

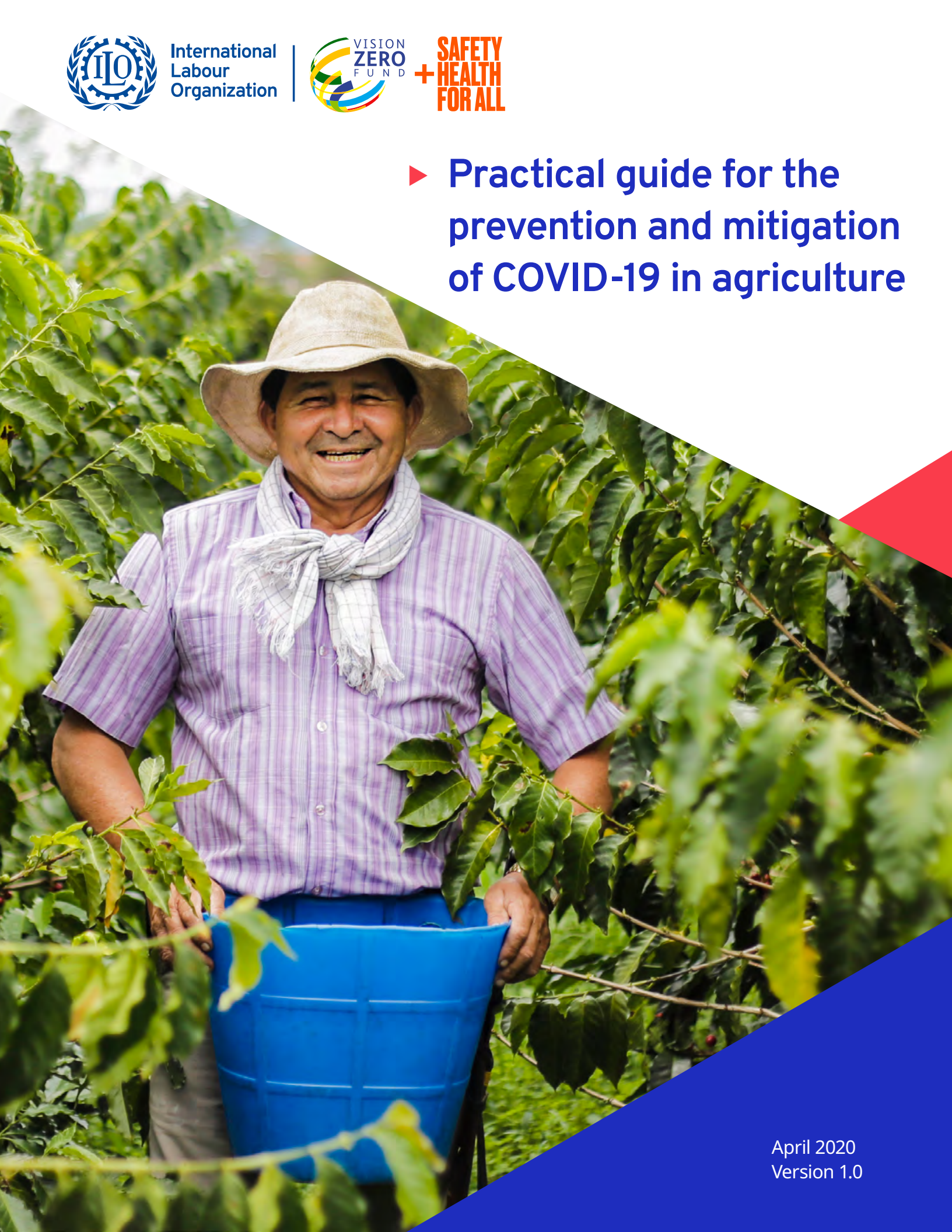


International
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+
**SAFETY
HEALTH
FOR ALL**

► **Practical guide for the
prevention and mitigation
of COVID-19 in agriculture**



April 2020
Version 1.0

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Practical guide for the prevention and mitigation of COVID-19 in agriculture

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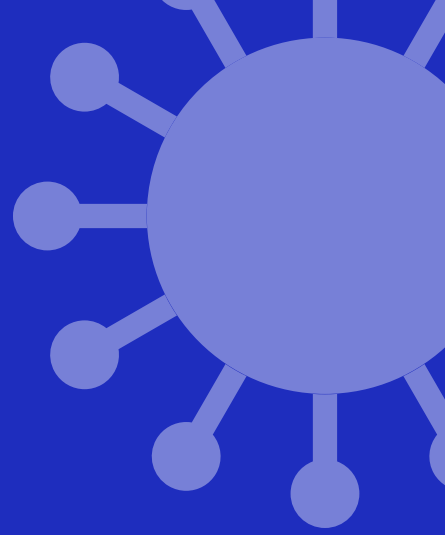
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Contents

