

**NATIONAL BLACK GROWERS COUNCIL  
CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**

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As the coronavirus pandemic expands, the National Black Growers Council (NBGC), along with all others, finds itself more deeply impacted by its wrath (*see* <https://www.cnn.com/interactive/2020/health/coronavirus-us-maps-and-cases/>). You and previous generations have survived countless struggles in the past, but the COVID-19 virus warrants special attention. On the recent Board of Directors monthly conference call, we discussed several practical considerations that should be implemented as planting season gets underway. The intent of this notice is to recap some of these recommendations and to provide some resources to help guide us through these challenging times.

**Recommendations**

1. Follow social distancing recommendations, avoid close contact with people who are sick, wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, use an alcohol-based (should contain at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
2. In interactions with industry reps, follow social distancing guidelines at all times. Restrict situations that require close contact with others, including group meals, grower meetings, and training sessions. Most companies have instructed their employees to do the same and to scale back on personal visits. Please understand that this is not the preferred method of providing customer service to you; rather a requirement to help get us through this situation.
3. In interactions with partners and employees, be vigilant and watch for those with COVID-19 symptoms (*see* <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/2019-ncov-factsheet.pdf>). Immediately remove individuals who show symptomology from the workforce in order to avoid spreading the virus.
4. Restrict personal meetings with USDA officials as much as possible as their office personnel have been instructed to do the same (*see* <https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>). Use alternate communication methods (phone calls, emails, faxes, text messages) to conduct as much business as you can. If personal meetings are required, call ahead to make appointments and assure that you can comply with USDA requirements for office visits.

All agree that as farmers, we provide essential services that require us to remain active and productive. This season already had us struggling with low commodity prices and very tight margins, and these conditions have worsened with the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage you not to panic, but think ahead as you negotiate seeds, fuel, fertilizer, and crop protection products. While marketing your crop, pay attention to your production costs and keep a level head on expectations.

NBGC's leadership is closely monitoring opportunities to provide financial assistance information to our network of farmers, including a review of the recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (*see* <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3548/text>) and resources from the Small Business Administration (*see* <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/economic-injury-disaster-loan-emergency-advance>). Our focus will be to make sure that the unique circumstances of our growers are addressed and that we get a proportional share of the resources from this needed legislation. We encourage you to discuss your needs with our Board members and Executive Director.