

April 24, 2020

Georgia Agriculture Education recognizes the importance of the food processing facilities to the schools and communities they serve. We also recognize that food processing/home canning is essential to many families and individuals in these communities. It is our desire to see these facilities utilized as much as possible while protecting all those involved and providing a safe product for the customers. We further understand that due to circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, practices and procedures used in these food processing facilities will have to be altered for the coming season. In order to maximize the safety of the agriculture teachers, student workers and customers of the food processing facilities, we recommend the following practices be implemented and followed.

- Teachers and student workers should take their temperature each morning before reporting to the facility. Anyone with a temperature above 100.4, cough or shortness of breath, or who have knowingly been exposed to the Covid-19 virus, should not report to work.
- Signs should be posted outside the facility asking customers not to enter the facility if they are exhibiting symptoms or have knowingly been exposed to the Covid-19 virus.
- All teachers and student workers should wear masks while inside the facility. Customers should be encouraged to do the same.
- All teachers and student workers should always wear disposable gloves while handling food products.
- Teachers, student workers and customers should not share gloves, towels, cloths, or other equipment.
- Food processing facilities are strongly encouraged to require customers to make appointments to use the facilities in order to reduce the number of customers inside the facility at a given time. This may also require limitation of the amount of produce that can be processed during the appointment to allow as many customers as possible during the day. The facility may need to alter hours of operation in order to accommodate the scheduling of customers. Time between appointments should be adequate to sanitize between customers.
- Food processing facilities should encourage customers to do as much prep work as possible prior to coming to the facility. This minimizes time and exposure in the facility and may allow more appointments during the day. Customers who utilize glass jars for food preservation, could be encouraged to fill these at home and bring to the facility for the thermal processing.
- The facility should limit as much as possible the number of customers inside and encourage/enforce distancing of 6 feet between customers, teachers, and student workers as much as possible.
- The facility should provide hand soap and disposable towels and encourage frequent handwashing of all involved.
- The facility should sanitize all workspaces and equipment before customers arrive, between customers and again at the end of the day.

Food processing facilities should implement these practices to minimize risk as much as possible. **The Agriculture teachers of each food processing facility should also follow all guidance given by their local board of education/health department as to further practices that should be followed, and as to whether the local BOE or Health Department will allow reopening of the food processing facility.**

Sincerely,
Billy Hughes
Program Manager, Agricultural Education



Agricultural Education Mission Statement: Agricultural Education prepares students for successful careers and a lifetime of informed choices in the global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources systems.