Introduction	05
1. Purpose	06
2. Who is the guide intended for?	06
3. What are the scope and principles of the guide?	06
4. How does COVID-19 spread?	07
5. Policy, planning and organization	07
6. Risk assessment, management and communication	08
7. Prevention and mitigation measures	10
Access control	10
Personal hygiene	11
Procedure for cleaning and disinfection of facilities	13
Procedure for cleaning of potentially contaminated surfaces	14
Susceptible or vulnerable staff	15
Transportation and transfer of agricultural workers	16
Stress management	17
8. Provisions for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19	18
References	19
Visual aids for workplaces	20

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Introduction

The international community – headed by the World Health Organization (WHO), in conjunction with the International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations agencies, and governments and public health authorities all over the world – is taking steps to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, with the aim of reducing infection rates and also addressing the resulting economic and social impacts.

In many countries the most affected sectors have a high proportion of workers in informal employment and workers with limited access to health services and social protection. Without appropriate measures, workers run a high risk of being infected, of falling into poverty and of facing serious difficulties in restoring their means of subsistence during the recovery period. National governments are adopting a series of policies and mechanisms which are resulting in widespread changes to both daily life and productive activity.

The supply of food is a vital, fundamental activity which must be guaranteed, especially in health emergencies, providing the general public with an essential service while also creating peace of mind and ensuring access to safe and adequate sources of basic foodstuffs.

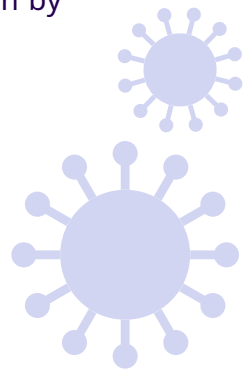
Even though many producers are devising and implementing plans for continuity in production, they should all, without exception, focus their actions on prevention and on the protection of all workers. The International Labour Organization (ILO) is contributing to this important task through the facilitation of effective and efficient prevention proposals.

▶ 1. Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to provide practical guidance for preventing and mitigating the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in agriculture. These recommendations should be taken into consideration alongside any standards, regulations or directives issued by each country, bearing in mind its social protection coverage in relation to occupational safety and health.

This guide may be considered as a tool for use in agricultural undertakings, providing help to:

- ▶ Identify and implement preventive measures in workplaces to avoid infection by COVID-19.
- ▶ Apply basic measures to mitigate the spread of the virus.
- ▶ Promote social dialogue and cooperation in workplaces.



▶ 2. Who is the guide intended for?

- ▶ Employers or their representatives in charge of agricultural undertakings (persons responsible for ensuring the safety and health of workers).
- ▶ Agricultural workers (women, men, permanent and temporary workers, day labourers and migrants).
- ▶ Any type of agricultural undertaking: large, medium-sized or small; cooperatives; family-run businesses.

▶ 3. What are the scope and principles of the guide?

This guide includes preventive measures to avoid exposure to, and mitigate the spread of, COVID-19 through the implementation of recommendations which are easy to apply in workplaces. In view of the characteristics of the virus, the recommendations also apply in general to workers' housing and transport to the workplace.



Employers would be responsible for ensuring that the proposed measures are adopted to reduce risks in the workplace to a minimum, and also for providing resources and inputs at no cost to their employees. Workers would have the responsibility to cooperate with implementing the recommendations, observing safety measures and ensuring the safety of other persons within reasonable limits (including preventing exposure to safety and health risks) and using safety devices and personal protective equipment (PPE) in the proper manner. This guide applies to all workers, whatever their contractual status, and reflects the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

In addition, a set of graphics with instructive messages is attached, to reinforce the recommendations aimed at workers.

▶ 4. How does COVID-19 spread?

A person can contract COVID-19 through contact with another person who is infected with the virus. The disease can spread between persons through droplets emitted from the nose or mouth when an infected person coughs or exhales. The droplets fall on nearby objects and surfaces, so if other persons touch these objects or surfaces and then touch their eyes, nose or mouth, they too can contract COVID-19. They can also be infected if they inhale droplets scattered when a person who has COVID-19 coughs or exhales. This is why it is important to stay 1 to 2 metres away from a person who has symptoms (according to the applicable national legislation).

