





COVID-19

Precautionary measures for agricultural farmers


Pre-harvest operations (from planting to harvesting):




- Farmers are recommended to follow precautionary safety measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Simple measures include physical distancing of at least 2 metres, frequent handwashing with soap, wearing a facemask and other personal protective equipment (PPE) clothing, and cleaning their machinery regularly. Agricultural workers should also follow these recommended safety measures while conducting field operations.



- Farmers and daily wage workers should wear gloves and facemasks while working on farms and handling the produce. They should also maintain a permanent handwashing routine. World health organization (WHO) advises to wash hands with water and soap for at least 20 seconds. Gloves and facemasks are effective only when used in combination with frequent handwashing. Farmers should have a clear understanding on how to properly use PPE.



- Maintain a safe distance of at least two metres (two outstretched arms) from other farmers and daily wage workers during farm activities such as cultivation, weeding, irrigation, harvesting, products delivery and product processing



- Maintain good respiratory hygiene (cover mouth and nose with your elbow when coughing or sneezing; dispose of tissues and wash hands) while working on farm and agriculture products processing.



- If any daily wage workers or farmer present symptoms like flu, fever, cough, runny nose, body aches and body temperature over 37 degree Celsius, allow them to go home and remain in home- isolation/quarantine to avoid contagions.



- Farmers and daily wage workers should avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing and/or having with body temperature over 37 degree Celsius. Close contact in general must be avoided, including hugging, kissing or shaking hands.



- Farmers and daily wage workers should avoid eating and drinking from the same dish, while working on the farm and agriculture product processing social distancing of two meters should be considered.



- Remind farmers and daily wage workers regularly to not touch their faces, nose and eyes and to observe hand hygiene prior to taking a break or eating and when handling personal protective equipment (PPE). Protective clothing needs to be washed with soap and water daily.



- Farmers should not share agricultural tools and equipment with others. Washing and frequent sanitizing items used in agriculture activities must be considered.



- During harvesting the farmers are in close contact with the crops. By sneezing and coughing they might cause COVID-19 virus to spread, so while harvesting they must use facemasks, and before and after harvesting they should wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 second.





• Measures of personal hygiene and physical distancing should be followed by those engaged in harvesting of all field crops, cereals, fruits and vegetables before, during and after executing any field operation.



• Most vegetables are packed in plastic bags (shoppers) after harvest. The common act of blowing into the shopper to open it must be avoided – by blowing the virus can be spread to consumers.



• In case of manual field operations like harvesting/picking, workers should be separated by two metres strips, assigning one strip to each person. This will ensure adequate spacing between the engaged laborers.



• Maintain a safe distance of two meters (two outstretched arms) during rest, eating, transporting production to the collection point, loading/unloading.



• Stagger the field operations wherever possible and avoid engaging a high number of people.



• Engage only those people whose movements in past 14 days are known and those who have followed COVID-19 safety precautions.



- Use infra-red thermometer to check body temperature. Engage only familiar persons to the extent possible, and after reasonable inquiry, avoid the entry to any field activity of anyone suspicious to be likely infected.



- Prefer mechanized operations over the manual wherever feasible. Only essential operators should be allowed to accompany the machine.



- All machines should be sanitized at the start of the operations, as well as at regular intervals.



- All bags or packaging material should also be sanitized with appropriate disinfectants.



- Proper sanitation and cleanliness of threshers for harvested crops should be maintained especially when machines are shared and used by farmer groups. Thorough washing of machine parts frequently touched is advised.

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FAO, 2021. *COVID-19 precautionary measures for agricultural farmers: Pre-harvest operations (from planting to harvesting)*. Kabul. <https://doi.org/10.4060/cb4597en>