

NATIONAL CHRISTMAS TREE ASSOCIATION

Choose & Cut Farm COVID-19

BEST PRACTICES RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Christmas Tree Association has developed these best practice recommendations for Choose & Cut farms to use as guidance to adapt their business to the circumstances they will face during the 2020 Christmas season due to COVID-19.

Choose & Cut farms must protect the health and safety of their employees, provide customers with the confidence they need so they can enjoy selecting a tree without risk and demonstrate to state and local officials they are conducting business responsibly. We highly encourage you to develop the best possible response to these recommendations:

DEVELOP A COVID-19 PLAN

- Frequently sanitize items and areas such as hand saws, tree cart handles, counter tops, door handles and restrooms
- Limit the number of customers permitted inside buildings, minimize or eliminate wagon rides, fire pits, or other places that people gather
- Supply no touch garbage receptacles
- Offer Santa either on closed circuit TV or live at a distance
- Do not erect photo op “cut-outs” where faces come in contact
- Offer individually bagged food items instead of self-serve loose items such as cookies
- Provide a server for drinks instead of offering self-serve
- Require all dogs to be on a leash, or discourage dogs, as they cause unnecessary interaction among customers
- Encourage customers to tie their own trees on their vehicles by offering an instructional video

SALES & PAYMENT

- Install windows or plexiglass partitions at sales counters
- Offer Curbside pick-up
- Use a touchless pay credit card system
- Price products to limit the use of coins
- Eliminate the need for customer signatures on credit card transactions

PROTECTING CUSTOMERS

- Take staff temperature daily, provide PPE for all employees, do not permit staff exhibiting symptoms of illness to come to work
- Encourage customers to visit during non-peak hours

- Create special hours for select customers (elderly and at risk)
- Advise customers that you reserve the right to deny service to anyone displaying signs of illness or not following farm guidelines
- Have sanitizing stations available to staff and customers
- Request masks be worn by those able to without adverse health impacts
- Require masks be worn when social distancing is not possible, as on wagon rides to fields or in checkout lines
- Offer masks or neck gaiters for sale (with farm name or logo)

COMMUNICATIONS

- Discuss procedures with staff to keep employees safe
- Train staff on new procedures to keep customers safe
- Communicate early the proactive steps your farm is taking to keep customers safe through website, newsletter, social media, phone message, local paper, etc.
- Recommend signs at farm: wear mask inside buildings, limited numbers in gift shop (follow your state/county regulations), maintain social distancing, manage customer flow (one-way traffic in and out)
- Stress no visitors to farm if ill or had contact with someone ill with COVID-19
- Consider sign in sheet with family name and phone number. Break into morning/afternoon each day

RESOURCES

- Additional information is available on CDC, State and Local Health Department websites
- **There is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted on plants or plant products** Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension/New York State Integrated Pest Management