▶ 5. Policy, planning and organization

- ▶ Designate a working group, according to the size of the agricultural undertaking, which includes the manager and/or supervisor, representatives of the workers (safety and health committee) and the safety and health officer at the workplace.
- ▶ Provide information and training for the group on the steps to be taken to implement preventive and mitigation measures.
- ▶ Devise a work plan in line with outcomes from a chart of actors and activities (described below).
 - ▶ To implement the work plan, promote cooperation in the workplace.
 - ▶ Consult the workers and consider their proposals.



- ▶ If necessary, reach a consensus on the way to apply measures, seeking the opinions – depending on the size of the agricultural undertaking – of the manager of the undertaking, the safety and health committee (if it exists), the workers and the person responsible for occupational safety and health programmes.

Chart of actors and activities

Workplace or location	Preventive and mitigation measures to consider	Who carries them out?	When are they implemented?	With whom are they coordinated?	Priority

Steps to follow:

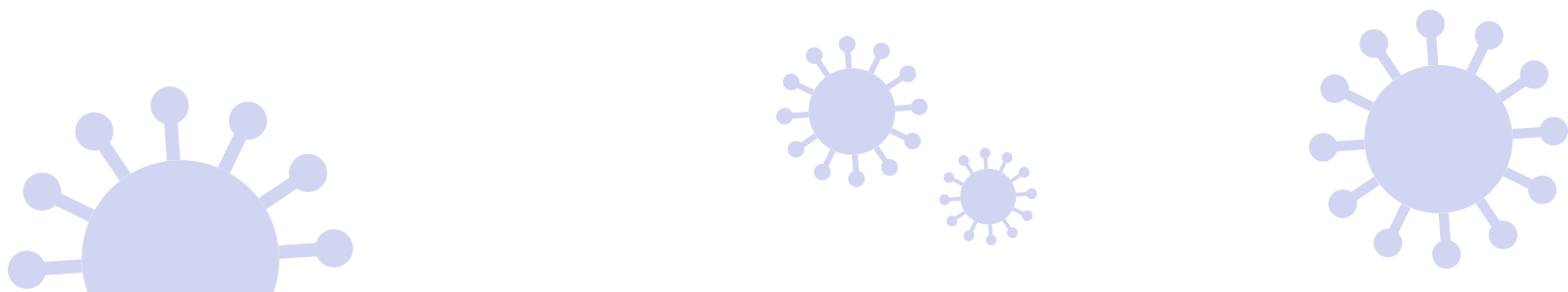
- ▶ Complete the chart of actors and activities and hold a dialogue with the working group on the recommendations to be given to the employer or manager. Experience has shown that this step is essential for promoting positive change.
- ▶ Make adequate financial resources available for the purchase of all inputs needed to implement the suggested measures and recommendations.
- ▶ Present the results of the discussion to the employer or manager in order to plan the implementation of the agreed preventive and mitigation measures.
- ▶ Document all information on activities performed by keeping a log especially of cleaning schedules for toilets, canteens and leisure areas, and of purchases of inputs (soap, alcohol, chlorine, gloves, masks, etc.).

▶ 6. Risk assessment, management and communication

- ▶ Conduct the risk assessment through analysis of the different work environments and activities performed by the workers, establishing a hierarchy of priority areas, work stations and work environments, as well as other potential areas of interaction with other workers, providers, customers and visitors, among others.



- ▶ Keep staff separate in accordance with the established minimum distance of 1 to 2 metres (according to the national legislation).
- ▶ Allow a maximum of five workers at the same work station (according to the national legislation), ensuring a healthy distance.
- ▶ For jobs where workers need to be less than 1 metre apart, masks should be worn.
- ▶ Establish work groups to minimize the movement of workers in work areas and to facilitate tracking and monitoring should any infection be identified.
- ▶ Avoid rotations of workers.
- ▶ Establish staggered hours of work for crews or groups in areas where different jobs and operations require larger numbers of workers, as well as areas such as canteens, toilets and changing rooms, to avoid overcrowding.
- ▶ Ensure that individuals are seated 1 to 2 metres apart during meal times (spaces can be marked to make the distance more visible).
- ▶ Do not share food or utensils.
- ▶ Inform workers of their right to stop work and remove themselves from a work situation which presents an imminent and serious danger to life or health, in accordance with guidelines in the national legislation (right to know). Establish appropriate procedures, including for immediately informing the direct supervisor of the situation.
 - ▶ Inform workers, using simple language, of the risks arising from COVID-19.
 - ▶ Hold periodic information sessions with workers on the situation and evolution of the pandemic, observing physical (social) distancing (1 to 2 metres apart), according to the national legislation. Make use of printed media that can be easily understood by workers (posters, infographics, brochures, with more illustrations than text).
- ▶ Train managers, producers, workers and their representatives regarding the measures adopted to prevent the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and regarding the action to take in the event of infection. For workers in high-risk jobs, training should include the correct use, maintenance and disposal of personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - ▶ Apply the protocol established by the health authority to facilitate access to health facilities and healthcare in the event that a producer or worker contracts COVID-19.



▶ 7. Prevention and mitigation measures

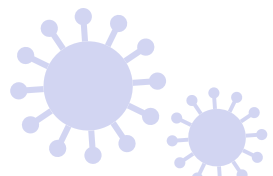
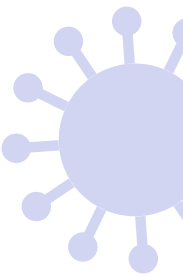
Access control



- ▶ Organize how workers enter and leave the workplace (avoid congestion, mark distances on the floor/ground and avoid “two-way traffic”).
- ▶ Facilitate the washing of hands before entering and leaving the workplace.
- ▶ Set up screening to detect any symptoms among workers and their families, if the latter enter the workplace. Where possible, check that body temperature is not above 37.3 °C and ensure that no other symptoms are present, such as a dry cough, sneezing, generally feeling unwell, a headache and/or breathing difficulties.
- ▶ Disinfect all instruments or equipment used.
- ▶ Avoid visits from external workers or staff. If they need to enter the workplace, apply the same access control measures.
- ▶ For newly hired workers (temporary or seasonal), apply the same access control measures, observing the principles of respect and non-discrimination.



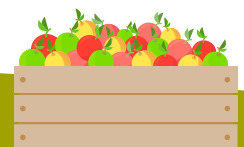
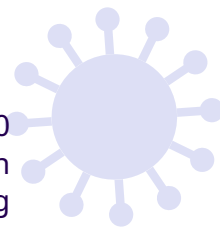
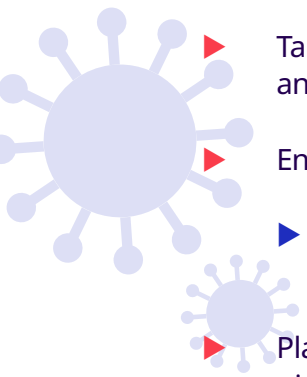
- ▶ Coordinate with workers changes of clothing when entering or leaving the workplace or productive areas.
 - ▶ Carry out maintenance and cleaning and ensure the correct use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
 - ▶ Ensure that there are appropriate facilities (separate changing rooms for men and women) for changing into/out of work clothes.
 - ▶ Maximum of five workers in changing rooms (according to national legislation), respecting a healthy distance.
 - ▶ Set up separate entrance and exit arrangements for changing rooms to avoid “two-way traffic”.



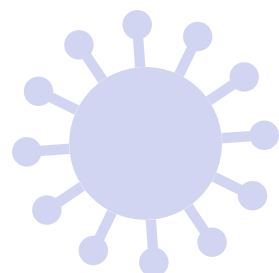
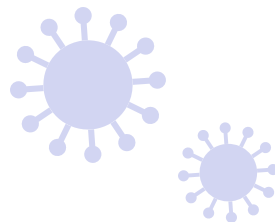
Personal hygiene



- ▶ Insist on correct and constant washing of hands with soap and water (for at least 20 seconds), backed up by the use of sanitizer gel or 70 per cent alcohol solutions. Wash hands again after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, before and after eating or going to the toilet, to avoid transmission of the virus or contact with it.
 - ▶ If 70 per cent alcohol is not available, add 30 tablespoons of water to one litre of 96 per cent industrial ethanol (ethyl alcohol).
 - ▶ If no other product is available, continue to wash hands with soap and water.
- ▶ Take care of your nails and keep them short; do not wear rings, watches, bracelets or any other objects that can prevent you from washing your hands properly.
- ▶ Ensure that tissues are available for workers to use if they have a runny nose.
 - ▶ Dispose of tissues in plastic bags inside containers with lids. Close bags with a knot before throwing them away.
- ▶ Place dispensers of sanitizer gel or 70 per cent alcohol solutions at strategic points, giving priority to areas where product safety must be maintained, customer and external service areas, and areas containing large concentrations of workers.
- ▶ Encourage all staff to shower on a daily basis.



