



In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social distancing orders designed to keep us safe, AgrAbility Virginia is aware that farmers and food chain workers are particularly vulnerable to the stressors introduced by this pandemic as well as by the measures designed to slow its spread. The impact of COVID-19 on our food system, as well as on farmers' physical and mental health, is significant, widespread and varied—affecting different people and different agricultural enterprises in different ways.

AgrAbility Virginia is here to support farmers as they face distinct challenges during this time noting that the farming population, as a relatively older population, may be particularly vulnerable to the effects and complications of corona virus, and further, that farmers—already in a time of stress—may be susceptible to increased negative impacts of corona virus on mental health.

We at AgrAbility Virginia are committed to ensuring continuity of service to Virginia's farmers and food chain workers during this pandemic by aggregating information about the relevant resources available to our clientele and by providing direct service via email and phone. In effort to keep us all safe, we are temporarily discontinuing face-to-face and on-farm interactions. Please read below to learn more about available resources..

- The [CDC's statement on the mental health impacts of COVID-19](#) offers an explanation of how the virus might induce or exacerbate mental health concerns and provides coping strategies and suggestions for how we all can manage anxiety and stress to maintain mental health during these uncertain times.
- We at Virginia Tech have developed and aggregated a [number of resources on farm safety, health, and wellness](#). We are also hosting a [webinar on farm stress and safety](#) on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. We have also developed resource guides including one on [mental health topics for farm families and caregivers](#) and a [decision-making guide for farm service providers and educators](#).
- Virginia Cooperative Extension has developed a [number of resources](#) to help Virginians prepare for the threat of corona virus infections. Several of these are oriented toward those engaged in food systems work. These include extension publications focused on [farmers markets](#), [u-pick farms](#), and [community gardens](#), among others.
- Cornell Small Farms Program has shared a number of [publications related to farm resilience](#). These publications include ideas for market adaptation and resilience, a platform for sharing stories and coping strategies about how your farm or food business has faced the challenges of the pandemic, as well as articles on how farmers and food chain workers can help to slow or stop the spread of the virus and protect their communities. Though some of these pieces are tailored specifically for New York farmers, we believe Virginians will also benefit from the information provided.



- Drs. Mark Stephenson and John Shutske at the University of Wisconsin—Madison have delineated [six possible impacts that COVID-19](#) could have on farming. In their article, they describe the impacts that COVID-19 will likely have on markets, supply chains, farmers' health, the farm workforce, worker safety and protection, as well as on other areas affecting rural lives and livelihoods including on travel and social gatherings.
- Last, the National Center for Appropriate Technology has compiled a list of resources designed to help farmers navigate these challenging times. Their resource list includes a [video series](#), [general information for agricultural producers](#) including resources specific to fruit and vegetable, meat processors, and dairy producers, and [resources related to alternative marketing options](#). Their resource list also contains information about farmer assistance programs. NCAT is also hosting farmer learning sessions and other events related to COVID-19, these events are listed on their [calendar](#).

To access AgrAbility Virginia services or to seek information, please reach out to our program coordinator, Garland Mason, by emailing [garlandm@vt.edu](mailto:garlandm@vt.edu). Please also stay tuned to our Facebook page and website for news updates, featured resources, and additional information.

