



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
HEALTH / AGRICULTURE BUILDING  
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PHILIP D. MURPHY  
*Governor*  
SHEILA Y. OLIVER  
*Lt. Governor*

DOUGLAS H. FISHER  
*Secretary*

March 25, 2020

Agriculture – its farms and related processing, distribution, and retailing operations – is an essential and vital business in New Jersey and is recognized as such in the State’s planning and organization of commerce as we deal with the changes brought to our world by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The need to maintain crucial supply chain operations, from farm to processor to distributor to retailer to consumer, is recognized in the State’s directives on keeping food retailing operations – supermarkets, grocery stores, farm markets, and other places where the public can obtain needed supplies – operating as safely as possible during this critical time while also observing the social-interaction recommendations health officials have mandated.

Our State’s residents are doing their part to slow the spread of COVID-19, with a great many staying in their homes and practicing social distancing. As this continues, it becomes increasingly important for New Jerseyans to have the opportunities to engage in positive and constructive activities that also provide fresh air, sunlight, and a sense of purpose. This makes our home and garden centers, and the nurseries that supply plant material to them, essential parts of helping residents deal with this new home-based reality in the way that we all live.

Each individual business will have multiple decisions going forward to ensure compliance with the COVID-19-related Emergency Orders issued by Gov. Murphy and the recommendations of the state Coronavirus Task Force and the Centers for Disease Control.

The New Jersey Department of Agriculture is committed to carrying out the services it does to help our agricultural industry and those related to it remain operational. This includes the continued implementation of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) which becomes increasingly vital as COVID-19 makes sanitation in all industries more crucial than ever before.

Topics listed at [www.nj.gov/agriculture](http://www.nj.gov/agriculture) cover current specific information and guidance from the federal and state governments for the operation of agricultural and ag-related businesses during this unprecedented time.

If you have specific questions, the NJDA is available for information at 609-292-3976.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'D. Fisher', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Douglas H. Fisher, Secretary of Agriculture