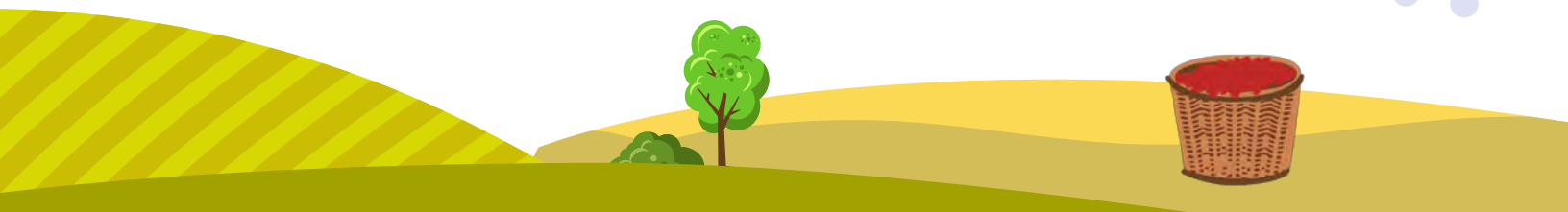
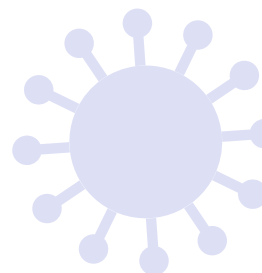
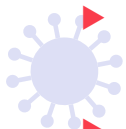
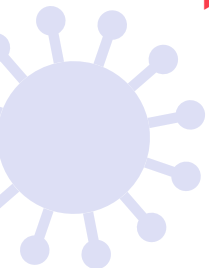
- ▶ Make the use of disposable masks and gloves mandatory, according to the nature of the tasks to be performed – for example, workers handling food and drink, workers engaged in general cleaning tasks, vehicle drivers and security guards (follow recommendations issued by the national authorities).
 - ▶ Soak gloves and masks in a chlorine solution after use and dispose of them safely.
- ▶ Place informative visual aids (infographics) in common areas, hostels and childcare centres.
 - ▶ Make parents aware that they should not bring children to the childcare centre if they display any of the following symptoms: fever (temperature of 37.3 °C or higher), cough, sneezing, runny nose, fatigue, muscle pain, headache and/or breathing difficulties. This recommendation also applies to childcare centre staff.
 - ▶ Sanitizer gel should be dispensed to any child or adult who enters the childcare centre (except breastfeeding women).
 - ▶ Take the temperature of all children.
 - ▶ Ask about the health condition of the child and family members in the past 24 hours.
- ▶ Among other services, ensure the provision of water, toilets and sanitary services, and an adequate supply of cleaning products (soap, industrial chlorine for domestic use, sanitizer gel, ethanol), tissues, gloves, disposable masks and garbage bags.



Procedure for cleaning and disinfection of facilities



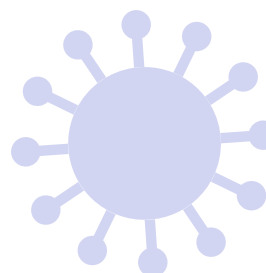
- ▶ Strictly observe hygiene measures in procedures for the handling of food and the disinfection of tools, machinery and equipment.
- ▶ Intensify the cleaning of common areas (rooms, reception areas, meeting rooms, closed work areas, workshops, storage facilities, seedbeds, greenhouses) and also changing rooms for men and women, childcare centres and hostels, as well as handrails, knobs, switches, doors and ladders/stairs. Use chlorine solutions for cleaning and disinfection operations.
 - ▶ Carry out such operations twice a day.
- ▶ Encourage such cleaning and disinfection in workers' and producers' homes and in leisure areas.
- ▶ Stop work at scheduled intervals to carry out sanitization and disinfection in line with stages of production.
- ▶ Keep doors and natural ventilation systems open to maintain constant air circulation in indoor work areas.
 - ▶ Let as much sunlight in as possible.



Procedure for cleaning of potentially contaminated surfaces



- ▶ Disinfect manual tools, electro-mechanical equipment, other frequently used tools and also vehicles after each use by spraying 70 per cent ethanol mixtures or chlorine solutions.
 - ▶ Industrial chlorine has a concentration of 5 per cent. Add three tablespoons of chlorine (one tablespoon is roughly equivalent to 15 ml) to one litre of water.
 - ▶ Use 70 per cent ethanol for surfaces where chlorine cannot be used.
 - ▶ Never mix chlorine with another product, otherwise it loses its efficacy. Solutions should preferably be prepared just a few minutes before using them.
- ▶ Inform all workers that on arriving at their home or hostel they should change out of the shoes and clothes they have been wearing and put them in a bag for subsequent washing. The same procedure should be used even when they are not staying at home.
 - ▶ Clothes for washing should not be shaken.
 - ▶ Disinfect personal belongings (keys, mobile phone, bags, watches, etc.) using a chlorine solution.



Susceptible or vulnerable staff



- ▶ Inform the management or immediate supervisor if there are workers with any kind of symptoms. Such persons should be sent home and should stay at home or at a health centre for at least 14 days until they have fully recovered.
- ▶ In case of doubt, take the temperature of the person concerned. If it is above 37.3 °C or the person has breathing difficulties, send him/her to the nearest hospital or clinic and inform the health authorities.
- ▶ Give special attention to adults over 60 years of age, since they are considered the most vulnerable population group on account of suffering from chronic degenerative diseases. Appropriate shielding at home is therefore recommended.
- ▶ Apply the principles of equality and non-discrimination to pregnant workers, ensuring that their working conditions safeguard their life and health.
- ▶ If they display symptoms of any kind, they should stop work and immediately inform their supervisor. They should then be referred to the local health centre to await subsequent instructions.

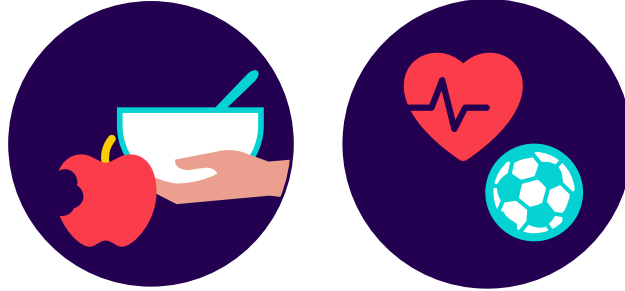


Transportation and transfer of agricultural workers

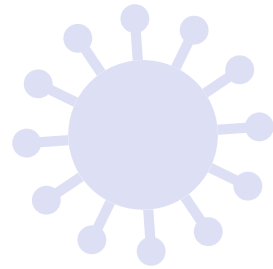


- ▶ Vehicles for the transportation of workers, if provided by the undertaking, should be cleaned every day, as indicated in the procedures for cleaning potentially contaminated surfaces.
- ▶ Apply physical (social) distancing and display information on the preventive measures to be followed.
- ▶ Agree on and coordinate with the driver the use of gloves and frequent washing of hands during the day and before and after using gloves.
- ▶ Place sanitizer gel dispensers by the door of the vehicle and at an intermediate point inside.
- ▶ Place informative visual aids at different points in the vehicle.
- ▶ Install containers for the disposal of tissues. These waste containers must be handled by those responsible for the vehicle and be disinfected with a chlorine solution before final placement.
- ▶ Wherever possible, keep windows open to ensure adequate ventilation inside the vehicle.
- ▶ Transportation should be of seated passengers only, with one person per row (alternate seating). If possible, provide masks for all workers and any accompanying family members using the vehicle.

Stress management



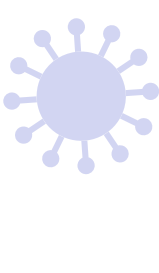
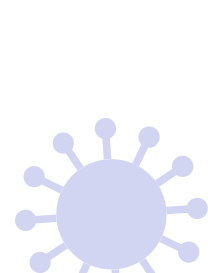
- ▶ Use the following recommendations if you detect feelings of distress, sadness, confusion or anxiety among workers and colleagues resulting from the magnitude of the COVID-19 pandemic:
 - ▶ Provide information on the risk situation in the workplace and recognize existing safety levels.
 - ▶ Facilitate steps to promote physical health (exercise and healthy eating habits).
 - ▶ As far as possible, maintain a healthy lifestyle at and outside work, observing physical (social) distancing (1 to 2 metres between persons, according to the national legislation).
 - ▶ Follow a suitable diet.
 - ▶ Get enough sleep and rest.
 - ▶ Promote leisure activities with the family at home.
 - ▶ Avoid the consumption of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.
 - ▶ Avoid excessive exposure to news items that cause more anxiety.
 - ▶ Identify support services provided by local organizations and health authorities and encourage workers to consult them in confidence if necessary.



