are primed to take a lead role across the state, with great impact.

Community Engagement to Making Masks - Operation Face Mask

In response to the shortage of Personal Protection Equipment, including face masks, an Extension response has been implemented enlisting Texas Extension Education Association members, 4-H members, 4-H Ambassadors, Healthy Texas Youth Ambassadors, Master Clothing Volunteers, and Master Wellness Volunteers. These groups have already been actively involved producing homemade

face masks meeting CDC guidelines requirements. This project should only be undertaken if procedures can be implemented and participation in a safe manner.

There are early success stories. In Hopkins County through the Hopkins County Medical Mask Sewing Group Facebook page, approximately 150 masks have been made locally and more are in production. Contact Joyce Cavanagh (jacavanagh@ag.tamu.edu) for instructions and guidelines.

Animal Response

AgriLife Extension is supporting the Texas Animal Health Commission with COVID-19 animal health response education efforts. According to the CDC and international health experts, pets and domestic animals are not considered to be at risk of either contracting or spreading COVID-19. Visit <https://www.tahc.texas.gov/covid-19.html> for the latest updates.

Please utilize the following pages when creating animal health messaging:

- CDC - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/animals.html>
- AVMA - <https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/animal-health-and-welfare/covid-19>

COVID-19 Specialist Guidelines, Policies

COVID-19 guidelines for conducting field work, pesticide applicator and course provider information, plus a pesticide CEU training guide at a distance are available on the Texas EDEN Employee site (pwd: 77843).

- [Guidelines for Field Scouting and Field Site Visits](#)
- [Pesticide Applicator and Course Provider Update](#)
- [Pesticide CEU Training Guide Distance](#)

Children Activities – COVID-19

Several requests recently from agents and community members regarding ideas that parents can do to keep their children active during the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see at the following AgriLife Today article: <https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/03/20/social-distancing-with-kids/>

The Alphabet Activities Guidebook developed by Alice Kirk, Extension Program Specialist with the Family and Community Health (FCH) unit, is available on the Family and Community Health website and is available for download: <https://fch.tamu.edu/alphabet-activities-guidebook-activities-for-kids-at-home/>

Please feel free to share this online resource with individuals and families in your respective counties.

Fee-based Programming

While COVID-19 may have longer-term impacts on programming, we are treating this as a temporary modification in how we do business. As such, we are not making changes to program pricing at this time. In general, continue to maintain program prices as they were, even when programs are shifted into online settings. We will revisit this as the situation continues to unfold.

Reminders, Trainings

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>

Blair L. Fannin

Associate Director of Extension Communications

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service | Texas A&M University System

600 John Kimbrough Boulevard, Suite 509

2142 TAMU | College Station, TX 77843-2142

979.845.2259 | Blair.Fannin@ag.tamu.edu

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu>