Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota


Governor Tim Walz’s Executive Orders were lifted in June, 2021 when the peacetime emergency declaration was lifted. To provide SFA leaders, chapters, networking groups, staff and consultants with guidance for how to conduct our work and keep people safe, this “COVID-19 Preparedness Plan” is provided. This plan applies to all SFA staff, contractors and consultants, including chapter contractors, and SFA Chapters, Networking Groups, and the SFA Board of Directors. It is intended to give necessary guidance so that face-to-face meetings, field days and gatherings can take place. See page 3 for how this plan applies to staff and consultants conducting work for SFA. Questions? Contact Jerry Ford, Network Coordinator Jerry@sfa-mn.org or Theresa Keaveny, Executive Director Theresa@sfa-mn.org.

SFA COVID19 Guidance in Five Steps

1. **Know and follow the COVID19 guidance/recommendations of the venue or community** where the event, meeting or gathering is held. Meetings and events are allowed indoors or outdoors.

2. **Masks**; Following CDC guidelines, SFA recommends that masks be worn indoors by people who are not vaccinated or who have extenuating health issues. Masks are not required outside, but are recommended in places (inside or outside) where a crowd forms and where people stand or sit close together. Masks should be available for attendees’ use.

3. **Food** (including pot lucks) is allowed. It is recommended that those serving food be masked. Boxed lunches and pre-packaged food and beverages are recommended.

4. **Pre-registration and sign in**: SFA requires, as best practice regardless of COVID19, that chapter and statewide events, meetings and field days include online pre-registration with walk ups welcome. Exceptions are events such as Salsa Fest, Harvest Fest and Happy Hours. This is best practice because online registration enables SFA to obtain contact information for follow up. For COVID19 purposes, this provides a list for contact tracing if needed, and communicates to people that by registering, they are verifying they do not have COVID19 or live with someone who does. Use the SFA-provided sign in sheet at the event for walk ups (people who do not pre-register), which states that, by signing, the person does not have COVID19 or live with someone who does. Send the sign in sheet to jerry@sfa-mn.org.

5. **Sanitation**: SFA requires, as best practice regardless of COVID19, use of a hand washing station when a meal is served. Hand sanitizer should be available at/near portapotties and sign in table.

More details on SFA’s COVID19 Policy

1. SFA members, staff, contractors, Chapters, Networking Groups and board may hold face to face INDOOR meetings or OUTDOOR gatherings of any size until further notice.

2. Co-sponsored events with other organizations: SFA may co-sponsor events led by another organizations if they have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that meets or exceeds the requirements in this plan. If not, SFA may advertise the event, but not co-sponsor.
3. If the farmer, host or contact person at whose venue the activity is being conducted is ill or doesn’t feel well, or if they reside with others who do not feel well or who are ill, the activity should not be conducted. This should be verified by the SFA person in charge before scheduling the activity and again on the day/evening before the activity begins.

4. COVID19 recommendations or guidance used by a venue or community or school must be followed by SFA or chapters who are holding an event, meeting or gathering.

5. An event is considered to be “outside” if it is held entirely out of doors or under a tent, canopy or shelter house with no sides. Outside does NOT mean held in a house, restaurant, meeting space, machine shed, barn or other outbuilding that is enclosed on more than one side.

**Other COVID19 measures to be used at each meeting, event, pasture walk or field day**

1. A **point person** for each meeting, event or field day will be designated, and this person will read this policy in advance, and will be responsible for its implementation. This person should not be the hosting farmer, venue host or one of the presenters. The designated person will manage sign-in, ensure COVID-compliant measures are handled in advance and at the event, and will be present throughout the event. The point person will email the sign-in sheets to jerry@sfa-mn.org after the event (these sheets are used if contact tracing is needed.) The point person will report to Theresa Keaveny, theresa@sfa-mn.org, (507) 766-9159, if they learn that infected or exposed persons were at the event.

