



New York Farm Bureau • 159 Wolf Road P.O. Box 5330 • Albany, New York 12205 • (518) 436-8495 Fax: (518) 431-5656

April 20, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo
State Capitol, Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12210

RE: Agricultural Worker Safety

Dear Governor Cuomo,

On behalf of New York Farm Bureau, the state's largest general farm organization, I am writing to express our concern for agricultural workers safety. The wellbeing of our workers is always important, however the health of our farm workers during the COVID-19 pandemic is critical. We need to ensure their safety so food can continue to be grown, processed and packaged safely and our farms can continue to provide nourishment to all New Yorkers.

New York Farm Bureau encourages improved inter-agency coordination around the needs of farmworkers related to testing, medical treatment and emergency housing. Farmers must be able to plan in the cases a worker becomes sick and needs alternative housing and how and where to find these resources. Unlike many other industries, farmworkers often live on farm (or in farm provided housing) with other employees of the farm, this poses a unique challenge to agriculture and could allow for COVID-19 to affect a large number of employees on a single farm. Furthermore, New York's farms are in the most rural areas in the state often making it difficult to obtain much needed resources. We urge you to increase testing and treatment for COVID-19 in rural parts of New York with an emphasis on farms and processing facilities, for workers that may have been exposed to COVID-19 regardless if the worker is showing symptoms. We would like to see guidance for protocols and procedures that our farms should be taking in the case a worker tests positive for COVID-19. Including, testing, quarantine, housing, meal preparation and transportation protocols that should be implemented.

Farmers take the health and safety of their workers into account daily and understand that additional precautions are necessary during this time. Clear COVID-19 guidelines are needed for our farms to continue work at the highest of safety and health standards.

New York Farm Bureau thanks you for consideration of this matter and we are grateful for your effectiveness and your support of agriculture during these times of uncertainty

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Fisher
President

Cc:

Meg Baldwin, Deputy Secretary for Health

Patrick Hooker, Deputy Secretary for Food and Agriculture

Richard Ball, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Markets

Howard Zucker, Commissioner of the Department of Health