

## Considerations and Ideas for Strawberry Pre-Picked and Pick Your Own Operations

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It is very likely that most, if not all, of our strawberry season will be affected by stay-at-home orders, social distancing, and increased hygiene methods. Please find ways to keep you, your family, your employees, and your customers safe.

The information below is to help you decide about what is best for your farm and items to consider that you might not have thought of or have on your list.

### Prior to Opening

In addition to notifying your customers of opening day, start conversations with them about new procedures in place on your farm that provide a safer environment. Address new practices in place on your farm to make customers know that you care. Communicate to them the safety precautions and guidelines your farm will implement to offer a safe experience.

Use social media to remind people of this year's new norm. Communicate by social media and signage.

Prepare on-farm signage now.

Advertise in advance the price of berries and encourage customers to use correct change.

Remind the public to not come to the farm if sick!

Encourage social distancing. Example: mark the check-in and check-out line area with tape or a painted line 6 feet apart.

Field distancing is also needed. (see Pick Your Own)

Consider charging a flat fee per container instead of by the pound.

Consider scheduling appointments for customers at pick your own operations. There are some apps available to facilitate this. (apps are listed on the last page)

Sell as many pre-picked berries as possible. Consider online ordering, including pick-up time, vehicle color and make. Offer curbside/drive-up service. Some farms with available labor will only be selling pre-picked berries this year.

Modify website to allow online orders to be picked up at the farm.

Be sure to show due diligence at all times. ***One grower not showing social distancing and precautions in place could greatly affect all the other farms in the state.***

### General Areas

Limit customers to certain areas.

Post signage for your guidelines.

Put up signage to remind customers to wash their hands, stay 6 feet apart, etc.

Clean often!

Allow no one to touch the prepacked berries before buying.

The CDC defines social distancing as follows: remaining out of congregate settings, avoiding mass gatherings, maintain 6 feet distance from others when possible. This includes you, your employees, and your customers.

## **Rules You Might Consider for Your Farm**

All pickers must use containers provided by farmer.

Absolutely no sampling in the field.

Everyone entering the field must wash their hands prior to entering.

Sanitize at check out after each transaction.

Do not accept cardboard boxes or any other packaging from customers.

If you open the car door for a customer, wash your hands immediately afterward.

## **Handwashing**

Place your order for hand washing stations. More than one is likely needed if you are a pick your own operation. Hand washing stations are in short supply so make your arrangements now.

Keep soap and single use paper towels on hand. Never run out of supplies at hand washing stations. Trash cans should have a liner in them.

Provide fully functional hand washing facilities. Water, soap, single use paper towels, and trash cans with a liner.

Put hand washing stations apart to spread out people.

Make sure handwashing stations are being used.

The CDC encourages handwashing after picking.

If using hand sanitizers, make sure it contains at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer is also in short supply.

All workers must wash their hands:

- Before starting work.

- Before putting on gloves.

- After using the restroom.

- Upon return to the work station.

- After blowing one's nose, coughing or sneezing in hand.

- Any other times the workers hands may have become contaminated.

## **Pick Your Own Areas**

If possible, maintain a directional approach to lead your customers through the field. For example, have them start at one end of the field and end at the other end, if possible, and have dedicated paths leading to the pay station and parking area. This decreases customer proximity.

Examine your field and develop ways that it can be subdivided to accommodate social distancing.

Divide the field by using tape, flags in different colors, roping, short PVC pipes, etc. Your rows are likely on six foot centers so that helps as well.

You can also number your subdivided field blocks and assign customers to particular blocks.

Provide gloves to customers that want to pick.

It is important to limit the number of customers in the field and ensure that customers are spread out.

## **Payments**

When lines form at container pick up or payment areas, have markings on the ground indicating 6 foot spaces so that customers are spaced appropriately.

Consider using online money transfers like Venmo or Pay Pal to help limit contact with customers.

Collect money first then issue baskets; this reduces customer contact to only one interaction.

Have a drop box for cash paying customers.

Order extra card readers and keep them clean.

Ask customer to swipe their cards so employees will not have to handle anyone's cards.

Mount the card readers so customers can insert their own cards and consider omitting signatures.

Collect cash at one area and collect payment by cards at a separate location.

If you usually have a small closed-in paying area, consider using a tent outside in the open air.

Use gloves and proper disposal of gloves when handling money, credit cards, and having contact with customers.

Sanitize after each transaction.

## **Employees**

Provide training to all employees, including friends and family, on proper handwashing and the importance to never touch their nose, mouth, or eyes when picking.

Implement mandatory breaks for workers and insist they must wash their hands before starting back working.

Consider having employees wear gloves when picking.

Make sure that employees stay away from work, if they are COVID-19 positive, displaying disease symptoms, or came into contact with a known case of COVID-19.

Monitor the health of anyone working on your farm.

If any employee exhibits symptoms of COVID-19, it is your responsibility to contact the local health department.

Use the materials and posters provided by the CDC in both English and Spanish.

## **Sanitizing**

For those that will still sell by the pound, wipe the scales after each weighing.

Clean and sanitize ALL contact surfaces. Disinfect high touch areas.

**Clean** - Removal of soil and food residue from surfaces which can include the use of clean water and detergent. Clean all surfaces.

**Sanitize** - Treatment of a cleaned surface to reduce the number of microorganisms of public health significance to a safe level within 1 minute. (Food contact surfaces and non-food contact surfaces.)

**Disinfect** - Treatment of a cleaned surface to destroy or inactivate all infectious organisms on hard surfaces within 10 minutes. (Non-food contact surfaces, high touch surfaces, incident with infected person.)

Disinfect surfaces (reusable bins, buckets, railings, doorknobs, time clock, tabletops, employee lunch area, handwashing stations, etc.) on a regular basis - several times a day! Please use the official CDC list of allowable substances to select your disinfectant. Other methods are not safe.

Instruct your employees on effective sanitizing.

Continually clean high touch areas.

Identify food contact areas like baskets, display area, bins, etc., and keep them clean.

Bleach solutions should be: **5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) to 1 gallon of water** or **4 teaspoons to 1 quart water**.

## **Additional Items to Consider**

Do not offer any samples until COVID-19 is over.

Some growers say they will only sell berries this year - no ice cream, no milkshakes, no yogurt, etc. Keep it simple, keep it safe!

Postpone festivals. Cancel petting zoos. Do not have picnic tables or playgrounds available for use. No loitering allowed. Cancel Mother's day events, family days, field trips, etc.

Take down your photo op area.

If you have asparagus and other items to sell, be sure to mention them on your social media page. Have all items in clamshells or clear plastic bags for grab and go. Keep items out of the public's reach.

Listed below are some apps that allow appointment scheduling. We understand most are free but premium ones you must pay for. Simply sharing for you to investigate.

<https://www.hubspot.com/products/sales/schedule-meeting>

<https://www.setmore.com/>

<https://www.appointlet.com/>

<https://www.picktime.com/>

<https://www.sagenda.com/>

<https://tableagent.com/reservation-system/>

<https://www.fresha.com/pricing>

Hand washing signs and social distancing signs are attached to the email. Simply print them off and post on your farm.

And remember.... Be sure to show due diligence at all times. ***One grower not showing social distancing and precautions in place could greatly affect all the other farms in the state.***