▶ 8. Provisions for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19

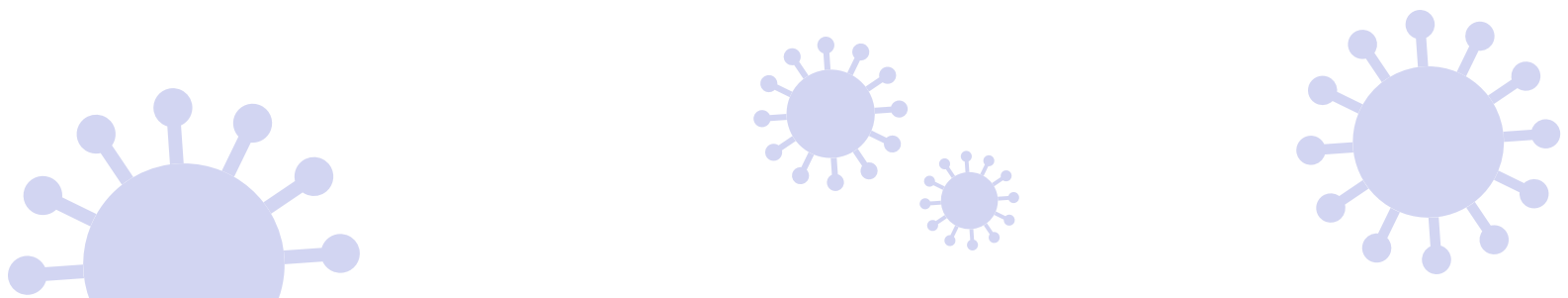


- ▶ Apply the provisions and instructions issued by local or national authorities regarding the display of suspected symptoms of COVID-19 by workers and with respect to staying away from the workplace.
- ▶ Any worker who has any of the following symptoms: a cold (even slight), fever (temperature above 37.3 °C), headache or body aches, or breathing difficulties, should:
 - ▶ Inform the supervisor or person in charge that he/she is unable to work.
 - ▶ Stay at home for at least 14 days. Once at home, the person displaying the symptoms should follow the protocols established by the health authorities.
 - ▶ Indicate whether any person in the immediate family or at the place of residence has the same symptoms and inform the supervisor if he/she has taken medication such as paracetamol, acetaminophen, ibuprofen or aspirin that can mask the symptoms.
- ▶ Isolate any person who displays symptoms of COVID-19 in the workplace (as in confirmed cases) pending transfer to an appropriate health centre, if his/her condition warrants it.
 - ▶ Organize the disinfection of the workplace and monitor the health of workers who have had contact.
- ▶ Notify the manager or supervisor of the agricultural undertaking through a sickness incident report in the event of observing any worker with symptoms or learning that a worker has been sent home having reported symptoms or because of symptoms displayed by a close family member at the same residence.

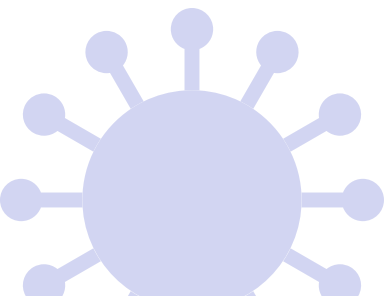
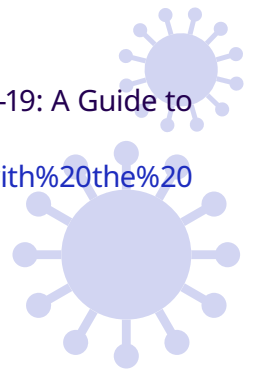


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CORRECT WASHING OF HANDS



Wet your hands with water



Apply soap



Rub vigorously for **20 seconds**



Rub between fingers



Wash under your nails



Rinse



Dry hands with paper towel



Turn off tap with paper towel

Wash your hands after:



Coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose



Touching surfaces or objects



Using transport

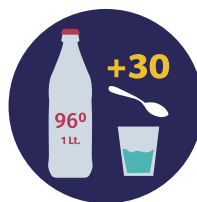


Being in contact with garbage



Before and after eating or going to the toilet

Remember to also use sanitizer gel or 70% alcohol solutions



If 70% alcohol is not available, add 30 tablespoons of water to one litre of 96% industrial ethanol

Washing hands can save lives!



PERSONAL HYGIENE



VERY IMPORTANT:

Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds at frequent intervals. Also use sanitizer gel or 70% alcohol solutions.



- **Keep nails short and clean**, do not wear rings, watches or bracelets.



- **If you do not have a tissue**, cough or sneeze into your elbow.



- **Do not greet others with a handshake**, kiss or hug.



- **Regularly disinfect your mobile phone** and personal items such as keys, watch or wallet.



- **Do not touch your face**, especially your mouth, nose and eyes.



- **On arrival at home**, remove clothing and shoes and take a shower. Place clothing in a bag for washing. Do not shake clothing.



- **If you cough or sneeze**, use tissues and dispose of them in a separate container (bin). Wash your hands immediately afterwards.

REPORT POSSIBLE INFECTION

If you have any of the following symptoms:



Cold
(even slight)



Dry
cough



Body
aches



Temperature
over 37.3 °C



Breathing
difficulties

You should:



- **Inform the supervisor or person in charge** that you are unable to work.