2. **Pre-registration** using SFA’s online portal is encouraged for workshops, field days, pasture walks and events that are not public walk-up events such as Salsa Fest or Harvest Fest. Walk ups to events who have not pre-registered are allowed. Pre-registration makes it possible to plan head count for meals and/or materials and track attendees for all events. Use the Event Entry Form: (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScxJsc_avqsg50nLuuCsdBjxiZtNPtwIJoFlQBeI891jtjC/viewform) to initiate the process for ALL events. This will guarantee that there will be pre-registration. This pre-registration includes a statement confirming that the registrant does not have COVID19 or reside with anyone who does. SFA also requires and provides a sign-in form, to be used at the event at a sign-in table or station, that confirms each attendee’s wellness. Anyone who comes to an SFA activity, meeting or field day who is ill may not sign the acknowledgement and must be denied entrance.

3. **Masks** are recommended for indoor gatherings, meetings and events, for all, and in particular for people who have not received the COVID19 vaccination. A mask is not required at outdoor events but should be used if people are in close proximity. For state SFA sponsored events, SFA will continue to bring masks to the venue for attendees requesting them. Chapters and Networking Group provide their own masks for attendees.

4. A **6-foot distance** between people is no longer required for indoor events or outdoor events but is recommended for crowded venues and outdoor locations.

5. **Hand sanitizer** is required at the event sign-in station (indoors or outdoors). SFA has provided this to staff and consultants. Chapters and networking groups should provide this themselves.

6. **Food and beverage service**: Potlucks and food that is served by a caterer or dished up by attendees is allowed and beverages may be provided from a coffee urn or beverage dispenser wherein people serve themselves. It is recommended that people serving food or beverages indoors or outdoors wear masks.
Boxed lunches or meals, pre-packaged food and bottled or canned beverages continue to be encouraged as the preferred alternative.

7. **Indoor events** may be held in homes and it is recommended that all wear masks and that people who have not received the COVID19 vaccination wear masks. The available bathroom facility may be used. A sink must be available, or, in its place, a handwashing station.

8. **A porta-potty** is required for outdoor events such as a farm field day, unless a public restroom is available at the site. Hand sanitizer must be available inside or immediately outside the porta-potty. Chapters and networking groups are responsible for paying for this for any of their events.

9. **A handwashing station** is to be placed near food service when a meal is served and used by all participants. SFA staff have obtained the required handwashing station, and chapters should obtain or rent one. These should also be used after COVID19 restrictions are lifted.

10. SFA will provide **materials and supplies** to staff and consultants, including hand washing stations with paper towels, hand sanitizer, gloves, masks and signage. Chapters should obtain their own hand washing stations, hand sanitizer, paper towels, garbage cans and masks, and, for outdoor events, porta-potties, unless an outdoor bathroom facility is otherwise available.

11. **Coughing or sneezing** should be done into an arm, a handkerchief should be used, and hand sanitizer used afterwards.

12. **A notice of these COVID19 requirements will be posted at events or reviewed with attendees by the SFA point person** The SFA employee, contractor or point person in charge will review with attendees the sanitation requirements at the beginning of each event.

**Additional Requirements for Staff, Consultants and Contractors**

1. All SFA employees and consultants are encouraged to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination.

2. SFA staff, which includes consultants and contractors in this context, may continue to do on-farm visits and consultations as before, observing the requirements below. **In arranging any farm consultation in which SFA staff would normally go to the farm**, the staff person will inquire whether a phone call or zoom meeting is preferred, and will ask if the farmer and any household member is ill with COVID-19 symptoms. If either is the case, the consultation should not be scheduled face to face. If the farmer and those living with the farmer are healthy, on farm consultation is allowed so long as it is held outside. Masks are recommended for inside meetings if participants are not vaccinated.

3. Travel in one vehicle involving more than one SFA staff, consultant or member is discouraged unless all parties in the vehicle have received a COVID19 vaccination.

4. Screening and policies for employees or contractors exhibiting signs and symptoms of COVID-19: All employees and contractors are required to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. They will disclose to the Executive Director whether they or someone they are living with are considered at higher risk or vulnerable to COVID-19 exposure, such that it would limit their contact with others outside of their home offices. In these cases, arrangements have been made (and will be made) to enable the individual to perform SFA work from home.
5. If a staff person or contractor is ill or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, they should obtain a COVID-19 test and report any positive results to the Executive Director. The guidelines below regarding self-care, return to work procedures, and notification of other employees, contractors and attendees shall be followed.

6. In the event that an employee or contractor has SFA work planned that is interrupted due to COVID-19, postponement is recommended versus cancellation. If necessary, arrangements will be made for another person to assume responsibility for the SFA work unable to be performed by the employee or contractor.

