

# COVID-19 FOOD SAFETY FOR PRODUCE AUCTIONS

## WHAT ARE THE HEALTH RISKS?

**COVID-19 is not a foodborne illness.** The virus affects the lungs (respiratory system). There have been no reports that anyone has become sick from COVID-19 by eating food.

The biggest risk of COVID-19 transmission is being physically close to a person who has the virus. COVID-19 is transferred from one person to another through droplets that are produced when an infected individual coughs or sneezes, or through close contact such as a handshake, hug or other physical types of greetings.

## ATTENDING AN AUCTION

Communicate with the auction manager to identify alternative options to physically attending the auction in person while there is a Stay in Place enforcement order.

- Stay at home if you are sick.
- If you are not selling or buying produce stay at home.

To prevent transmission while at the auction:

- Prohibit non-essential people from attending the auction (e.g., tourists, friends, family members).
- Wear a facemask when you are around others (i.e. during bidding).
- Suspend any unnecessary handling of produce.
- Cover the produce and prohibit touching the product.
- Prohibit product sampling.
- Stop the sale of foods during the outbreak.
- Maintain all regular food safety activities.

## FOOD SAFETY TRAINING CERTIFICATE

Communicate with the auction manager to identify the options that are available to you to meet the annual food safety training requirements for selling produce at the auction. Each auction may have different options available, so contact each auction to which you plan on selling produce. The following options may be acceptable at your local produce auction:

- Six-month extension of the 2019 OSU GAPs certificate.
- Training requirement waived if PSA training was completed in the past 12 months.
- Complete an on-line GAPs training.

## KEEP PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Produce auctions are a place of gathering for vendors, buyers and tourists. When many people come together in one location the virus spreads faster. Practice physical distancing while traveling to the auction and while at the auction. The minimal recommended distance between people to reduce the risk of transmission is 6 feet.

- Limit the number of people riding in a buggy or vehicle to one or two members of the same family.
- Increase the distance between vendors to six feet or more.
- Only allow one seller to stand by their produce.
- Provide additional space to allow for buyers to stand six feet apart during the bidding period.

## CLEAN AND DISINFECT

Auctions should consider providing additional restrooms and handwashing stations that are fully stocked.

- Vendors should hand-sanitize after every transaction.
- Disinfect all surfaces including doorknobs, railings, counters and tables regularly.
- Bleach may be used to disinfect surfaces, but a concentration of 5 tablespoons of bleach per gallon of water is required to kill COVID-19.
- Additional disinfectants that may be effective against COVID-19 are available on the [EPA Pesticide Registration List](#).

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