- **Check your temperature** at least twice a day.



- **Stay at home** for at least 14 days, until you have fully recovered.



- **Inform the supervisor or person in charge of the agricultural undertaking** if any person in your family or place of residence has displayed symptoms or has taken medication.



- If your symptoms get worse, **follow the health authority protocols**.



- **If pregnant workers display symptoms**, report it immediately, contact the health centre and follow instructions from the authorities.



- **Do not self-medicate.**



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION OF FACILITIES



Intensify cleaning and disinfection of common areas and work areas with chlorine solution or soap and water.



■ **Clean work tools at the end of the day** using a chlorine solution. Do not lend them to another person.



■ **Never mix chlorine** with another product, since it loses its efficacy and may be toxic.



■ **Keep doors and windows open** to promote air circulation.



■ **Clean and disinfect vehicles for worker transportation** every day after use.



■ **Stop work at scheduled intervals** to carry out cleaning and disinfection.





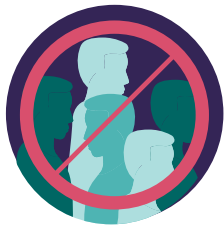
PROTECTION IN THE WORKPLACE



If you have symptoms, inform your supervisor or person in charge and follow the protocols established by the health authorities.



Always keep a distance of 1 to 2 metres between workers.



■ **Avoid group meetings** and visits from external workers or staff.



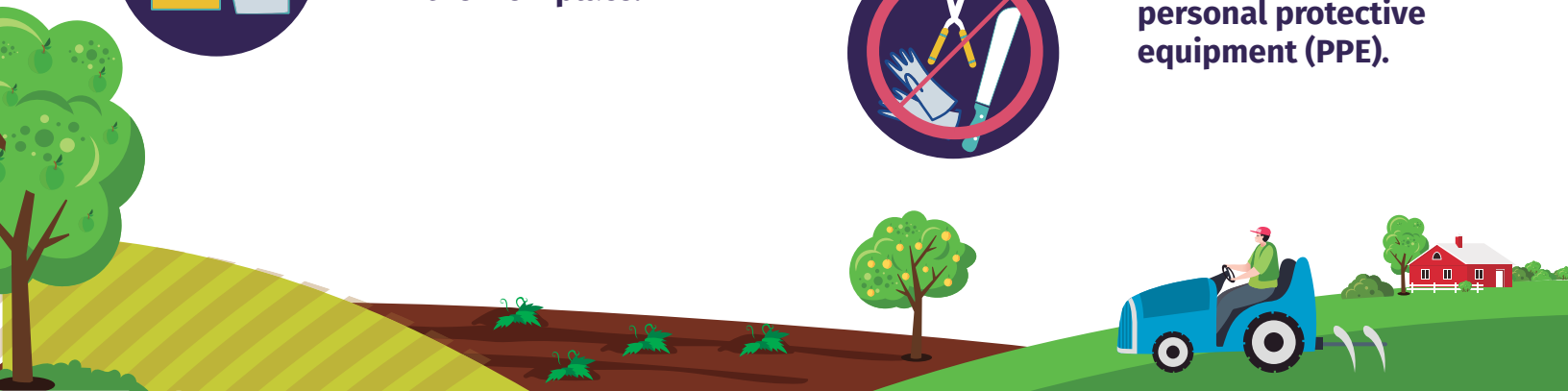
■ **Use sanitizer gel dispensers** located at strategic points.



■ **Change clothes** on entering and leaving the workplace.



■ **Do not share tools** or personal protective equipment (PPE).



USE OF MASK AND GLOVES



The use of disposable masks and gloves is recommended for:



- Workers who handle food and drink.



- Workers performing general cleaning tasks.



- Vehicle drivers.



- Security guards.



Masks should be worn when staff need to work less than 1 metre apart.



Where possible, wear masks and gloves on public transport.



Soak gloves and masks in a chlorine solution after use and dispose of them safely.





STRESS MANAGEMENT

If you feel distress, sadness, confusion or anxiety regarding COVID-19, we recommend that you:

■ Maintain a healthy lifestyle at and outside work:



■ Consult your immediate supervisor or boss.



■ Follow a suitable diet.



■ Talk to a trusted family member or friend who will listen to your concerns.



■ Get plenty of sleep and rest.



■ Do some exercise or leisure activity with family members or co-residents.



■ Keep well informed about the risk situation at your workplace and recognize the safety level that exists there.



■ Avoid the consumption of tobacco, alcohol or drugs.



■ Avoid exposure to excessive news items that cause more anxiety.



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