7. The MN Department of Health informs individuals if they have tested positive for COVID-19 and will follow up with others who may have been exposed to the person with COVID-19. Quarantine requirements and return-to-work procedures are found here: https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

8. SFA’s only office is in New Ulm, where the Executive Director is based. Other employees and contractors work from their homes. The SFA office is open to the public. Hand sanitizer is used when guests enter the office. Masks are required for anyone who has not received a COVID-19 vaccination.

9. Handwashing and hand sanitizing: Employees and contractors who are involved in any SFA public-facing activity outside of their home offices must wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water frequently throughout the day, but especially at the beginning and end of the activity, prior to any mealtimes and after using the toilet. Hand-sanitizer dispensers (that use sanitizers of greater than 60% alcohol) will be at entrances so they can be used for hand hygiene in place of soap and water, as long as hands are not visibly soiled. Hand sanitizer shall be used and carried in vehicles used for SFA work and brought to the activity.

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was posted throughout SFA and via email on August 20, 2021. It will be updated as necessary.

Certified by:

Theresa M. Keaveny, Executive Director, theresa@sfa-mn.org and (507)766-9159

PROCEDURES REGARDING COVID 19 EXPOSURE, TESTING, QUARANTINE AND RETURN TO WORK

1. Health screening and “stay at home” requirements: Whether working from home or at a work location, employees and contractors must immediately report to the Executive Director if they are potentially infectious. In these cases, individuals should not report to any work site until their isolation or quarantine period is completed; or should immediately go home if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 while at work.
Attendees at SFA events shall contact the SFA Executive Director, Theresa Keaveny, theresa@sfa-mn.org and (507)766-9159, if they discover after the event that they were potentially infectious at the time of the event. If an attendee contacts the point person or someone else involved with the event, that person should contact Theresa Keaveny.

Effective isolation and quarantine practices are found on the on the MN Department of Health website at www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html#stayhome or Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf, with information about local and state public health authorities to contact for assistance.

2. MDH Guidance on Return to work after required isolation or quarantine period is found at www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/returntowork.pdf

3. Requirements to inform others if someone exhibits COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive is found at https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/Employer_and_employee_questions_related_to_COVID_19.pdf
   a. SFA must inform workers and all other attendees of events who have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 symptoms, or who has tested positive for COVID-19, of their possible exposure to COVID-19 while engaged in work (including meetings, events and field days) for the organization. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 are assigned a case worker through the Minnesota Department of Health or a local public health agency. The caseworker works with the employer and affected employee or individual to determine if more communication is necessary based on facts and circumstances, e.g. how close the individuals worked together and length of contact. If additional messaging is appropriate, the caseworker works with the employer to message that out.
   b. Can SFA disclose the identity of an employee or individual who has tested positive for, or otherwise been diagnosed with, COVID-19 to others who were in close contact with the infected person during the relevant 14-day period?

   No. The ADA prohibits disclosure of the identity of an employee who has tested positive for, or otherwise diagnosed with COVID-19 to co-workers. However, an employer can provide employees, contractors and attendees with information that would help them evaluate exposure. Employers can generally identify that an “employee, contractor or attendee has tested positive for COVID-19” or “has been exposed to COVID-19,” but the individual should not be identified.

   c. The Executive Director will gather information from employees, contractors or others who may have been exposed, and will engage in the required communications, and ensure the privacy of infected individuals and people who may have been exposed is maintained in accordance with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidance (www.eeoc.gov/transcript-march-27-2020-outreach-webinar) and other applicable state and federal law.

4. SFA encourages all attendees and pre-registrants to self-check their body temperature the day of the event, field day or meeting, prior to arrival. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan establishes and explains the policies, practices and conditions necessary for SFA to meet the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards, and Executive Order 21-23 (May 14,
2021), EO 21-21 (May 6, 2021) and EO 20-11 (March 15, 2021) related to workers, contractors, members and farmers, given that SFA has a customer-facing operation and activities involving groups, risking exposure to COVID-19. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry (DLI), in consultation with MDH, has the authority to determine whether a plan is adequate.


See Emergency Executive Order 21-21 here: [https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%202021-11%20Final_tcm1055-472034.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%202021-11%20Final_tcm1055-472034.pdf)