



# The University of Vermont

April 27, 2020

To All Producers,

UVM takes the threat of the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) very seriously and requests that all employees, partners, and producers that we work with do so as well. In an effort to mitigate the spread of the virus and to protect the wellbeing of our communities, we must all work together.

## **OFFICE VISITS**

At this time the Extension Offices are still open, but with restrictions. Below outlines procedures we are following to minimize exposure to COVID-19.

- All business will be conducted by phone or email if possible to avoid in-person office visits. If you require an in-person visit, please call the office 24 hours in advance to set up an appointment.
- If you have paperwork, materials, or samples there will be a designated location directly outside of the office to place materials. Do not leave frozen manure samples without making prior arrangements with a staff person.
- If an in-person visit cannot be avoided, you will be asked to sanitize or wash your hands before entering the building. Once in the building you will be directed to a designated space that allows for the 6-foot social distance.
- All business will be conducted in as efficient of manner as possible. Both UVM employees and clients are asked to come prepared to complete the tasks as timely as possible.

## **FIELD AND FARM VISITS**

As we begin to gear up for a busy field season, we want to communicate the steps that we're asking everyone to take to ensure the safety of our employees and producers.

- First and foremost, we ask both UVM and producers to communicate with one another during this time. If you, or anyone in your family, or people whom you've had close contact with is sick, please postpone our visit until you are well.
- If you have traveled to any high risk areas within the past 3 weeks, please make UVM staff aware of this.
- If you are uncomfortable inviting UVM onto your farm or into your facility for health or safety reasons, or if you have an individual in your household who is considered "high risk", please make the UVM staff aware of this. Our primary concern at this time is to reduce exposure to the virus and to do our part to flatten the curve of its spread. Postponing visits is one way we can do this, and we support your decision should you choose to postpone your on-site visit.

When you do invite UVM onto your premises, please be aware that UVM staff have been asked to follow sound biosecurity measures by:

- Washing their hands often and well and at a minimum, before and after each on-site visit.
- Wiping down their computers, keyboards, phones, pens, and other equipment before and after each on-site visit.
- Wearing gloves and a facemask during their visit.
- Planning to only interact with essential farm representatives at the visit.
- Not going into your house and avoiding farm facilities as much as possible.
- Keeping social distancing active at the visit, which means that the UVM employee may interact but at a 6-foot distance. Visits will be conducted outside or in a spacious area.
- Not riding in your vehicle or having you ride in ours.
- Completing essential work and leaving the farm immediately. Unfortunately, these will not be social calls and employees are asked to complete work and leave immediately.

In all cases, any in-person visits will need to be considered **Essential Work**. When information or communication can be provided remotely, that option should be used instead of a visit.

We are available by phone, e-mail, and can set up virtual meetings for face-to-face communication. The University of Vermont Extension is still open and here to support you, but we want to make sure we are keeping everyone safe. Please feel free to contact us by phone or email.

**Office Main Number: 802-524-6501**

**Heather Darby**, Agronomist: 802-782-6054

**Jeff Sanders**, Agronomy Outreach Specialist: 802-309-1315

**Susan Brouillette**, Program Manager: 802-309-8260

You can also visit our program website for updated research report, crop, and program (webinars) information – <http://go.uvm.edu/nwcrops>. We have also included information and resources on COVID-19 for farmers.

We understand that this situation continues to change and evolve rapidly. We will rely on direction from the VT Department of Health, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the FMI Food Industry Association and other authorities as necessary and ask that you do the same. The following links provide information and resources about the Coronavirus:

[Vermont Department of Health Covid-19 website](#)

[2019 novel Coronavirus](#), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention